



## From the Broker's Desk Nancy C. Rowe



If you have been thinking about dressing up your kitchen with new countertops, you have a wide array of materials to select from. Wood was the first material used for countertops as it was found in the free standing furniture used in kitchens in the late 1800's and for those less fortunate, it was wide wood planks that provided a working surface. Wood is still available today with butcher block counters which give a warm, wood tone appearance and scratches or burns can be easily sanded away. But wood is porous and to protect against bacteria, the surface needs to be disinfected frequently and oiled to protect the surface. Between 1900 and 1920, society recognized the correlation between germs and disease and the "Sanitary Movement" influenced the creation of easily cleanable surfaces and the white subway tile became the countertop of choice. This tile was very sharp edged and the grout lines were extremely tight to allow for the removal of all dirt and germs from the surface. By the 1930's, tile was available in bright and beautiful colors but the grout lines remained tight. Today's tile selections offer limitless options for colors and designs. Tile is resistance to heat and sharp knives and resists stains but can crack if an object is dropped on it and our larger grout lines are more prone to staining or harboring bacteria. If a tile becomes damaged, it can be replaced with a minimum of effort unlike other countertops. From 1930 to 1950, tile continued to dominate the kitchen counters but a laminate product known as Formica became available and grew in popularity. Laminates are made of paper blended with resins and fused to particle board and continue to be used today because of their durability, stain resistance, multi-designs and lower cost. Now we are in the era of the solid surfacing materials. The acrylic and polyester product best

known to consumers is marketed under the name Corian. These products are nonporous so require no sealing and scratches and burns can be sanded out but they don't have the look of real stone and the cost is equal. Another composite product gaining in popularity is quartz which is a mixture of resin and quartz chips which offers a greater variety of colors and patterns than natural stone but doesn't offer the natural look of stone. The most popular of natural stone is granite which withstands normal wear and tear well but does require regular sealing to avoid stains. Marble is a glamorous material but stains easily even with sealing. Marble's cool, smooth surface has always made it highly desirable for the kitchen area designated for baking. Soapstone has a natural softness and needs polishing with oil to keep it in shape as it will crack. Slate is available in a range of thicknesses and can be polished or left natural. If you want to create a unique kitchen look then there are the options of metal, concrete and paper. Sheet metal came into use in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and progressed into enameled metal and has now been replaced by stainless steel. Because of its durability and ease of use and maintenance, stainless steel is highly desirable but the cost to fabricate custom counters is high. Concrete counters can endure heavy use but aren't as heat resistant and because of being porous require frequent sealing. These counters can be customized with inlays and made into any shape but again because of the custom fabrication, cost is high. There is now available a paper composite product made from paper fibers and mixed with resin which is eco-friendly, lighter than stone or concrete and durable but is susceptible to chemical damage. With so many choices, research on line and visit your local kitchen and building supply stores to determine which product will best give you the service and appearance you want to achieve. Remember that the experienced Agents of WILLOW Realty are always ready to assist with your real estate questions.

### 9 Uses for Coffee Grounds

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THIS OLD HOUSE.COM

1. Deodorize Your Fridge - Place a bowl of dry grounds in your refrigerator or freezer to neutralize odors left by stale or spoiled food.
2. Clean Tools and Dishware - Place a few teaspoons of grounds on a thin cleaning rag and use to scour away grease and grime. Finish with a thorough rinsing.
3. Hide Furniture Scratches - Dip a cotton swab into steeped grounds and dab on scratches in dark wood furniture to mini-



4. Give Paper an Antique Look - Dip paper or sheets of stationery in a soupy mix of grounds and water; allow them to sit a minute or two, then let dry and brush off the grounds.
5. Repel Insects - Mound grounds into a ring to create a protective border around plants that will ward off ants and slugs.
6. Contain Ashes - Sprinkle damp grounds on fireplace ashes to cut down on airborne dust as you sweep them up.

7. Scrub Hands - Rub a scoop of grounds between palms as an exfoliant to remove dead skin and help eliminate smells from foods like fish and garlic.
8. Make a Cockroach Trap - Fill a can or jar with an inch or two of moistened coffee grounds, then line the container's neck with extra-sticky double-sided tape. The scent will draw the roaches into the trap.
9. Fortify Plants - Give seedlings a nitrogen boost by stirring grounds into soil or a watering can.

### Restaurant-Style Coleslaw © All Recipe.com



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|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 (16 oz) bag coleslaw mix  | 1/2 c white sugar   |
| 2 tbs diced onion           | 1 tbs white vinegar |
| 2/3 c creamy salad dressing | 1/4 tsp salt        |
| 3 tbs vegetable oil         | 1/2 tsp poppy seeds |

Combine the coleslaw mix and onion in a large bowl. Whisk together the salad dressing, vegetable oil, sugar, vinegar, salt, and poppy seeds in a medium bowl; blend thoroughly. Pour dressing mixture over coleslaw mix and toss to coat. Chill at least 2 hours before serving.

### Fresh in July

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#### Vegetables

- cucumbers
- tomatoes
- summer squash
- corn
- green beans
- Lettuce



#### Fruits

- watermelon
- strawberries
- cantaloupe
- blueberries
- peaches
- apricots
- kiwi
- raspberries
- plums

