

Old House

JOURNAL

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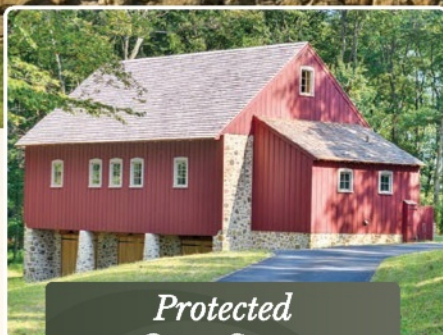


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— OLD HOUSE JOURNAL —

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THIS MONTH

BELOW: A DIMENSIONAL TILE ROOF COMPLETES THIS STORYBOOK HOUSE.

What's the view from your roof?



I remember the first time I stepped on mine—my heart nearly stopped. It was high, and so steep! While not everyone can or should go up on the roof, taking a good look at what it's made of is often the first step in problem-solving for repairs. Don't underestimate the importance of a good roof—not only in keeping water out, but also in topping off your architecture. Roofs are a defining feature, just like windows. Nothing makes me crazier than seeing the wrong roof on a fine old building (think a Mediterranean Revival house, its original clay tile roof replaced with flat asphalt shingles). Get the background you need to do right by your roof in “On the Roof,” starting on page 42.

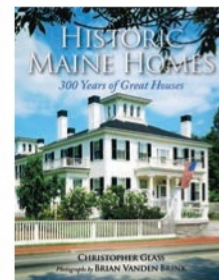
Hot summer days are the best time for cool mountain getaways, and we visit a spectacular one in this issue. Set in the Catskill Mountains, and featuring little-seen bark house style, it recalls another era, yet offers all the comforts of today. Let it inspire you to place hints of rustic style in your own surroundings (see “Nestledown,” page 20).

Gardens are something I just can't get enough of, both in print and in real life. And one of my favorite garden accessories is a stylized, vintage-look shed. Not only does it add much-needed storage, but when done right, it can be a conversation piece or a focal point all its own. Garden writer Catriona Tudor Erler tells us how to create “A Better Shed,” starting on page 70. And I can't imagine a sweeter way to reach the shed than by traipsing a stone path...it's the kind of throwback detail that can add layers of charm to your garden. Learn how to make one in Quick Makeovers (page 58). Enjoy your summer!



HOUSE HUNTING?

If you're looking for an old house to call your own—one to have and to hold and to shepherd for years to come—be sure to check out the stunning Antique Homes listings on page 87 and at bit.ly/antiquehomes.



ARMCHAIR TOURIST

If you're like me, and gazing at jaw-dropping old houses is your idea of a good time, check out the new book *Historic Maine Homes*, which showcases the work of photographer and longtime OHJ contributor Brian Vanden Brink. bit.ly/mainehomes



PORTRAIT BY CARLA T. BARRETT

Old House JOURNAL

Paint the front door
a zippy historic color,
like colonial red.

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Mow the lawn!

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Sweep the sidewalk.

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Add new house
numbers or an
address plaque.
They're little
treasures in tile
or stone.

EDITOR EMERITUS, AT LARGE
Patricia Poore

Plant a big pot of summer
annuals that clash wildly with
the house—in my case, orange
lantana and salmon impatiens.

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Plant beautiful petunias
or pansies in my flower
pots sitting on the porch.

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Add pots and
pots of flowers
and a hammock
on the porch.

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Growing up, one of my chores
once school was out was to paint
the wood porch floor and steps
so they would be shiny and clean
for the summer.

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08

GOOD FOR THE NEXT CENTURY

A folk Queen Anne is gently updated to today's energy standards.

+ WINDOW TREATMENT IDEAS

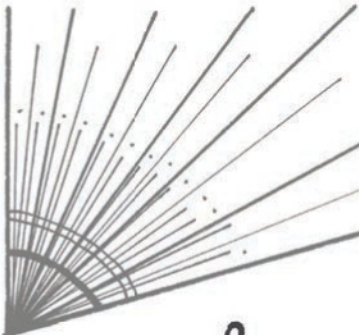
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NESTLEDOWN

A near-original mountain camp answers the yearning for time spent in nature.

+ A GUIDE TO RUSTIC FURNITURE





GOOD

FOR
THE

NEXT CENTURY

HISTORIC PRESERVATION
& RENEWABLE ENERGY
MEET UP IN VERMONT.

STORY BY

REGINA
COLE



PHOTOS BY

CAROLYN
BATES





“After I bought this house in 2011, I panicked,” admits Jan Blomstrann.

As chairwoman and CEO of Renewable NRG Systems, she knew that her home had to be energy efficient. (“We make support tools for the wind and solar energy industries,” she explains.) The house she’d fallen for was a drafty folk Queen Anne built in 1894. All the windows were rotted. “I was warned against using the furnace, lest the house explode.”

Situated on a steep hillside above Lake Champlain, Jan’s old house is two and a half stories, about 3,200 square feet inside with a wraparound porch on the front and side. In a late Victorian neighborhood in Burlington, Vermont, this house boasts its original slate roof and fish-scale wood shingles in the attic gable.

“I had never owned an old house; most recently I’d been living in a condo,” Jan explains. “But I knew I wanted a real home where my children could visit, with a small garden. When I walked into this one, I fell in love. Afterwards, I realized that it leaked air all over the place. The wiring was original, which was not so good.”

Fortunately, Jan knew professionals who appreciate old houses. She assembled a team that included architect Bill Maclay, interior designer Cecilia Redmond, and landscape architect Cynthia Knauf. Together, they introduced 21st-century comfort and function into the 19th-century house without obliterating its integrity or its personality.

“Jan’s house just needed some TLC,” recalls Cecilia, who trained in Ireland and London before

OPPOSITE: FURNISHED WITH PERIOD LIGHTING FIXTURES, ANTIQUE RUGS, AND FURNITURE COLLECTED BY THE HOMEOWNER, THE INTERIOR OF THE 1894 HOUSE SUITS HER CONTEMPORARY LIFE. ABOVE, LEFT: THE REAR ELEVATION SHOWS THE SECOND-STORY BALCONY THAT OPENS FROM A LUXURIOUS NEW MASTER SUITE. ABOVE, RIGHT: THE BROAD FRONT PORCH, ITS CEILING PAINTED THE TRADITIONAL SKY BLUE, IS A FAVORITE PLACE TO SIT AND GREET NEIGHBORS.

**DECORATING
CLASSICS**

Soft aqua French-
style wallpaper and
lace panels

**TRADITIONAL
FURNITURE**

Simple Colonial
Revival and Empire
style furniture





Quiet Energy Upgrades

LEED-certified architect Bill Maclay convinced the owner that an old house could meet today's standards.

- 1. INSULATION** Six inches' worth of spray urethane foam was retrofitted from inside, leaving the historic exterior walls intact.
- 2. NEW WINDOWS** The architect is quick to say that it usually makes sense to restore old windows, even in cold Vermont. "But rot had made these beyond saving; we bought triple-glazed wood units with a thin muntin profile matching the originals."
- 3. WHEN TO SAY NO** "It made no sense to ruin the look of the slate roof with photovoltaic panels," Bill says.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A PAIR OF ANTIQUE BRASS BEDS FURNISHES A SECOND-STORY GUEST ROOM. THE NEW MASTER BATHROOM INCLUDES A SOAKING TUB AND CRISPLY PAINTED WAINSCOT; THE PAINTED FLOORCLOTH CAME ALONG FROM A PREVIOUS RESIDENCE. THE FORMER ATTIC YIELDED INTERESTING NEW SPACES, INCLUDING THIS DORMER ALCOVE. PREVIOUSLY REMODELED, THE KITCHEN GOT JUST A MINOR UPDATE; IT OPENS TO THE SCREEN PORCH AND BRICK TERRACE.



she moved to Vermont 14 years ago. “She has great appreciation for Victorian design, but she is also a 21st-century woman.”

Jan explains that Bill designed the LEED-certified building that houses her company’s headquarters. “It’s incredibly important to take the good buildings in our historic neighborhoods and make them efficient,” says the Vermont architect. “If we don’t insulate them, people can’t afford to heat them, and they’re abandoned.”

In the case of Jan’s house, the historic exterior was in fine shape. So the inside walls, where little original plaster remained, were taken down to the studs, and foam insulation was sprayed into the double-stud cavity. “We kept all the original trim and hardware,” Bill says.

Spray foam was added to existing cellulose insulation at the roof, and the existing stone foundation got spray foam insulation, along with improved drainage. Rotted windows were replaced with wood-clad R5 triple-pane versions. The “deep energy

A Tradition of Painted Floors

Then and now, it’s a practical solution for soft wood floors.

Beautiful old wood floors downstairs were refinished and clear-coated. Together with designer Cecilia Redmond, the owner chose to paint the lesser board floors upstairs in a forgiving mid-gray. Other common painted treatments have included checkerboards and lined borders—at the perimeter or to define a center or alcove.

HANDRAIL

To meet current code, the new railing leading to the third floor had to be taller than the 19th-century version. The builder simply doubled the handrail to add height.





retrofit” brought the heating Energy Use Index from 54 kBTU a year to just 23 kBTU.

“We did not tamper with the scale and proportion of rooms downstairs,” says Cecilia, who chose muted shades of gold, green, and blue for the interior. For the dining room, she found block-printed Zoffany wallpaper in a lovely aqua that reminded Jan of a dining room she’d seen in a French chateau.

Burlington landscape architect Cynthia Knauf transformed the backyard into a garden sanctuary: “In an area of not even a quarter acre, we created different flat levels and outdoor spaces,” she says. “The upper-level brick patio is an extension of rooms inside.”

“I love everything about my house,” Jan smiles. “Its warmth comes from the juxtaposition of historic preservation and energy efficiency.”

TOP: AN OVERVIEW OF THE REAR GARDEN SHOWS TERRACING AND THE DESIGN RELATIONSHIP AMONG NEW REAR PORCHES, FENCE, AND SHED. **LEFT:** THE UPPER LEVEL OF THE BACKYARD, PAVED IN LOCAL BRICK, FUNCTIONS AS AN EXTENSION OF THE SITTING ROOM.



SIMPLE WINDOW TREATMENTS

UNFUSSY TREATMENTS MAY BE USED ALONE OR AS AN UNDERLAYER.



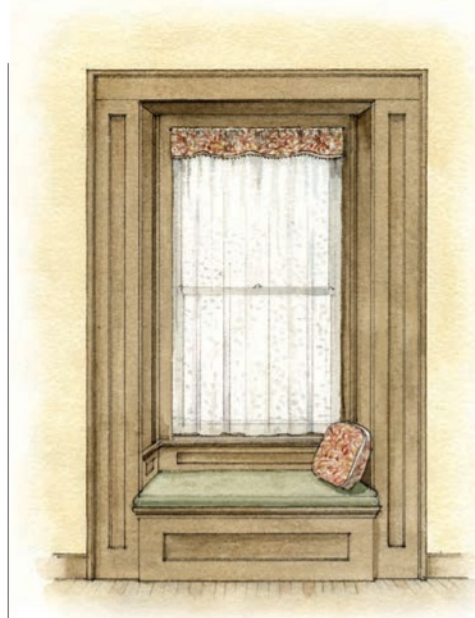
Simple though they are, the window dressings in Jan Blomstrann's Vermont house add an important finishing touch. In the living room as well as the kitchen, hall, and bath, sheer café curtains are hung on small rings from inside-mounted rods. Pleated lace panels look elegant in the dining room, given shape by brass tiebacks at sill level. In the bedroom, pleated panels are hung over narrow blinds mounted against the glass.

Simple treatments have one or two layers only, with no stiff or upholstered pieces (e.g., cornice or pelmet); require no extreme sewing; and are minimally embellished. Roller shades, Venetian blinds, lace or sheer panels, café curtains, and also Roman and balloon shades are most often mounted inside the window frame. Lace curtains or fabric drapery may cover a sheer "glass curtain," shade, or blind. **By Patricia Poore**



PANELS ON RINGS

Hung from rings on a well-chosen rod, both unlined curtains and pleated drapery panels look elegant, especially when they fall to the floor. Fabric tiebacks at the sill echo the room's proportions.



SHIRRED VALANCE

In a timeless scheme, a narrow fabric valance shirred on a rod covers the header of glass curtains (lace or sheer), which filter light and provide a bit of privacy for an upstairs dormer window.



PANEL OVER CAFÉ CURTAINS

A decorative drapery panel adds a formal touch when mounted over café curtains at meeting-rail height. Hung from rings rather than shirred on the rod, the half curtains are easily opened and closed. Proportions and fabrics here say "bungalow," but the two-layer scheme is perennially popular.

SHEER GLASS CURTAINS

Sheer half-curtains filter light and the view while subtly calling attention to unusual sash proportions. The larger curtain hung from rings can be opened.

PLAIN ROLLER SHADES

In this Arts & Crafts living room, practical roller shades can be pulled down to block sunlight or for privacy.



POUGHKEEPS
YACHT



RETREAT

A downstairs room is furnished with vintage leather club chairs and birch-branch shelves overflowing with bound books of the Victorian age.

NESTLEDOWN

SPACIOUS, RECUPERATIVE, AND QUIANT DESCRIBE THIS SURVIVOR FROM THE DAYS OF MOUNTAIN CAMP RETREATS.

**STORY BY
BRIAN D.
COLEMAN**

**PHOTOS BY
WILLIAM
WRIGHT**



FAMILY ROOM

The living room opens to the dining room behind. Casual seating clusters around the stone hearth, where fires burn on cool nights, even in summer.



UNLIKE SO MANY VICTORIAN HOUSES, the interior of this vacation camp is informal, open, and spacious. The house was built to be solid, with a full foundation and a sturdy roof—not always the case for summer homes in the Catskills. This mountaintop house, said to be one of the best unaltered examples left in Onteora Park, nevertheless was hard to appreciate at first glance. It was hidden by a tall hedge and tumbledown fence.

When Lynne and Steve Foote first heard about the house for sale in this historic community in New York's Catskill Mountains, they were intrigued. Mostly for the good, it stood hardly changed since 1902. A multi-gabled roof sheltered quaint dormers and eaves; its three-story fieldstone chimney anchored the southern end of the home. Broad living porches ran across the eastern façade, opening to spectacular views of High Peak and Round Top mountains—vistas that the city-bound Foote family yearned for. Its charm seemed irresistible.

The original fir woodwork had never been painted; black with age, it needed just a good cleaning and a renewing coat of linseed oil to bring back the mellow golden gleam. Previous owners had replaced some of the windows and doors—but they stored the originals underneath the house, ready to be reused during renovation. Upstairs and in the garret, multiple bedrooms were available for the couple's children and frequent guests.

Fieldstone fireplaces and a stone arch in the entry had been painted white, so these were painstakingly stripped. A missing window seat was reinstalled in the living room. Restoration designer Dave Maurer tracked down a cache of vintage Bradley & Hubbard brass wall sconces, complete with iridescent Steuben glass shades, which now cast glowing circles of light in the rustic interior.

TWIG-WORK

Characteristic rustic fretwork made of birch logs creates a letter-writing niche adjacent to the front entrance. Rooms are clad in beadboard.





FURNISHING A CAMP

TAKE A CUE FROM THE WAY THIS 1902 CAMP HAS BEEN FURNISHED—AS IF A FAMILY OF THE 1890s HAD JUST RETURNED FROM “THE GRAND TOUR.”

Asian, European, and North African antiques mix with leather couches and rustic furniture.

The owners found vintage oriental carpets locally, in rich but faded palettes of midnight blue, terra cotta, and burgundy.

Other furnishings, mostly vintage, are appropriately local, including Indian-head bookends, a butter-scotch slag-glass table lamp, and paintings of the mountains by local artists.

Taxidermy brings nature inside, as with a bison's head near the entry and the fox umbrella stand.

Around the fireplace, seating is eclectic, and there's no TV in sight. Like the bark outside and beadboard within, everything has patina.

The house's lower level had been a warren of unused and unfinished spaces, originally intended for laundry and servants. Dropped ceilings and Sheetrock walls were removed, replaced with tongue-and-groove wainscoting and ceilings consistent with the house. The lower level has been repurposed as a guest bedroom, office, bar, and family room. The family room and bar have the appeal of a 19th-century gentlemen's club, with vintage sports paraphernalia and old books lining bookcases made of birch branches.

The family gathers together for meals—and Lynne loves to cook. A more serious kitchen was a priority in the renovation. The existing kitchen, a cramped space at the rear of the house, was doubled in size by absorbing a small bedroom and removing a servants' staircase. In the

BELOW: VERANDAS ARE CASUALLY FURNISHED WITH VINTAGE KEROSENE LAMPS. THE ARTS & CRAFTS-ERA OAK DINING TABLE IS ORIGINAL TO THE HOUSE. BALUSTRADES ARE IN A RUSTIC TWIG-WORK STYLE. BROAD EAVES AND A MASSIVE FIELD-STONE CHIMNEY GIVE THE FRONT ENTRANCE WELCOMING APPEAL.

new kitchen, which includes a pantry and eating areas, the house's age and character were reinforced. Salvaged elements were used whenever possible: 19th-century fir flooring salvaged from Bennett College in Millbrook, New York, replaced mismatched floors; windows were rebuilt and some reglazed with old glass; vintage hardware and lighting fixtures were installed. Informal fir cabinets are set off by a copper sink and backsplash. Modern appliances, including a dishwasher, refrigerator drawers, and a freezer, are hidden behind tongue-and-groove fir panels. The rebuilt 1930s Magic Chef stove is the heart of the kitchen.



More Online

See more houses and gardens in historic Onteora Park at oldhouseonline.com/ontेora.

BUILT AT THE VERY END OF THE
VICTORIAN ERA, THE BARK-ON-
LOG AND SHINGLE HOUSE IS
IN THE RUSTIC STYLE OF THE
ADIRONDACK GREAT CAMPS. IT
NESTLES IN AMIDST THE MISTY
CATSKILL MOUNTAINS.





THE LARGE KITCHEN IS RELATIVELY NEW. ITS RAMBLING LAYOUT, WELL-MATCHED FIR BEADBOARD, VINTAGE STOVE, AND COPPER SINK MAKE IT LOOK ORIGINAL.



TRANSFERWARE

At Nestledown, red-and-white transferware brightens shelves in the kitchen's dining nook. Transfer printing, an affordable way to decorate ceramics, began in England after 1752 to emulate hand-painted China ware. (An impression is applied or transferred to the object; firing sets the pattern.) Ever-popular blue was followed by brown, black, purple, green, red, and yellow (rare). Staffordshire Victorian transferware made ca. 1830s-50s, with classical, oriental, and scenic themes, is the most sought-after type. Spode and others continue to produce transferware in new and reproduction patterns.

The porches, too, have been restored to their original look. Down came modern railings made of pressure-treated wood, which were replaced with rustic log rails and twig-work set into cedar posts. Furnished with mismatched antiques and lit by flickering kerosene lamps, the upper porch soon became an outdoor dining room. From here the family watches the sunset display of lavender and gold, and the moonrise over dusky blue peaks.

The original name for the old house was Highways, a reference to its mountaintop setting, but the interstate system has stolen that word's evocative appeal. So the Foote family rechristened their home Nestledown, appropriate to their feelings for the place and an allusion to the Long Island home of textile and interior designer Candace Wheeler, the founder of Onteora Park. The rustic lodge has indeed become a place for nestling down to enjoy nature and the simple pleasures of the past.

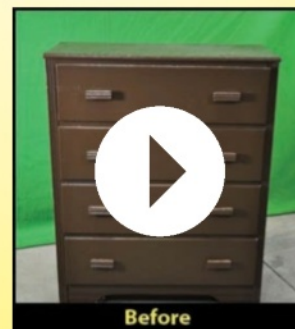
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TWIG BOOKCASE

A twig bookcase or display cabinet with legs of yellow birch, an alder burl top, and bark veneer, this meticulous example is by Jonathan Swartwout. \$3,600, fisheroftheberrystudio.squarespace.com



WILLOW CHAIR

This beefy, oversize garden chair was formed freehand by an Ohio maker of both traditional and contemporary willow furnishings. \$625, aroundthebendwillowfurniture.com



HOOP BENCH

Old Hickory has been making hoop benches since the late 1800s. Crafted from Tennessee Valley woods, this one is available in various finishes and seat/back options. From \$2,200–\$2,700, oldhickoryfurniture.com



ANTLER SOFA TABLE

Antler and horn furnishings became a Victorian craze after London's 1851 Great Exhibition. This custom table is a signature piece from Montana-based craftsman Bryan Mackie. Around \$2,200, antlercreek.com



JUNIPER LOG BED

Juniper is prized for its unique character; this hand-carved log bed can be augmented with a custom, hand-painted scene on the headboard. (This one depicts woodland moose.) Queen bed, \$3,695; headboard only, \$1,995. woodlandcreekfurniture.com



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BUNGALOW KITCHEN

What's better than a kitchen in black, white, and red—
with a cozy nook? **By Roseann Ferrini / Photos by Greg Premru**

Misguided remodeling has ruined many a modest prewar house, and mine was no exception. The biggest project proved to be the kitchen, which had lost all original details and was a poster child for bad space planning.

I wanted an efficient kitchen, but one with the charm of grand-ma's era. I referred to Jane Powell's book *Bungalow Kitchens*, which advocates using simple white cabinets, linoleum, and tile. I also used the period's nickel fittings and bought vintage glass lampshades. I even collected Depression-era and mid-century kitchenware and tablecloths to add color to the design.

The room revolves around my cookstove, a 1930 Magic Chef range

restored by Dave Erickson in Littleton, Massachusetts. (Dave also made the matching hood.) The stove's enamel colors were the basis for all my other selections: off-white linoleum flooring with a black and red border, buttercream cabinets, and red accents.

The kitchen cabinets are by Crown Point Cabinetry, customized for a true 1930s look. Forbo's Marmoleum flooring is perfect for its practicality as well as its appearance. The new black and white hex tile countertops are inset with "flower" details. Liner tiles make a red stripe in the otherwise plain subway-tile backsplash.

Set in an alcove behind a characteristic rounded arch, the original nook is tight but adequate, and filled with light now that no appli-

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ance blocks the window. For extra storage that doesn't take up floor space, I expanded the cabinet that's inset into the wall of the nook. The table and chairs were a flea-market find; I recently repainted them lipstick red, a bold accent that adds even more charm.

BEFORE, A STOVE BLOCKED THE NOOK'S WINDOW. NOW A VINTAGE STOVE OCCUPIES A TILED ALCOVE WHERE BEFORE A STEEL SINK WAS BACKED BY PLASTIC "BRICKS."

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ITALIAN VILLA

Chicago architect Otis L. Wheelock designed this first grand estate built on Summit Avenue in what was then a fledgling prairie city. The 1863 house of local limestone has all the elements of Italianate architecture, including a belvedere. A breathtaking Aesthetic stair hall and the porch's neoclassical columns date to high-style remodelings.

—Paul Clifford Larson



"I feel lucky to live in such a special house and to be able to put my stamp on it. When I come home at the end of the day, the house just shimmers."

RODDIE TURNER



BRICK QUEEN ANNE

This 1881 house has the balconies, grouped windows, gabled roofs, and varied ornamentation characteristic of the exuberant Queen Anne style. The original veranda was removed years ago; current owners stripped later white paint from the brick.

—Bette Hammel

STICK STYLE

Likely built from a pattern book, this diminutive house dates to 1884 and is a delightful iteration of the Stick-Eastlake style, with steep roofs and wood ornamentation. Along with a slightly eccentric interior, it has a good-sized kitchen and a lovely garden.

—Melinda Nelson

Summit Avenue / *Hill District, St. Paul, Minnesota*



Lined with 19th-century beauties, this landmark Minnesota boulevard is an illustrated dictionary of Victorian house styles. “You could drive by and see the porte-cochère, the colonnade, the turret, and you knew that the owner had not just fallen off the turnip wagon,” writes Garrison Keillor about the lumbermen and railroad magnates who commissioned these substantial dwellings outside the “clamor and stink” of downtown St. Paul. The district is a national treasure. **Photos by Karen Melvin**



BEAUX ARTS ROMANESQUE

Renowned architect Cass Gilbert designed this 1894 brownstone mansion. For nearly 60 years, it served as apartments, a music studio, and a guesthouse before a recent restoration that necessitated removal of eight kitchenettes. *—M.N.*

ROMANESQUE REVIVAL

F. Scott Fitzgerald rewrote his first novel in a third-floor bedroom of this 1889 townhouse, which was rented to his parents. The rough-hewn stone structure is part of the Summit Terrace row, eight single-family units designed by architects Willcox and Johnston, now a National Historic Landmark. *—B.H.*

EXTRAVAGANT QUEEN ANNE

This 1889 confection in wood had retreated behind asbestos siding. In 2000 it was purchased by a young property manager who, in his teens, had developed a fondness for Queen Annes while mowing lawns nearby. Replication of the original porch was part of his decade-long restoration. *—Dave Kenney*



Inspire

WINDOW SHOPPING



Courtesy of Robert Searcy/Houston Association of Realtors

HOUSTON, TX / \$249,900

Roman brick, a low-pitched gable roof, and trapezoidal clerestory windows stamp this Atomic Ranch as a classic. Inside, the distinctive brick carries over into the living room in the form of a room divider/planter and fireplace.



Courtesy of Martie Lieberman/Modern Sarasota

SARASOTA, FL / \$335,000

Designed by architect Ken Warriner and nicknamed "the little jewel box," this much-published 1959 house boasts original terrazzo floors, clerestory windows, skylights, built-in furnishings, a fireplace, and sliding glass walls.



Courtesy of Mark Herrin/Keller Williams

SAVANNAH, GA / \$264,900

This low-slung Mid-century Modern is loaded with original features, including pink kitchen appliances, vertical wood paneling, soffit lighting, and multi-colored slate floors. The owner restored the Japanese-inspired garden.



Courtesy of Fritz Nelson/Historic Properties

NEWARK, DE / \$479,900

Designed by Edward Durell Stone in 1948, this house is the only surviving example of the International Style in Delaware, and features an oak spiral staircase, a wood-ceilinged game room, and a cedar sauna and closets.



Courtesy of Lori Foulke/Shorewest Realtors

HARTFORD, WI / \$249,900

The signature of this 1957 suburban Milwaukee house, designed by Emil Abendroth, is its soaring butterfly roof. Other features include a covered skylit entry, large slate foyer, and fireplace set into an entire stone wall.

Mad for Modern

With good bones and retro cachet, the houses that many postwar kids grew up in are starting to attract a new generation of buyers.

See **more houses for sale** on page 87.



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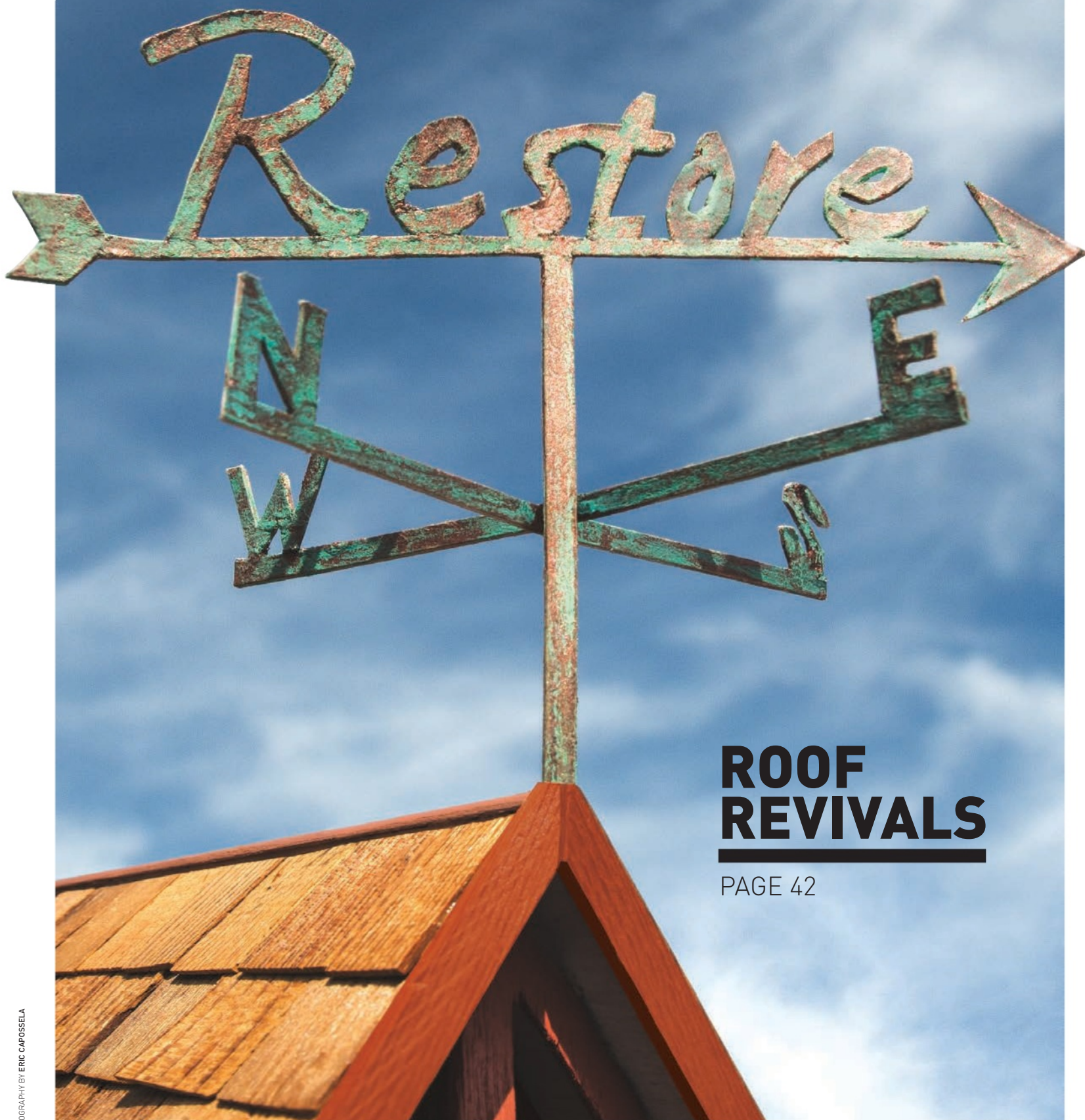
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ROOF REVIVALS

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LOST ARTS: BUILDING A GATE THAT DOESN'T SAG

A pro woodworker shares three techniques for a sag-free garden gate.

+

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62 SALVAGE IT

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66 ASK OHJ



ON THE ROOF



THE RIGHT ROOF CAN BE YOUR HOME'S CROWNING ARCHITECTURAL STATEMENT.

BY JAMES C. MASSEY & SHIRLEY MAXWELL

A roof does much more than shelter the humans who live beneath it—more even than protect the house. Roofs tell tales—about houses and their inhabitants, about time and place, and about style in every sense of the word.

Consider the simple, steep late-medieval roof of early America as it fades into the softer lines of the Federal era's dignified gabled roof, then onward to the haughty double-sloped Second Empire-style mansard with multiple dormers. The flamboyant cones and spires of late 19th-century Queen Annes; the red-tiled roofs of Spanish Colonials; the broad, low spread of the bungalow roof; and the flat roof of a Modern house—each one has a story to tell. Part of that story has to be about the changing materials from which roofing is made.

From time without measure, built houses were topped with natural materials—wood, stone, or earth. (Terra cotta is literally “baked earth.”) Copper and lead roofs date back to the classic past of Rome and Greece, with iron, tin, and zinc added in the 19th century. Man-made materials only came into general use in the 20th century, particularly the broad mixes of asphalt, felt, and asbestos, as well as modern metal formulations like stainless steel and aluminum. In the recent past, manmade roofing materials have become more common, especially those that mimic natural ones at a lower cost, such as manufactured slates or asphalt shingles that resemble wood.

Today's roofing is available in a multitude of materials, colors, shapes, and forms that maintain the vintage appearance of originals—matching an original roof as closely as possible should always be a prime goal.



METALS

Metal roofs are constructed of natural materials. In the U.S., lead was rarely used for roofing, and has fallen out of favor. It is nonetheless probably the most permanent of all roofing materials; after a few centuries of use, it could be removed, melted, re-cast, and put back in place. Today, lead-coated copper remains an option.

Copper sheets or rolls have been available since the later 18th century and continue in production today. Expensive but long-lasting (more than a century), they are mostly used on mansions, churches, and monumental buildings. “Tin” roofs (correctly called sheet-metal roofs) are increasingly popular today, generally with standing-seam construction. Various kinds of corrugated and crimped tin roofs are most often used in commercial and utilitarian buildings, but they also appeared on very simple houses of the 19th century. In the early 20th century, tin shingles with stamped patterns were popular; they are still used today.

Sheet-metal tin-plate roofing of the 19th century was the first factory-produced roofing, arising in the Federal era. It was initially formed in small sheets with either two or all four edges of each sheet crimped closed, and evolved to be manufactured in increasingly long rolls and installed with crimped edges, today’s standard seamed roofing. Later materials included aluminum and improved tin and zinc alloys, as in galvanized metal. Today, stainless steel may be used in special cases or best examples. Mostly gone now are fast-rusting tin roofs requiring periodic painting. Today, metal roofs come in a range of colors such as dark green, dark red, and aluminum—either factory-finished or painted on site.

PHOTO BY JAMES C. MASSEY; ICONS BY MEGAN HILLMAN; PREVIOUS PAGE PHOTO BY JAMES C. MASSEY

10 WAYS TO KEEP THE ROOF OVER YOUR HEAD



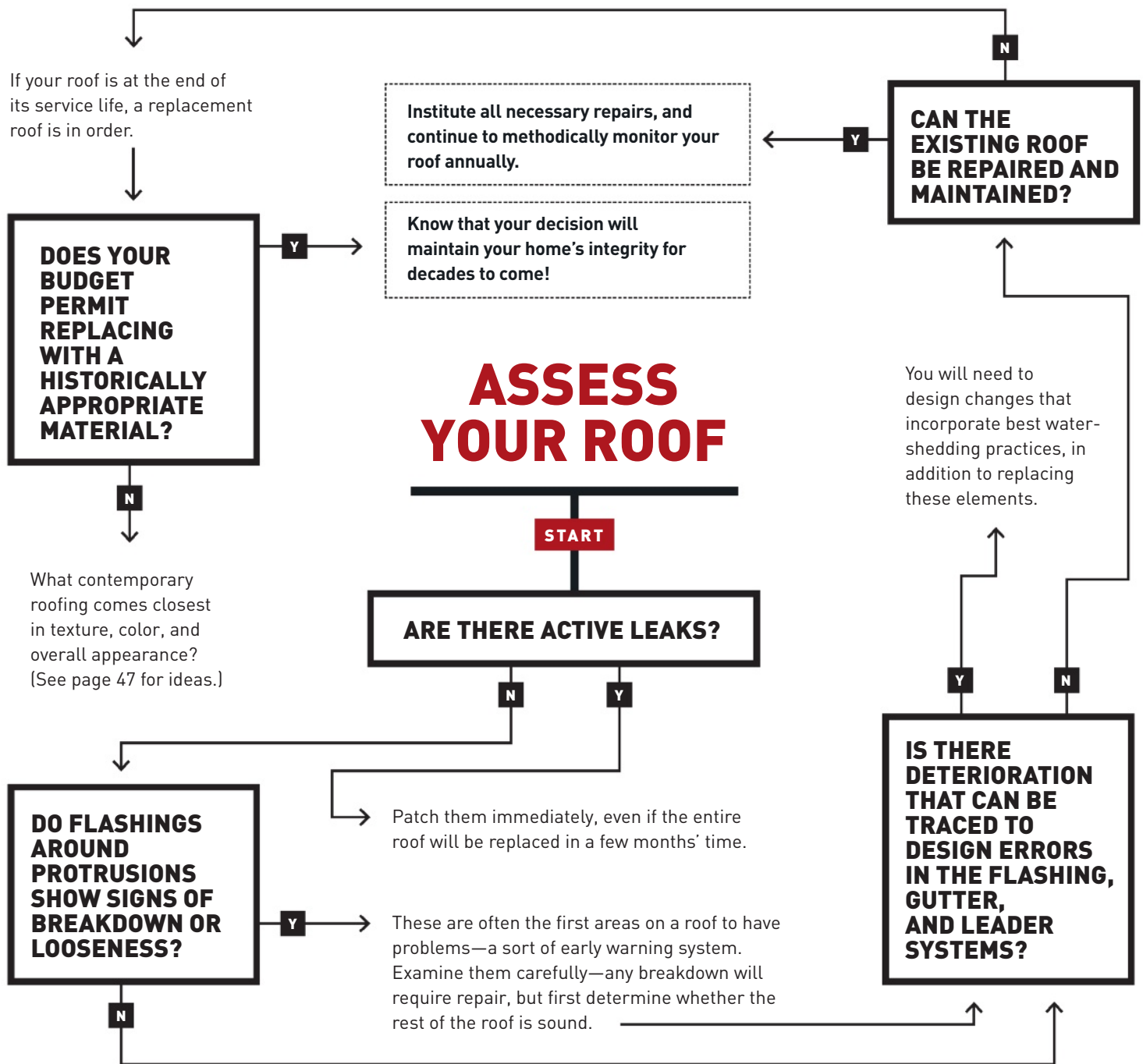
1. Look up! Check regularly for obvious problems—tree limbs lying on the roof or brushing against it, loose or decayed tiles and shingles, or twisted sheet metal, for example.

2. Fix it “by littles.” Roofing is usually repairable and does not necessarily require complete replacement. Individual tiles, shingles, slates, and sheet-metal sections can be removed and new ones installed. (Learn how to replace individual wood shingles at oldhouseonline.com/replace-shingle.) However, if 15 percent of the roof needs repair, it’s time for a new one.



3. KEEP GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS CLEAR OF DEBRIS.

4. Make sure flashing is in good and tight condition and that the roof drains well.



5. If you find water leaks within the house, you probably need to fix the roof. **Water problems don't cure themselves.**



6. Repaint roofs as needed, but do not apply asphalt compounds over the roof—that leads to cracking, drying, and failure.

7. Watch for rust on metal roofs, especially around nails in shingle roofs.



8. PREPARE FOR BAD WEATHER—ice dams in freezing areas, loose tiles or sheet metal in windy ones. In tornado zones, replace lightweight shingles with heavy architectural-grade ones made for those conditions. After a storm, promptly check the roof. In fire-prone areas, replace shingles with fireproof tiles or metal.

9. When installing new roofing, **purchase additional pieces** to make it easier to match repairs later.



10. Keep the guarantee on your new roof—and remember where you filed it!



TILES

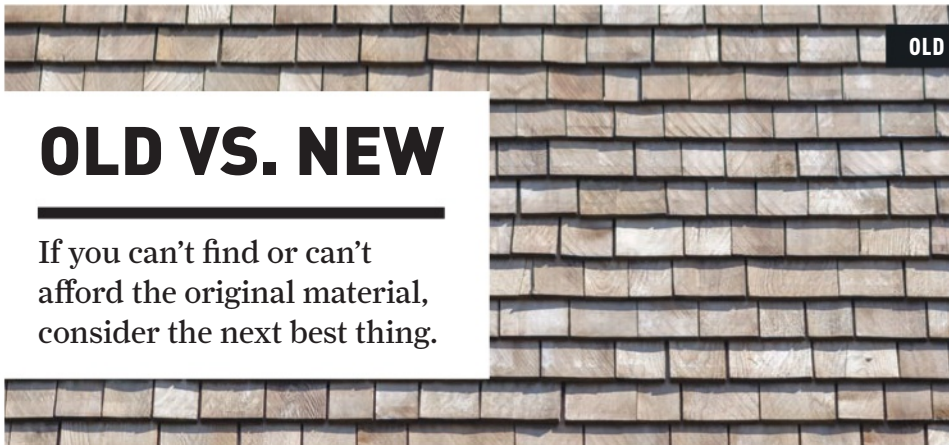
Tiles, generally of terra cotta, are of ancient origin and were in wide use in the 18th century in Spanish parts of the United States. In the 20th century, as Spanish Colonial and Mission styles spread throughout the country, so did tile roofs. Often overlooked is Germanic settlers' use of tiles in the 18th century, from New York to North Carolina. Some examples survive at Ephrata Cloisters, Pennsylvania, and Old Salem, North Carolina. In the Spanish colonies, tiles often appeared in barrel (half-round or S) shapes. Ceramic tile with colored glazes, either as shingle tile or curved shapes, came into use in the early 20th century, especially for Beaux Arts mansions. Tiles (both barrel and flat) are in ever-wider use today and are especially valued for being fireproof—no mean consideration in wildfire-prone areas.

ASPHALT

The biggest manufactured-roofing innovation of the mid-19th century was the introduction of shingles and rolls of material composed of asphalt, felt, and a granular coating, which came into wide use in the early 20th century because of their low cost, fire resistance, and ease of installation. They were available in a variety of dark colors and shapes. In improved forms, they are now the most popular type of roofing, generally as strips of shingles. (Roll roofing is used for industrial and secondary structures.) Asphalt shingles vary from very cheap, lightweight models to heavy "architectural shingles" that can be good copies of wood or slate, with excellent shadow lines. The most common shingle design is a rectangular butt-end, but varied shapes are available. Formerly popular was a hexagonal or diamond-shaped self-locking pattern widely available in the first half of the 20th century, and still made by GAF. Owing to environmental concerns, cement-asbestos shingles (and siding, widely used until the 1950s) are no longer used, though they may still be found on old houses.



THE #1 TIP FOR A LONG-LASTING ROOF? GET THE WATER OFF IT AS FAST AS POSSIBLE!



OLD

OLD VS. NEW

If you can't find or can't afford the original material, consider the next best thing.

TRADITIONAL MATERIAL: Wood Shingles
MODERN SUBSTITUTE: Wood-look shingles made of fiber-cement, architectural-grade asphalt, sheet metal, and tile. The substitutes offer fire resistance, which may be important, although wood shingles also can be chemically treated for fire resistance (required by code in many areas). Rough split wood shakes and manmade replicas are available, but are only appropriate for vintage houses that were originally built with them.



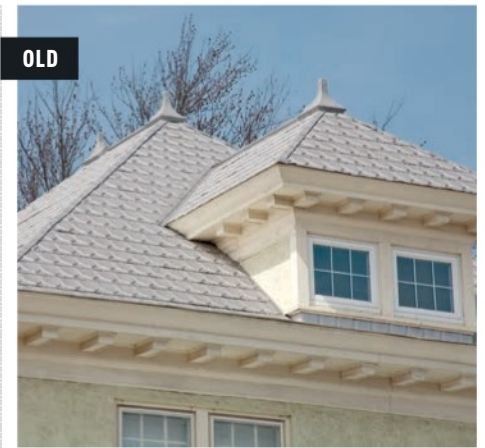
NEW

TRADITIONAL MATERIAL: Slate (Stone)
MODERN SUBSTITUTE: Manmade slates are widely available in varied colors and butt ends in differing proprietary polymer compositions, frequently incorporating recycled rubber. There are many asphalt-based, sheet-metal, fiber-cement, and concrete manmade slates in production.



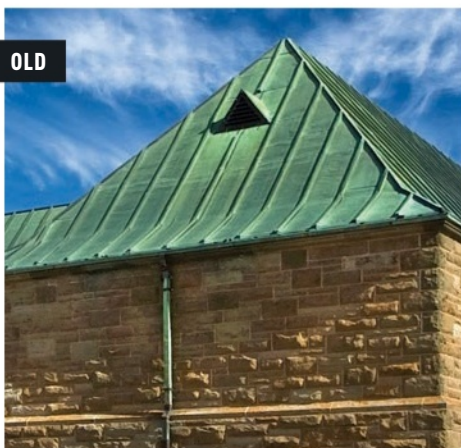
OLD

TRADITIONAL MATERIAL: Sheet Metal (Tin, Zinc, Terne, Lead)
MODERN SUBSTITUTE: Aluminum or coated-steel sheet, generally galvanized with zinc, with one of numerous factory finishes and colors, installed with traditional site-formed standing-seam joints. Probably the best quality is stainless steel.



OLD

TRADITIONAL MATERIAL: Sheet Metal Shingles
MODERN SUBSTITUTE: Some metal shingles embossed in traditional patterns are still available, as are a wide variety of plain metal shingles.



OLD

TRADITIONAL MATERIAL: Copper
MODERN SUBSTITUTE: Copper sheet metal is available; alternately, copper-coated steel or copper-finished sheet metal also works.



NEW

TRADITIONAL MATERIAL: Cement-Asbestos Shingles
MODERN SUBSTITUTE: Close proximities are available in fiber-cement and concrete.



OLD

TRADITIONAL MATERIAL: Terra cotta Tiles
MODERN SUBSTITUTE: Besides widely available terra cotta and tile products, some shapes (e.g., flat) are available in coated sheet metal.



WOOD SHINGLES

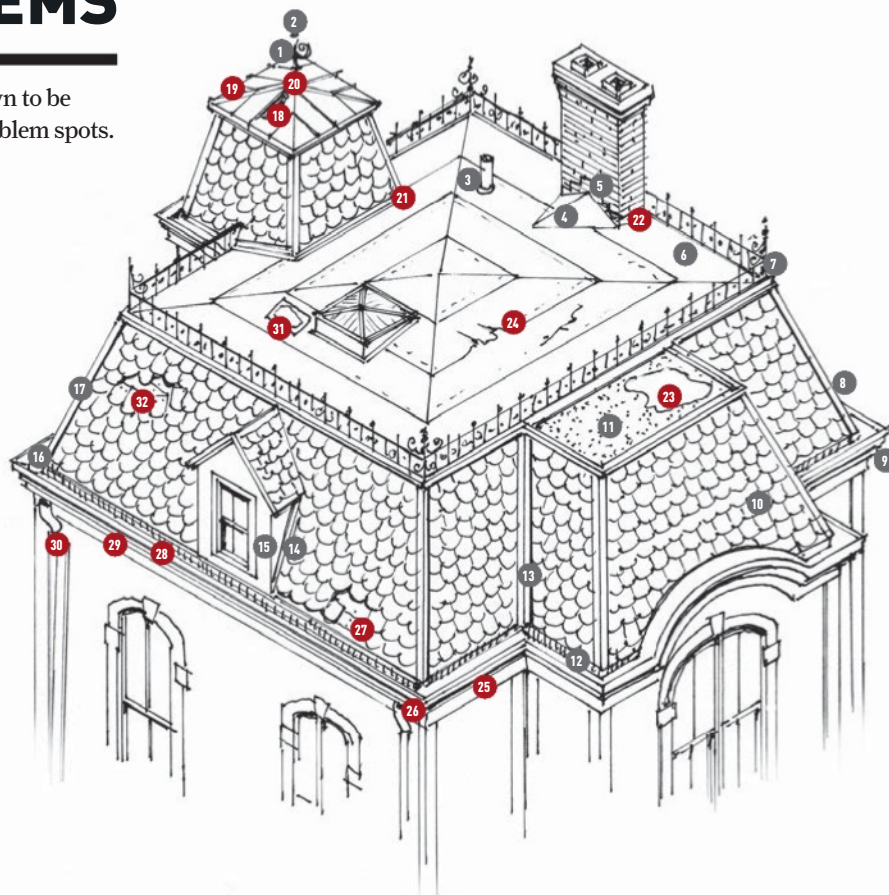
Wood shingles are the oldest type of natural roofing material in the U.S. still in broad general use—they've been widely used since the 17th century, both as roofing and wall sheathing. Most often they are cut and dressed, or sawn smooth. Rustic split shakes are mostly a 20th-century phenomenon, becoming popular on 1940s ranch houses, but they don't belong on earlier homes. Pine, oak, and especially cedar were the traditional shingle materials, with durable cedar being most common today. Bent-shingle "thatch" roofs such as this one are less common, but make a striking presentation on Arts & Crafts and cottage-style houses.

ROOFING ELEMENTS & TYPICAL PROBLEMS

If your roof has sprung a leak, check first on areas known to be trouble-prone. This handy illustration shows prime problem spots.

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. STANDING-SEAM ROOF | 18. "TAR POT" PATCHES |
| 2. FINIAL | 19. FAILURE OF SOLDERED JOINTS |
| 3. VENT | 20. GALVANIC CORROSION |
| 4. CRICKET | 21. FLASHING MISSING |
| 5. STEP FLASHING | 22. DETERIORATED FLASHING |
| 6. ROLL ROOFING | 23. PONDING OF WATER ON FLAT ROOF |
| 7. CRESTING | 24. ROOFING CRACKING, CURLING, AND BUBBLING |
| 8. HIP | 25. ICE BUILDUP IN CLOGGED GUTTER |
| 9. CORNICE | 26. CLOGGED GUTTER |
| 10. SLATE ROOF | 27. MISSING SLATES |
| 11. TAR AND GRAVEL ROOF | 28. OPEN SEAM IN METAL LINING ADMITS WATER INTO CORNICE |
| 12. FLASHING | 29. ROTTING CORNICE |
| 13. VALLEY FLASHING | 30. BROKEN LEADER (DOWNSPOUT) |
| 14. CHEEK FLASHING | 31. INADEQUATE PATCHING |
| 15. DORMER | 32. FAILURE OF SLATE NAILS |
| 16. BUILT-IN GUTTER | |
| 17. HIP FLASHING | |

■ ROOFING ELEMENTS
■ TYPICAL PROBLEMS



SLATE

In the U.S., slate roofing dates to the 18th century; during this time, slates were imported, usually from Wales. After the Civil War, slate of varying quality, durability, and color was widely quarried all over the East, from Vermont to Virginia. Slate remains in use today. Though it is undeniably expensive, it's probably cost-effective over the potential lifespan of the house itself, since it often lasts for a century or more. In Victorian times, the colors available—dull shades of black, gray, red/purple, green, and blue—were frequently combined to form complex geometric patterns using a variety of butt-end shapes—diamond, square, fish-scale, round, hexagonal, and more. These shapes and colors remain available and in use today, but manmade slate is more common now, though not as durable as the original stone. (Manmade, however, is lighter and less expensive, both often prime considerations for modern homeowners.)





< WEATHERVANES:

Weathervanes date back to the colonial period; they come in all shapes and sizes, to fit a variety of houses. Copper horse weathervane, \$349, brassgallery.com

DECK IT OUT

Once your roof is safe and sound, consider adding one (or more) of these items to make it a standout.

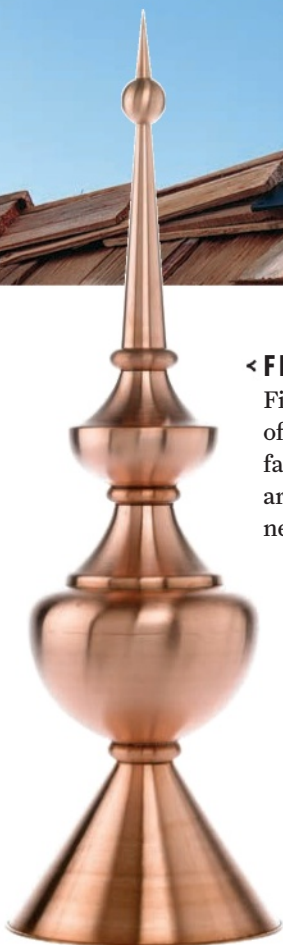
ROOF CRESTING: ▾

Decorative wrought and cast iron ornamental borders topping the roof ridge were commonplace on some high-end Victorian homes. Today cresting is often made of cast aluminum, which is lighter and less expensive. Armada cresting, from \$142 per 47" section, architecturaliron.com



< FINIALS:

Finials (decorative spears and balls) often crowned turrets, towers, and fancy gables, drawing attention to the architecture. Alexandria finial, \$1,100, necopperworks.com



GUTTERS: ▲

Half-round copper gutters add a beautiful touch—especially when they weather to a verdigris finish. Half-round copper gutter, from \$6.95; decorative miter cover, from \$36, classicgutters.com



< CHIMNEY POTS:

Made of terra cotta or metal, chimney pots are a fun and interesting addition to most house styles. They also make the chimney taller, increasing its draft, and keep out pests and rain. Halifax Big Bishop chimney pot, \$535, chimneypot.com

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BUILT TO LAST

□ POSTS

Set gate posts in a concrete encasement typically three times the diameter of the post. Use post anchors where termites are common, or in very damp soils. A general rule of thumb is to sink a third of the total length of the post into the ground (two-thirds above grade). Cap post tops, or at least bevel-cut the tops to shed water.

□ FASTENERS

Best practice: brass screws, countersunk and plugged. At least use hot-dipped galvanized fasteners.

□ FINISHES

Whitewash and transparent stain can be touched up and don't peel. Untreated cedar and redwood weather to a natural gray.

Building a Gate That Doesn't Sag

Garden gates sag because a square (or rectangular) frame is essentially unstable. Built with standard DIY woodworking joints, the gate will twist unless it is braced or pulled into tension. This tendency is exaggerated because a gate is held along only one side; the unhinged, free side sags from its own weight and from the trauma of being slammed. (And do you remember swinging on the backyard gate as a kid?) **By Patricia Poore**

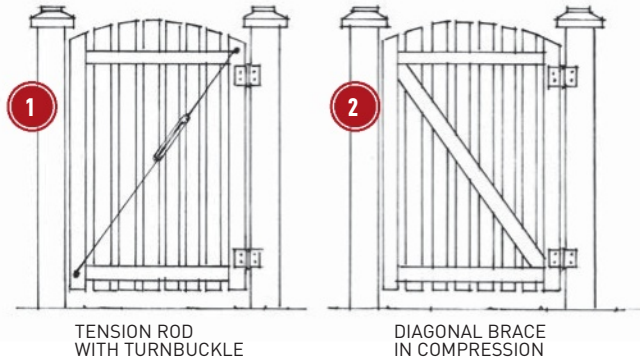
BEST PRACTICE

Always use best-practice principles for fences and gates, or they won't last five years. Use rot- and corrosion-resistant materials; build to shed water; avoid exposed end grain and water traps. Strength is important because a gate moves. Sink posts into concrete; use heavy-duty fasteners; make good, strong joints. As for wood choice, your best bet is a rot-resistant species (cedar, redwood, teak, mahogany). Cedar wins because teak is very expensive and has a high waste factor; redwood should be used only if it is recycled old-growth lumber, and less-resistant mahogany needs a finish coating. Pressure-treated lesser woods are in disfavor because we now know that the preservatives do transfer (to the touch, and into the water table) and because cuts require highly toxic on-site treatment.

“These principles are useful for the do-it-yourself fence builder. Joinery is paramount in wood construction subjected to the elements; my own company relies on advanced woodworking joints.”

—Charles Prowell, Prowell Woodworks

THE
PRO
TIP



TENSION

Three basic ways to build a no-sag gate are illustrated here. The first two involve the principle of triangulation: introducing a diagonal to stabilize the square frame. The tension solution [1] uses a rod or a cable and turnbuckle, as shown, to keep the frame from twisting out of square. But “diagonal bracing is only as stable as the primary joint to which it’s fastened,” says woodworker Charles Prowell. “A turnbuckle cable requires periodic adjustment.”

COMPRESSION

The compression solution [2] makes use of a solid brace along the opposite diagonal.

JOINERY

Rigid woodworking joints [3] also will keep a gate from sagging. Rigidity keeps the frame from twisting. A pegged mortise-and-tenon joint is strong. You should try to cut the mortise accurately for a tight fit, but if there’s any play, shim around the tenon. Note that the pales (pickets) are inserted through holes drilled into the rails.

To ensure a really tight mortise-and-tenon joint, drill the holes in the tenon just a bit off center from the holes you drill in the side of the post. This way, when you drive the pegs, they will act as a wedge, tightening the joint. This is called a draw-peg joint. Taper the ends of the pegs to help them go in easier. Cut the mortise a bit deep to allow for draw.

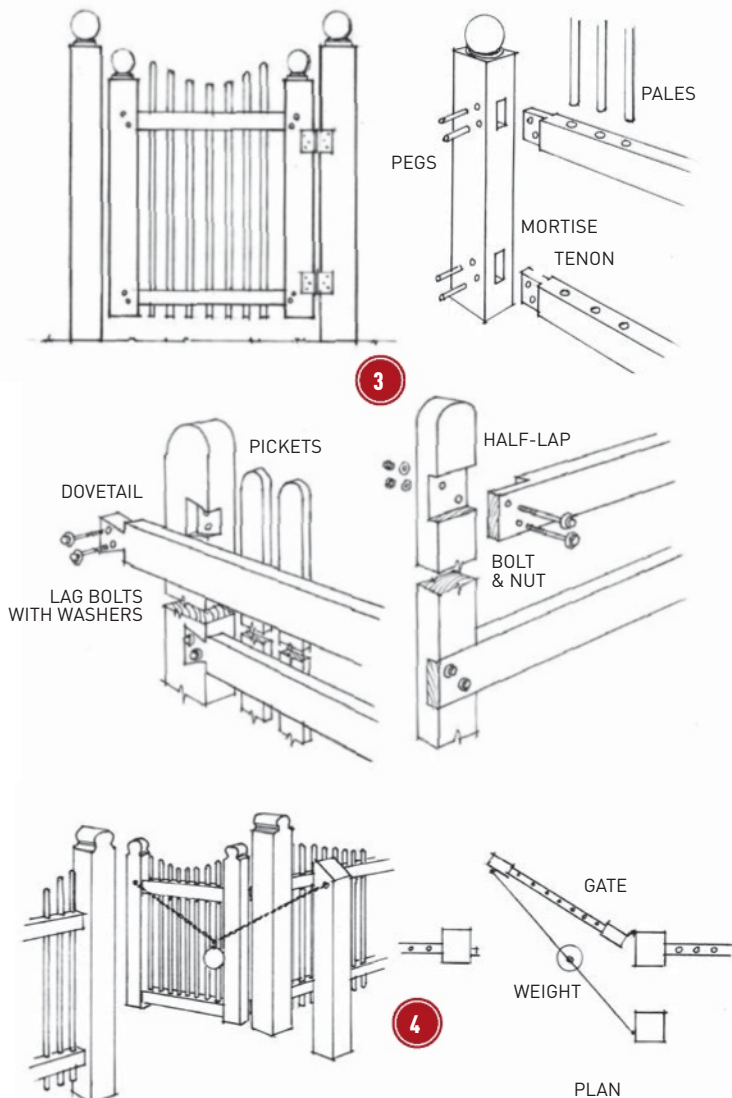
A dovetail joint is your second alternative. And easiest to cut, but not as strong as the others, is the half-lap joint. Against crushable wood such as redwood, use a large, flat washer with the nut and bolt.

CLOSING THE GATE

Don’t use a screen-door spring closer! There’s just too much tension on one of these; slamming will cause the gate to wrack and vibrate apart in no time. The easiest solution is to forgo automatic gate closers entirely—simply close the gate manually behind you. Or install the hinged gatepost slightly out of plumb to encourage the gate to close itself.

An early solution (still used most picturesquely at Colonial Williamsburg) is a weight on a chain [4].

No matter what the closing mechanism or the type of latch used, adding a stop piece the full height of the gate is very important. If the swinging gate is stopped against the post only at the latch point, it will wrack every time it closes.



More Online

See consultant Charles Prowell’s gates and learn about his joinery techniques at oldhouseonline.com.



Restore
FIELD TESTED



6" Random Orbit Sanders

By Mark Clement

Sanding is boring—and a lot of work. Depending on the project, you might be attached to a vibrating, dust-generating machine for hours on end. But it's so important to success on certain projects—furniture and wood floor repair, paint prep—that once I get started, it becomes (sort of) fun.

One thing that blurs the line between love and hate is a tool that delivers both a positive user experience and a super-smooth, swirl-free finish. Then there's power: Precision is great when you're using 120-grit paper to tune up a trim piece, but when you need to remove stock and existing finishes—say, for a wood floor repair—there's no substitute for go-juice that propels 60-grit paper into raw wood. Of all the random orbit sanders

I've used, I'm partial to the right-angle sander with a 6" pad—I find it easier and more effective to move around and hold for longer periods of time.

Whenever you talk about sanders, there's no avoiding dust—and the easier it is to collect, the better. While removing dust with a vacuum tends to be more effective, it presents its own challenge in trying to avoid being perpetually tangled up with the hose. So a canister that works—and is easy to remove—makes sense. The more you have to fight the canister, the better the chances are you'll spill the dust you've just collected.

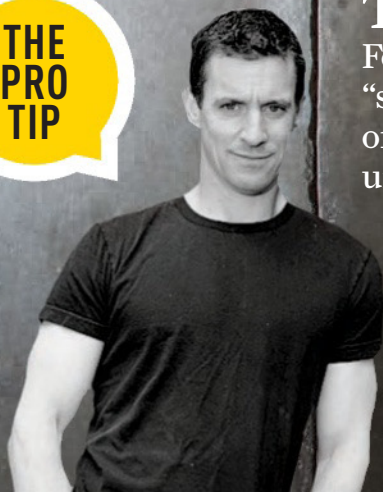
All told, for a sander that's going to get heavy-duty DIY use, low noise, high power, and uncompromising finish are key components.

True Grit

For knocking down finishes or evening up a work surface (what we call “stock removal”), you'll need to make multiple passes with ever finer grits of sandpaper. Start with a lower grit to break up the finish or smooth uneven material, then feather it in with finer and finer grits. To open up the grain of a piece of wood and better enable it to accept a finish, 100-grit paper or finer is typically effective. You might not feel like you're making progress, but you are.

—Mark Clement, Host, *MyFixItUpLife*

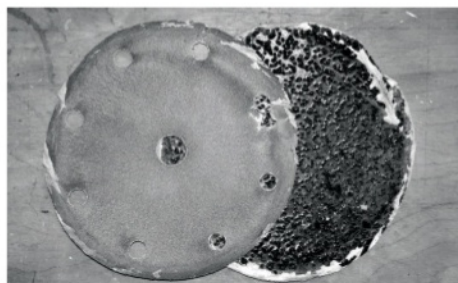
THE
PRO
TIP



HOW TO USE IT



One way to keep from damaging materials—especially on a softwood species like pine—is to hold the tool above the surface before turning it on. Once the pad is in motion, ease it gently onto the work surface and start sanding. Even with random orbit tools, I still like to sand with the grain when I can, especially at lower grits.



Sandpaper doesn't last forever. Even if it still feels rough, it's not. Telltale signs that it's time to change the paper: when it's frayed, clogged, or the same color as the wood. It doesn't pay to be frugal with paper—it works as long as it works, then it doesn't work anymore.



Most of these sanders are designed to collect dust two ways: via a built-in canister or by connecting them to a shop vac. Switching to a vacuum connection is as simple as removing the canister and replacing it with the vacuum hose.

Head to Head

WHETHER YOU NEED TO DO A LITTLE SANDING OR A LOT, THESE TOOLS COVER EVERY PRICE POINT AND POWER LEVEL.



PORTER-CABLE 7346

Power was where this 4.5-amp sander/buffer excelled—it made easy work of everything from rough sanding a maple tabletop to finish removal on closet doors, but unlike others in the test, it lacked a dust-collection system. Several testers noted that the bulky design made it hard to get a decent grip and adjust speeds, and the extra power translated to increased vibrations. Still, said our expert, Mark Clement, "For occasional sanding—and buffing—this is a no-frills tool. Actually, it has one frill: You get two tools in one machine."

Get It: \$149, portercable.com



FEIN MSF 636-1

The commercial-grade 3.7-amp Fein is one of the oldest random orbit sanders on the market—but our testers found its considerable power a bit too brawny for finer work, especially since it lacked a speed-adjustment dial. While its simple design (basic on-off switch, flexible shop-vac connection, easy hook-and-loop pad changes) made this sander simple enough for a beginner to use, our panel agreed that this high-end, heavy-duty workhorse is best for pros—or DIYers who have a lot of aggressive stock removal ahead of them.

Get It: \$499, fein.com



RIDGID R26111

With a soft-start trigger and six adjustable speeds to ensure a smooth finish, Ridgid's 3.3-amp sander met our testers' needs for finer sanding work. The integrated dust collector performed admirably and was easy to empty, but some worried that the soft bag wouldn't stand up to rigorous use. A relatively short cord and fussy lock-on switch ("Bumping the trigger in the slightest would shut off the sander," said tool pro Michael Springer) were the primary gripes, but most testers found this budget-friendly sander more than adequate.

Get It: \$99, ridgid.com



BOSCH ROS65VC-6

Lightweight and comfortable, but with enough power for a wide range of jobs, the 3.3-amp Bosch proved to be the "Goldilocks" tool for our testers. "Its size and weight made it easy to sand along the side of a table without it being heavy or awkward," said DIYer Natasha Thomas. Well-placed adjustment switches and vibration control earned this sander top marks for delivering a smooth experience. While the filtered dust collector sucked up waste like a dream, some found it slipped off the tool in use.

Get It: \$229, boschtools.com

TESTER
FAVORITE



Restore

QUICK MAKEOVERS

Add Polish to Outdoor Areas

Small projects like cleaning off a wall, swapping out the mailbox, or laying a random stone path will add charm outside the house.



Change the mailbox

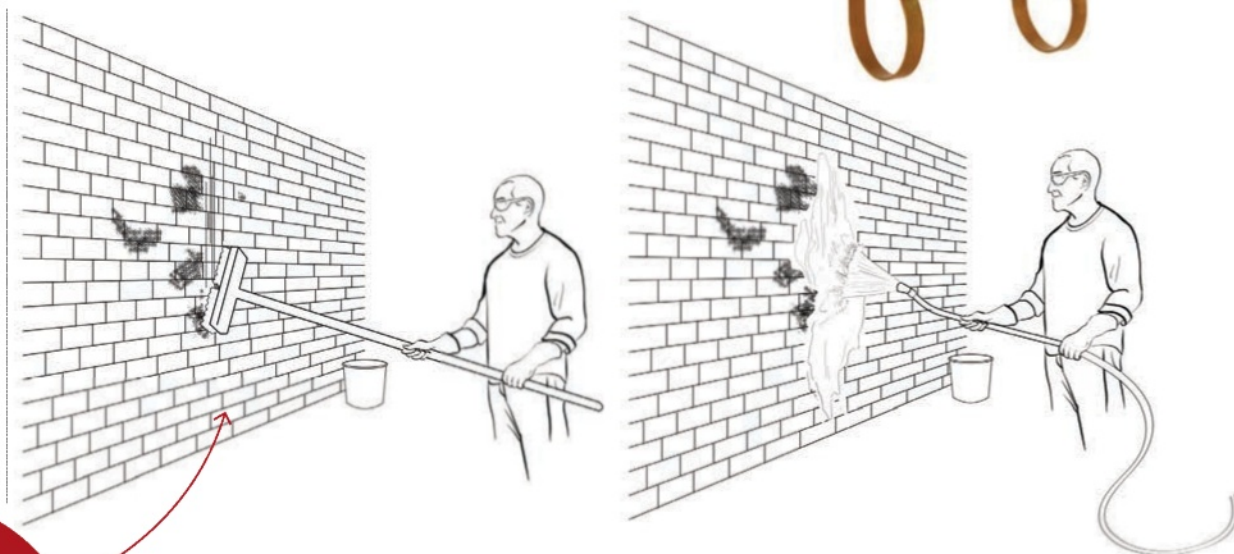
Don't underestimate the appeal the right mailbox can add to your front door—swapping a generic box for one aligned with your architecture can uplift your entire entryway. If you have an existing mailbox, remove it from its screws and use them (if possible) to hang the new one. For new installations, trace the back of the box onto grocery-bag paper, cut it out, and mark the screw keyholes; use this template to measure for placement. A good rule of thumb: Aim for 12" from the door and 42" from the bottom of the box to the ground. Use a level to ensure that screw holes will be plumb, then drill 1" deep with a 1/4" bit (use a masonry bit on bricks) and place plastic screw anchors in your holes. Install 1 1/4" screws (leave 5/8" exposed to hang the box), then place your mailbox.

PASADENA MAILBOX WITH CUSTOM NUMBERS, AMERICASFINESTMAILBOX.COM >



Remove mossy stains

WET DOWN THE WALL BEFORE YOU START SCRUBBING TO KEEP OVERLY DRY BRICKS FROM SUCKING IN THE BLEACH SOLUTION.



A little moss growing in the right places (between walkway stones, for example) can be a pretty outdoor accessory—but moss climbing a brick wall isn't a look most homeowners want. Remove it with a simple water-based cleaning method and some good old-fashioned elbow grease. You'll need a bucket, a long-handled scrub brush, and bleach, and you should always wear gloves and eye protection for safety.

Mix two cups laundry bleach per gallon of water, then dip the brush into this mixture and start scrubbing the wall from the top down. Proceed slowly and methodically—you don't want to miss any areas. It may take a couple of scrubbing passes to remove all of the green. When you're done, rinse the wall thoroughly with a hose. (You also can use a TSP/water combination, but it can be hard on surrounding plants, so work sparingly and minimize absorption by soaking the ground nearby before beginning. It also can fade adjoining paint, so tape accordingly.)

Place a garden path

A random stone path is a lovely way to add vintage appeal and a practical element to the garden—not only does it create a charming focal point for your yard, but walking on stones decreases dirt tracked into the house.

STEP 1

Consider where your path should lead (to a bench or special grouping of plants?) and whether it should be straight or meandering. Avoid getting too close to large trees (and their roots). Walk the course to see if it feels right, then lay out the path in 3-D using stakes and twine, or even a garden hose. Do some spots seem too high now? Would an adjustment right or left work better? Live with your mockup for a few days before installing.

STEP 2

Lay stones atop the grass along your route. Pay attention to how shapes fit together, overall appearance, and spacing between them—24" on center accommodates most strides, and 3' is a good standard width. (You want the path to be wide enough for two people to walk side by side.)

STEP 3

Once you've arranged the stones in a pleasing pattern, it's time to install them. Start by cutting around the edge of the stone with a utility knife or a spade. Next, move the stone and cut laterally beneath the turf. Take a trowel and dig out some additional soil—your hole should be 1" deeper than your paving stone.

STEP 4

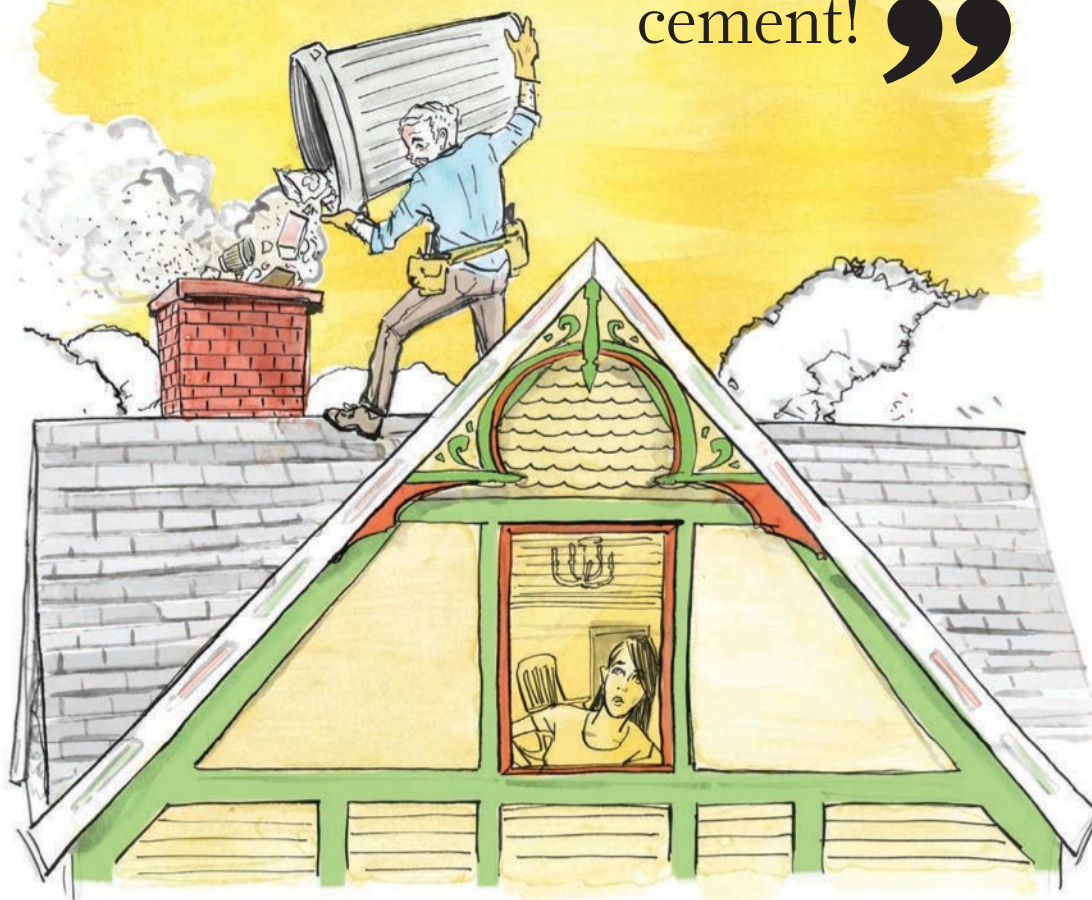
Place a ½" layer of soft sand into the hole, then compact it. The sand will help keep the stones from heaving. Finally, set the stones one at a time, checking for level as you go. Placing them ¼" below the surface of adjoining grass will allow for easy lawn mowing.



Restore

STUFF MY CONTRACTOR SCREWED UP

“The fireplace flue had been filled with old chimney bricks and gobs of hardened cement!”



We had a crumbling chimney on our 1878 Stick Style Victorian. I was eight months pregnant and my husband was away on business when the chimney was repaired, so I really had to take the contractor's word for it that the job had been finished. Imagine our shock when my husband came home and took a walk on the roof, only to find that our “repaired” chimney was down to only one flue—the second flue that vented our only fireplace was entirely cemented over, and had been filled with loads of old chimney bricks and giant gobs of hardened cement!

—Red Queen, via MyOldHouseOnline.com

THE FIX

Ouch—there's nothing like a professional repair that actually makes the problem worse! To find out the best way to fix this (beyond finding a different contractor stat, of course), we checked with Charlie Allen of the Cambridge, Massachusetts-based firm Charlie Allen Renovations, who surmised that the bricks and other debris could be trapped in the chimney either by the damper or by an offset in the flue. “Try opening the damper,” Allen suggests. “If it won't open, it's probably because bricks are sitting on it.” If the damper appears to be working normally, the debris is most likely stuck in the flue offset. “You can look up the chimney with flashlight or a camera to figure out how far up the bricks are,” Allen says.

As for clearing out the flue, “the way to get the bricks out is to use gravity to push them out through the fireplace mouth,” Allen says. You'll want to call in a pro for this job, as they'll need to set up a plastic-walled tent with a HEPA vacuum around the fireplace opening to catch the dislodged dust and debris. “The protection is really important,” says Allen. “The soot and fine dust inside that flue are incredibly invasive and will go everywhere.” He suggests checking with a company that installs cast-in-place chimney liners (such as SolidFlue, Golden Flue, or Supaflu); they should have the necessary tools and equipment to chip off the cement cover and push the debris out of the chimney.

Speaking of chimney liners, if your chimney doesn't have one (or if the existing one is damaged), getting a new liner should be next on your list after the flue is emptied out—it's essential for safe fireplace operation.

ILLUSTRATION BY BRETT AFFRONTI



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 When their knockoff Duncan Phyfe dining chairs began falling apart, blogger Jami Boys and her husband, Brian, came up with a clever way to reuse them—turn the chair backs into the sides of an Empire-inspired bench.

THE COST

dining chairs	\$20
lumber & molding	\$30
paint	\$15
quilt batting	\$10
fabric	\$30

TOTAL \$105

1. REMOVE THE CHAIR BACKS

Lay each chair on its back on a flat surface, and detach the seat and front legs by gently striking the chair back near the seat with a rubber mallet or dead blow hammer while pulling the front of the chair in the opposite direction. This should loosen the dowels and glue holding it together and allow you to pull it apart.

2. CREATE A BASE FOR THE BENCH SEAT

Brian and Jami used 1" x 2½" oak strips to create a sturdy 36" x 12" frame, securing it by driving two 3½" screws through the long piece and into the short one on each corner. Attach the chair backs to the frame by driving three screws through the bottom slat of each chair back and into the frame.

3. ADD A BOTTOM RAIL

For extra stability, Brian and Jami used stock

pine 1x2 lumber to create a second frame 9" below the seat. Screw the two long pieces of the frame directly into the chair legs, then screw the shorter cross-pieces into the long ones. Complete the bottom rail by finish-nailing five strips of ¾" x 1" molding, spaced 7" apart, on top of the frame. You're now ready to fill the nail and screw holes, prime, and paint the bench.

4. MAKE THE SEAT

Cut a piece of ½" plywood to the same size as the top frame. Cover it with a piece of quilt batting (cut about 1" larger on each side than the plywood) and a durable fabric (cut about 2" larger than the plywood). Pull the fabric taut over the batting, and staple it to the plywood with a staple gun. Finally, use two L-brackets with screws on the bottom of the seat to attach it to the frame.

STEALS & DEALS



BENCH DOG BLADE-LOC

Protect your hands (and prevent blade damage!) by using this cover while swapping out the blades on your circular saw. \$12.59, rockler.com



REVEAL POWER SCRUBBER

Ditch the old toothbrush and make quick work of grout stains with this battery-powered scrubber. \$14.99, rubbermaid.com



TAPE-EASE

This rubber grip eliminates solo tape-measure fumbling by securely holding onto almost any surface. \$3.99, tape-ease.com

 **More Online**

Get a link to step-by-step photos of this project at oldhouseonline.com.



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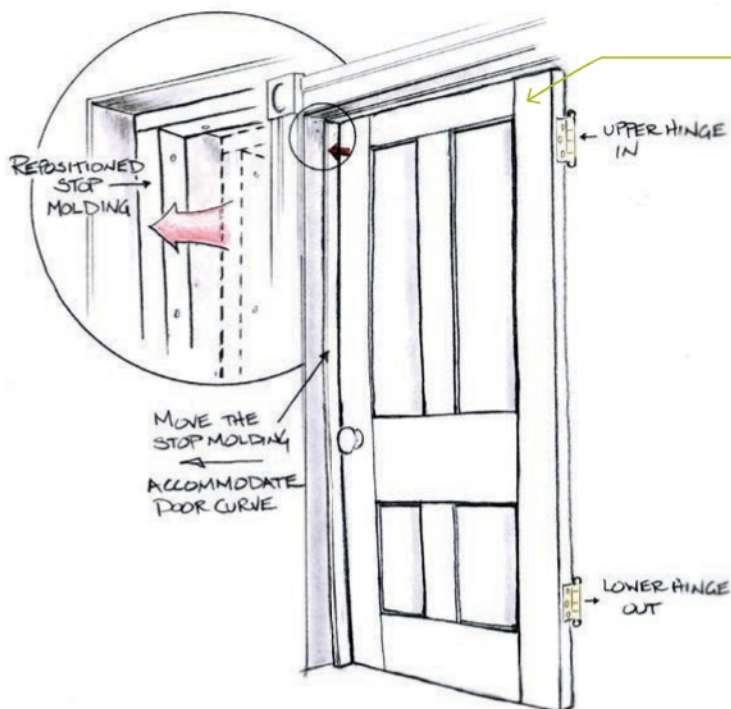
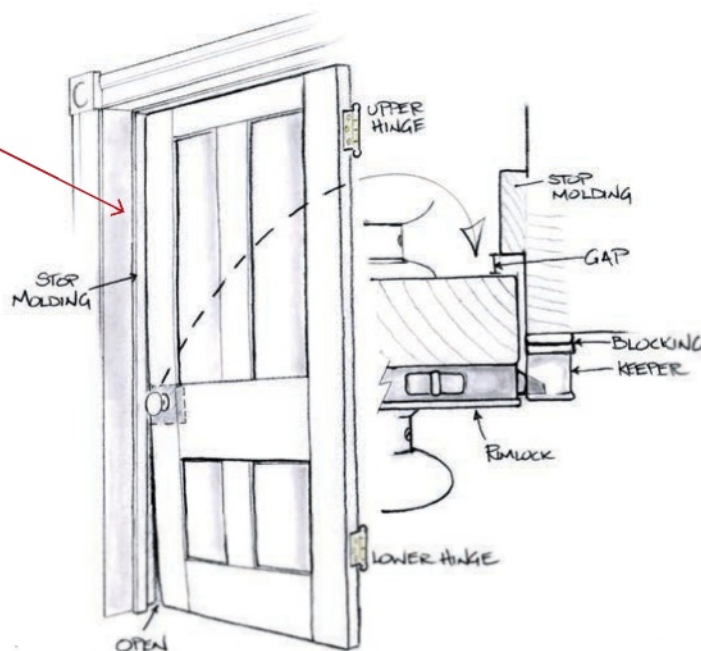
Doors That Won't Close

Warped doors can be found in many old houses. The degree of twist usually determines whether the door is merely a nuisance, or if it truly can't function. The causes vary, but warping generally happens on doors that are relatively thin (usually less than 1¼"), ones that were made with poor wood, or ones that have spent extended time in a damp environment, like a bathroom. Additionally, a door can sometimes get warped and misshapen by being forced to close in a jamb that has settled unevenly. Determine, if you can, whether it's the door or the jamb that is skewed. **By Ray Tschoepe**

WRONG WAY

FORCE IT CLOSED

Avoid the temptation to keep pushing harder against the door to get it to latch—this puts a lot of stress on the door lock, and will eventually cause it to fail. Some people try screwing thin blocks of wood behind the lock keeper to bring it out far enough to latch the warped door. This will require longer and longer screws to secure the keeper. Even then, the door will be partially open to air, sound, and light even when it's latched.



RIGHT WAY

ADJUST THE JAMB OR HINGES

You can take a number of steps to reset a door that simply has difficulty latching. Look to three common areas of adjustment: the stop moldings, and the upper and lower hinges. The easiest approach is to remove the stop moldings from the strike side and top of the door. Close the door until it latches, then reinstall the moldings to follow the door's curve. (These moldings are generally thin and bend along gentle curves.) If this doesn't solve the problem, try adjusting the hinges. Move the hinges in the direction you want the upper and lower portion of the door to move (so if there is a gap at the top, move the hinge "in" toward the stop molding to close it; if the door's pressing hard against the stop, move the hinge away from the stop molding to adjust). Since adjustments can stress the hinges, move them no more than a quarter inch in each direction (usually opposite each other, which helps the door sit straighter). This small move will necessitate plugging the original screw holes and drilling new ones, since holes that are very close to the originals often will allow the screw to migrate back to the original position. If the door is badly warped, you'll need to replace it.

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Q: For 19 years, sparrows have pecked away at the sandstone around our doors; we assumed pitting started from the use of de-icing salts, so we have not used salt since we moved in. A masonry company applied a sealer to the affected stones, but it didn't deter the sparrows. Can you help?

—Jonna McRury, Toledo, Ohio



"I have pictures of the birds caught in the act," writes the homeowner, describing pecking damage in the limestone around two entry doors.

A: Well, I'm familiar with what pigeon poop does to limestone and sandstone, but I haven't come across sparrow damage. Perhaps I should have by now: Sparrow Pecked is the name of one historic stone-block finish. If they labeled a face finish after it, it must be a rather common phenomenon! (Though Sparrow Pecked sandstone was used in America, today's references come mostly from sources in the U.K. and Australia selling Sparrow Pecked Cladding Sandstone: "Sparrow pecking is a traditional hand-chiseled rustic finish... The texture can be produced from a fine finish through to a heavily punched finish, replicating chiseled finishes seen [in] old Sydney Town.")

The careful treatment is neat and consistent compared to your stones, which were "chiseled" by actual sparrows. I agree with Tyler Rodkey, a technician at LimeWorks (limeworks.us), who theorizes that the birds are pecking for the stone or calcium grit they need for digestion. (Think about the limestone-and-oyster-shell grit given to chickens, or the pecking stones for birds sold in pet stores.)

You've already taken the first step: decreasing the number of nests in your tile roof. The pecked area is limited to low spots where the birds can perch. I would cover those stones with plywood for at least one season. To patch the damage, Rodkey suggests a LimeWorks patching material called Lithomex. (The color appears similar to LMTN3, Light Indy Limestone, but you should send a sample for verification.) The product is troweled on and tooled to match the face stone or fluting.



Have a Question?

Ask Patricia at ppoore@aimmedia.com.

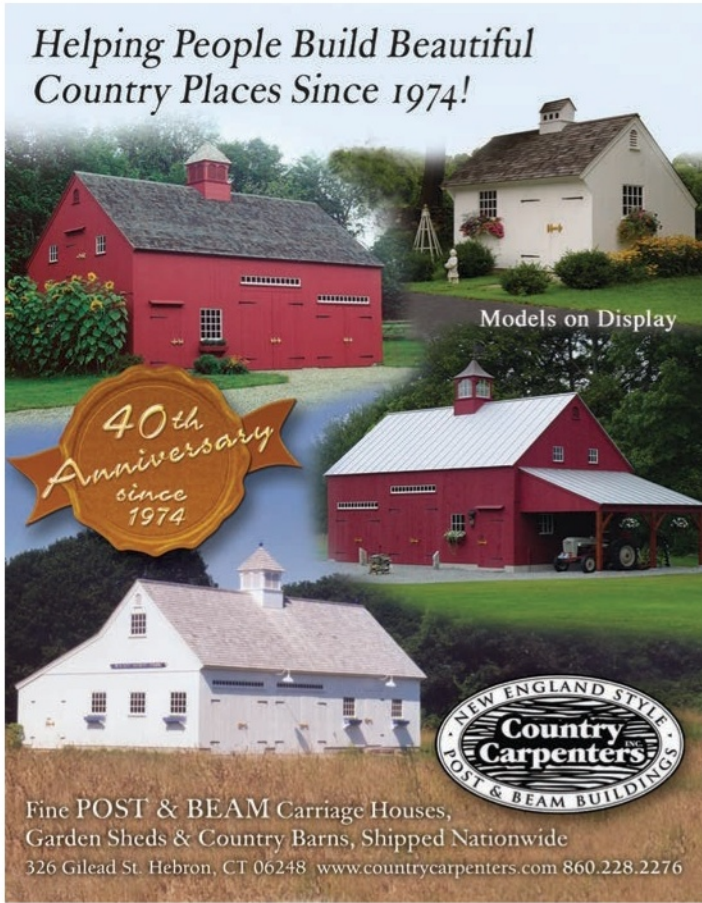
Q: I'm having trouble fitting my large furniture into the Victorian house I'm restoring—it has too many windows, not enough wall space (a nice problem to have). Any ideas?

—Carol Long, via
MyOldHouseOnline.com

A: Much of the furniture sold today is oversized and overstuffed. Still, if yours is of good quality and you like it, there's no reason you can't use most of it in a Victorian house. Some suggestions:

- Using fewer, larger pieces actually can make a room look bigger and less cluttered.
- Don't place everything against a wall (where you encounter windows and doors). Pulling furniture toward the center of the room creates conversation groups.
- Go ahead and center a large focal piece in front of a window. Try diagonal placements.
- Consider reversible solutions, like removing bun feet under a chest to minimize height, or cutting down a tall post (save the splice) on a bed that has to tuck into a sloping dormer.
- Reupholster or slipcover loud pieces in neutral classics.
- Get creative about what goes where. Maybe an oversize chair is better used in the stair hall, rather than crowding the living room.
- Think of volume, not just width and length. A tall Victorian room can take larger pieces than a similar room with low ceilings.
- That said, you may want to deaccession a piece or two.

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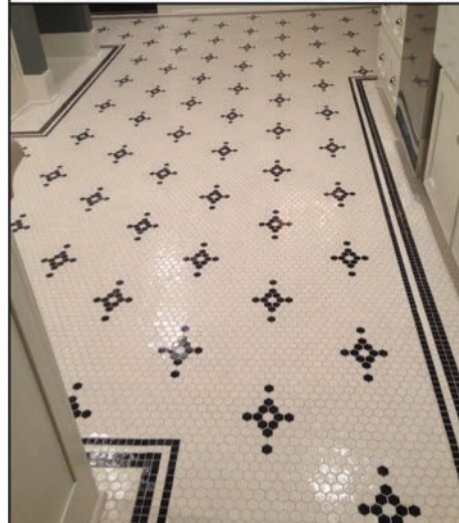


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The image shows the interior of a rustic wooden shed. The walls are made of light-colored wood. Two shelves above a central window are filled with numerous dark, turned wooden pegs. The window has a white frame and looks out onto greenery. Below the window, a dark green wooden shelf holds various items: a terracotta pot with a pink flower, a small green ceramic beehive, a wooden mallet, and several wooden pegs. Below that, another dark green shelf holds a green watering can, a small green ceramic beehive, a wooden mallet, and several wooden pegs. On the bottom shelf, there is a red-handled saw, a small green ceramic beehive, a wooden mallet, and several wooden pegs. The overall atmosphere is warm and rustic.

A BETTER SHED

For an outbuilding that complements your old house, start with traditional styles and materials.

By Catriona Tudor Erler

Sheds have evolved far beyond a place to store tools, pots, and bags of fertilizer. Today, garden outbuildings serve a multitude of purposes, ranging from man caves and home offices to dining pavilions and even aviaries. Sheds and outbuildings can be extremely useful, extending your living and storage space, generally at a cost much less than a home addition.

A poorly designed shed is an eyesore in the garden, but one that's well-designed and -proportioned can be a valued focal point, adding grace and charm to the landscape.

Ideally, an outbuilding should be consistent with your home's architecture, giving a sense of coherence and harmony to the overall look of your property. Fortunately, that doesn't mean you have to go to huge expense to build a custom structure. Today, many prefabricated shed retailers offer customized options, allowing you to coordinate your outbuilding to your home by matching the roof and siding colors. These sheds also come in different styles, giving you a choice of roofline, window and door design, and other features. Then there are the "extras," such as shutters, skylights, window boxes, porches, vents, ramps,

and electricity—even plumbing, heating, and cooling.

For most people, a basic 8' x 10' shed is large enough for storing bicycles, tools, or garden equipment, or even as a home office or library retreat. However, if you intend to use the shed for a hobby or other activity, it may need to be larger. For example, the minimum recommended size for a woodshop is 12' x 20' so there's room to maneuver with a full sheet of plywood. Check with a shed retailer for advice on the optimal size for the building's purpose. Companies that customize prefabricated structures generally offer lengths and widths in 2' increments (such as 4' x 6' or 12' x 20'), giving you ample choice for the dimensions.

Because sheds are essentially miniature versions of houses or barns, they tend to have a dollhouse look that is particularly charming and even whimsical. If the shed is near your house, echo the house's architectural style. If you site it some distance from your house, perhaps you'll want to celebrate the whimsy of the miniature scale, or even create a fantasy outbuilding. A garden, and the structures within it, are your artist's palette, giving you an opportunity to express yourself.



LEFT: EVEN A TINY SHED HAS ENOUGH SPACE TO STASH TOOLS—AND ADDS WHIMSY TO A SMALL GARDEN.



HOW TO GET PROPORTIONS RIGHT

Building a shed from scratch? Consider choosing dimensions that relate to the Fibonacci number sequence. These pleasing ratios, discovered in the 13th century by the Italian mathematician Leonardo Fibonacci, closely follow a 1:1.61 ratio. Known as the Golden Ratio, it often appears in nature and was used regularly in classical architecture.

When designing your own outbuilding, you can keep it well-proportioned by making the length and width any two successive Fibonacci numbers, such as 3' x 5', 5' x 8', 8' x 13', or 13' x 21'.



PHOTO COURTESY OF COUNTRY CARPENTERS

A LARGE BARN-STYLE OUTBUILDING (LIKE THIS ONE FROM COUNTRY CARPENTERS) CAN BECOME A GUEST COTTAGE OR WOODSHOP.

WHAT'S IN A SHED?

No longer just a place to keep yard tools, today's outbuildings encompass a range of different uses.



STUDIO/RETREAT

Furnished simply with a desk, bookcases, and/or a couch, a backyard building can become a close-by retreat for writing, reading, or dreaming—minus the usual distractions of your main house.



SHOULD YOU GO GREEN?

While it's just gaining traction in the U.S., the trend for creating roofs covered in living plants is well-established in Europe. A garden shed is an ideal structure for a green roof, helping it to blend nicely into the garden setting—and a green roof provides structural and environmental benefits that include insulating the building, reducing storm water runoff, and increasing the roof's lifespan. As an added bonus, some municipalities are giving tax breaks to encourage the creation of green roofs. Be aware that a roof designed to support plants must be reinforced to bear a load of up to 300 pounds per square yard. Hardy sedums are popular plants for green roofs because they thrive in a lightweight, soil-less growing medium and are drought tolerant. They just need a yearly trim and occasional fertilizer to look their best.



More Online

Find a guide to manufacturers of traditionally styled sheds at oldhouseonline.com.



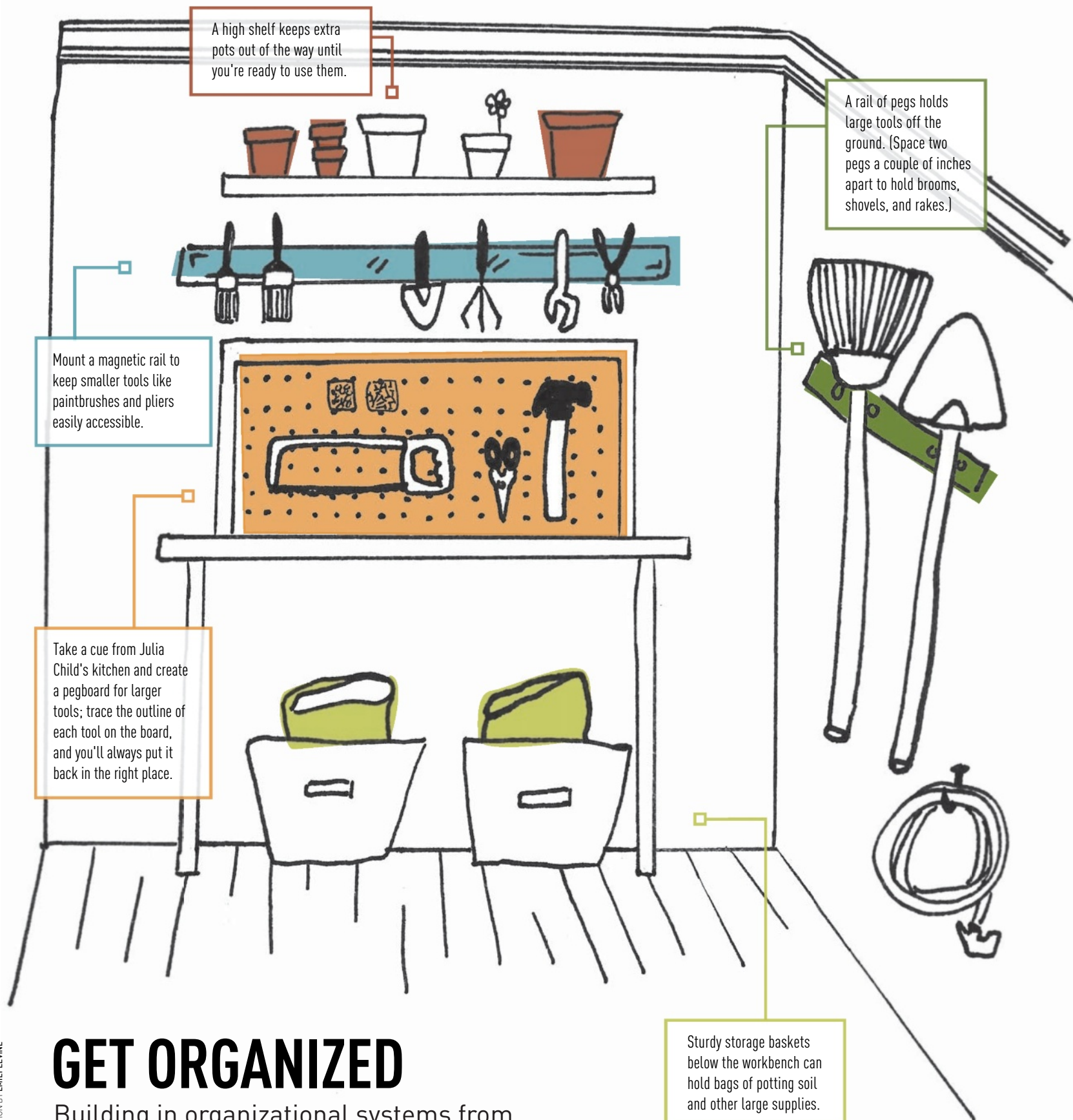
POOL HOUSE

An outbuilding placed alongside the pool can have many uses—storage for chemicals and pool toys, a changing room, or even a cabana that offers a casual place to escape from the sun.



GREENHOUSE

Adding skylights and upping the number of windows on the façade turns a basic garden shed (like this model from GardenSheds.com) into a greenhouse—a welcome place for serious gardeners to cultivate specimens in the off-season.



A high shelf keeps extra pots out of the way until you're ready to use them.

A rail of pegs holds large tools off the ground. (Space two pegs a couple of inches apart to hold brooms, shovels, and rakes.)

Mount a magnetic rail to keep smaller tools like paintbrushes and pliers easily accessible.

Take a cue from Julia Child's kitchen and create a pegboard for larger tools; trace the outline of each tool on the board, and you'll always put it back in the right place.

Sturdy storage baskets below the workbench can hold bags of potting soil and other large supplies.

GET ORGANIZED

Building in organizational systems from the start will help keep your garden shed tidy.

FURTHER READING

Sheds: The Do-It-Yourself Guide for Backyard Builders by David and Jeanie Stiles (Firefly, 2007)

Renovating Barns, Sheds & Outbuildings by Nick Engler (Storey, 2001)

Stylish Sheds and Elegant Hideaways: Big Ideas for Small Backyard Destinations by Debra Prinzing and William Wright (Clarkson Potter, 2008)

Shed Chic: Outdoor Buildings for Work, Rest, and Play by Sally Coulthard (Rizzoli, 2009)



TUCKED INTO A CORNER OF THE YARD AND SURROUNDED BY PLANTS, THIS SIMPLE SHED BLENDS INTO ITS SURROUNDINGS.

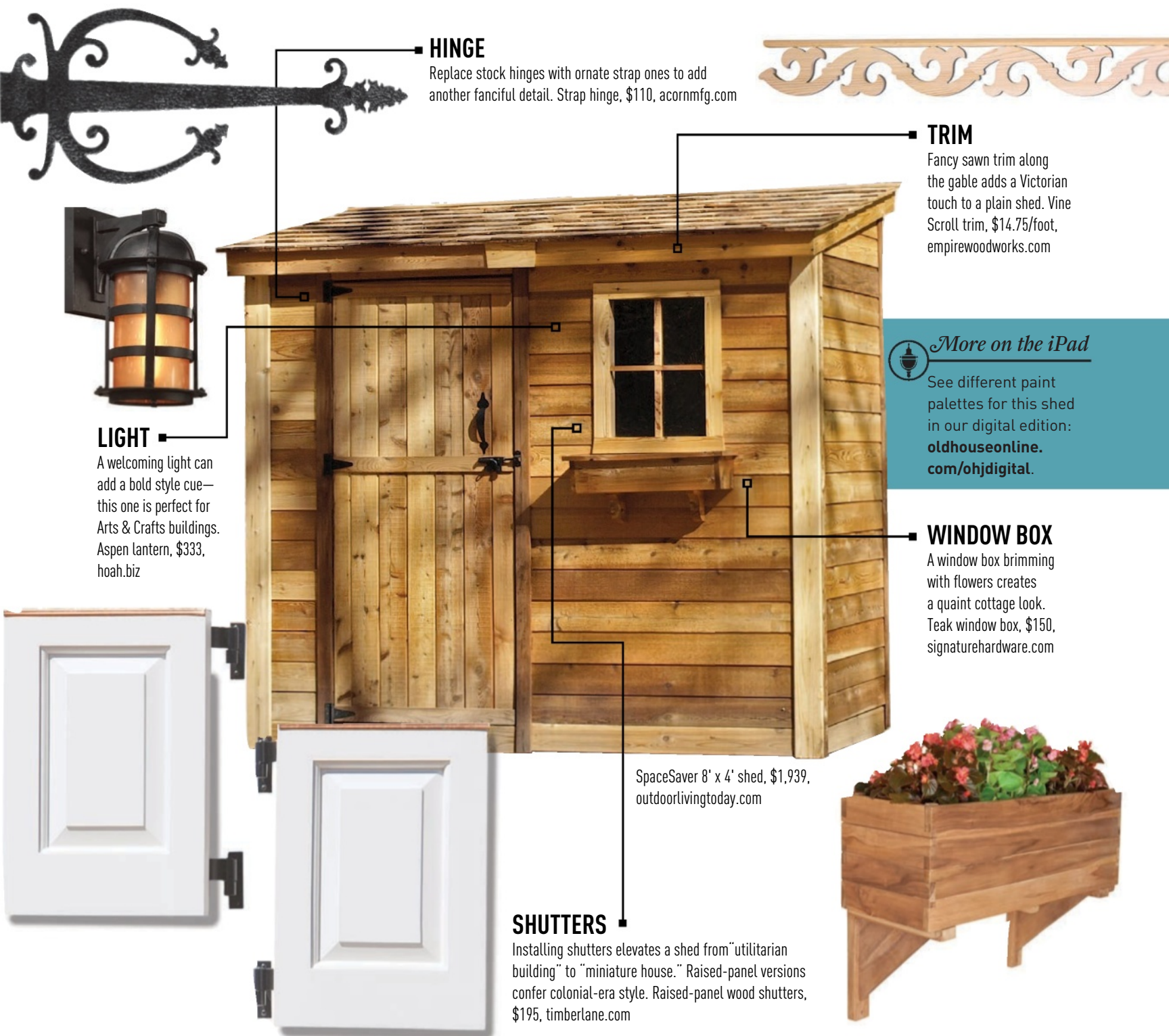
LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

With a little ingenuity, you can find space for a shed even in a tiny city garden. Build one into a corner of the fence or along the back garden wall. A narrow lean-to addition on the side of the house is another space-saving way to gain storage. Here are a few things to consider when siting your shed:

- How much **space** is available? You'll want to leave enough space for a person to get behind and to either side of the structure. If you have plenty of space in your yard, do you want the building near the house so it's easy and quick to get to, or is the journey there part of the process of escape?
- Will this be a gracious structure that's a **focal point** for your overall garden design, or a workhorse of a building that's best tucked away out of sight?
- Do you want your building to be primarily in the **sun or shade**?
- Is the ground in your desired location level? Does it have **good drainage**? If not, plan on some site-prep work prior to construction.
- Are there any overhanging trees nearby that could pose **potential obstructions** or problems?
- Are there any **other buildings** on the property? Consider their relation to (and distance from) the new shed.
- Are there any setback regulations? Make sure to thoroughly research **zoning requirements** and secure any necessary permits before you begin.

CUSTOMIZE A BASIC SHED

With a little creativity and a few additions, you can take a no-frills shed and transform it into a charming building that's in harmony with the style of your home.



HINGE

Replace stock hinges with ornate strap ones to add another fanciful detail. Strap hinge, \$110, acornmfg.com

TRIM

Fancy sawn trim along the gable adds a Victorian touch to a plain shed. Vine Scroll trim, \$14.75/foot, empirewoodworks.com

LIGHT

A welcoming light can add a bold style cue—this one is perfect for Arts & Crafts buildings. Aspen lantern, \$333, hoah.biz

More on the iPad

See different paint palettes for this shed in our digital edition: oldhouseonline.com/ohjdigital.

WINDOW BOX

A window box brimming with flowers creates a quaint cottage look. Teak window box, \$150, signaturehardware.com

SpaceSaver 8' x 4' shed, \$1,939, outdoorlivingtoday.com

SHUTTERS

Installing shutters elevates a shed from "utilitarian building" to "miniature house." Raised-panel versions confer colonial-era style. Raised-panel wood shutters, \$195, timberlane.com



Design

VINTAGE VISION



More Online

Peek inside a Sears house at
oldhouseonline.com/sears-house.

Sears, Roebuck & Co. / 1916

A model Sears bungalow showcases the ideal early 20th-century porch.



Though not widely adopted, tile was promoted for porch floors in the early 1900s, thanks to its durability. 1 1/4" marble hex tile, \$16.95/sheet, and Greek key border, \$24.80/sheet, subwayceramics.com

Stained glass windows were commonly used near the entry to preserve privacy while admitting natural light. Check salvage stores for period originals. \$450, ogtstore.com



With art glass and a verdigris patina, a pendant-style porch light nods to the bungalow's Arts & Crafts pedigree. Holly chain-mount light, from \$360, oldcalifornia.com

Ubiquitous on turn-of-the-century porches, a clear-finished beadboard ceiling adds an essential note of cottage-y charm. Look for tongue-and-groove planks in rot-resistant species like cypress, redwood, and cedar at suppliers such as vintagewoodworks.com

A Victorian craze, wicker furniture lost many of its frills during the Arts & Crafts movement, but retained its status as the outdoor seat of choice. Sanibel rocker, \$395, theporchswingcompany.com



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Point of Entry

A few fresh strokes around the front door can make a remarkable difference, especially when they include one of these unexpected period treasures. **By Mary Ellen Polson**



1. NAUTICAL FLAIR

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2. FOCAL POINT

Restore your early American or Colonial Revival entry with a hand-built raised-panel door flanked by sidelights, in long-lived African mahogany. \$4,955. Vintage Doors by Yesteryear's, (800) 787-2001, vintagedoors.com

3. RING FOR MR. CARSON

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4. PROHIBITION FAVORITE

Illicit in the '20s and quaint now, a speakeasy in oil-rubbed bronze is an attractive way to see who's at the door. The 8½" grille comes with a latching interior door. \$139.95. Signature Hardware, (866) 855-2284, signaturehardware.com

5. CHANNELING EASTLAKE

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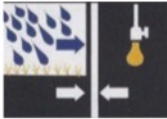
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Decorative Gable

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SUNBURST

A popular motif in the late 1800s, sunbursts can be interpreted two ways: as a reference to the optimism of a “golden age,” or as a nod to Great Britain (and the idea that the sun never sets on the British Empire).

DENTIL BAND

Borrowed from classical Greek architecture, this row of small tooth-like projections is used to accent architectural features; here, it also serves as the cornice on an unusual stylized, protruding pediment.

STICKWORK

Wooden boards (or “sticks”) prominently arranged in a checkerboard pattern are a nod to the Stick Style, which used applied exterior elements to suggest a building’s inner structure.

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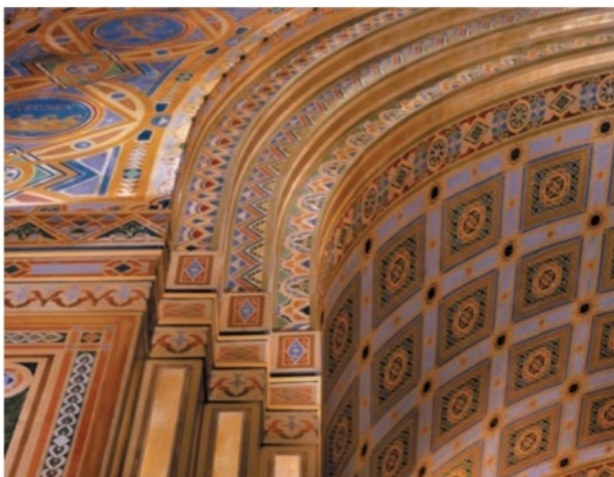
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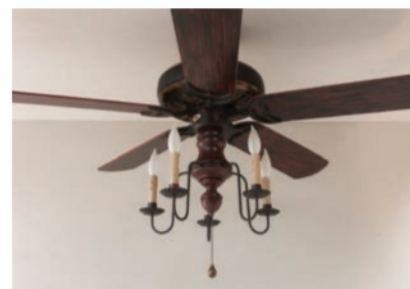
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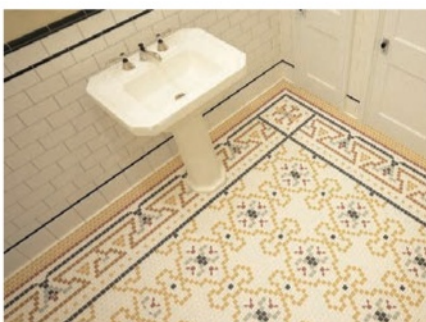
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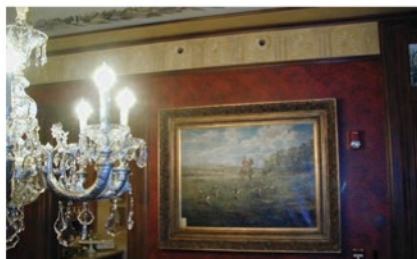
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Our family has been handcrafting custom window shades in the USA since 1930. We have a large selection of traditional cloth window shades, pulls, trim and brackets. Available with your choice of finished bottoms, wooden or springless rollers.

877-588-5200; www.windowshades.net

EXTERIOR PRODUCT SHOWCASE

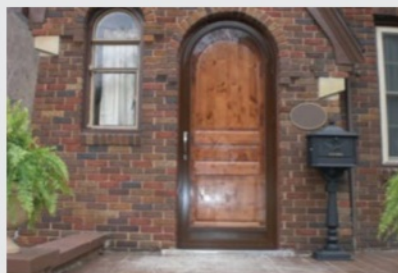


Allied Window, Inc.

The Culbertson Mansion cried out for "invisible storm windows"—with bent glass for the Queen Anne turret windows. Allied Window answered the call. Interior or exterior applications, custom colors, special shapes, and special glazing are all routine. Our abilities meet the needs of the professional in the field or the homeowner—for the conventional to the extraordinary.

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Arch Angle Windows & Doors

A manufacturer of high end specialty shape storm windows and doors. Arch Angle all aluminum storm products are individually hand crafted to complement the historic requirements or distinctive architecture of the homes, churches and commercial buildings they protect.

800-548-0214; www.archangleohio.com

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207-729-1616; www.penobscotbayporchswings.com

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Acrymax Coatings

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802-496-3581; wardclapboard.com

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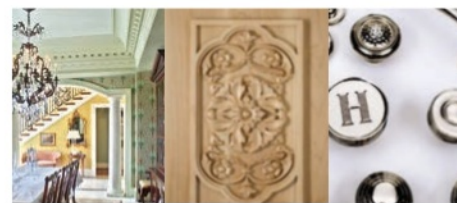


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Specializing in custom and reproduction porch rail, spindles (balusters), and other millwork, especially for Victorian-style architecture. Available in premium exterior wood or high density polyurethane.

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Remuddling

“You’re going to the party dressed like that?”

—Kate Fallon Malcolm



DON'T

Mix and match eras.
A pierced concrete screen can be a beautiful feature when paired with the clean lines of a Mid-century Modern house, but on this 1920s Dutch Colonial variant, it has a jarring time-warp effect—particularly in conjunction with weathered, barn-like wood siding.

THE GAMBREL ROOF is an old-house original, designed to maximize second-story headroom. Though you can spot the distinctive, double-pitched shape on early houses, 19th-century Shingle Style Victorians, and early 20th-century Dutch Colonials, you’re not likely to find a gambrel on a new build (unless it’s a period reproduction). But because the shape is most commonly associated with barns, it’s all too easy for gambrel-roofed houses to take on an agricultural bent when they get gussied up in the wrong clothes.

DO

Preserve original porches.
Even if you hate the outdoors or are desperate to gain more living space, think carefully before you enclose a porch. All too often, it can turn a welcoming façade into one that more closely resembles a prison.



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