

This Old House

24
ways to
save \$\$\$
at the home
center

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**add more
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easy ideas to try

- Laundry room spruce-up
- Sturdy DIY trellis
- Build a fancy pet bed

APRIL 2009
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Test your **E.I.Q.** (Energy Independence Quotient)

Which is the biggest energy expenditure in your home?



- A. Water heating
- B. Appliance usage
- C. Lighting

Answer: **A. Water heating**

But it doesn't have to be...Did you know?

- Tankless water heaters cost up to 60% less to operate than standard electric units.
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- Because they heat water on demand, tankless units provide an endless supply of hot water.
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- Floor space savings of 12 to 16 square feet.

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REIGN OF TERROR

is over.

The **new towing power** AND
trailer sway control standard.



*Always follow proper safety protocol.

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curb appeal

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Cover photo by Mike Smith



Aspire to be among the underworked.

Step. Just—step.
Close the laptop.
Let the calls go to
voice mail and
finally give yourself
permission to step.
Easier said than
done, right?
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high maintenance
of wood decking and
without the boundaries
of fixed design
options, you'll become
all too comfortable
to simply go without.
So ask yourself—
do you have what
it takes to get
nothing done?

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IDEAS

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PRODUCTS

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ADVICE

4 WAYS TO SAVE MONEY

PUT LAMPS IN THE CORNER ↑
They'll shine off two walls, giving
you more light. *Cost:* Free
Savings: About \$40 a year off electric bills

RUN APPLIANCES EARLY ↑
Your AC won't have to work
as hard to offset their heat
during the day. *Cost:* Free
Savings: About \$25 a year off electric bills

**PUT THIRSTY PLANTS
AT SLOPE BOTTOMS**
Rainwater runoff will cut down
on the need for the hose. *Cost:* Free
Savings: About \$20 a year off water bills

DON'T RINSE DISHES
Instead wipe them with a damp sponge
before putting them into the dishwasher.
That'll save nearly 20 gallons of water per load.
Cost: Free *Savings:* About \$10 a year off water bills

Discover 21 more Money-Savers
you can use this week
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more vacation
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letter { from This Old House }

The man has a point

Right before I left work for the weekend, I picked up my car and served through it.

Bill...bill...bill—even at work I get bills—and finally, here in the state, a letter!

I worked my finger under the flap, slipped out the note, and began to read.

"Dear Mr. Scott Omlenicko,

Oh should I say: Dear Mr. Kook, Mr. Magoo, Mr. Screw-up Everything?"

At first I thought, Why's Allen writing when she usually calls? But I read on. And as I did, I realized this note was from a man, a *This Old House* subscriber named William, who was also a builder.

"How did you ever become the 'editor' of the wonderful world of *This Old House*, which has been going on for over 50 years with REPECTED people?"

There are his quotes marks around the word editor.

William, it turns out, doesn't appreciate that I'll use this page of *TOH* to make up home improvement mistakes, which—so his point—are legion. But then, unlike William, it's been a long time since I worked as a carpenter. Now I'm just an average homeowner with an above-average love for home improvement. I strip screws, bend nails, and make that second trip to the hardware store each Saturday because I bought the wrong thing on the first trip. And I always need 1 more house—or—than the weekend has on it in finish a project.

My guess is that you're not so different, which is why I'd rather sympathize than act as a gadabout. Plus, William is right: *TOH* is, in fact, wonderful. And once you've flipped this page, you'll find that all the other pages are packed full of instruction, information, and inspiration. Take, for example, the DIY with you'll find on page 57. Or our info-packed All About Concrete Pavers (page 54). Or this month's Reader Remodel, a delightfully quirky no-leaves of Jane Zupanski's yard (page 76). Of course, the expertise in the Ask This Old House section (page 91).

I hope that's plenty enough to please anyone—including William, but he seems a pretty much tough customer. The rest of his letter went like this: "Enough is enough! I think it's time for your retirement party!"

Retirement? He clearly hasn't seen my 481(k).

"Who's that, because I am sure you are a very nice person at least your wife puts up with you."

Oh, William. I have to disappoint you again, but—



THREE WAYS TO HELP US MAKE A BETTER TOM+

1. Visit our reader-remodels site www.thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH to upload and share photos of before and after projects you've finished. Our staff won't be able to browse the website, but we'll be able to see them.

2. Submit your tip. Contribute time-saving tricks and money-saving ideas to our bank of information—and come away with a free new one—www.thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH.

3. E-mail me. Tell me about a story you'd like to read, write advice you need, or suggest a person to share by writing to scott@thisoldhouse.com.

Scott Omlenicko
 DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR

checklist { April.09 }

EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW

□ Tally up tax-related home expenses

Let's face it: Filing your taxes is an annually recurrent (or celebration) task. But if any of the following was true for you in 2008, you might get some back-buck from Uncle Sam:

• If you made pro-friendly upgrades, such as installing an energy-efficient water heater or solar panels, you may qualify for a tax credit.

• If you tackled a major home improvement, you may deduct the sales tax on the materials as well as the interest on loans you took out for the project.

• If your home is a historic structure, you might qualify for a 20% recent rehab credit.

Look for details at enr.gov/taxnotes.



□ Reseed your lawn

Still need to fix those bare patches? Take heart! Reseed now, while it's cool outside, and bold sprouts will vanish. Here's how TDW landscape contractor Roger Cook does it: Slice the patches and spread lawn over them, then add seed and use the back of the rake to incorporate it. Tamp down the area and keep it watered. You'll see new grass sprout in a week or two. Find the right seed for your region at theoldcastle.com/boon.

□ Get the water flowing again

Your outdoor faucets may not see much action when April showers are falling, but now's the time to make sure they're working properly. Open the shut-off valve indoors, then close the spigot to check for leaks. If water escapes around the nut that holds the spigot in place, tighten the nut by hand. If it drips from the spout itself, try replacing the washer.



□ Save your Easter lilies for planting

Keep your pot of lilies long enough to root, and you'll be able to plant it outside after the last frost in areas where temps don't dip below 20 degrees. Bury the root ball (lilies with the soil and pull off the blossoms), leaving the stem and leaves intact. In the fall, cut those back. Next spring, new blossoms will appear. For more tips to jazz up your yard, check out "Boost Your Curb Appeal" on page 82.



□ Book your annual AC tune-up

You can slash your energy bill by up to 25 percent by having your central AC system inspected and cleaned so that it runs efficiently. (Bonus: It's an easy way to commemorate Earth Day, April 22.) Set up the appointment now, before your contractor gets bogged down with summertime AC repairs. Get more strategies for reducing home upkeep expenses at theoldcastle.com/boon.



□ Deep-clean carpets

All that sand and soil you tracked in during snow season waits for carpet fibers fast. Make rugs last longer by vacuuming them well, then use a steam cleaner to get rid of embedded grime. If you'll rather hire a pro, check your mail for coupons; carpet cleaners are only after deals in springtime.



Designer Style... on a do-it-yourself budget.

Create beautiful outdoor living spaces with **Four Cobble Stone®** from Oldcastle®. Professional, multi-piece patterns come to life with a collection of simple-to-install, 16 inch square stones. The best of nature-inspired stone textures, shapes and colors.



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readermail

This month, a bit of praise, which we'll always take, a professional's suggestion, a homeowner's reminiscence, and your DIY good times and not-so-good times, confirming once again that a sense of humor goes a long way when tackling all these projects.

Sign me up

I picked up the March issue of *The Old House* at my local center and wanted to say how much I love the layout, the beautiful photos, and all the how-to projects I can't wait to do. My subscription starts next month.

MARI MCDONALD WOODBRIDGE, IL

Variation on the 2-in-1

Finally! Read "Smart Storage Solutions" [March]. As an architectural designer, may I suggest one tweak that would make some of the built-ins shown even more successful? I'd conceal the cables under the stairs with high-grade plywood, so give the entire design a finished look with just a little open work. In general, I believe you should try to design built-ins so that it appears as if it has always been there.

LEE KATVAL, WOODBRIDGE, CALIF.

A family affair

We have learned from readers who find a connection to a story. "All in the Family" [March] My Mom, Jan, Feb. 1, which you can read at shelldiscover.com/home, struck a chord with our ecotopia homeowners.

Your story about the bonding that occurs between contractors and homeowners arrived just moments of my longest renovation project. The crew was around so long that I gave them permission to live (even in my backyard) for lunch, and they always left me a fully prepared cupcake. One day the head of the crew was missing when I got home from work, I was told he'd

taken my dog home to her cousin's house—something I'd forgotten to do! Another race they're but would a thank-you on the fence part of our project. In the end, we were happy to have our house completed, but said to least our daily commutes.

CHRISTINE DEPTOLLO
BOLCHASTOWN, MASS.

Fighting for a gritty garage

Then there are those who feature for a little too close to home, as the reader makes quite clear [Go to shelldiscover.com/home to see the original story].

If it's not too much to ask, could you stop the water-logs on garage floor robot? Each month my wife and I read *TOH*, which becomes a source of projects for us (just as me). Normally I don't mind, but there's one thing I'm unwilling to do, and that's paint my garage floor. You see, my garage is my sanctuary, the one place I can make a mess. Each story there tells a story: the paint splatters after a basketball ride, the splashes from when I crashed the fridge too high and all my beer cans exploded. If my wife gets her way, I'll be painting over this masterpiece and be exposed as I keep it clean. So, if you can't stop running these articles, could you at least praise them on merits that I can tolerate before the sea does?

DANIELA PINE, ARINGTON, TEX.

Lender not borrower be?

Re "Hobby Tools" [Jan/Feb]: You suggest that readers borrow specialized tools whenever they can, but I'd

never lend out my tools. How would I know for sure that I'd get them back and in the same condition?

GOINOLLEY, WISCONSIN, WIS.

The editor's reply: Why not form a tool co-op with several neighbors? There will be more tools available to all, and each member will feel more accountable when the borrowed tools are also on the line.

Great good-up

A longtime reader of *TOH*, I followed the advice about spacing up the grooves in my bathroom using vinegar and a toothbrush ("99 Uses for Vinegar," Home Solutions, Jan./Feb.). I did what you suggested, but, unfortunately, I ended up damaging my marble tile. The article didn't mention that vinegar can damage natural stone surfaces. Do please let us know.

WARRINGTON, ST. JAMES, NY

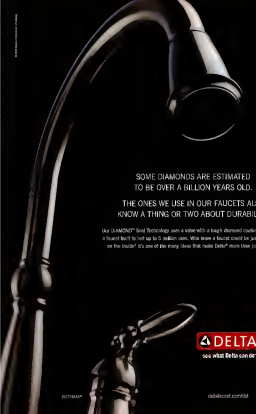
The editor's reply: You're absolutely right, and we're sorry that we omitted this important information. While vinegar works wonders on cleaners for glass, grout, and ceramic tile, it can damage natural stone surfaces, granite, marble, and other stones. To play it safe, always test cleaning products on a small, inconspicuous area first.

how to
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Or mail TOH_letters@mc.com
• Include your full name, address, and phone number. Feedbackletters@mc.com is edited for clarity and length.



PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS



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NEWSFLASH

• Toilet-maker Toto worked with Japanese builder Densetsu House to develop the hi-tech bidet fixture. Toto II, which is capable of estimating all sorts of vital statistics about its users, including weight, body mass index, blood pressure, and hormone levels (it can even tell if you're pregnant).



DESIGN

Concrete cabin fever

More and more Lolo and Monte Tanner always wanted a log home but not the maintenance hassles or terrible vibrations that can plague one. So they turned to a new building substitute: concrete. "This is about as solid a house as you can get," says Stewart Hansen, cofounder of Ever Lay Systems, which built the Tanners' home and came 40 others from "logs" of concrete that are cast in molds made from real logs. The concrete yetts long-lasting, heat-retaining timbers with a bark-like texture—knobs, cracks, and all. Hansen says the logs, which cost \$75 per square foot of horizontal surface, can save up to 40 percent on heating and cooling costs and up to 30 percent on insurance fees. Ever Logs may offend purists, but their energy-saving qualities are tough to deny.



Average number of square feet by which new homes shrink in 2008



FOCUS

Is refinancing right for you?

With mortgage interest rates free-falling to their lowest level in 40 years, refinancing requests had jumped to 65 percent of all loan applications in mid-February. But getting rates that low doesn't always save you costs. Here are three ways to know if it's worth it.

- **Do you plan to stay put much?** The average closing cost to refinance is \$3,000, which means you have to live in your house long enough to recoup that one-time charge.
- **Is your credit good?** To qualify for the very lowest rates, you need a credit score of 700 or higher and at least 20 percent equity in your home.
- **Will you be changing the loan's payoff?** Some lenders offer a lower rate but only if you pay a lower rate in interest charges if you extend the term of your mortgage.

Reporting by Kristi Emhoff and Nicole Rodriguez

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES; PHOTO: EVER LAY SYSTEMS; PHOTO: EVER LAY SYSTEMS



Easy-change paint tray

The First ReadyPaint Tray comes with four finish built in liners. When you're ready to pour a new shade, simply pull back the top liner, squirt to provide the leftover paint, then draw it away—and the tray is ready for action again.

From \$5, perfirstready.com. For more great coverage, visit the Hardware Auto at firstready.com/aut.



RESEARCH

Money really does grow on trees

Houses that are only 17.5 percent shaded by trees can about \$330,000 in electricity per month in summer time because of reduced cooling costs, according to an Auburn University study.





An awning can **EXTEND** your party time,
family time, social time and quiet time.

Looking for more ways to enjoy your outdoor space? Sunbrella's new retractable awnings are a great way to extend your outdoor living space. They're made with Sunbrella's durable, fade-resistant fabric and feature a sturdy frame that can be adjusted to fit your needs. Sunbrella's retractable awnings are available in a variety of colors and patterns, so you can find the perfect one for your outdoor space. For more information, visit www.sunbrella.com or call 1-800-333-3333.

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home solutions

Edited by Deborah Bassett

inside

10 USES

RAIN-BARREL FIXES

ROSE PRUNING

MORE



1 SMART IDEA

Pet-bed cubby

IF TV's "Dog Whisperer" has taught us any thing, it's that every pooch should be put in its place—a cozy place, that is. These cubbies in a bookshelf are a clever alternative to pet beds that take up floor real estate. Built into a niche, the custom piece has a 34-inch-deep nest for Sam (left) and Henry, topped by narrow shelves for books and keepsakes. You can easily modify any bookcase that's at least 35 inches deep to accommodate your four-legged friend, just remove one or two of the bottom shelves and secure it to the wall so that it doesn't topple over when your dog or cat crawls in. Don't forget to toss in a pillow for more comfort.



3 more pet projects
Check out these bonus ideas to
give your furry friend the best of
thisoldhouse.com/ideas

Shellac

This old-fashioned finish is made from a resin secreted by an insect—but don't let that bug you. TCM reader Michelle Rosebrough told us how she puts it to work

1 Make a tack cloth.

Dip the cloth into a solution of 1 part premixed shellac and 1 part denatured alcohol. Wring out and let dry thoroughly; then wipe onto walls to remove dust.

2 Make wood workable.

Apply shellac thinned 1 to 2 with alcohol to make fibrous or brittle wood easier to shape, plane, or sand.



Restore old hardware.

After removing dirt and paint, dip padlocks, hinges, knobs, and pulls, and the pieces with clear shellac—it will keep brasses from tarnishing too.



Even out coats of stain.

Prime pine or other soft wood with a layer of shellac to help it absorb stain evenly. Use a waxless version, sold pre-mixed as SealCoat, if you plan to apply a polyurethane finish, which won't adhere to wax.

5 Keep tools rust-free.

Coat metal tools with a layer of shellac to keep out moisture and dirt.

6 Disguise flaws on painted surfaces.

Before repainting, brush shellac onto stains, bare spots, or residue to prevent these blemishes from bleeding through fresh coats.

7 Cover oil and gas stains.

Apply a few coats of

shellac to stains on your driveway before adding new asphalt or sealer. It will keep the oil or gas from dissolving the patching material.

8 Make a French polish.

One of the oldest and easiest-to-apply finishes for wood furniture. Wipe waxless shellac onto furniture with a pad made of cheesecloth, wringed lightly in a scrap of an old lint-free cotton sheet. Lubricate the pad with mineral



oil as needed to keep it from sticking as you work.

9 Eliminate odors under carpets.

Where mildew or pet accidents have been a problem: Remove the carpet, clean the floor or subfloor, then create an odor barrier over the affected areas by applying a coat or two of shellac before replacing the carpet.



Seal cut-in lumber.

After drying or staining green lumber, brush shellac over the open grain to prevent the ends from splitting.



easy furniture repairs
Sealant seals spot stains and repairs scratches
at www.marvin.com/trim

If you could design your dream window, what would it be?



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+ GREEN

Fixes for rain-barrel snafus

Thanks to rising water prices, the sale of barrels used to collect rainwater for irrigation has doubled dramatically in the past couple of years. Though they're easy to use, it's also easy to overlook the simple tasks that keep them shipshape. Read on to learn how to troubleshoot common complaints quickly.

—BETH PARSONS



Problem

"The standing water in my barrel is mosquito magnet."

"Dead leaves and twigs are getting inside and rotting in the water."

"Water drains too slowly or not at all from the bottom spigot."

"Moss has formed in the water's surface, but I worry about using an algae bloom in my yard. It will harm the plants I want to water afterward."

Fast Fix

A mosquito doesn't wait for gardeners to get home before breeding for about a month. First, drain the water's surface, then use a funnel to filter out debris floating through the center hole.

Check for clogs or holes in the screen that lie over the barrel's opening and clean. Or, as an alternative, use a bag to catch debris. It's easier to remove the bag of debris than to clean the barrel's interior.

Remove debris from the interior opening, and make sure the barrel is on a platform of bricks or other blocks so rain gravity can help water escape from the bottom of the problem collector.

Add a cap to the barrel's end to keep it for several days before using the water. To remove algae, use a pump to remove the water. To remove algae, use a pump to remove the water. To remove algae, use a pump to remove the water.

+ SYSTEMS

Think thin

Rate how these necessary but unsightly devices stack out from eaves and walls like new friends? Newline-profile versions help solve the problem.

—DEBORAH SHOOTER



Smaller slivers

Profileline's 1/4-inch-thick hardware-free, low-profile Slimline has a rechargeable battery backing up power of a power failure.

\$70; www.profileline.com



Thin and sleek

Profileline's 1/4-inch-thick hardware-free, low-profile Slimline has a rechargeable battery backing up power of a power failure.



Bathroom fan and light

Profileline's 1/4-inch-thick hardware-free, low-profile Slimline has a rechargeable battery backing up power of a power failure.

STARTER KIT

Everything you need to prune roses

Let's set the record straight: You don't need to be a gardening pro to grow roses. But you do need to prune repeat-blooming varieties in early spring to get the best blossoms, says Peter H. Ravnkilde, a rose expert at the New York Botanical Garden. (Other types can be cut back as early as 1/2.) Ravnkilde says the right time to get you started will help you concentrate on your technique so that your shrub roses and climbers don't become, um, a thorn in your side. Here's what you'll need for the task. —JENNIFER STANFORD



1. **Trim bag.** A sturdy tote carries tools and when not working, it's a great place to store your tools. \$20; www.bushbuddy.com

2. **Rose bush.** Keep the bush contained and away from the base of the plant to prevent rot. \$17; www.bushbuddy.com

3. **Rose gloves.** These are not just for the roses. They also protect your hands from the thorns. \$10; www.bushbuddy.com

4. **Pruning shears.** Simply cut the soft wood before the plant starts to grow. \$10; www.bushbuddy.com

5. **Pruning saw and steel pipe.** The saw is used to cut the hard wood. The steel pipe is used to support the plant. \$10; www.bushbuddy.com

6. **Long-handled shears.** These are used to cut the hard wood. \$10; www.bushbuddy.com

7. **Pruning shears.** These are used to cut the hard wood. \$10; www.bushbuddy.com

8. **Pruning shears.** These are used to cut the hard wood. \$10; www.bushbuddy.com

9. **Pruning shears.** These are used to cut the hard wood. \$10; www.bushbuddy.com

10. **Pruning shears.** These are used to cut the hard wood. \$10; www.bushbuddy.com



Who knew?

- 1. **Wood glue.** Only a bit after the end of pruning season, to seal the ends of the branches. \$2; hardware stores
- 2. **Pruning shears.** These are used to cut the hard wood. \$10; www.bushbuddy.com



homeowner tip

BYRON WOOD, STOCKTON, CALIF.

An old saw handle fitted with a piece of 1/4-inch oak makes a good push stick when I'm using my table saw. The grip gives me good control and keeps my hand away from the blade."

SHARE YOUR TIP

Post them at thisoldhouse.com/tips



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the beauty goes on

valspar

before+after:
kitchen

Old space, whole new look

A smart mix of materials—and plenty of cabinets—added light and function, all within the same four walls. By AMANDA LICKY • Photography SUSAN ELMORE



These days most of us aim a project by considering how little we can do—not how much—to transform a space. When Lyn and John Meneghini wanted to work their dream Minneapolis kitchen, with an old counter, blue-marbled marble floor, and pickled cabinets, they dreamed about turning it into a past madhouse and starting fresh in the nearby suburbs. Then cooler heads prevailed—local architect Todd Hansen being one of them. Together, the two embarked on a dramatic but mostly concrete update of the kitchen, combining the same finishes in the adjacent breakfast room and pantry so that the three spaces worked as one. Hansen chose materials and finishes for their light-reflecting qualities: beveled white subway tile, Carrara marble counters, cabinets painted a gray-toned white, and lots of stainless steel. The look is clean and bright, with an updated traditional feel. Proof positive of the project's success came when the owners had room for a job change. "When we told our friends Anne and Eric Behr the news," says John, "Anne immediately asked, 'Can we have the house?'" Today, the Behrs and their three kids are enjoying the fruits of their friends' remodel. "The kitchen sold us on the house," Anne says. "It's the one room where all five of us want to spend time."



[Before]

But 2009 isn't updated in the 1980s, the kitchen sported counter tops the color of country ham and maple floors the color of blue. 2009? While his and cabinets dark cabinets, and lots of stainless steel gave the space better look and feel.



before + after

An overall update unified the kitchen, breakfast room, and pantry, adding storage, light, and prep space—without eating the footprint or moving plumbing lines.

1 **Brought in TAPE MEAS.** Taking glass doors down added square in attached greenhouse was removed.

3 **Added a quarter-height table.** Equipped with bar stools, it provides space for breakfast and breakfast bar.

2 **Added storage.** To the existing cabinets, narrow wall open shelves added storage and display space at both ends of the eating area.

4 **Removed upper cabinets.** To keep the kitchen light and bright, upper cabinets were replaced with open shelves.

PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS



4 **Moved the range.** The stove formerly jammed into the corner, swapped places with the fridge and gained counter space on a hot sale.

5 **Slack open shelves** were made by nailing longboard shiplap boards into shiplap backsplash. (Source: Ikea, Zillow for inspiration)



6 **A deep farmhouse sink** reinforces the updated traditional style of the space while taking dirty dishes down and out.



pro advice

TOO-WHOLE ARCHITECT MINNEAPOLIS

"A light palette, especially in a room that faces north, looks brighter when there are contrasting black elements."



A marble-topped table, built by a local furniture maker, matches the counters. Its robust height, shelves, and side cutout cutting board allow it to double as a kitchen island. (Photo: David Bergeron, above; (clockwise from top) David Bergeron, above; (clockwise from top) David Bergeron, above; (clockwise from top) David Bergeron, above)



Windows were painted glossy black to echo the floor stain. The contrast they provide helps ground the gleaming white walls. Even the window's frame looks like the other hardware in the room. (Photo: David Bergeron, above; (clockwise from top) David Bergeron, above; (clockwise from top) David Bergeron, above; (clockwise from top) David Bergeron, above)

7 **A wide range hood** delivers the cooking area the pull-up assistance and drawers double as towel bars. (Image: Viking Customized Metal Hood, Viking Customized Metal Hood, Viking Customized Metal Hood, Viking Customized Metal Hood)

From garage to comfy rec room

An underused outbuilding becomes a getaway space for the whole family

By KIMMIE LUCY • Photographs by MARK LUTHEMAN



A wall-mounted shelf holds a few of the family's favorite books. The door (not seen) opens to a small storage room.



before The family's newly parked in the freestanding garage, situated at the far end of the property. It's a small, cluttered room with a white door and a small table.

It's a familiar phenomenon: The remodel plan you begin with isn't exactly the one you end up with. For one Southern California family, a garage was once a room for a child's playroom. But their two young kids now spend most of their time in the garage. "When we started, we wanted a place for the kids to play their Wii games, which takes a lot of space," says the wife, and the solution was to build a room near the pool. Designer and builder Debra Kerner was about replacing an overhead door with carriage-style ones and building a wall—easily removable to allow for two cars should the family want to return the room to a garage someday—to create a more airy, airy room. She put in a ceiling, finished the walls with wainscoting and wallboard, built an insulated subfloor, and added custom built-ins, a beverage fridge, and wiring for media equipment. As the couple watched the room take shape, they decided to upgrade the space even more, so now they could also use for pool parties. With the help of interior designer Allison Timmerman, several neutral-toned finishes like tan grass carpet and grass-look wallpaper. The result is a comfortable—even elegant—room that the adults use as much as the kids. "We love it," says the wife. "It really completes our home."

PHOTOGRAPH BY KIMMIE LUCY; PHOTOGRAPH BY KIMMIE LUCY; PHOTOGRAPH BY KIMMIE LUCY

- The undercounter fridge is sleek and built into the wall. Family members don't have to run back to the house every time someone wants a drink.
- Divided-light pocket doors are on the side of the room to lead to the patio and pool. Built-in recessed shelves hold games, a video player, and a TV.



before + after:
garage



A built-in TV screen allows the couple, both avid readers, to host great Super Bowl parties, or follow live games of soccer while the kids play their Wii basketball or bowling.

makeover tips
Decorative molding is a clever way to transform a garage into a room.

before + after

Now using not only a modern, modern design, the 437 square-foot space without changing its footprint.



pro advice
DORIS KERNER
DESIGNER/OWNER
SANTA MONICA, CALIF.
"When finishing a garage, consider raising and insulating the floor before carpeting. It'll feel much more comfortable underfoot."

Carriage-style doors make the space functional as a family room but also look like a car in the future.



1. Adding a wall-mounted shelf holds a few of the family's favorite books. The door (not seen) opens to a small storage room.
2. A built-in TV screen allows the couple, both avid readers, to host great Super Bowl parties, or follow live games of soccer while the kids play their Wii basketball or bowling.
3. Pocket doors open the family room to the pool, allowing the space to double as a cabana.

Bin pulls

For the kitchen and beyond, pulls in three basic shapes put an array of options at your fingertips. *by ANDREW COOKSTONER • Photographed by MICHELLE T. WELSH*

There is a classic way to tell if a house is old: for good reason. Easy on the inside, second in the eye, and as simple as any piece, is a couple of classic pieces, bin pulls have been popular since the mid-19th century, helping to open deep drawers and lift heavy windows. The decorative mid-Victorian turned out to be one of the most popular, while plain metal and bronze versions had their heyday in the early 20th century. Whatever their style, bin pulls still look great on a kitchen and for more today. Check out 25 of our favorites.

**classic
chrome
cupped**

These chrome-plated metal cupped bin pulls are a classic choice for a kitchen or bathroom.



← CUPPED

**bronze bar
wooden window
pulls**
These pull handles are made of
brass and feature a Victorian
style design.



← SQUARED OFF

← ECLECTIC



**patinated
eclectic**
This bin pull
features a
patinated finish
and a dark
wood base—a
great match for
copper
hardware.

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CUPPED

Cup pulls in nickel and chrome became standard fare in 1940s and '50s kitchens. Note: Some new versions are removed on from the back.



clean-lined
KALAMAZOO
An old-fashioned pull with an elongated rim to obscure the brass-colored screws. \$15; kalamazookitchen.com



crowded
KALAMAZOO
The extra screws on this brushed-brass pull give it an unexpected, almost 1940s, industrial feel. \$15



mesh-mesh
KALAMAZOO
Brushed nickel updates this meshwork. \$15; kalamazookitchen.com



old copper
KALAMAZOO
For a handcrafted, old-fashioned pull that looks like you're in a museum. \$15; kalamazookitchen.com



ultra-matte
KALAMAZOO
This sleek, finished, polished pull might not be old, but it's a modern twist on the classic. \$15; kalamazookitchen.com



pro advice BO LAMBERT / ON LINE DESIGNS
HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION

When replacing pulls, measure the distance between the existing screw holes first to avoid drilling new holes or leaving old ones exposed.

SQUARED OFF

From sleek and simple to ornate and showy, these pulls inspired by window sash latches have a geometric look.



good as old
KALAMAZOO
A Japanese pattern inspired nickel-plated pull is perfect for a classic 1940s kitchen. \$15; kalamazookitchen.com

budget pick



real retro
KALAMAZOO
A brushed-nickel style sash latch. \$15; kalamazookitchen.com



pantry style
KALAMAZOO
This round edge rectangle has a brushed nickel finish. \$15; kalamazookitchen.com

ECCLECTIC

Working, flaring, scrollwork, and more give these pulls their unique shapes and an extra level of detail.



flared
KALAMAZOO
This sleek, flared pull has a brushed nickel finish. \$15; kalamazookitchen.com

budget pick



lead metal
KALAMAZOO
This affordable lead metal pull is perfect for a classic 1940s kitchen. \$15; kalamazookitchen.com



oval option
KALAMAZOO
A sleek, oval pull with a brushed nickel finish. \$15; kalamazookitchen.com

SCALLOPED

Try this sleeky brass pull for a modern twist on a classic design.



scalloped
KALAMAZOO
This sleek, flared pull has a brushed nickel finish. \$15; kalamazookitchen.com

FLAT

Enhance a modern space with this sleek, flat pull.



flat
KALAMAZOO
This sleek, flat pull has a brushed nickel finish. \$15; kalamazookitchen.com

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landscaping

Focus on foliage

No need to rely on flowers to perk up your yard. Plants with dramatic leaves can dazzle—and save you work. By JENNIFER HARRIS • Photography: JACQUELYN DRAKE

Next time you hit the local garden center, think leaves. Flowers may come and go as the growing season wears on, but foliage remains vibrant nearly year-round.

"People often don't realize that foliage plants present a kaleidoscope of color possibilities, from gold and chartreuse to blue, green, red, burgundy, purple, astonishingly black," says gardener expert Nancy J. Orndy, author of *Foliage: Astonishing Color and Texture Beyond Flowers*. Some plants have leaves of a single color, others are variegated with stripes or spots. Leaves may be soft and round, straight and spiky, big, medium, or tiny. In other words, you can just about say look you choose.

Focusing on foliage can save time and trouble from your yard work as well. No need for phosphate-rich fertilizer to boost flower production, though mulching is always a good idea. You can skip up insecticidal soaps and sprays, too. Foliage plants usually do fine even if attacked by Japanese beetles or other chewing insects. "Plants need leaves to survive," says Orndy, "so most plants just keep making more of them over the season." Simply take off any dead leaves or cut back ones that are clumped, and plants will send out a new flush.

Some foliage plants do produce flowers, which you can leave or clip. Running flower bulbs like they're in a small garden, and most gardeners make and keep leaves more lush, since all the plant's energy goes into them. This also prevents plants from forming roots, so you don't have to worry about overwatering.

Good as for some good foliage plants to try, plus tips on using them.



shopping tip Curved rows of lime-colored 'Spill' sedum (1) stand out against dark black mondo grass (2). Japanese forest grass 'Rune' (3) follows the lowest edge, guiding visitors to the entry.

Nine building blocks of a foliage garden

Here are a handful of foliage plants that will grow in most areas of the country. There are varieties of each that will give your garden a wide range of colors, shapes, and textures.

Cornus (*Cornus spicata*) Though most often a green for foliage flowers, *Cornus* can be grown for its foliage. In early spring, the foliage is bright green, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red.



Pigeonhole (*Pigeonhole*) Ground hugging masses of large, pointed, deeply lobed green leaves with a prominent central vein. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red.



Larrea (*Larrea tridentata*) A small, shrubby plant with a dense, rounded habit. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red.



Plantain Lily (*Plantain Lily*) A small, shrubby plant with a dense, rounded habit. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red.



Black mondo grass (*Black mondo grass*) A small, shrubby plant with a dense, rounded habit. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red.

Japanese pointed fern (*Japanese pointed fern*) A small, shrubby plant with a dense, rounded habit. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red.



Dusty miller (*Dusty miller*) A small, shrubby plant with a dense, rounded habit. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red.



Japanese forest grass (*Japanese forest grass*) A small, shrubby plant with a dense, rounded habit. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red.



Coastal bells (*Coastal bells*) A small, shrubby plant with a dense, rounded habit. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red. The foliage is bright green in spring, but as the season progresses, it turns a deep red.

Winning ways to use them

Give your garden pizzazz by spotlighting one plant or combining several in containers that play up their individual assets.

1. **Use a single type of plant for impact.** With so many foliage plants in various forms, it can be daunting to decide on one to use in your garden. Start with just one. To achieve a look in partial shade, try golden Japanese forest grass, shown at right. For a long border in full sun, consider edging it with dark edibles, and in bright, sunny spots, try variegated edibles and grasses.

2. **Use for indoor containers.** Foliage plants perform well in containers. For a look with a dark shade, use a variegated plant. For a look with a dark shade, use a variegated plant. For a look with a dark shade, use a variegated plant.

3. **Create variations on a theme.** Choose one leaf shape and select plants that carry out that theme in various colors or sizes. Here, a sun-loving light green grass is paired with New Zealand flax (Phormium tenax), which has long, silvery leaves. Impatiens, which is a shade-loving plant, is used to create a look with a dark shade.

4. **Choose contrasting shapes.** Place a plant that is a soft, rounded mass next to one with tall, arching leaves, and both will stand out. In the foreground here, purple weaver grass (Muhlenbergia capensis) creates a striking backdrop for a tall, arching plant. In the background, a tall, arching plant is used to create a look with a dark shade.



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at www.garden.com

Three standout annuals

Great for filling an empty spot in the yard—and fun to change out from year to year—the next—these annuals showcase some extraordinary foliage. Mix them into beds and borders or put them up for some stunning containers.



Castor bean (*Castor bean*) Tropical looking green leaves (surprisingly) look great up to 20 inches wide. Not for yards where small children play, as all parts are poisonous. Full sun to 10 to 15 inches tall.



Summer pansy (*Summer pansy*) Tropical looking green leaves (surprisingly) look great up to 20 inches wide. Not for yards where small children play, as all parts are poisonous. Full sun to 10 to 15 inches tall.



Celosia (*Celosia*) Tropical looking green leaves (surprisingly) look great up to 20 inches wide. Not for yards where small children play, as all parts are poisonous. Full sun to 10 to 15 inches tall.

price
wise

White subway tile

Think all subway tiles are basically the same? Take a close look at two versions of the classic rectangle, and you'll see subtle differences that affect the final look—and the price.

By KELLY EDWARDS • Photography DOUG BOSTA

As far back as 1904, the first New York City's first white-enamelled underground transit stations were clad in "subway tile," not being listed in catalogs. The easy-to-clean, tightly grouted tiles became a hit in American bathrooms and kitchens, and they remain popular today. Study the two shown here to see how small variations can shift the look from homelike to sleek.

Artistic Tile's Frameworks

CERAMIC TILE/CLAY/STONE/GROUT
Distributor: Wright's Sources | Warehouse/Case

+\$15
per square foot

\$4.80+
per square foot

Del-Tile's Rittenhouse Square

CERAMIC TILE/ENAMEL ART/CLAY/GROUT
Distributor: Wright's Sources | Warehouse/Case

IS IT FOR YOU?

It's a beautiful look in a rustic—and, yes, even a classic—style. It's a good choice for a space that's not too busy.

the clay

A mix of rustic and modern white clay is fired by hand into a machine that extrudes and cuts the tile forms, which are hand finished.

the glaze

Antique-style glaze is hand-applied to the back of the tile, and machine-applied to the front.

the edges

Because the tiles are hand-fired, not milled, their back edges develop variations, giving them the look of a hand-thrown tile. The front edges are slightly beveled and hand-polished.

the clay

Pure white clay and talc is fired and processed in a North American quarry, and machine-ground into a fine dust.

the glaze

Finished in a grout-like space machine-applied glaze gives the tile a bright white finish.

the edges

Machine-made ensures straight, clean edges, which help make installation a snap. Tiles can be scored and cut with a hand tool.

IS IT FOR YOU?

It's a beautiful look in a rustic—and, yes, even a classic—style. It's a good choice for a space that's not too busy.

Variations on a theme

Seeing this current popularity means you'll find it in a wide variety of sizes, materials and glazes. For instance, this tile has a 4 by 8 inch, flat beveled edge and a made-in-Italy, hand-thrown white glaze. The front edges are slightly beveled and hand-polished. The back edges are slightly beveled and hand-polished. The front edges are slightly beveled and hand-polished.

tiling how-to learn how to tile a wall or floor. Visit www.tileusa.com for more information.

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Cast-iron bathtub feet

Repair your vintage claw-foot tub supports in your house or backside, lamp bases, and more. By ANDY BOWLES • Photograph by DEK JONHSON



They're small, they're ugly, and they're usually quite dirty. Still, iron bathtub feet are saving the day at antique and salvage yards. It's no wonder, really, with their intricate carvings of lion paws with drawn claws and eagle talons gripping balls.

Separated from the heavy rolled-iron casters they used to support, the feet you find today typically date to the late 1800s or early 1900s. They were used to elevate the rounded tub basins to give the vessels a formalistic look.

You'll be hard-pressed to find a matching set of four feet, but pairs and even three of a kind are easy to come by. Expect to pay between \$10 and \$25 for each foot, depending on size and condition. Designs were most elaborate in the 1890s—

STEP-BY-STEP

Build a tub-foot umbrella stand

the peak of the Victorian era, when Americans craved embellishment on even the most utilitarian household objects. These ball-and-claw foot tubs had wide "saddles" decorated with flowers, vines, or shells that wrapped the base of the tublike shields. They were quite large—about 5 inches wide by 7 inches tall—and weighed 4 or 5 pounds each. By the early 1930s, when the popular style of claw foot tubs began to fade, foot were eliminated: unsanded balls supported by smooth ankles.

If you're trying to find an exact replacement for a missing or damaged foot on your old tub, you may have trouble, because each tub manufacturer had its own method for attaching the feet, typically via some sort of bracket extending from their back side. For safety, and more fun, a so-called replanted foot onto a creative reuse project. Their weight makes them especially handy as bookends, though I've also seen one mounted on a table lamp. A hollow post hidden behind the foot holds the light socket and shade, and serves as a conduit for the cord.

For a seasonal project inspired by April showers, you can follow my lead and use three existing feet to support an umbrella stand with a round base. Read on to learn how. ■

Claw foot tub interiors were coated in porcelain, but the saddles and feet were usually bare metal and periodically required a fresh coat of paint, typically white, to prevent rust. Metallic gold or silver paint were also common, and I had an old silver finisher stand on a shopping trip to Zabar's Emporium in Kingston, New York. I needed three matching feet to mount on the base of a galvanized flower basket to turn it into an umbrella stand. To preserve the feet's painted surface, and certainly harmful lead, I just brushed on a couple of coats of clear polyurethane.

Cost: \$75 for the tub feet plus \$15 for the basket.
 Time: 3 hours.
 Difficulty: Easy, as long as you're comfortable with a drill/rover and glue.

Tap the feet with a hammer that's 20 inches or higher to accommodate full extension.



1. Measure the diameter of the basket's bottom. Using a ruler and compass, trace a circle with a diameter 1 to 2 inches smaller than the bottom.



3. Place the wood disk on the basket's inside wall, and mark where to drill holes in the metal bottom. Remove the disk and bore the holes.

2. Trace the circle on a piece of 1/4-inch plywood, and use a saw to cut out the disk. This will be fixed to the bottom of the basket and provide a stable surface on which to mount the feet.



6. Insert 2 feet bolts through the basket holes from the inside out, and use steel tape to temporarily secure the wood of each foot. Turn the basket over and place the wood disk on the bottom, fitting the holes over the bolts.

3. Clamp the feet to your workbench or in a vise (as shown), and drill holes through the iron brackets that extend from the backs of the feet. Some may already have holes or slots, depending on how they were attached to the tub they supported.



4. Arrange the feet so the wood disk where you want to attach them. Trace the outline of each foot. Use a iron bracket, and mark its holes for screws. Then set the disk on your worktable, and drill all three holes.



5. To give the metal basket a prime to match the feet, brush on a wash that's a 2 part white paint to 3 part polyurethane. Then do with an angulipca wherever the look you want. Let dry, and place your new umbrella standing the front door so that it's ready to be chivalrous on the first rainy day.

Project photography by KIMMIE LAMON

SEE OTHER
 salvage projects

Check out other ways to creatively reuse old items at
thefixation.com/ideas

Dressed-up laundry room

Painted cabinetry and handsome finishes add polish to a workaday space. Here's how
by ELIZABETH ROSSIGNOL • Photograph by BECCA LAURINDEN

Today's main-floor laundry rooms are much more convenient—and stylish—than their basement-dwelling forebears. This one combines elements of the adjacent kitchen and master's retreat: the same Shaker-style cabinets, here given a coat of deep green paint, a pale Carrara counter top, gleaming black-and-white marble flooring, and a pair of unexpected storage solutions. The headboard backdrop adds another classic touch—and hides the dryer vent and water hookup.

The mix of traditional and offbeat elements looks handsome but cozy. "It's dressed up and beautiful," says interior designer Bruce Laursen, who created the room with business partner Wendy Daniel. Her passion for making a utilitarian room stand out as one in the open house. "Keep single-boring architectural elements such as cabinetry and tile in place, then put more playful touches like color palette and other finishes," says Laursen. Here are ideas for creating a similar space.



brass-style pulls
Antique-style brass pulls are used vertically on cabinet doors and drawers, saving them a creek. \$10-\$120. kitchenhardware.com

marble countertop
Gray-colored Carrara tile is classic, but it's prone to staining. Built-in marble is a safer bet, but it's expensive. Consider a Carrara Cloud countertop at \$40 installed. carraracloud.com

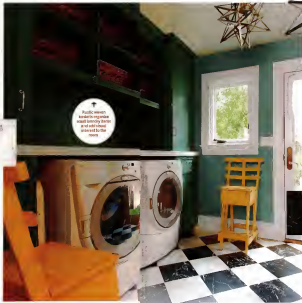


pro advice
BECCA LAURINDEN, INTERIOR DESIGNER, COLUMBIA, S.C.

"Select your washer and dryer before designing your cabinetry. Most front-loaders are 30 inches high, so the countertop needs to be installed a bit higher than normal."

storage seat

This custom wooden laundry landing spot was on entry \$200 to make. benches.com. To get the best of everything, we applied Sherwin Williams's PureWhite Acrylic to the back. \$20 per gallon at paint stores.



stellar light
This blown glass starburst light fixture adds a fun touch to utilitarian space. \$670. stardustlight.com



black-and-white floor

Marble tiles make an elegant upgrade for the classic checkerboard floor. Here, the homeowners went polished marble tiles (\$10-\$25 each, dallas.com). Easier to install yourself and even more budget-friendly: stone tile adhesive vinyl flooring. Arranging in traditional white (50 cents each) and black marble (50 cents each) at Select Laid It.

paint palette

For a finished look, paint the walls in a classic color palette. Use a Sherwin Williams color palette. Sherwin Williams's Benjamin Moore's Little Green is a classic color. Sherwin Williams's Benjamin Moore's Little Green is a classic color. Sherwin Williams's Benjamin Moore's Little Green is a classic color.



crown molding

Molding along the top gives these walls height without a lot of work. Copy it with MDF crown that has an elegant crown profile. 65 cents per linear foot. dynamictouch.com



woven baskets

Kate Laursen's collection of woven baskets is made from recycled glass and is perfect for the laundry room. They're made from recycled glass and are perfect for the laundry room. They're made from recycled glass and are perfect for the laundry room.



Home invasion

Take a deep breath—then hold it for two hours. That's what it feels like to open your home up to a historic house tour. *by DAVID GIFFORD • Illustration by FREDERICK LORR*

7 minutes 46 hours

I never stopped to consider how many shades of white there are until now, at this very moment, as I struggle to peep over the blinds, seifs, and work-boom-induced vibrations on my laptop keyboard.

You see, white is the color I've painted every wall and sill, every inch of crown and baseboard molding in my house. But never did it occur to me that with each successive trip to the paint store I was choosing a different shade. At the time I figured any white would do, but now I realize my folly, as I am through can after half-wad can of paint, deeply pondering the subtle differences between Swan Wing, Angel Cloud, White Squeak, and Sea-Marched Shit.

The reason for my paint paranoia is that my house—in 1915 Tudor Revival that my wife and I saved from extinction and spent the past two years painstakingly restoring—has been selected for inclusion on a historic house tour. Sure, it's an honor, but it also means that, in just two days, several dozen hypocritical strangers will arrive on our doorstep to inspect and ultimately judge our taste, workmanship, and lifestyle. Yes, I am terrified.

The local preservation society asked us to participate in this act of public scrutiny because our house, destined for selling in a distinctly public way, represented something of a community property. It was built by a wealthy industrialist as a wedding gift for his daughter. It fell into rapid decline in the latter part of the 20th century. For decades, everyone involved knew it "that house," the big place with the bell-tower porch, the pond, the wonderful infestation of raccoons, the no-worship plumbing, a subtle curtain-wire that



had binged through the well-laid-out garden growing like a beehive through the site. Think of it as the dirty old house George Bailey chucked into a 19th-century *Wonderful Life*. Over the years, countless century-savvy had crept through the dense ivy growth that once surrounded this place, trying to peek in the

windows, wondering about the rumors (true, it turned out) of a million old baby-boomers. Many had thoughts of restoring that house themselves, but we're the ones who made the move, so we would say unapologetically, damn it, make us when every thing looks like a town's shrunken DIY project. Needless to say,

there's quite a bit of civic interest in the work we've done.

That's why I'm hoping the sun will be fully out when our guests arrive, the better to hide the various paint flaws in my reborn front stoop. My chimney work follows the same better-than-it-follows-a-rabbit line. And I'm hoping they'll be drawn and caught by the infinitesimal flowers on the back of my rug, which reflect a level of landscaping usually seen only in the work of professional at summer camp. So, we are determined to present this house not only as expertly restored but also as though it contains a perpetual state of impossible photographic evidence. As if we were occupied not by a middle-class couple with two young children but by a well-tended house with the name of Casanova.

To this end, we're in the weeks leading up to the tour, throwing up a two-story ladder obscuring the door to the chandelier with a sign that reads

Yikes! one hour

Our children are sequential makers: they can do their grandparents' house, where they can do no damage with their arsenal of salt and sippy cups. All their toys are stored away behind a closed door in the basement, where we're hidden all our secret down-the-sewer-bells, boy-toy tools, broken phones, even the half-donut soapstone that we keep making meals from to water hot news. All of it is here in the secret room, tucked up above your ceiling.

Locusts are the danger by replacing the mold and falling down steps ones on any a place with more classic work of interior, but they were not with bottles well beyond our usual price range, and making my offense clear

with secret codes. As I don't want our living room to seep off the finger print I just noticed on one of our best switch plates, my wife calls out to me "You're sweating that."

"What?"
"A tip?"
"No, I want to look at it."
"You never wear a tie. You didn't wear a tie to my sister's wedding, did you? You look like a 12-year-old being dragged to church."

All those weeks of tension suddenly came rushing in a wave of silence.
"What? I don't, what's the deal, grasping at my throat. 'You wear'?"
Then the doorknob rings.

7 minutes zero

We open the front door and admire the long line of our patrons with our carefully rehearsed air of surprise, as though we weren't expecting anybody.
"Oh my god!" is the first night of the tour. "Well, I hope the place is presentable for company!"

In every town, there is a quirky subset of the population devoted entirely to local history. These are the white-haired patrons of the historical societies, the people who form book clubs, search their family diaries, and attend house tours. And now they are here, expecting our home like we were expects it a quote bar.

"Is that bathroom tile original?" one visitor asks.

"Oh, yes, of course," I reply.
"But wasn't this house built in 1915?"

"Oh, yes."

"Funny. They didn't make that tile until the 1930s."

And I really don't know what to say, because I'm actually being called

We open the door and address the long line of tour patrons with our carefully rehearsed air of surprise. "Oh my gosh! Is this the night of the tour? I hope the place is presentable!"

out as a fraud on the subject of my own home, and this is something no one ever anticipates.

I break away to restore the flow of foot traffic, leading down toward the basement hall with noise, only to discover that our secret door is open. A dozen people are waiting about in the one part of the house that contains all the dark secrets I fear true selves. The added evidence of our machine-middle-class existence.

"So, is that chandelier in the living room original?" one of the visitors asks me, and I am afraid to respond, certain I'll get the answer wrong.

In that case, quite suddenly, it's over. All our dear notions of pomp and circumstance, and politeness, and cleaning, and we are now reduced to a bag of potato chips where we shiver as when we're being cut true selves on the back story, moving on the driveway with a cold that makes over us with a secret of behavior that could only be described as *Philly Shell*.

Oh Wonderful Day
Oh Victorian Curator
Oh maybe just plain old white.

David Gifford is the author of *All the Way Home: Building a Family in a Fading Drive Home*, which comes out in paperback in June.

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Add a pop of color with wainscot stripes

For a decorative take on a classic wall finish, put some bold strokes below a chair rail.
By DEBORAH DULOVICH

Painting trends to make it for wood paneling goes back as far as the 19th century, but somewhere along the line it stopped trying to fool the eye. Today, there are still others merely mimicking a different paint treatment from what's on the upper walls, adding a contrast in color or, at best, stripes.

To give your walls a similar look, start with a neutral basecoat, then pick a secondary color that'll pick some punch. Use a pencil, ruler, and plumb line to outline the stripes, suggests New York City-based decorative painter Abbie Shapiro. Then, to give them an old-school touch, use a paint roller to paint the stripes with two parts latex glue, and pour it into a small roller tray. "The glue-paint mix may be different from what you're used to, so practice on some cheap board first until you get the right look and can do a stripe in one swipe," Shapiro says.

Roll on the wainscot, and if your edges are slightly uneven, don't worry too much. Wait a day for the paint to dry, then add the painter's touch: a French-style round artist's brush. To introduce a little contrast, use a light color with no glue for these.

Keep in mind that perfection is not the goal here. For this you could simply paint up some wallpaper or use copious amounts of painter's tape. You want your work to have a made-by-hand, folk-art quality. That's the secret to this look's charm.

Cost: About \$50

Time: 2 days

Difficulty: Moderate
Practice painting and ruling on some flatboard board first to make it a look you like.

Grouty white
basecoat
base paint
wainscot
stripes
downward

To make stripes like these, decorative painter uses latex-covered rollers like these from White Roller Systems (2 1/2 inch roller \$4) and latex paint mixed with glue (glue/paint mix is 1 part glue to 2 parts paint). And a double-finish roller (2 1/2 inch roller \$6 per quart per quart).



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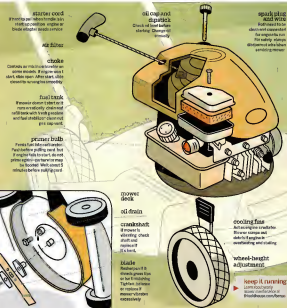


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Artist	Album	Label	Year	Genre	Notes
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1971	Soul	First album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1972	Soul	Second album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1973	Soul	Third album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1974	Soul	Fourth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1975	Soul	Fifth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1976	Soul	Sixth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1977	Soul	Seventh album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1978	Soul	Eighth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1979	Soul	Ninth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1980	Soul	Tenth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1981	Soul	Eleventh album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1982	Soul	Twelfth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1983	Soul	Thirteenth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1984	Soul	Fourteenth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1985	Soul	Fifteenth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1986	Soul	Sixteenth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1987	Soul	Seventeenth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1988	Soul	Eighteenth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1989	Soul	Nineteenth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1990	Soul	Twentieth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1991	Soul	Twenty-first album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1992	Soul	Twenty-second album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1993	Soul	Twenty-third album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1994	Soul	Twenty-fourth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1995	Soul	Twenty-fifth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1996	Soul	Twenty-sixth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1997	Soul	Twenty-seventh album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1998	Soul	Twenty-eighth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	1999	Soul	Twenty-ninth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2000	Soul	Thirtieth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2001	Soul	Thirty-first album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2002	Soul	Thirty-second album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2003	Soul	Thirty-third album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2004	Soul	Thirty-fourth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2005	Soul	Thirty-fifth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2006	Soul	Thirty-sixth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2007	Soul	Thirty-seventh album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2008	Soul	Thirty-eighth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2009	Soul	Thirty-ninth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2010	Soul	Fortieth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2011	Soul	Forty-first album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2012	Soul	Forty-second album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2013	Soul	Forty-third album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2014	Soul	Forty-fourth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2015	Soul	Forty-fifth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2016	Soul	Forty-sixth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2017	Soul	Forty-seventh album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2018	Soul	Forty-eighth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2019	Soul	Forty-ninth album
Al Green	Al Green	Atlantic	2020	Soul	Fiftieth album

[illegible]

Add dimension, color, and decoration to a blank space with a sturdy host for climbing plants
By JENNIFER STAMERON - Photos made by SCOTT SMITH

Cost: About \$100 for the router or \$120 for pressure-treated wood.
Time: 3 days.
Difficulty: Moderate. Making the notches and shaping the plywood will slow things down, but the assembly is simple.

A well conceived, well-choreographed visit may benefit the busy-tourist, but is not so much his first love, but is the real world of the teaching teacher's well-learned, fervent, and your honest-sounding. Better that you create a buffer between the deluge and the facade with a guided tour. Not only will it provide the plants with some anxious appreciation loss, but will also give you something better than a blank wall to look at and your visitor's greedy glances. As *The Glass House* senior technical editor Mark Brown shows on the following pages, it's not hard to see how the framing and 24-in. to 3-in. can be a thoughtful focal point. Put in place, and create your garden to new heights. Just don't reveal the invitation to see. *Prose Chatterbox*

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4. Set the lattice in place

Because the lattice needs to float freely, it is not attached with fasteners to the frame. This allows it to expand and contract with the weather. For this reason, the lattice shouldn't be too snug. In the frame, make sure it has room to move but still sits on the 2x4 string.

A Lay the lattice flat on a flat surface with the slope facing down. Lay the lattice inside the frame so that it's resting on the slope.

B Using a cord/cable and 1/4-inch screws, attach the back side of the frame to hold the lattice in place.

C Assemble a three-sided frame for each side panel, using the rafters above. With the main panel facing down, fit the new frame into its notches in the string. Using a cord/cable and 1/4-inch screws, secure the sides to the main panel with 3-inch deck screws. Secure at a 45-degree angle to the rafters so the sides will hold the lattice in place. Lay the lattice in place, and secure the caps on the back side of the side panels to hold them in place.

Tip Assemble the lattice near the site so that you won't have to transport the heavy pieces far.

5

5. Cut and install the caps

Trim the ends of the lattice to fit the frame with every corner. This will leave angle cuts at the ends.

A Using a miter saw with the blade set at a 45-degree angle, cut a 2x6 to the length of the entire panel plus 12 inches. Cut 2x6s to the lengths of the side panels plus 5 inches, making an angled cut at one end of each piece to a straight cut on the other end.

B Center the 2x6s over the top of each lattice panel, along a double-truss and 3-inch-deep screws, attach the caps to the top of each frame.



6

6. Install the trellis

To make sure that ascending plants attach themselves to your siding, position the trellis 2 to 3 feet away from the house. This will also give you access to the back of the trellis for pruning and maintenance, and allow air to circulate to the plants.

A Measure the distance between the ends of the uprights, and mark their locations on the ground. Using a posthole digger, make holes for the posts deep enough to hold the post feet. Pour 6 inches of 1/2-inch gravel into the bottom of each hole for drainage. Tamp the gravel.

B Lay the trellis ends face with the top of the uprights adjacent to the holes in the ground. Tell the neighbors to give a hand with the lifting. Lift a section of the bottom edge of the trellis, and add gravel where needed to bring it up to level. Check it for plumb. Once you're satisfied with the positioning, hold the trellis in place with 2x6s screwed to the sides at diagonals. Fill the holes with soil and work with some gravel, tamping it down every 6 inches. If the top branches hit soil, remove the stabilizing 2x6s and plant climbing vines and flowers on the side.

Good climbers

Fill your new trellis with flowers and vines that grow vertically. While perennials are best to keep the structure covered year-round, starting off with annuals can keep the plants up until a season here. Look out for the perennials on the right. Here are a few handy suggestions to brighten up your trellis.



Clematis
(Clematis)
Clematis is a perennial climber that grows up to 10 feet tall and produces long-lasting flowers.



Sweet Pea
(Lathyrus odoratus)
This is a climbing annual that grows up to 10 feet tall and produces a long string of flowers.



English Ivy
(Hedera helix)
This is a perennial climber that grows up to 10 feet tall and produces a dense covering of leaves.

Morning Glory

Whether it's an annual or a perennial, Morning Glory is a climbing plant that grows up to 10 feet tall and produces a dense covering of leaves.

PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS; ILLUSTRATION: JEFFREY M. HARRIS; TRELLIS: JEFFREY M. HARRIS; TRELLIS: JEFFREY M. HARRIS; TRELLIS: JEFFREY M. HARRIS

Boost your Curb Appeal

by Natalie Rodriguez

6 exterior makeovers with loads of inspiring (& money-saving!) ideas

IT'S A BACK-TO-BASICS ECONOMY, but that doesn't mean you should let your home be anything less than a pleasure to come home to. A welcoming exterior can put a spring in your step each time you climb the steps, adding the right elements can increase your daily comfort, too. Fixing up a front porch to lounge on during the hot summer months or swapping a falling roof for something new that's also maintenance-free makes your space more enjoyable—and shows your no-to-do list.

Quality upgrades continue to add value. Home prices may have dropped, but the return on remodeling investments remains strong, according to the National Association of Realtors. Not surprisingly, exterior improvements still lead the pack in terms of biggest bang for the buck, with siding and windows paying you back over 75 percent of their cost upon resale.

But it isn't only major projects that make a difference. Whether it's swapping in a good faux version of a cost, and/or expensive, material like wrought iron or switching to new hardware to breathe your front, the following pages are packed with small ways to spruce up your exterior on any budget. After all, there's never a wrong time to make your home more of a haven.



before



ADD BACK GARDEN
These vintage-looking light's were \$180 at a home center.

SAVE TO PRODUCE
Get a vintage-style solid wood door for half the price of a reproduction.

HELP THE COVE
A small vibrant aluminum fence makes an elegant iron-and-steel.

1 Enhance the architecture

Editor past down hold upwell in Atlanta a double whammy of heat and humidity but shivering one cost on top of another about parents to life span will be at short by taking Putting new into speed on our older house that likely has old paint someone and without sure to spell trouble. So the first thing local contractor Alex D. Dierfeld on the 1920 Craftsman was strip its claspboards of their 10 layers, prime them and put on two new coats of period appropriate green with crimson like trim. Then she used a little soft to color the light (light key architectural) elements that had receded into the background in the old blue and white scheme. "It's a subtle way to draw your eye to the details like the windows brackets and lion tapers," says D. Dierfeld. Sandblasting steel from the granite foundation and repainting its black double door and iron screen cost \$1,650—one third the price of other exterior

WORTH IT WORTH IT A new 10 vinyl light wood window was installed to the side of the porch. It should last 20 years or more. The last window, replaced to replace up to 75 percent of the cost of new window if they rot.

Photo: Mike Lee/istockphoto.com

FOUNDTONE
LARGE STORAGE

*By adding
pieces to define
the edges of a new
kitchen and install
cabinet before
walls are painted,
Mickley knew
how to keep
walls—only painting
them toward the
end of the house.
He also knew
how to keep his
cabinets and island—
and even the
stove—dark.
Blackware
Paddy Mountain
Hardware.*

FORM & FUNCTION

*By the way, find
an atmosphere
relatives on eBay
or Craigslist and
have a retro
day to use
modern goods.
This house
isn't even
halfway out of
the house, but
it's a long way
from the house
to the house.*

**MODERN
LEGACY**

*Of the house,
some are in
a dark, dark or
a modern style.
For the house,
it's a long way
from the house
to the house.
It's a long way
from the house
to the house.*

BEFORE

*Before the first
move, the house
had a pretty
design layout
with lots of
wooded space.*



By Anne

ANATOMY OF A MODERN VINTAGE KITCHEN

*Learn two design pros' tricks for creating an OPEN-PLAN,
MULTIPURPOSE space with just the right dose of OLD-FASHIONED CHARM*

By JILL CONNORS Photographs by ERIC ROTH Styled by COLETTE SANSLOW

c

b

a



Kitchens are natural gathering places, and the more they cue up feelings of hearth and home,

the stronger the pull. But when the owners of this kitchen, Ellen Eissle and Gary Russo, moved into their 1906 Shingle style house with three young daughters, the evening space felt as if it had been dropped into place without regard to early-20th-century architectural traditions or 21st-century lifestyle. Previous rooms had left behind a room with a dysfunctional layout, which had the fridge off to a corner facing the back door—32 feet from the sink and 14 feet from the stove. It was large enough but lacked a heart. "All the workstations were a mixed 90 degrees, with nothing in the middle," says Eissle, so if to discourage them from grabbing a meal together or working on the mother-daughter craft projects they enjoy.

A professional photo stylist, Ellen knew she could create a warmer mood with just a few changes in the visual landscape. When a 1990s Wedgewood stove popped a pop on eBay, she made the vintage bid, dispatching her find to a nearby restaurateur, then showing it at the garage. She also had, tucked away in an inspiration file, a water-color rendering of the kind of cupboards she felt she imagined the house might originally have had: a rimmed bar of how much other vintage furniture can have in an otherwise up-to-date kitchen. "Hutches evoke that whole era of the well-lit kitchen," she says, "before built-in cabinets became the norm."

But Ellen and Gary, who met on a wedding tour of old Boston, wanted more than a cosmetic improvement. Yes, they tinkered for a better functioning kitchen where everyone could assemble, not only for meals but to take care of bills, school projects, homework, paperwork, and all the rest. But they also hoped for a more workable ground floor plan. Given a technical program mirroring the idea of an adjacent to any room where he could hang out with a counter of the kitchen. That, plus a rethinking of the kitchen, could yield even making space open space, where those people could work on separate projects—together. Continued on page 4



TEACHING AN OLD HUTCH NEW TRICKS

One secret to this new old kitchen's charm—and utility—lies in one old cupboard that acts as a divider between the kitchen and family room. The island retains oak panels and built-in shelving to make the newly built piece look old. "It's so close to the cabinets that were made in old times," says Marc Poirier of Tanglefoot Lumber, supplier of the oak. "Especially in the dining room, the wood is character." Architect Martin Pomeroy designed the built-in, giving it a rustic style but, she thinks, a modern hardware. It is topped by a counter that also level with the existing oak side of the open cabinet. Instead of the 19th-century the inspiration of a fabric store, side shot of color to the glass-front upper cupboards (SHEDS). When under this built-in's modern, of course, is the way it divides two rooms, serving as a porous divider in an open plan. The upper cabinets open on both sides with shelves reachable from either room, while the base cupboards are separated, and a wrap-around counter gives the piece its unified look.



PRO ADVICE MARTIN POMEROY ARCHITECT, ARJUNION, MASS.

To adapt an existing hutch as a room divider, finish the raw side. Even better, add open shelves. You don't want the cupboard to turn its back on either room.

PANEL DOORS AND REFRIGERATOR
46 Combine two types of panel doors for a modern look. The built-in refrigerator is a built-in refrigerator. The built-in refrigerator is a built-in refrigerator. The built-in refrigerator is a built-in refrigerator.

OLD TIME ACCENTS
47 Very hard to find in old houses are old time accents. The built-in refrigerator is a built-in refrigerator. The built-in refrigerator is a built-in refrigerator. The built-in refrigerator is a built-in refrigerator.

SPONSOR COUNCIL
48 Overall, the new kitchen is a great place to spend time. The built-in refrigerator is a built-in refrigerator. The built-in refrigerator is a built-in refrigerator. The built-in refrigerator is a built-in refrigerator.

With the fully-recessed stainless steel undermount sink, the living room, an island over anchors the cooking space and offers additional storage but when the wild and wild come down



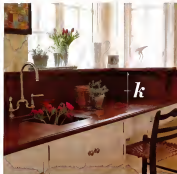
(4) The circularity in image, studies of earlier years, is further explained as above. The polarizer dichroism is calculated as relative term and obtained results, as profiles in the spectrum in the film plane.



So they called in Martha Denavick, an architect known in their Arlington, Massachusetts, neighborhood for her work on old houses. That one, with its striking new gables and deep overhangs, caught her imagination because of its "fairy-tale feel," she says. "But the kitchen didn't have any of the charm of the rest of the house. It felt like this bar room room."

His priority was to step up the function and improve the flow with more preplanned storage space, plus room for various activities, while making it a rhythmic march to the house. Noting how the back door always jammed in the bridge and how the placement of the dining room door made it impossible to add chairs in its left, he bumped the wall out 36 feet, squaring off the room. In one blow he set the location of its back door and moved the bridge nearer the door.

The hangout, with four ratty windows, also made space for two skivers and, in effect, three rooms at once, with a crafts corner and office nook alongside the cooking area. "I learned not by establishing circulation patterns," says Pinesnik, who assessed the workstations to her



them out of the flight path to the dining room.

Her next big decision was to remove the sink wall to open the kitchen to a new family room addition. When she finally decided to build the room, Stal, Pennerski thought the open plan was a little too open. Her first suggestion was a pair of half walls to delineate the spaces but preserve open sight lines. Eltern had different ideas, preferring Pennerski with her: a reduction of the kitchen island. Pennerski, with fond memories of her own grandfather's striped island, was stumped. And as the two women talked, they hit her on the idea of a bench with an unusual cover. With capboards opening on both sides, it could serve as a room divider while adding back the storage that was sacrificed when the old sink was—and its cabinets—were done.

Tilson loved the idea of using reclaimed wood for its microwave, so Perschke used it not only for the base, but also for an island that houses modern efficiency and vintage styling. The drawers and pullout trash bin are mostly concealed behind wood panels. Open shelf storage allows access to the microwave on one side and, on another, provides a foothold for anyone who wants to slide up to the counter for a snack or keep the cook company.

With its warm finishes and arid details, the once young moon is now as intimate and familiar as the kitchen in Peasebitt's grandmother's house. It's also busy as a beehive: "I can be in the computer and Jiro can be doing homework at the island, and Gary can be watching TV on the other side of the porch," says Edgema. "It all happens as intended." ■

STORAGE
 3 Tons, all-weather
 of storage tubular
 like chain and
 drivers. The most
 heavy-duty design
 3-ton capacity
 engine supply
 tubular and
 engine. Custom
 3-ton capacity

[illegible]

READER
REMODEL

By Ross Higgins,
Ithaca, New York

My new yard was a half-acre floodplain

She loved the wooded site—until it filled up like a lake with every downpour. Mad, wet, but undeterred, she carved out a flowering paradise (and a swimming pool) from the muck. Here's how



I bought the property in the fall, and I was really looking forward to the coming summer, when I could start gardening in my new yard. Then the spring rains came. During the first downpour, which went on for hours, I watched in horror as the back yard filled up. I'd always wanted a pool, but this wasn't it. The flood was run-off from the road behind my property, which slopes down from there. I hadn't asked—and then that, basically, my place was in a bowl. And it became all too clear in the months that followed that the flood wasn't a one-time thing.

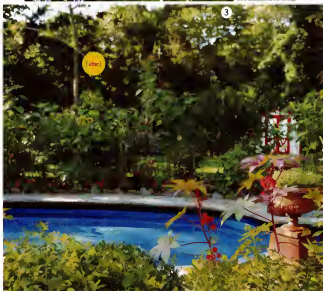
After years of waiting places in the area, I fell in love with the town of Hempstead Harbor, on the eastern end of New York's Long Island. And in November 1997, I purchased this 2.5-year-old ranch-style house on half an acre. It had some woods, and the property was nicely secluded. It was my first house, and I figured it was something I could handle. During that first winter, I opened up the stairs, raising the ceiling in the main rooms. When the weather warmed, a friend and I built an outdoor shower enclosure (she'd loved a handyman out of the PrivacyFence to do the simple plumbing). I dug and a backhoe no overhanging the backyard and found a contractor, but he stopped showing up. Since I like to work with my hands—I make costumes for theater and film for a living—I finished leveling the area myself and paid someone to lay the bricks.

ABOVE: After every third rain the homeowner's backyard was inundated with standing water. It reached the edge of the patio that was her first outdoor project after she bought the place.



Find even more by growing many plants from cuttings or seeds, including (1) lavender, (2) sunflowers and (3) tulips. And you can also use the seeds, including (4) and (5) for the pool.

Note: Numbers show the sequence of the landscape plan in the next page.





ABOVE: The homeowner traveling in her neglected backyard. She used wood chips from pallets found for the worms in the rear.

Then came the first flood. I went to the room, because legally the road runoff is their responsibility, but they weren't much help. I fought them, but there was a flood every year. Some were worse than others, but I was always a nightmare. Between designs, I got busy at home. There was no landscaping plan at the rear of the house, just pea stones, so I placed mums, herbs, and lilacs. I rented the seers for various things, like making French drains for the downspouts. I love my garden, but I didn't close it in years. I didn't have any kind of plan. It was mostly trial and error, though I occasionally place works of color. I started two beds in the front, but I still had chaos in the back.

More than four years after buying the place, I finally tackled the backyard. I decided I could spend my money on using the trees or spend the same amount fixing the problem myself. I found a wonderful contractor who figured out what was going on. He upgraded, took down more than 40 trees, and hauled in 15 cubic yards of topsoil. With all the ground-up tree stumps and the topsoil, we built three berms across the back of my property to stem the floods. There's no seeping where the runoff flows to and a corner to my yard, so the water flows the better and makes an easy way into a large dry well. It's not a perfect solution; last July we had 15 inches of rain in two hours, and everyone flooded. But it's much, much better.

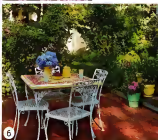
In the months right after the excavation, I put in a rock garden and a vegetable bed in the back and a shade bed at the side yard.



What I did

Redesigned a half-acre lot on New York's Long Island to address flooding issues, put in a patio and swimming pool, and cleared out 15 beds for flowers and vegetables.
Landscaping costs: \$25,000 for the flood work; \$4,000 for an irrigation system, and \$20,000 for the pool.
Time frame: 12 years. Four years of haphazardly figuring out what to do about the flooding, and two months for the regrading. It took less than a month to put in the pool. I built garden beds over 10 years.
Where I saved: I started plants and shrubs from cuttings that neighbors gave me, grew plants from seeds and used lots of recycled material.

Where I splurged: The pool's exterior: \$20,000 for the exterior material, \$4,000 heater and \$5,000 for generator.
What I did differently: I put in a sunroom off the back of the house. I yearn for that winter sun.
Biggest challenge: Solving any drainage problems.
How I solved it: I talked to neighborhood engineers, people who work for the town. When I found Tom Landgoed of Memo Landscaping Excavating, in Hampton Bays, it was clear he knew exactly what to do. He is a local who grew up working with his dad. He also gave me credit for knowing what was happening and my insistence to make sense to him.



(4) A pink and white lily. (5) A pink and white lily. (6) A small white table and chairs. (7) A small white table and chairs. (8) A person working on a garden bed.

Photo of two large blue hydrangeas in the back of the house that I planted in the rear of the property. The two green blue plants from my photos (8) with trees removed from the backyard there is a simple car for the two trees, vegetable garden.

I've really tilled the yard by degrees. I'd do the side yard, then the back, then work on a bed in the front. I thought I'd just have shade gardens, but once those 40 trees were gone, I got a lot of sun. I've expanded the vegetable bed, put in one for greens, added other beds and built pathways and garden accessories. I've done most of the work myself or with friends. I look in books and magazines like *The Old Farmer* and just figure it out.

I had a pool installed three years ago. I chose a kidney shape because I love the '60s. It's vinyl with a black liner, which keeps the water warm. I love that I don't have to deal with rusty chemicals. Instead, I have a generator that makes chlorine out of salt. The water is soft, so your skin doesn't dry out. And I have a flower bed by the pool, where I plant azaleas in spring. By midsummer, they tower over the pool, and I can watch birds eating the seeds as I swim. How cool is that?

I've learned a lot along the way—mainly



homeowner tip

ROSE INGLETS, HAMPTON, VA
"The patio guy didn't finish, and scratched with my deposit. Moral: Get good recommendations and check references before you hire."

that plants grow, especially vines. You need to know what spreads and ascends, like the ones at Shiro's shrubs that now come up everywhere. Chinese lanterns are so invasive that I pull out as many as I can and cut what's left, and I still have lots. And vegetables! I had so many cucumbers last year that even after giving away as many as I could, I pickled three dozen jars. It also helped I don't like to baby plants, if something doesn't survive the winter, that's it. Three fig trees didn't make it, so now I have fig trees in pots and wheel those inside when it gets cold.

One thing I did right was put in a sprinkler system when I had the yard upgraded. I also maximize the garden with very little money. I start a lot of plants from seeds or cuttings, and I go to yard sales. I get a \$100 14-ft mulcher for \$25, and I mulch azalea leaves to cover the garden. I make compost all year, and since I don't use pesticides I mulch the vegetable beds with lawn clippings. Nothing



9



10



11



12

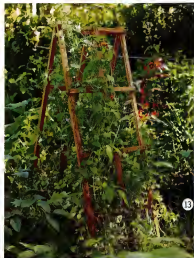


13

goes to waste. I even edged a bed with old wine bottles instead of mulch, and I put water in the depressions of the bottle bottoms to attract butterflies.

I've really enjoyed sprinkling a variety and accessories around the garden. There are accessories that I made, including the one on the top of a metal patio table that I found at the town dump. I've named my house "Seawave," which means dash of glass or tiles used to make a mosaic. The house, the plants, and everything else in my garden are a mosaic, just like my life. When you lose something, all the little pieces just fall into place. ■

(9) Snowy globe alligatree grows alongside the garage. (10) Rose tying up one of the bamboo-pole trellises she made for growing beans in her large vegetable bed. The bean bushes are also interested and seem a number of tubers. (11) An 18-by-20-foot built-in house with a thatched roof at the back of the yard near the compost pile. She bought it for \$750 at a local store. The third someone had it up for sale in her yard. (12) Rose especially loves birds. She's built a bird nest for the police and placed it in the garden. (13) Rose and black-eyed Susan.



13



16

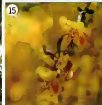


17

(14) The original 14-by-20 vegetable garden from more than a decade ago. (15) Rose and her husband added a 14-by-18 bed for greens. She built this new bed from 2x material and chicken wire. (16) The garden is home to a number of birds, including one created from a chicken box and wooden bowls. (17) Rose's house grows the table yard a lot of plants. (18) Rose's climbing roses add a deep velvety color to the patio. (19) The blue-toned patio around the kidney-shaped pool was a custom design. It provides a welcome place for relaxing to one of Rose's classic-shaped chairs in the yard of the country.



14



15

more inspiration
For another reader's take on how to make the most of your space, check out our story and photo gallery on page 102.

SALE

THIS OLD HOUSE UNCOVERS

HIDDEN WAYS TO SAVE

We searched high and low to sleuth out the top secrets of pro contractors and die-hard DIYers for saving money when you hit the home stores

by Cathy Garcia
Illustration by Mark Matzko

1 DO YOUR RESEARCH UP FRONT

- A lot of shopping tips involve savvy price work—and there's money angles, too.
- **Make a comprehensive list of project supplies** so that you can pick up everything you need in one shot. Visit the "How to a Repair" section at thisoldhouse.com for lists of materials and tools needed for various projects.
- **Double-check measurements** so that you don't waste money on parts and pieces that don't fit.
- **Compare prices online** to streamline the bargain-hunting process. Sites such as Shopping.com, PriceGrabber.com, and Scoopville.com quickly give you an idea of a product's price range at various retailers.

2 SURF FOR COUPONS

- More than 26 million Americans downloaded online coupons in 2008. You can find printable coupons at these sites:
- **CouponCrew.com** and **ibuy.com** offer daily and weekly deals for home improvement stores.
- **RediMail.com** lets you sign up to receive deals when your favorite stores have a sale or post a new deal.
- **SavingsGiver.com** lets you enter your ZIP code to see advertised sales and coupons for your local newspaper.
- **FreeShipping.org** offers coupons for free-cost delivery at more than 1,000 stores.

3 TIME YOUR TRIP RIGHT

- Cutting costs isn't just about where you shop or what you buy. When you shop matters, too.
- **Hit the stores early.** Sale items are usually marked down late in the day or after closing time. Say you'll have first dibs on a sale item early in the morning.
- **Visit sales of home stores** from Saturday through Friday, so the best selection is available early in the weekend.
- **Stores receive sales** at the end of every month, quarter, and year. Plan to make large purchases at these times; stores are often willing to cut deals to help meet these deadlines.

4 FIND YOUR OWN BARGAIN

- The clearance aisle might be picked over, but that doesn't mean you can't strike a deal. Clear Top Tips for Hagglers for a quick primer on asking for discounts.
- **Ask sales clerks first** because they usually know what has just been marked down and what's going on sale.
- **Visit under hardware and home stores** in your neighborhood. If you're a regular and friendly face, you might be the first one they tell about upcoming sales—and they may even offer to special-order items they don't normally stock.
- **Bring flyers from other retailers** offering a lower price and ask if the store will match them. Sears and Home Depot have price-matching policies and will sometimes beat competitors' prices by up to 10 percent. Smaller local stores may follow on their price to win your business.

HOMEOWNER TIPS

"If you need wood for small projects, check the scrap bin. You can often get a quarter or half of a 4x4 plywood sheet, or a small piece of a 2x6, for a fraction of the cost of a whole piece."
—BRIGGS
ADVICE@THISOLDHOUSE.COM

"Save money on fertilizers by purchasing in bulk, where you fill a bag with the fertilizer of your choice. That way, you don't overbuy for the project at hand."
—A. STUBBS
ADVICE@THISOLDHOUSE.COM

"Always look at the 'cups' paint—colors that were mixed wrong or that customers returned. Usually, you can get it for \$5 per gallon instead of \$25 or \$30 per gallon."
—FRANKFORD
ADVICE@THISOLDHOUSE.COM

TOP TIPS FOR HAGGLING

Feeling skittish about asking for a deal? Follow this time-tested, expert-verified advice.

- **Know what you bargain for.** You're most likely to get discounts on bulk purchases, high-priced items such as appliances, floor-to-ceiling damaged and discontinued items, and goods that have languished in the clearance aisle.
- **Speak to a "decider."** Sales clerks usually don't have the authority to offer you discounts. Always ask to speak to a manager.
- **Close prepared.** Practice your pitch before delving in. Says Michael D. Condon, author of *Negotiating for Dummies*, "You should also let the manager know a price fast. Example: 'I'm interested in this drill, but I've seen it online for less. What is the best price you can give me?' Get more specific if need be, a good rule of thumb is to offer 10 to 30 percent below the sticker price or to ask if the store will match or beat a competitor's price."
- **Be flexible on the deal.** You might be able to get free delivery or assembly instead of a discount.
- **Be polite!** Sincerity and respect are important negotiating tools, says Condon. Whether you're merely shy or bold, act authentic and avoid being rude—you're more likely to get a good result.

how do you save?

Visit www.thisoldhouse.com for more tips on saving money on your home projects.

ALL ABOUT

Concrete pavers

When it's time for a new driveway or poolside patio, this easy-to-install option is tough, cost-effective, and surprisingly handsome. The TOH experts show you how to choose well for your next project. **By Jeanne Heber**

One trick to making a richly planted—or even stony—yard feel more manicured is to add a neatly defined piece of hardscaping. Patios and paths or an upgraded driveway not only define space but also provide the kind of concrete that makes a flower bed or lawn pop.

But if traditional surfacing materials leave you feeling as flat as poured concrete, consider pavers—concrete pavers. More affordable than stone, more colorful than brick, and more durable than sephol, concrete pavers are a practical yet attractive option anywhere on the property. And because they're modular, they're easy to install and fix, even for DIYers.

Concrete pavers fall into two categories: interlocking and architectural slab. Interlocking pavers were invented by the Dutch after World War II, when bricks, like traditional paving material, were in short supply. Because of the chunky bricks' broad design, many early European-made, and many of the original are still in good shape despite 50 years of traffic. Little surprise, then, that their consumer counterparts come with a lifetime warranty and make perfect driveway material. For all their practicality, however, interlocking pavers lack the natural look of the France-inspired travertine and plant shapes, unlike many architectural.

Architectural slab pavers provide a more aesthetic alternative. Though these thinner slabs can't handle auto traffic like their interlocking kin (and are slightly more sensitive to the vagaries of the freeze-thaw cycle), they mimic the look of brick or natural stone. Best of all, they do it for much less than the real deal.

Read on to find more information and plenty of inspiration on concrete pavers that will help you tackle your next hardscaping project with confidence.

The two types

All concrete pavers contain used gravel, Portland cement, and water, but their durability and texture vary depending on how they're made.

INTERLOCKING

- Edges lock into one another, creating uniform joints.
- Made with stiff, very strong concrete.
- Thick, suitable for all uses, including driveways.



ARCHITECTURAL SLAB

- No edges, so they're less likely to crack.
- Made with wetter concrete to resemble stone or brick.
- Thin, not good for driveways.



VITALS

What's the cost?

Pavers typically run \$3–\$10 per sq. ft., including labor. Agre installations including base prep and materials do \$5–\$25 per square foot.

DIY or hire out?

While a little more, you can tackle a path or small patio. For driveways or large projects, hire a pro.

Do they hold up?

Interlocking pavers offer extra insurance for structural integrity. But for architectural slabs, have insurance.



When can they get?

They're available for paths and patios, and before that, in general, only interlocking pavers work in driveways. Where not available, see paver alternatives.

Can you get a paver? If not, see paver alternatives. Or see "The paver" issue, page 80.

Easy to care for?

Absolutely—they're concrete. No occasional sweeping and washing is all this concrete ever needs. If you want to keep that good look, look for pavers to look off stains or release stains. In any climate, use a sealer to protect.

Are concrete pavers right for you?

Consider these factors before you buy

pros **Easy installation.** Their flat bottoms, interlocking sides, and tight-fitting shaped edges make pavers go down more quickly than most natural stone. **Slip resistance.** Driveway pavers offer better traction than poured concrete, especially on steep slopes. **Resilience.** Pavers move independently, unlike poured concrete or asphalt, which can crack from ice heaves or swelling tree roots. Repairs are simple: Pull up the affected pavers, make the fix, and put them back.

Weather resistance. Pavers survive freezing conditions without splitting or cracking if they meet industry standards for minimum water absorption.

cons **Color changes.** Surface wear that reveals the underlying aggregate changes the overall color and appearance. Tumbled pavers are already worn but not as formal. **Faded pavers** have an acid-wash layer, but that costs their cost.

Stains. Pavers absorb stains, especially oil, which require a thorough cleaning with a degreaser and pressure washer or replacement. Sealers will slow off staining, but they must be reapplied every couple of years.

Repeats. Unlike real stone, concrete slabs have repeating shapes and textures—dead giveaways that they're fake. You may need a pro to do an installation that disguises these repeats.

Waste. Anywhere there's a joint, weeds can sprout.



The competition

Concrete naturally won't erode like the porous stone. Here are the most traditional alternatives:



BRICK

First, clay pavers cost about the same as concrete pavers: \$2–\$3 per square foot or \$50–\$55 installed. Color choices are limited, but the brick doesn't change from wear or mold like they really require extra film of moss.



STONE

The versatility option at \$6–\$20 per square foot or \$35–\$20 installed, but it has a limited look. Choose stone like the granite used to make those cobbles, or virtually any irregular stone up to one and a half feet. Porous limestone and sandstone are more vulnerable to staining.



The runoff issue

Rainwater that washes over most paved surfaces, including many concrete pavers, has been known to cause downstream erosion and strain municipal sewer systems. But permeable interlocking pavers eliminate runoff. These pavers have extra-wide joints or molded-in drain holes so that water can flow directly into the soil, which recharges groundwater and traps contaminants. The pavers also require concrete block base or carefully graded crushed stone for optimal drainage, so installation is more complicated and expensive. But there's a bonus: no puddles!

Pick your paver

With varying colors, textures, and shapes, there's a paver for every landscape. Here are a few of our favorite looks



"stone" paver

Product: Old World Stone by Grigio
Weight: 30 lbs. (max.)
Price: \$5.75
Highlight: Three sizes let you customize your patio and avoid some edge-cutting.



"brick" paver

Product: CapriStone by Unilock
Weight: 2 lbs.
Price: \$4
Highlight: The look of worn, aged brick instantly adds charm to a driveway.



"flagstone" paver

Product: Ideal Stone by Mayland
Weight: 25 lbs. (max.)
Price: \$180
Highlight: The irregular edges fit together like jigsaw pieces. Fewer joints make one paver look like two or three, edged bits.

"flagstone" paver

Product: Sandstone by Premiere
Weight: 32 lbs. (max.)
Price: \$80
Highlight: These stones have a natural shape with sanding on their top surfaces.

Blue pavers, pavements.com



pebble finish

Product: Exposed Aggregate paver by StoneLine
Weight: 22 lbs.
Price: \$5
Highlight: A pebbly surface provides slip resistance, which is useful around pools.



"sandstone" paver

Product: StoneStone, by StoneLine
Weight: 20 lbs.
Price: \$5.50
Highlight: These heavy, 2-foot-square pavers add a lot of natural stone without the texture of split-stone.



modern "brick" paver

Product: Newer Modern by StoneLine
Weight: 16 lbs.
Price: \$5
Highlight: Their crisp lines visually stretch a pathway's length.

Get it right: Use a 1/2" thick sand bed. A 4" thick base is recommended.



rough "cobbles" paver

Product: Cobble, by Pavestone
Weight: 13 lbs.
Price: \$3.25
Highlight: Each paver looks like the real thing, with a rough, irregular shape.



smooth "cobbles" paver

Product: Cobblestone, by Unilock
Weight: 8 lbs.
Price: \$4
Highlight: Re-creates the polished, uniform look of European cobble.



How to install pavers

Whether you do it yourself or hire someone for the job, here's what has to happen

ORDER MATERIALS

Pavers: Manufacturer handbooks specify the number of pavers per square foot. Get 10–15 percent extra so that you'll have enough for cut pavers or spacers.

Sand and paver base (subbase): A cubic yard covers 324 square feet 3 inches deep. If you order by the ton, have the supplier do the conversion.

SET THE BLOCKS

1. **Rebar:** Dig out any base or fill to reach stable, undisturbed subsoil.

2. **Lay the base:** Spread and compact the paver base, followed by a 1½-inch layer of concrete sand.

(Heavily draining clay soils may require extra base materials to encourage drainage.)

3. **Set the edges:** Nail down a metal or plastic edging to give pavers a firm support that will hold them in place.

4. **Lay the pavers:** Set the pavers snug to one another in a pattern that minimizes the number of cut pieces.

5. **Fill the joints:** Spread mason's sand over the surface, and work it into the joints with a vibrating plate compactor.



Making repairs

To extract the first paver in the field, use a pry bar or shovel to scrape out the joint around the paver. Wet the joint, then work the tip of two screwdrivers into the short ends. Pry the paver up until it's high enough to grab, then wiggle it out. If the paver is too compacted, break it apart with a masonry chisel and a 3-pound mallet. Remove the rest of the paver by hand.

Make sure the mason's sand is flat before resetting the pavers. After the pavers are all back in place, sweep more mason's sand into the joints, wet it, then sweep it more until the joints are filled.



pro advice ROGER COOK, FFL
LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR

"For Diggers, I recommend the running-bond pattern shown here. It requires the fewest cuts, so it goes down fastest."

Pick your style

Pavers come in many shapes, detailed to suit almost any architecture, and can transform a ho-hum outdoor space into a handsome and durable expression of your taste

Cool pool surround

These pavers have irregular shapes and textures that mimic the look of real stone and, when wet, are less slippery than the real thing. Making these ideal around pools. Package shows in gray, charcoal, and beige. \$14 per square foot; biggest lot



Old-world patio

With a cool weathered look and well-worn grout, these pavers are an especially good match for adobe or stucco houses. Plaza Stone Her Stage, is an array of colors. \$1.35 per square foot; pavers.com



"Brick" driveway

Deep red and pavers seem to be the appropriate on old houses—ones that look old. Copolmans, is a variety of colors. \$18 per square foot; united.com



Moderne walkway

The clean lines and smooth faces of these long, narrow pavers make a fine complement to a contemporary exterior. Granada white and porcelain. \$6 per square foot; shopcivill.com



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Should you seal your pavers?

Pavers will survive fine without sealers, but applying one is good precaution to prevent staining, mold growth, rot, discoloration, weeds, or loose joint sand. Sealing is essential in areas of pools to keep out oil of grease. Clean pavers first, using a degreaser. If necessary, seal with a dry mix on under the garden sprayer, following the manufacturer's directions. Seal them to seal every couple of years.

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY OF LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS; COURTESY OF LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS



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inside

CLEAN A DRAIN

MOUNT A TV

SAVE A TREE

MORE



25
 tips, tricks, and
 answers for
 your home-
 improvement
 questions

Q The paint has worn off my favorite hand fork, and now it gets rusty after every use. What's the best way to keep this from happening?

—JOANNE CHARTS, ATLANTA

A When a hand fork gets rusty, it makes it harder to use. That's why This Old House home-improvement contractor Roger Cook recommends following this regimen after each use: Wash the fork with soap and water, dry it off, then spray the tines with WD-40. After you wipe off the excess, store your fork indoors in a dry spot.

—THE EDITORS

PHOTOGRAPH BY GABRIEL NELSON

Our Cast of Veteran Experts



TOM SILVA
General Contractor



MIKE ADAMS
Master Carpenter



HOWARD TRETHEWEY
Plumbing and Sewing Expert



ROBECIO CORDEIRO
Landscape Contractor



RAJIV O'CONNELL
Fire

Two years ago I planted three white pine trees, but now they're so different in size you'd never know they were put in at the same time. Why would they grow at different rates? —GEORGE DETLOW, BOWFIELD, OHIO



Rajiv O'Connell
spreads a thick layer of mulch around the base of a tree to keep branches

Rajiv O'Connell replies: From what I can see in the photos you sent, the problem with the smallest tree is a lack of water, possibly due to poor soil. The best-laid tree has a mulched ring around it, while the others have weeds and grass growing up to their trunks. This means the smallest tree has extra competition for water, and they don't have any buffer from lawnmowing equipment, which appears to have whacked their bark.

So here's what I think you should do: First, pull up the weeds and grass—without damaging the roots—and create a bare, circular patch around each tree that extends from the trunk to a point about 6 inches beyond the tips of the longest branches.

Next, feed the roots. Starting 1 foot from the trunk, use an iron bar to poke a series of holes 1 foot deep and 1 foot apart over the entire bare area. Following the instructions on a bag of overgreen fertilizer, measure out the amount you'll need to cover the patches. Blend it into a wheelbarrow's worth of compost, and fill the holes. Mulch the patches with 2 to 3 inches of wood chips or shredded bark.

To ensure that your trees get enough water during the growing season, wrap a soaker hose around each one in concentric circles about 1 foot apart, and bury it under the mulch. Soak the trees once a week, or twice weekly during really dry spells, and you should see them improve.

SAVING WATER WITH CISTERNS

My line is a house, built about 1961, that has an underground cistern. How was it installed then? The cistern was asked don't really know.

—GORDON JACKLITTLE
MUSKEG, MANITOWA, CANADA

Kyle O'Connor replies: A cistern is simply a large covered tank for collecting rainwater. They've been used all over the world, and archeologists have found ones that are at least 6,000 years old.

When your house was built, the cistern might have been used as a source of drinking or bath water to supplement a well, or maybe to irrigate a vegetable or flower garden when the well was out. In some cases, cisterns are constructed as a source of water for fighting fires. We recently observed an abandoned one for a home on the densely settled borough of Brooklyn, New York, where it still has the latest FORTV pipes.

Lately, cisterns have become popular again as water conservation experts warn us of shortages during summer droughts. In fact, many towns in arid parts of the U.S. encourage their residents to save water by installing cisterns for watering lawns and gardens.

If you want to install more about cisterns, take a look at the list down below, learned from the Home Water Development Board at www.waterboards.ca.gov. It explains many ways to set up cisterns to collect water for landscaping and drinking.

FRAGILE DRAIN PIPES

Our upstairs bathroom sink is newly plugged, but plumbers refuse to work it. They say the drain pipes, installed in 1936 when the house was built, are too fragile and may break in the effort. We'd gladly replace the pipes, but that would mean ripping out the beautiful hand-painted plaster ceiling in the kitchen below. What do you suggest?

—JOHN AND BANA, CHANDLER, OHIO

WHAT IS IT?

1. Garden uplifter

2. Saw blade

3. Paintbrush

4. Or...

5. Or...

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Michael Trethewey replies: I would suggest finding a good plumber. Several in line, these drain pipes are going to get big, whether you make them or not. And when that happens, you'll end up replacing the ceiling anyway, along with anything that is left on top of it.

In the meantime, follow your plumber's advice, and don't try to clean the drain mechanically. Also, avoid using standard chemical drain cleaners, because they generate heat that might not be helpful in this situation.

A gentle bacteria-based drain cleaner, such as the ones made by Bio-Clean, would be a safer bet. It should work in as long as the drain isn't completely clogged, although it might take several applications.

PORCH ROOF FIX

A handyman I hired to paint the exposed underside of my front porch roof fixed the gaps between the roof boards with some sort of sealer, which is now falling out. I see the look of open rafters. Is it a little embarrassing by the overall appearance? Do you have any advice?

—WENDY MASSEY, REDWOOD BEACH, CALIF.

Tom Silva replies: I can think of a couple of ways to solve this problem, once all the loose siding has been pulled out. You could roof it by 1/2-inch strips of wood over each joint, push like a board-and-batten wall. Place the strips on all sides before you install them to protect them from moisture.

You could also have the man under porch roof it with thick lead or plywood, cut so it fits loosely between the rafters. The plywood will look like it's over on 1x1 rafters fastened to the sides of each rafter. Take the plywood to the rafters, and cover the gap between the plywood and the rafters with quarter-round molding, which will also help hold the plywood in place.

With either method, make sure the nails you use aren't long enough to poke a hole in the roofing.

MOUNTING A PLASMA TV

I want to hang a 60-inch, 125-pound plasma TV on a brick wall. Which anchors should I use to hold up the mounting bracket?

—DAVID WISNOLLO, HUNTSVILLE, ALA.

Tom Silva replies: Mounting brackets typically come with instructions

that you should follow to the letter. But if your instructions don't answer what to do on brick, I'd go with lag-screwshield anchors, metal shields that fit into holes drilled into the brick, not the mortar. A TV on lag screws requires lag-type steel shields. Shields made of plastic or lead aren't strong enough, don't-type shields are for concrete. Use a shield the same size as the screw diameter specified for your bracket. So, for example, if each screw needs 1/2-inch shields.

Here's how to proceed:

1. Fasten the bracket on the wall so that it's level and four mounting holes land near the horizontal centerline of four separate bricks—not on the mortar. Mark those hole locations with a pencil.

2. Using a masonry bit and drill for the shield diameter, drill a hole at each mark 1/2-inch deeper than the length of the shield.

3. Vise out the disc from each hole, then tap the shields in with a hammer until they're flush.

4. Fasten the mounting bracket to the shields using the screws provided.

When you drive a screw into a shield, the shield expands tightly against the walls of the hole, making a secure connection to the masonry. Now you can safely hang your TV.

BUILT-INS OVER BARFET

I'm about to make a built-in bookcase for a room with well-to-well carpeting. I know how to do the woodworking, but how I should install it?

—CYNTHIA KENNEDY, GA.

Norm Abrams replies: Carpet may always go directly on a solid floor joist subfloor. If you did put an overlay, it would be difficult to get the bookcase level and to keep it that way, because the carpet and pad will gradually compress over

FROM THE TOH TV JOB SITE



Tom Silver helps plasterer Kevin Ponsa fill in missing crown at the TOH TV project house in New York City.

A leak left some plaster crown molding in my house in need of repair. Should I patch it with the real thing, or tear it all down and replace it with modern materials? What's involved?

—STEPHEN K FROM ROCHESTER, N.Y.

Tom replies: You need to consider the amount to be patched and the cross-section of the profile. The smaller the job and the more complicated the design, the more it costs per foot to replace in plaster. For small repairs for replacement, whether with wood or even plaster crown foam, means a lot of labor and a big cost. If you have

only a few feet here or there, I'd recommend repairing. You'll cause less damage to the walls.

Keep in mind that making plaster crown molding is a craft that takes years to learn. It's a job for a specialist rather than a homeowner, or even a general contractor's crew. I recently watched Scott Schryback, a plasterer in Brooklyn, New York, and his team make about 30 feet of new crown for the current TOH TV project house. Here's how they copied the moldings for the 105-year-old brownstone in their shop.

Cost: \$35 to \$50 per linear foot installed
Time: 1 to 2 weeks

HOW IT'S DONE: Poling plaster moldings

1. Prepping the mold

Scott Schryback is a crew chief for his plaster crew and is in charge of prepping the base for the plaster mold. He uses a brush to clean the base with a brush to remove any dust or debris. He also uses a brush to clean the base with a brush to remove any dust or debris.



2. Pouring the plaster

Working on a plaster mold, Miller pours the liquid plaster into the trough. The material flows in a single mass of water and mixed gypsum. Miller starts pouring along the trough's edges and then runs to the center. He has to work quickly to fill the mold completely before the plaster starts to set up.



3. Forming the profile

A shaped metal edge, known as a knife, is used to finish the plaster. Miller uses a large wooden "knife" to finish the plaster. Miller pushes the knife along the setting plaster. It takes about 25 minutes and a dozen tries to carve the profile before the mix hardens to the point of no return.



4. Trimming the ends

After pouring and cleaning off a second layer of plaster to fill in the sides, Miller uses a brush to clean the base with a brush to remove any dust or debris. He also uses a brush to clean the base with a brush to remove any dust or debris.



5. Hanging the molding to cure

The plaster molding already feels solid. It will need to cure. The plaster takes between three days and a week, depending on the weather and the size of the piece. Before the molding is hung and stable enough to install, Miller drills holes into the end of the molding and strings it up in the shop. The plastic gravity keeps it from bowing or bending.



6. Installing the molding

At the house, plasterer Kevin Ponsa looks at the piece up with a combination of drywall screws and a strong construction adhesive. He also uses a nail gun to secure the molding wherever the wall is piling surface is uneven. Miller is very good and works with fast plaster.

time. Also, if you or anyone else ever decided to replace the carpet, you'll have to remove the caulk.

So, when you're ready for installation, here's what you need to do:

1. Cut and remove both the carpet and get a couple of inches past the footprint of the cabinet. Use a sharp utility knife guided by a straightedge to make straight, clean cuts.
2. Unhook the cut pieces from the tack strip—the barbed strip of wood nailed to the floor next to the walls—and pry up the strip. If you're careful, you can reuse it.
3. If it's back the remaining carpet and pad just enough to make room for the cabinet.
4. Once the bookcase is installed and level, slide the tack strip next to its base with the barbs pointing toward the case. Can the pad—now the carpet, just pry—so that an edge runs along the side of the tack strip.

5. Spread the carpet over the tack strip. I've done a couple of projects where I unhooked the carpet by hand, but the easier way is to get the carpet edge wet with a wet brush. Then pull the carpet over the strip.
6. Trim off the excess carpeting with a utility knife, then tack the edge with a staple gun against a stiff wall or scraper or party block. ■

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Event Spotlight

The 2009 International Builders' Show
Las Vegas

The Old House kicked off the 2009 International Builders' Show in Las Vegas with our annual cocktail reception at House of Blues. Thanks to everyone who joined us for an evening of great food and music with our editors and the crew from This Old House and Ask This Old House TV.



L to R: Tarryn Bates-Wagner, CEO, Wagner Apple Builders Products, Inc.; Sr. Account Manager, Jonathan Tolson; This Old House Magazine Publisher/Shadow Marketing Manager, AJD; Building Products Inc., Public Relations Counsel, Marlene Hays; Franchise Development, Neil Noel; President, The Old House Foundation, Charles Kammerer; This Old House Magazine.



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Norm's tricks of the trade

Q

I know I should nail crown molding into joists and studs, but what do I do where the joists run parallel to the wall?

—MARK TURNER, LEICESTER, MA

A Crown molding should be nailed to framing whenever possible. But when there's no joist near enough to nail into (requiring an plywood backing to the ceiling so that it have something solid to nail the crown to.

Developing each step needs to match the angle between the back of the molding and the ceiling. Here's how to find this angle so before you nailed the bead with either a circular saw or a table saw.



1. Place a short piece of molding between the top of a framing square, then put a level square against the back of the crown, as shown. Set the bevel square's angle as the side closest to the crown's top edge, which will go against the ceiling.



3. Flip the strip slightly so secure that the back of the molding and the miter saw's table are square. That way the backing won't get in the way of centers that are out of square.



4. Stick the backing to the ceiling with construction adhesive, drive a few screws into the drywall to hold it in place while the adhesive cures. Now you can nail the crown's top into the backing strips and its bottom into studs.

Q I'm putting that trim around a window, but the head casing has to be narrower than the side casing. How do I miter the joint when two pieces are different widths?

—DANIELA HENRY, NEWTON, MA

A Here's a technique that will work for making tight joint joints with anylist, whether the pieces are the same width or not.

By the way, it's also not into this same problem with side casings where a door or window is very close to an adjacent wall.



2. Now draw a straight line between each mark and each piece a outside corner. This is your outline.



4. After you make your miter, the joint will look like this—nice, tight, and square.



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MILWAUKEE 600Z-21

Price: \$80

Highlights: Comes with two sanding pads, one for fine and one for medium sandpaper, and one for adhesive-backed sandpaper.



Tester: Lisa Goldstein, New York City
Skill level: Beginner/Officer (I did three jobs of sanding on power tool experience.)

Good tool for: Sanding a big, flat, horizontal surface in a room that's not too big. **Verdict:** I loved not having to worry about whether I was sanding with the grain.

Tool stats: Variable speed: 7,000–12,000 rpm; 3.5 pounds; circular dust collector.

**WANT TO BE A TOOL
TESTER?** Let us know where you're from, what tool you'd like to test, and what you'd like to know. Send us a note to asktheoldhouse@asktheoldhouse.com.



Photo: Milwaukee
approved online
distributors



PORTER-CABLE 390K

Price: \$130

Highlights: Built-in electronic load control maintains consistent operating speed for consistent smoothness.



Tester: Mike Mauer, Cuddery, Wis.
Skill level: Pro (I've been a woodworker for 35 years.)

Good tool for: Sanding replacement feet for a metal TV cradle.

Verdict: With minimal effort, this sander quickly removed saw marks and burns. Its dust collection system left minimal surface residue and only a few airborne particles.

Tool stats: Variable speed: 7,000–12,000 rpm; 3.5 amps; 2.1 pounds; circular dust collector.



CRAFTSMAN VIBRAFREE 25827

Price: \$60

Highlights: Spinrite sanding pads spin in opposite directions to reduce vibration.



Tester: John Scorselli, Somerville, Wash.
Skill level: Seasoned Officer (I've renovated a Victorian home and built cabinetry.)

Good tool for: Removing planer marks from birch casing. **Verdict:** Consistently less vibration compared to my previous sander, and it removed material aggressively.

Tool stats: Single speed: 12,000 rpm; 2.7 amps; 3.3 pounds; circular dust collector.



SKIL 7490-01

Price: \$60

Highlights: Stalled power switch keeps dust out for longer tool life.



Tester: Joe D. Brann, Enid, Okla.
Skill level: Seasoned Officer (I've built cabinetry and furniture.)

Good tool for: Preparing a painted precut window casing for a new coat of paint. **Verdict:** Although the sander worked well, it was inefficient at collecting dust that I had to bag every few minutes to empty the collector.

Tool stats: Single speed: 12,000 rpm; 2.4 amps; 3.5 pounds; circular dust collector.

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The history: A visitor to the house in her youth, McAn-Bled remembers sitting in the elegant living room and listening to classical music as her dad, Victor, with her grandfather M.J. Bled in the 1920s. "Back then it was quite a treat to have a record player," she recalls. The tale ends when M.J. Bled built in 1934, stayed in the family until the 1940s when a doctor taught the place and performed some unnecessary surgery, leading on a massive rear addition not exactly in line with the original spirit of the house. "He sure made a mess of the place," says McAn, who hopes the next owner will erase the addition and return the house to its original floor plan.

Why save it? The house has many notable features, including Corinthian columns that divide the enormous living room and colorful stained-glass windows, shiftable crown molding, and peacock floors.

What's needed? Preservation North Carolina is looking for someone to restore the house. Like McAn, PNC would fund if you removed the rearward-ramp addition. But you'll definitely need to install new electrical plumbing, and heating, finish the walls, and perform some cosmetic work. The house is a historic district with plenty of newly restored homes, and the state will provide a 30 percent tax credit for your work. Once it's done, you can track down an old Victor or Bled and fill this empty old house with music from its heyday. —KATHY HANSEN



1. A decorative loads board covers the front porch. The house's entrance is supported by heavy brackets, 2 & 3. The interior has been renovated for the study from these photos were taken that all the details, including the plaster is made and some, are of wood and stone, 4. The heavy features this double hung stained glass window with figural panels, 5. An artist's rendering of the house restored to its original look, with the ground level addition removed.

Got a house? If you own a house that should be saved and it's in need of repair, contact The Old House Store, 100 West 5th Street, New York, NY 10013 or www.oldhousestore.com.



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