

This Old House

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DIY fixes
that'll
save you
big bucks

Your
favorite
upgrade
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about...
wainscoting
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Real World Re-dos

32 affordable
ideas to spruce up
every room

Best new
kitchen
& bath
products
p. 31

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Easy how-to!

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GET THE
LOOK



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READER REMODEL



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letter {from This Old House}

Time (and home repair) waits for no man

"Yes, I promise. I promise I promise. I promise that I will finish the deck today by Memorial Day," I said to my wife, and I meant it.

"You mean Labor Day," she said. "Memorial Day already happened."

"The Fourth of July, then," I believed.

"That's tomorrow."

I didn't even realize it until it was too late, but I had lost track of this summer. So late in fact that the Fourth (and by Labor Day is upon us) was this, and I still haven't gotten materials for the railing. I haven't finished my homemade potter-house irrigation system either, and I've still got a handful of acornus I thought four weeks ago that are waiting to get in the ground.

Someday I ended up with a wheelbarrow full of two-season yard debris without so much as a memory of enjoying the yard. How'd it happen? I don't think it's dementia, since I've never been found wandering the neighborhood in my pajamas. But, man, that one or so straight weeks of rain we had at the start of the season didn't help, June felt like one long April shower. And those were lots of wetters, of course, which these days mean it's about to have, no matter the weather. Humble and kindly and job-saving and tells and all the rest.

By "all the rest" I mean more bills—yes, more so, the first of bills yet to come. It's also pretty unexpected bills that burn the most, right? And, as we all know, a house can be full of them. Which is why we've got a story called "Fix Now, Save in Look Later" (page 7) that discusses. Basically, your rain today, for instance, and you'll keep your house getting inside the walls behind it—and avoid having more tilework and even harder to do it months from now. For a full cleaning and repainting getting the full and you could be looking at a big job—replacing soffits, fascia boards, and even beams—if they rot later on.

I think the money is an excellent resource and one that can save you a lot of money. It's just giving it a quick read and getting started on it as fast as you can. Remember, time is money. And Christmas is coming. And I've got to get this deck railing finished by, well, at least next Memorial Day....

Sam O'Connell

 SCOTT O'CONNELL'S

 LETTER



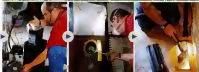
THREE THINGS I LEARNED FROM THIS ISSUE+

1. *How a grade-school bathroom stall can improve your kitchen.* (p. 70)
2. *How to say "wainscoting" the right way.* (p. 86)
3. *How a gallon of "super" paint can turn a wood floor into something special.* (p. 72)

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Keep money in your pocket and value in your house



Learn how to fertilize your lawn and tune up your furnace—and find 30 more quick DIY projects that will save you money this fall.

thisoldhouse.com/fall-upkeep

NEW! PET-FRIENDLY HOME

Top projects and gear to make your house a haven for you and your animal pals

thisoldhouse.com/pets



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readermail

We like to think that *TOM* is all about people coming together, and this month's letters kind of proved our point. You told us about how you've connected lately—with your kids, your pets, and even strangers who want to give you great information. Oh, and you still managed to throw in that good old-fashioned practical advice, too.

Inspired handymen

As an overhauler, I believed I had a golden rule that kept me from becoming a complete DIYer. But after reading about others' mistakes on the way to getting great results, my confidence has soared. My partner and I just renovated our 700-square-foot 1940s bungalow, to which we added 2,100 square feet, a project we'd never have considered if we both hadn't had the skills to do the work ourselves. Because of this, our 4-year-old is growing up with access to play. He recently found his hobbyhorse up in one of our old, "I love my new big house, Mom! Thank you!" That made very parroted, shrill, broken laughter, splatters, a cheap music box, and our war in it. What a *TOM* we might call it in our little house.

—SHEYDIN BURGESS BENCHOUZ

A voice from the past

Thought you'd appreciate a letter I got in the mail the other day. It was addressed to "Occupant." Thinking it was some kind of prank mail, I almost tossed it. But I opened it up and in it were six photographs. It took me a

couple of seconds to realize they were photos of my house! On the back of each photo, the reader—who was born in the house in 1933—had made a note of things he especially remembered about the place, including the blue shag on the drive, the chickens in the garage, and how his mom used to keep the lobster who jumped off the flight instructor passed nearby.

I'm getting a letter and more pictures sent to the writer. I know he'll be quite happy with the restoration and save the green his home.

—CHUCKAMEN ELMHURST, IL

Adapt a speech

Thanks for including the reconstruction of Puffin in "Eat Our Most Common" [May]. We got two e-mails about that periodicals.com and hope more people find their forever pets through the site. I love *TOM* even more!

—CHRISTOPHER GUNFORD, FLA.

Safe play

Thanks for the backyard safety tips [Home News, June]. You mention swings and loading areas, but also be sure to check swing sets in context.



Just a childhood friend when she and two other kids were messing high-top shoes and the whole so fell over.

—ART BROWN SURFIDE, ARIZ.

Greener painting

In June's "35 Clever Reader Tips," one "16-Flag the paint tray" idea great two-timer. A small environmentally aware tip would be to let the paint dry, remove the bag, use it for trash, and then toss it.

—NANCY AND AMY JO CORDELL AND JENNIFER KOWALSKI STE. MAE

Connections

In "All About Lawns" [June] we showed the wrong photo for one of the grasses; the picture below shows tall fescue.



• In Get This Look [July/August] we mislabeled La Jolie Blenc's Web address. It is www.lajolieblenc.com. To order the sundial featured, call 878-838-6649.

• On page 84 of "All About Stone Countertops" [July/August] we mistakenly swapped the photos of engineered stone and solid surfacing.

how to reach us

The editors, *The Old House* magazine, 133 West 10th Street, New York, NY 10013. Or e-mail TOH_editors@thomson.com or before your full name, address, and phone number. Subscribers will also receive a reply and length.

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All About To Stay & Save



reader project
of the month



Pond paradise

ROMAN AND RUTHLESS, JEFFREY: NO. What started out as a simple job to replace a broken sewer line and to improve drainage around property ended up as a big project and this relaxing oasis. It now outdoor water complete with two waterfalls, privacy, and scenery.

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BASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOMESIGHT NOW



Get the chimney swept early

Swiss, the first long drill of the season and if several weeks away—Ouch! why you should book your chimney sweep a year, before temperatures drop and prices rise. Remember: soot and ash and debris should be inspected and cleaned by a pro every year to prevent sparks from igniting the flammable pitch (tar) creosote that builds up inside. For more tips on prepping your fireplace for winter, check out diyandhomedesign.com/home.

Aerate your lawn

A summer of hot games and barbecues can lead to a warm and worn and compacted soil. It's up to you in September when most grass enters its annual growth spurt, by aerating. It'll stimulate deeper root growth and boost the absorption of nutrients from the compost or fertilizer you'll apply later this fall. You can use a light fork on small yards or rent an aerator for about \$60 a day for larger ones. Just make sure the soil is moist before you start.



Repaint thresholds under exterior doors

Those strips of wood take a serious beating all year round. Make them new, before the school year gets going, for more basic threshold upkeep. Lightly sand them, brush on a layer of deck paint. The exterior-grade coating will protect the wood and withstand months of foot traffic to traffic. Find more ideas for upkeep projects to tackle now at thresholds.com/ideas.

Thank your DIY partner

Hubbbs, please take note: September 13 is Wife Appreciation Day. Acknowledge the lady who stands



by you through the leaky pipes and dusty halls of home renovation by taking as a project she's been meaning to tackle—say, installing the closet organizers you picked up months ago, adding a specialty shower head to the master bath, or even clearing some precious garage space to make room for her tools, too.



Snag some yard gear for a steal

Yes, gardening season is starting to wind down, but here's the silver lining: You can pick up lawn mowers, spades, and other yard tools at a big discount as stores slash prices on these seasonal items. And don't forget to visit the garden center for marked-down perennials, trees, and shrubs—just avoid ones with weakened trunks or stems or spotted leaves. Then plant them four to six weeks before the ground freezes and thaws.

Brush away wildfires

Mary Sandoz (Marlboro Images) was a special delivery to my 11th graders because their owners had played *Call of Duty* and cleared their yards of dead and flammable material. Anyone who lives near woodlands should do the same, says Lee Hymon of the Alabama State Forestry Commission. Branching south, sweeping debris off your roof and clearing gutters removes the fuel that feeds forest fires during our hot, arid wildfire season. Visit www.al.gov for more on prevention.



It pays to live in this town—really

Stations in St. Louis, Park, Minnesota, and the City of "Live Where You Work Program" will help you pay for a home. The Thrift and Savings Bank (TSB) offers a 12-month loan down payment assistance program to help people who work for local businesses. A \$2,500 loan is used to help a home and another \$1,000 if they are a foreclosure. Banker said the loan is forgiven if the buyer stays in the house for at least three years. "We want to support the real estate market," says housing supervisor Michelle Scholten. "Not a bad way for small owners to put themselves back on the map. For more information, visit tsb.bank."



NEWSFLASH—The Great Statthalder Race is held every Labor Day in Hørne. A huge Team of polyester-fibersubstance wheels, does Front 2000, the mile drag. The winning submersed cross the finish line with one person and 10 gallons of water inside.



Making home safe

As homeowners enter their golden years, more and more would like to stay in their homes as long as possible—which means making changes to keep their residences accessible and comfortable. Seventy percent of remodelers say they've worked on three sorts of projects, typically termed universal design, the past year alone. Popular projects include widening doorways, adding grab bars in the bath, and installing curbless showers.

83 million

Number of adults in the U.S. who rolled up their sleeves for a DIY home-improvement project last year

Two-way trimmer

With a quick change of the blade, this lightweight tool is a garden tool convert. It can slash through grass, clipper. Chemical ground-scutting surfaces make quick work of overgrown hedges and large, hard-to-reach weeds around edging. Plus, as you work, the blade keeps your grip feeling good even when you're tending a whole lot of thistles. 800-343-8400



WEIGHT WE'VE LOST Bank of America's new "Home Loans" page lets buyers figure exactly how much house they can afford, what the monthly payments will be, and how changing their spending habits can affect loan rate and approvals. Visit bankofamerica.com/homebuyers

Reporting by Kathi Fendloff and
Nathalie Kaufmann

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



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Mark Little
Photographer

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home solutions

Edited by Deborah Sweeney

inside

DIY CLASSES

10 USES

DO AIR CLEANERS WORK?

MORE



← SMART IDEA

Screened-in pantry

Painters' fans blow away the weather, but we've got a way to make the season's over-doosy hot days your room. Use a wood screen door to shield up, even that needs to be somewhat—but not totally—hidden from view. Here, an eque door gives this kitchen the casual air of a porch while enclosing the pantry (You could do the same for a linen closet or laundry room.) With measurements in hand, pick up an old screen door at a tag sale, get it up with a bright coat of paint, and voilà! It's the doorjamb for a cooler that conquers weather in the temperature dips.



← The door's weather-resistant plays up the kitchen's laid-back by the shore feel.

**make one
yourself**
Build a screen door from a 1/2-in. x 6-in. x 6-in. board. For the door to fit, go to diy.com.



Build a better stacked-stone wall

They're get themselves clean, those low stone walls hold together by nothing more than friction and the force of gravity. If you're getting out together, take a few cuts from the hand-sawn retaining wall. (1) Stack the stones together. Using a mallet, rub the wall and fill gaps between rocks that aren't a perfect fit. (Two be sure to add every hole to retaining walls for drainage.) "Add a block out to the water you mix with your mortar to help it 'disappear' between the stones," says The Old House landscape contractor Roger Cook. (2) Vary the stone size. Large rocks sit over the low first and second rows of stones by backing up the horizontal pattern. (3) Top it off right. The wall is capped with stones that are lighter in color than those below them, making it appear less weighty. —SAM WAGNER



4-CLASS LIST

Sharpen your DIY skills



Yes, the kids are back in school, but they're not the only ones who can benefit from classroom instruction. These specialty programs offer classes that will show you the ropes for all sorts of projects at home.

woodworking

Part Townies at School of Woodworking
Part Townsend, Wash.
Master the basics of hand joinery to make simple pieces of furniture. If you already have some experience, delve into classes on carving and finishing. parttownies.com

blacksmithing

The New England School of Blacksmithwork
Andover, Maine
Around the holidays, a "Gifts from the Forge" workshop will help you craft fireplace tools or decorative hooks for loved ones. www.giftsfromtheforgeblacksmithwork.com

decoration/painting

The Finest School
Frederick, Md.
Work side-by-side with a pro to learn faux-marbling, wood graining, and even trunk or techniques such as stenciling. thefinestschool.com

fixing and carpentry

The Heartwood School
Washington, Md.
The popular timber-framing course offers a how-to-on join-and-bow-techniques using techniques you purchase at the home center. heartwoodschool.com

—SANDIE ROSENBERG



1988 Colonial Hill



1972 Larkspur Hill



1988 New York Hill



1988 Larkspur Hill



1988 Colonial Hill



1972 Larkspur Hill



1988 New York Hill



1988 Larkspur Hill



1988 Colonial Hill



1972 Larkspur Hill



1988 New York Hill



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This Old House

Charcoal

Don't let that half-empty bag sit around. Charcoal—the natural lump variety made from hardwood—can do more than cook burgers.

1 Nourish your compost heap.

Mechanical into your compost pile to increase its carbon content. (If the pile smells like ammonia, it needs carbon.)

2 Diagnose an imperfection.

Rub charcoal onto scratches under wood floors and furniture to temporarily "blend" them until you have time for a real repair job.



3 Keep air fresh.

Place charcoal, in open bowls or perforated plastic bags, in your fridge or drawers to battle odors.



4 Make cut flowers last longer.

Put a lump of charcoal beneath the cut stems in a vase to help the water stay clean and clear.

5 Use it as mulch.

Break charcoal into chunks about 1 inch in diameter and spread them on beds or beneath bushes to keep soil moist and suppress weeds.

6 Entertain kids (or adults).

Use opened charcoal to draw repeated figures or other game templates on your sidewalk. Wash away

the marks with a quick squirt from your hose.

7 Keep driveway dozers from clumping.

Before storing rock salt and sand to use this winter, mix a few lumps of charcoal into the bag or bucket. They'll soak up dampness and prevent these materials from freezing or caking together.



8 Decorate your yard.

Turn lumps of charcoal into a scarecrow's eyes for Halloween or a snowman's stick-inverters.

9 Help potted aroids grow.

These bloomers benefit from charcoal's alkalinity. Mix small pieces with your potting medium (e.g., bark or peat) at the base of the flower's

Keep pruned tools.

Place a few lumps of charcoal in your tool box to absorb moisture and keep the metal from oxidizing.

—JENNIFER KOSKOWSKI



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1 HEALTHY HOME

Q: Will an air purifier relieve fall allergies?

For some folks, allergies in the autumn are as big a bummer as they are in the summer. Dr. Leonard Belsky, an allergy and immunology specialist in Springfield, New Jersey, says air purifiers remove some of the allergens—including ragweed pollen (a seasonal offender)—but cause sneezing, itchy eyes, and other symptoms. “But there are caveats,” he adds. Here’s what you should know.

Pick the right one. Opt for a unit with a HEPA filter, but avoid getting air cleaners that emit ozone. “Ozone is a known trigger for asthma, so we don’t recommend using these products,” says Arjun Walcott of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.

Know the limitations. Most air purifiers can treat only a small area of your home. Read the label of yours to learn its capacity, and place it in a room where the sufferer spends a lot of time. Bedrooms are a good choice.

Keep it clean. “Any machine people make and cleaning these devices enough,” says Dr. Belsky. Change or clean the filter at least as often as the manufacturer suggests.

Don’t ignore it. Remember that people keep using air purifiers, such as during and after a wildfire, as a long way toward helping reduce indoor allergen levels. —KATHY HANCOCK

1 PRODUCT REVIEW

Bottom-up roller shade

Any window that faces “into a bad weather zone,” says a windowing expert, is crying out for better light and shade. The new bottom-up roller shade is a game-changer. It’s a roller shade that rolls down from the bottom of the window, so it can be used to block out the sun or to let in the light. It’s a roller shade that rolls down from the bottom of the window, so it can be used to block out the sun or to let in the light. It’s a roller shade that rolls down from the bottom of the window, so it can be used to block out the sun or to let in the light.



Shade’s built-in locking system. So each window has its own.


1 PAINTING

Park a wet brush safely

If you’re a painter, you know the frustration of a brush that’s too long to hold. The solution is a brush holder that’s long enough to hold a brush, but not too long to hold. It’s a brush holder that’s long enough to hold a brush, but not too long to hold. It’s a brush holder that’s long enough to hold a brush, but not too long to hold.



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the beauty goes on

valspar

Light and bright, even without windows

A playful paint job, crisp white wainscot, and colorful fixtures turn an attic bath into a cheerful bathing spot for tots. BY AMANDA COOKSTON • Photos by KYLE DUNN

Old houses often have just a single window option for the whole family, and it's seldom kid-friendly. The tub's too deep, the sink's too high, and there's never enough back storage space. That was the situation at Muzon and Kruse Moore's 1983 home in St. Louis, Missouri, and who they decided to build a one-and-a-half-bath for their daughter, Ella, now 6. Problem was, they'd have to carve it out of the middle of the unfinished attic, leaving wainscot at risk out of the top floor for bedrooms they'd planned. Plus, they wanted the space to have plenty of vintage charm. All on a budget.

Luckily, the couple, both designers for architectural firms, could pay some tricks of the trade to work. "We decided to compensate for the lack of light with touches of bright paint colors, big mirrors, and lots of white," says Kruse. In buying the house, they asked for a one-and-a-half-bath and a 4-foot pedestal tub, which added the period look. The resulting space is brighter and cheery, and a pleasure to spend time in. Says Kruse, "Now Ella reminds me when it's time for her bath."

before Windows at either end of the unfinished attic were reserved for future bedrooms. **AFTER** The new bathroom features houses of paint striped walls, multicolored cabinetry, white wainscot, and floor tile that's straight out of the catalog.



That 10-inch 10-inch window is the only source of natural light, but it's not the only source of light.

High-waist pedestal with wainscot around tub and reflects light.

before+after:
bath

before+after: bath

the key details

• **Open cubbies**, which repeat the colorful shades of the stripes defining the room, frame the tub and/or sink and stand in for a brass-classic Pfister bath.



• **Vintage-looking tub fittings**, including a goose-neck faucet and teardrop-style handshower, make it easy to reuse old soap bars. (Lubliner) Sign of the Crab



• **Wall-hung mirrors** that look like old-fashioned tin doors for a mid-century view. They were also a simple 20" x 16" mirror. The sink's chrome finish serves as a step to close counter. (Pfister) (Lubliner) (Lubliner)

• **A tile border** inside the tub (impact) for a full bathroom that still has a modern look. (Lubliner) (Lubliner)



• **Save the space** by using the same color for the tub and the tub's handshower. (Lubliner) (Lubliner)

before + after

What was empty space at the center of the office is now a 76-square-foot bath that feels light. (Lubliner) (Lubliner) (Lubliner)



homeowner tip
MAGNIFICENT
\$7.10.15

"Hire a pro, whether a contractor or an architect, to navigate the permit process, even if you plan to handle the remodel yourself. You'll likely need the time you save to actually get the work done."

1. **The pocket**
GOOD: saves space by eliminating a door swing and entry traffic flow around the sink.



2. **A backdoor**
GOOD: allows you to enter the room without the tub in the way of the door.

3. **Built-in cubbies** expand a wall behind the 4-foot tub. The colorful storage recesses keep the room open and airy, and provide a handy place for towels.

4. **A plate rail** along the 8-foot high surrounding walls for a changing display of daughter-life artwork.

Photo: David LaRocca



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Our favorite new product picks

Sure, times are tough—all the more reason to give the most-used rooms in your house (and yourself) a little lift. Happily, this year's kitchen and bath industry show featured a number of well-priced pick-me-ups. Here, 14 standouts. BY CHERYL BROOKER • Photos by COLETTE SCAMLO



→ **turn your shower into a spa.** Simply pivot the head of Endeavor's flexible handheld shower to feature it in one of five different spray options including a strong, pulsing massage and a soothing spritz. The only. You get the best of both—just the \$169.99. endeavor.com



→ **add stone-like sparkle underfoot.** Light reflecting greenish-gray tiles like a Marble Effect porcelain floor tile are a great rich but subtle shimmer. \$2 to \$28 per square foot. bellwood.com

→ **affordable luxuries.** Multi-spray showers, jewel-like hardware, counters and floors that are something special—get these luxe features for less.

→ **spiff up your cabinets.** Polished and lacquered nickel hardware never goes out of style—but they can suit you. Amerock's new Allure Value and High End Edge collections offer 12 elegant designs for just a bit of cash. From \$3.99. amerock.com



→ **go against the grain.** High-end butcher block can cost your budget as much as \$600 per square foot. Get a similarly classy look and repetitive edge with Targem's stone-look butcher blocks. They're engineered to be stronger than real oak and are naturally bacteria resistant. \$28 to \$44 per square foot. targem.com

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paint
ideas

Enliven walls with tiny twigs

Soften the look of a formal room with hand-painted branches and gold-washed leaves
By CHERIEAN BALZOVIC • Photography by CHERIEAN WHITMAN GLENNVILLE



For a delicate yet dynamic look, set the formal wallpapers back up against the wall panels.

Cost: About \$20

Time: Two days

Difficulty: Easy. Just be sure to practice your brushwork first for the swirl line.

Wall-frame molding can help make a large room feel more intimate, but these rectangles can also be a challenge to work with. Interior designer Marily King, who likes to give period rooms a contemporary touch, originally decided to simply paint the paneled dining room walls in this Atlanta home a soft French blue with lime-white baseboards and chair rail. Arriving didn't sit right with the dining nook, and wallpaper experts would have looked too busy. But something was still missing, so she turned to local decorator painter Fran Carter to provide the needed finishing touch. "The furniture and dishes were in, so just needed to enliven the space," he recalls. The solution came in the form of gentle tree branches, a natural motif for a room with a garden view. He let the branches grow up naturally, as if rooted in the dark oak floor, their leaves bumping up against the wall moldings as if they were framed by windows. "It looks radiant but has a sense of subtle," he says of the pattern. Just like the tree branches growing outside.

HOW IT'S DONE

The wells already had a base coat of interior latex with an eggshell finish, which is ideal. "Oil-based or latex with a higher gloss might have itched for acrylic craft paint to stick to it," says decorative painter Brian Carter. He bore up against paint a large job of foam board with the same latex order to provide a practice surface when you're working with thinned craft paint. On the wells, use painter's tape to create an edge along the bottom, right where the branches start to give you a clean line.



2. Practice loading a small, round artist's brush (No. 795) and applying the brown paint on the foam board before moving to the walls. It's fine to paint over the chalk; you can erase any error marks later. Let the brushes dry thoroughly.

4. Practicing on the foam board use gold paint thinned 8-to-1 with water to get the right transparency for the leaves. Paint leaves, let dry. Then add a second coat. "You want the structure of the leaves to show through," says Carter. "It keeps the pattern light and airy, and more natural looking."

8. Clean up. Wash the brushes and containers with warm soapy water, let dry. Replace furniture and drapes. Enjoy your painted—and framed—work of art.

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Plant now for carefree spring color

Our troubleshooting guide to getting a good show of bulb bloomers when the weather warms

By SUE WARELLA • Photographs by MARGIE TUSSEK

A spring landscaping error for the ultra-carefree lover of yard enhancements: Dig some holes, place the bulbs inside, cover them over, and let nature take its course. When the weather warms you'll be rewarded with glorious flowers that do best with minimal attention. Let post-bloom bulbs droop and wither, it provides food for subsequent years of flowers, with just a top dressing of compost or fertilizer each fall.

The hardest part may be not missing your window of planting opportunity, which is now. Bulbs should be set into the ground in the fall, when temperatures are cool and before a hard freeze makes soil too difficult to dig in. Read on for tips to ensure planting success.

1. Problem: Bulbs don't come up at all the first year

Solution: Buy top-quality bulbs that are heavy for their size and firm when squeezed. Garden centers should display bulbs the same way you should store them in a cool, dry place where air circulates around them or in an air-conditioned space. Good mail-order sources for bulbs include www.flowerlark.com, plantswep.com, and www.bulbpeddler.com.

One common mistake is not planting bulbs deep enough, leaving them susceptible to critters and frost heaves in cold climates. Follow this rule of thumb: Plant bulbs three times as deep as bulb height. Use a sharp shovel, crowd with a blade method to the bulb diameter for easy digging.

2. Problem: Bulbs don't come back the second year

Solution: While flowers like crocuses, daffodils, and grape hyacinths are able to re-bloom, cloning up your older year and multiplying, the



brighten up by

Planting tulips in the fall. Post-bloom tulips provide a beautiful spring color in the mixed flower bed. The tulips are from a local nursery and are available in a variety of colors.

Craftsman-style kitchen

Known for its handsome wood built-ins and handcrafted details, this early-20th-century style is a natural for a warm family hub. Here's how to duplicate it in your home. By ELIZABETH SCOTT • Photograph by JENNIFER MITCHELL

With its emphasis on natural materials, fine craftsmanship, and sturdy proportions, the Craftsman style is a period look that works well with today's casual comfort. Case in point: This new kitchen in a 1901 home features red birch cabinetry with a lantern-like look for the ceiling storage that also conceals most of the appliances. While the island cooking and granite counters may not be historically accurate, they suit the homeowners' needs. "You can balance modern conveniences with the essence of the style," says Minneapolis-based David Heide, who designed the kitchen. "Just try to make them fit the established aesthetic." The black-flecked brown granite and the cooling-island granite and black iron grates blend with the kitchen's distressed hardware and black subway-tile backsplash.

Read on for ways to create a similar look in your house.



vintage appliance
Add a pop of color with this retro-style sleek make-it-right greenery. Working: \$225. amazon.com



iron grilles
Wood regions are familiar sight in old homes. Inset in the ceiling, this ornamental piece disguises the exhaust vent over the cooking. \$200. regencyinteriors.com



pulls and latches
Left: Free and right: substantial brushed-iron this vintage-style cup pull and door latch are easy-hand-turned look. \$10 pull; \$42 and \$100 each. www.hillcountryhardware.com

pro advice
DAVID HEIDE, DESIGNER, MINNEAPOLIS

"For authentic-looking doors, shop for ones with 'clicking' or 'thumping' or 'molding' being the inside of the plates and rails."



Layers of glass and wood shutoff can give black brick counters a warmth similar to this.

prairie-style pendants
Architect Frank Lloyd Wright popularized the elegant lines echoed in the arms and stem of this ceiling light. \$248. kitchen.com



wool-home sink
A sink to hold aprons and dish towels made at home is in line with the Craftsman philosophy of doing it yourself. \$762. alprairiehardware.com



old-fashioned faucet
This ornamental faucet from Pottery Barn's Pottery Barn Kids line features a simple Art Nouveau gramework. In chrome. \$693. www.potterybarnkids.com



handmade tile
Handmade tile was the main element in Craftsman homes. Here, a free-spirited tile in a variety of colors and patterns is a dramatic backdrop for a dramatic backsplash. Subway tile: \$10 per square foot. www.potterybarnkids.com



chunky cabinets
A functional detail in the style is a chunky cabinet. Here, a free-spirited tile in a variety of colors and patterns is a dramatic backdrop for a dramatic backsplash. Subway tile: \$10 per square foot. www.potterybarnkids.com

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Distinctive doormats

They enhance your home's entry, extend a welcome—and let's not forget what such mats do for muddy feet. Here, we roll out our top choices. BY ANDREA DODDGE/CEP • Photographs by MARK NELSON

We've gathered a selection of lots of it made here at The Old House and have recently revised it to look as well as feel good—a place to wipe one's feet. So since you've kept the landing and put out a pair of shoes, treat yourself to this final bit of curb appeal. You'll find doormats to match your home's and personal style or reflect its natural surroundings, ones that put a handsome face on function as they do a spring in your step. Choose from lively cut-outs, sturdy rubber, washable wool, rugged, non-scratching. No need to leave the market, though—we've gathered up 19 of our favorites right here.

craftsman style
 7' x 10' x 1/2" (18" x 24" x 1/2")
 Size: 20x30 inches
 Material: Jute
 When it works: Pairs with a simple, clean front porch or back porch. From Craftsman to contemporary, builder looking for the Old House—inspired new look is coming. \$34. www.bensonwood.com



lance latex look
 7' x 10' x 1/2" (18" x 24" x 1/2")
 Size: 20x30 inches
 Made of: Rubber
 When it works: Works with any style house, from rustic to modern. Would be a welcome mat. \$20. www.bensonwood.com



colorful pineapple
 18" x 24" x 1/2"
 Size: 18x24 inches
 Made of: Coir
 When it works: Traditional style home where the color of the mat is a welcome mat. \$20. www.bensonwood.com

shopping



lattice work

FLORIAN HARTSH

Size: 20x30 inches

Made of recycled rubber

Where it works: Outside a mushroom farm, where its sandpaper-like surface can give grip when a good watering is in order



get centered

AL MOSKOW

Size: 36-inch diameter

Made of recycled rubber and nylon

Where it works: Wall-to-wall tile and carpet squares, especially in a small bathroom, where it's easy to clean



subtle flora

UNCOMMON GOODS

Size: 18x36 inches

Made of felt

Where it works: In a living room with a fireplace, where it's a perfect place for a plant. The minimalist pattern is inspired by a design in a book about Japanese art and design.



colonial fauna

AN THUY DO

Size: 18x36 inches

Made of felt

Where it works: In a living room with a fireplace, where it's a perfect place for a plant. The minimalist pattern is inspired by a design in a book about Japanese art and design.



our favorite shape

animated

ALL WOODS

Size: 24x36 inches

Made of vinyl

Where it works: In a living room with a fireplace, where it's a perfect place for a plant. The minimalist pattern is inspired by a design in a book about Japanese art and design.

shopping

complete your entry
Find a style of decor that fits your home's style.

best for a big entry



oversize

CUNNINGHAM

Size: 30x48 inches

Made of rubber

Where it works: In a living room with a fireplace, where it's a perfect place for a plant. The minimalist pattern is inspired by a design in a book about Japanese art and design.



circles squared

HOWE

Size: 18x36 inches

Made of rubber

Where it works: In a living room with a fireplace, where it's a perfect place for a plant. The minimalist pattern is inspired by a design in a book about Japanese art and design.



mod mat

CHICKEN

Size: 24x36 inches

Made of vinyl

Where it works: In a living room with a fireplace, where it's a perfect place for a plant. The minimalist pattern is inspired by a design in a book about Japanese art and design.



peacock style

CHICKEN

Size: 24x36 inches

Made of vinyl

Where it works: In a living room with a fireplace, where it's a perfect place for a plant. The minimalist pattern is inspired by a design in a book about Japanese art and design.



street artist

CHICKEN

Size: 24x36 inches

Made of vinyl

Where it works: In a living room with a fireplace, where it's a perfect place for a plant. The minimalist pattern is inspired by a design in a book about Japanese art and design.



oriental rug

GARYT HILL

Size: 18x36 inches

Made of wool

Where it works: In a living room with a fireplace, where it's a perfect place for a plant. The minimalist pattern is inspired by a design in a book about Japanese art and design.



swirly eyes

STONE ISLAND

Size: 18x36 inches

Made of rubber

Where it works: In a living room with a fireplace, where it's a perfect place for a plant. The minimalist pattern is inspired by a design in a book about Japanese art and design.



worth a smile

STONE ISLAND

Size: 18x36 inches

Made of rubber

Where it works: In a living room with a fireplace, where it's a perfect place for a plant. The minimalist pattern is inspired by a design in a book about Japanese art and design.



weaver look

STONE ISLAND

Size: 18x36 inches

Made of rubber

Where it works: In a living room with a fireplace, where it's a perfect place for a plant. The minimalist pattern is inspired by a design in a book about Japanese art and design.



front window

STONE ISLAND

Size: 18x36 inches

Made of rubber

Where it works: In a living room with a fireplace, where it's a perfect place for a plant. The minimalist pattern is inspired by a design in a book about Japanese art and design.



sophisticated stripes

STONE ISLAND

Size: 18x36 inches

Made of rubber

Where it works: In a living room with a fireplace, where it's a perfect place for a plant. The minimalist pattern is inspired by a design in a book about Japanese art and design.

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Put your pup through the paces

A backyard agility course gives you and your family a chance to make your dog happier, healthier—and smarter.

By KATHY HANCOCK • Photos by MICHELLE T. WORTH

You have your tricked-out media room. The kids have their backyard playground. But how about your dog? We think this oh-so-important family member also deserves a special leisure recreation area.

Which is why we recommend getting everyone together this weekend and building out an agility course. Not only will it give you and your family some quality bonding time with your favorite canine, the workout it provides is also great for your dog's health, behavior, and longevity. "Active dogs tend to keep fitter in their joints longer, which lessens the effects of aging," says Carrie DeYoung of the American Kennel Club. Plus, working your pup fly over hurdles, whip around poles, and balance himself on a teeter totter provides way more family entertainment than watching TV or playing video games.

Read on to see how (and why) to use this three-part course. Then visit thisathome.com/blogs to learn how to build it using only 10-inch PVC plumbing parts (no wood board). It's so easy to make, your dog will be making circles around it in no time.

4 These steps toward a calmer, healthier dog

1. Doing things like act as a border, better listening, get comfortable and lead your commands—plus building "come," "stop" and "stay"—all you help them out.
2. This jump bar helps their build up by having them land on their feet rather than on their heads. It also helps teach them that they are good for things like jumping and running.
3. A series of poles helps your dog learn to work his joints and muscles. Start with him, then add more as your pup gets stronger.



The course is available to use and by the American Kennel Club in its own competitions.

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animal house

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out back each day
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getting a workout.
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outdated over time
because "discarded"
or "expired" skills.
Our agility course
has helped and
helped to benefit
the dogs of all sizes.



SMALL DOGS

(Up to 20 lbs.)

Many small dogs are
used for companionship,
but can be nervous, such
as Jack Russell terriers,
which require energy
so that they don't
become out of control.

MEDIUM DOGS

(20 lbs. to 55 lbs.)

Dogs such as Labs and
border collies love to work.
The course gives them a
sense of accomplishment
and helps prevent future
hip, shoulder and back
problems.

LARGE DOGS

(55 lbs. and up)

Big breeds, such as
Great Danes, are the
best at learning
new tricks. However,
the course helps
prevent arthritis,
which often hinders
large dogs as they age.

[Did you know?]

Dogs aren't color blind. They just don't see colors as
vividly as we do. Use bright-colored tape on the jump
bars and weave poles so that they can see them better.

Using your agility course

- **It takes two.** Teaching your canine companion to use
the course requires instruction and lots of positive
reinforcement. Otherwise, he might find the experience as
terrifying as, say, finding an encounter with a vacuum cleaner.
- **Add incentives.** Start out using treats, then use your dog
off them as he gets comfortable with the course. Offer soft
treats or low-level string cheese. (But keep your dog out of the
treats to stay close to show.)
- **Keep things cool.** Position the course in a partially shaded
area of your yard so that your dog doesn't get too hot.
- **Practice makes perfect.** You wouldn't start preparing for a
marathon by running 10 miles a day, so don't expect your dog
to train for an hour on the first day of agility training. "Dogs
need to be conditioned, the same as humans," says DePinto.
"Always start slow, and work your way up to longer and more
difficult sessions, to avoid injury and fatigue."
- **Help the little guys.** Smaller breeds, such as Chihuahuas,
require some added support from you, especially as the
handler, which was to start learning could be a strain to the
end of the plank. Be sure to hold the plank up and find so that
it won't slide to the ground and scare your dog after a good



THINK YOUR PUPPY IS PRETTY GOOD

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Despite tough economic times, Stauer has had a very good year. It's time for us to give back. That's why we're offering this stunning 18" strand of genuine cultured white pearls for **FREE** (you only pay the basic shipping and processing). This is a classically beautiful necklace of lustrous, smooth cultured pearls that feature with a K15 sterling silver clasp. (\$295 suggested retail price.) It is the necklace that never goes out of style. In a world where most cultured pearl necklaces can cost three times, shop around and I doubt that you will see any jewelry store this compelling!

Why would we do this? One real goal is to build a long-term close relationship with you. We are sure that most of you will become loyal Stauer clients in the years to come, but for now in this long economy, we will give you three goals to help with your future gift giving plans.

We did find a magnificent strand of cultured pearls at the best price that I have ever seen. Our pearl dealer was stuck. A large luxury department store in St. Louis

recently cancelled a large order at the last minute so we grabbed all of them for sale as an extension order of his inventory, which, most lustrous cultured 5 to 6-mm pearls for only pennies on the dollar.

But let me get to the point! It's not a good deal, okay if you say. We're wondering about your own gift for someone special. In the past, Stauer has made gift giving easier with the Stauer's lowest prices on fine jewelry and luxury goods. This year, some really come in the answer for the next few days. I'm not offering this cultured pearl necklace at \$1,295. I'm not willing to let it go for \$295. That's because I don't want to **SELL** you these pearls at all. I want to **GIVE** them to you. This cultured pearl necklace is yours **FREE**, but pay nothing except basic shipping and processing costs of \$35.95, the normal shipping fee for a \$295-\$395 necklace.

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Persuading contractors to work for free? Snagging scrap materials from a school? You do the hard renovations with no money to save a buck—and we think that's terrific. Presenting our second annual roundup of penny-pushing advice from TOH readers. By STEPHAN LEECHER • Photos by JAMES MCDONALD

These readers saved \$9,700!



"I made some concrete tops with castles from my kids' school."
Andrea Kersey
Dallas

"I'd been dreaming of remodeling our kitchen with white marble counters for many years. However, the expense put the thought of my redo aside. A masculine event occurred: My children's school sanctioned a letter saying they were going to remodel the building. A bath room in those classrooms were still walls made of 4 by 4 foot slabs of white marble imported from Italy in the 1940s. I had noticed all them for almost a decade every time I visited the school. I instantly contacted the person in charge to find out what the school [planned to do with the marble]. Turns out he had nobody wanted it, so I had some local contractors take it in my kitchen. (Now have the countertops I dreamed of) and they have great sentimental value in itself."

What Andrea saved: \$1,500



"We underbroke period details with lower-price materials."
Erin Mills
East Hartford, Conn.

"As we finished the final details of the gut renovation of our 2000s stone house, we avoided copper switch plates for light and electrical outlets. But at \$20 or more each, the price tag was way over our budget. So I bought cheap metal switch plates from the big box store and copper led shavings from the crafts store included spray adhesive to stick the shavings to the plates. My husband even embraced a beautiful



fers design come from them. They are developing a paint that gets richer every day, and we still have enough to make copper plates for the whole neighborhood."

What Erin saved: \$200



"I turned a conversation-top box into a double vanity."
Mark Fennick
Durham, N.C.

"Our master bath was stuck in shag carpet with olive green carpeted walls and ugly beige sponge-painted-style wallpaper. When we finally agreed to renovating it, we saved a lot of cash by creating a vanity out of an old book up wood buffet that we bought in a salvage store for \$65. We painted it, gave it a brass countertop made from leftover flooring, and added beadboard in several units to finish it off. It's the closest period to its location."

What Mark saved: \$2,100



"I started my house's old wall studs into a new countertop"
Michael DeMotte

Design: RT

I was finishing my last major job when I built between 2000 and 2002, and needed a countertop for a new granite in the kitchen. As we demolished exterior walls, we found many intact 2x4s made of pine and realized those could be made into a countertop easily. After removing all the old studs, I drilled some holes through them, inserted threaded rods, and laid them together, using wood filler to seal the spots where needed.

What Michael saved: \$200



"I struck a deal with a landscaper"
Mary Jane Sheehan

DIY: Layne, Conn.

When we moved into our house, there were so many trees and shrubs in our yard that it was hard to see our home from the street. After remodeling the interior, there was not much money left in our budget to tackle the outside. So we contacted a landscape designer and got four

he could have just about anyone or shrub on our property that he wanted. He brought this crew and they dug up nearly all the problem trees, which he planted at other clients' homes. As an act of goodwill, he even removed some dead and dying vegetation for us. Then he filled in the holes and graded our yard with fresh topsoil—all at no cost to us. After we gave our house a fresh coat of paint and added some new plantings in the yard, we turned our yard into a gem.

What Mary Jane saved: \$2,200

"I mixed old paint to get the right color"

"Abby Brown," via TDI message board
Spout Springs, Okla.

When we bought our 2006 ranch house in 2009, the previous owner left us many paint swatches of paint. I had promised myself I'd paint their rooms, and my 8-year-old was saving up to buy the color he liked. He really wanted to paint a new toy with harmony, but didn't have enough cash left over to buy paint as well. That gave me an idea: I mixed up different colors of the leftover paint—peach, burnt orange, browns, blue—and came out with a mocha shade that's in love. The color is perfect for all the trim and walls he collects, and it's only cost me a couple of bucks for a roller gun.

What Abby Brown saved: \$60



"We made our temporary countertop permanent"
Beth Campbell and Steve Young

Spout Springs, Okla.

"We temporarily leveled nine counters for our kitchen renovation, but we couldn't decide what material to use. So we were put off by the cost. So in a temporary solution, we installed some pieces of



plywood. We liked the way they looked so much that we decided to keep them. We spent a total of \$200 for plywood, strip molding to cover the edges, and a couple of cases of clear-coat polyurethane finish—we never get loads of compliments on them."

What Beth and Steve saved: \$1,400



"Trained into lumber into decorative trim"
Leah McInerney

Knox, Mo.

"Instead of buying trim to frame doors and windows, my husband and I use 2-inch-by-8-foot lumber strips. They're inexpensive and come in bundles at our home center. The strips can be cut to fit a sample piece back at the store or a ruler to create more decorative details. So far we've used them for a window doorway, and because of their layer and living grain, they give us a look that is a little different and unexpected."

What Leah saved: \$300

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Somebody's got their nose at plywood!

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Stone fireplace fragments

Repurpose sections of vintage marble or slate mantels to spruce up your entry hall, kitchen, or garden. BY AMY B. BEARDS • Photography by PAUL KENNY



If you love Victorian era stone mantels, but don't have a grand old fireplace to put one in, here's an equally good idea: to buy one — just get a piece instead. A keystone, the grand at the center of many a stone mantel, is a beautiful piece, made of slate with a marble-style veining, can go for as little as \$15 at salvage yards or on eBay. A finished mantel piece with a gold leaf border is available in several colors for as little as \$15.

During the second half of the 19th century, stone mantels made from imported Italian marbles or more modest Vermont slate were status symbols for the growing middle class. Machine-carved with classical design motifs, such as acanthus leaves, swags, and garlands, they were made of local marble or stone.

Unlike most wood mantels, which were installed in one piece, however, and marble stone often broke into sections and were assembled on-site. For this reason, it's common to find just parts today.





shop smart Marble molders from the late 1800s can easily be \$1,800, but this matched set of three carves just for well under \$100.

On a recent trip to Greenleaf Depot in New York City, I had my eye on a serpentine mantel shelf. Supported by wood or metal brackets, it'd make a great wall mount cascade table in an entry hall. A pair of arched side panels with jagged flower-coral frame a pass-through between a kitchen and dining room, or surround a tiled backsplash behind a sink. And a fragment of a carved brace could be placed in the soil like edging to serve as a whimsical focal point in a garden.

But for my creative reuse project, I wanted to use a carved marble keystone. When tapped with a salvaged rod shank and hung on an outside wall, it would make a decorative pedestal shelf for a potted plant. See how I made it at right.

Make a pedestal shelf

With its elegant carvings and beveled details, the center keystone is typically the most decorative part of a mantel. And because it's already nailed in the back where a bolt used to secure it to the horizontal frame, the keystone also lends itself well to artistic repurposing as a wall hanging. All you need is a sturdy hole, a little epoxy, and a \$10 vintage slate rod like to transform it into a charming shelf.

Cost: \$60 to \$75 for a marble keystone and slate rod kit.
Time: 1 hour
Difficulty: Simple. Cutting the slate is easy if you use a grinder.



Choose carving, photo, such as. Decorative pedestal shelf. To frame your wall's decorative home.

STEP-BY-STEP

1 Measure the width and depth of the keystone's top. Double the dimensions to determine how big its shelf should be. Too much overhang at the sides or front can make it unstable.



2 Mark the desired width and depth on the slate, using straightedges to trace the outlines.



3 Grasp the slate in your workbench, and position a grinder's rotating wheel on a line. After a few passes, any overhang should snap right off.



watch it, learn it, do it.

For a step-by-step video for this project, visit diy.bonobos.com/learn.



4 Flip the keystone face down and use an awl to remove old mortar inside the hole, where the keystone's original bolt attachment would have been embedded.



5 Fill the hole with a fast-drying, two-part epoxy (such as Loctite®) formulated to bond metal and stone. Position a sturdy steel picture hook over the hole with its screws embedded in the epoxy.



6 Stand the keystone upright. It should now make a sturdy block; spread epoxy with a putty knife. Now all that's left to do is let the epoxy cure—and hang your new pedestal shelf.

Project photographs by KATHLEEN LARSEN

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Butcher-block island

This handsome and durable prep station is simple to build out of standard lumber or easy to find through kitchen retailers. **by ROBERT OTTENSTEIN • Photograph by TAMI CLAPTON**

If you're going for fancy and easy in your kitchen, skip the built-in cabinet island and instead make the central work area a farmhouse-style table with a butcher-block counter. Because these thick wood-slab tops have their edge or end grain exposed, they are stronger than wood laid on the flat. That means they resist warping and racking better than laminate and stone as well as stone.

With this durability comes an old-fashioned warmth. The need for wood and farmhouse in the kitchen is in full swing, and butcher-block islands mimicking 19th-century work tables are perfect for tying down the coldness of stone counters and metal appliances in modern cook spaces. You can bring this classic aesthetic to your kitchen by constructing a prep island from easy-to-find materials in choosing one of the dozens of styles available through retailers and furniture makers. "Whether you choose, you'll end up with an island that can be at the center of the cooking scene and still take whatever you can dish out."



build it right
Celebrated mastercarpenter, home-minded butcher-block designer, and thoughtful contributor



build it

You can piece together stock lumber and custom-made butcher-block into a durable work island

1. Make the legs. Glue and screw together doublet up 2x4s into full legs. (Note: Use poplar—found in specialty lumber yards—for all the parts here. It's more stable than pine.) Use a shorter block and a longer piece for each; a 3/4-inch notch near the bottom.

2. Build the bottom shelf. Cut 2x4s to the length and width of the bottom shelf. Glue

and screw the pieces together on the flat with the short ends sitting between the longer sides. Screw equally spaced 2x2 crosspieces within the shelf frame.

3. Assemble the frame. Glue and mount the shelf inside the leg notches and secure it with 2 1/2-inch trim-head screws. Cut four 2x6s to fit between the legs to make the apron. Attach the aprons using corner brackets, shave a slice off the top-corner of the leg to flatten it so that it fits against the bracket. Fill the screw holes and the seams between the 2x6s on the legs with wood filler. Let dry. Sand, prime, and paint the base.

4. Install the butcher-block top. Butcher block is available by special order. Create a mounting surface for the butcher block by screwing three 2x3 cross-pieces on the flat between the long sides of the apron, flush with the top. Drill two 1/4-inch-wide holes in each 2x3 cross-piece. Apply silicone caulk to the crosspieces and the top edge of the apron. Seal the butcher block in place. Drive a deck screw with a fender washer up through each hole and into the block.

5. Cut and install the lower rack. Round the ends of two short blocks of 2x10s to make the sides of the lower holder. Run a flat-bottomed hole with a hand-saw halfway through each block. Glue and screw one piece to a 2x4 mounting bar. Insert a dowel into the hole, put the second 2x10 block onto the other end of the dowel, then screw the block to the mounting bar. Screw the mounting bar to the aprons using deck screws.

Project 1050

Time 10 hours

Difficulty Easy to moderate

Order in the lumber yard to match but also having the block square and level before gluing

buy it

You can choose islands with drawers, tapered or turned legs, and a variety of butcher-block woods

\$550+

basic model

A simple wood frame and wood top of butcher block on the legs. The price shown is the assembly required island. kitchen.com



\$1,899+

mid-range model

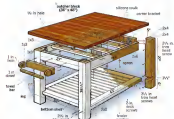
A 2 1/2-inch edge-grain maple top with a dry-brush and double drawers on the sides. The price shown is the web order of the kitchen. kitchen.com



\$2,895+

luxury model

The 2 1/2-inch edge-grain maple top with metal accents, turned legs, and top pull. The price shown is the web order of the kitchen. kitchen.com



PROBLEM.

SOLVER.

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weekend
remodel

Build a mudroom bench

Create a built-in place for coats and storage, with a seat to perch on while you tie your shoes. By JENNIFER STAFFORD • Photography by WENDY T. WOODS

Cost: \$170

Time: 3 to 4 hours over three days
Difficulty: Difficult. The basic frame is simple, but the partitions require some carpentry chops.

Business can't last forever, and soon enough our well-worn coats and umbrellas will be replaced by the new ones and the old ones. And with them a lot of money will go down the drain. Here's how to save: Instead of buying your family to do over on the front stoop, your best bet is to create a stopping area just inside the door where everyone can leave the weather behind.

On the following pages, The Old House owner Michael Miller shows how to create the perfect mudroom, complete with an open top shelf, coat hooks, and flip-top bench storage. The handsome entry hall built is made of plywood, shell panels, and layered moldings, a sure to make your home more welcoming, even while protecting it from wear and tear. In fact, you may find it so convenient you'll catch yourself stopping by even when the sun's out.

Project: Built-in coat closet
Location: Entry
Cost: \$170



For complete instructions, turn the page.



3. Seat lid

A. Trim the lid.

- Use a 6-foot long stock piece of 1x6 shoving board to build the seat lid.
- Using a miter saw, cut strips of 1x6 to inch dimensions shown molding to fit the front and side edges of the lid. Mitre the ends at the corners, but leave the back edges square. Attach the molding to the lid edge with wood glue and 2d nail chisel.

B. Install the lid.

- Place 1/2 inch pieces of plywood 2x4 inches. Nail it down at the back edge of the seat to the capris 2x4 assembly. Trim the edges with fine molding.
- Install the lid and 2x4 assembly using three European cabinet hinges so installed according to the "full overlay" instructions. It is a type of hinge allows the lid to open completely over the 2x4 assembly but reveal it only a small amount when it is closed. The lid should overhang the box by 1 inch on the sides and front.



4. Back panel

A. Mount the backboard panel.

- Since the board on a full sheet of plywood run lengthwise you will cut the board into two 4-foot pieces with a center cut. Then cut the pieces side by side the width to fit the 6-foot width of the bench.
- Mark a vertical line on the wall 4 feet up from the seat. Hold the two panels in place next to each other at the line, making sure the bottom of the top edges overlap, and push the screws between two seats' holes. You want the screws to fall into it so that you have something to screw the edges to.
- Mark the vertical edges of the back box and each side of the backboard. Replicate the marks at these marks.
- Secure the panels to the wall using adhesive caulk applied 1 inch from the edges and a 1/2 inch across the field and 2 inch from the head screws down into the seats.

B. Hide the backboard edges

- Fit each the edges and layer in from the top and bottom of the backboard paneling to create a tapered chair profile. You should make 45-degree mitered returns on either side to finish the ends.
- Cut two 4-foot strips of quarter round. Glue them to the backboard sides and to the wall. Trim them with 3/4 inch.
- Cut two pieces of 1x4 to fit between the outside edges of the backboard assembly. After the pieces are in place, secure them to the back of the bench using the full width of the backboard and quarter round. And the front extending panel the quarter round. Attach the boards at the top end corners of the backboard with 2d nail chisel.

C. Finish the trim.

- Apply a return on both ends of the 1x4 with adhesive caulk.
- Apply mitered quarter molding with returns below the 1x4 at the top and the backboard ends below the 1x4 at the bottom.
- Layer VV-equalizer round molding with returns over the joint between the 1x4 and the lid.

Tip To avoid splitting narrow wood stock with finish nails, drill the points of the nails with the stroke of a hammer before tapping them in.



5. Shelf

A. Install the shelf.

- Use a 6-foot piece of 1x6 shoving board to create the frame board above the backboard panel. Mount it to the wall using 2 inch 4d nails. Lead screws are drilled through the studs.

B. Mount the shelf brackets.

- Measure and mark the placement of three 2x4 brackets on the wall at the center and the corners. 4 inch away on the wall and 4 inch from the backboard.
- Using the provided hardware, install the shelf brackets flush with the top edge of the backboard and center at the studs.

C. Secure the shelf.

- Trim the front and sides with 6-foot long stock 1x2 shoving board with decorative shoe molding attached at the corners. Glue and nail the molding in with 2d finish nails.
- Set the shelf on the brackets and tight against the wall. Secure it to the brackets with 2 inch thin head screws.
- Cut a strip of decorative shoe molding material with outside corners to fit the full length of the backboard. Turn it upside down (flat end up) and fit it over the joint between the back and lower backboard with a 2 inch to wrap the corner.



trick out your bench
Get some of the products to accessorize your benchhouse chair.



6. Finishes

6. Finishes

A. Paint the bench.

- Sand the lid to bench with 180-grit sandpaper. Fill the nail holes and gaps between molding with caulk.
- Prime the bench, backboard, panel shelf and moldings. Then paint them with two coats of semigloss latex.

B. Attach the hardware.

- Screw the hardware to the backboard spaced evenly between the brackets.





READER

REMODEL

My mom thought I had lost my mind

The green shag carpet, makeshift walls, and layers of flooring were enough to make his mother cry. But after four years of remodeling weekends, this DIYer and his partner have made the 1919 bungalow into an inviting home.

By Charles McVie, homeowner
Photography by Deborah Whitlow Llewellyn
Styling by Brian Carter



We weren't in the house five minutes before tears started rolling down my mother's face, as she stood in the kitchen, staring at the walls and the orange-and-green shag carpet. I tried to comfort her, detailing all the positives: the newly 108-year-old bungalow had—original, beadboard ceilings and historic plaster walls, for starters—but she wasn't having it. The second floor of the 2,200-square-foot home was unfinished, and the first was filled with shoddy, half-done remodeling projects and had a musty smell.

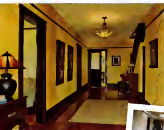
My partner, Jeremy, heard it too. I had convinced him to take a leap of faith on the home, which is an up-and-coming part of Great South Bay, but down despite the thought it was a money pit. While neither of us had done much remodeling, he at least had some carpentry experience. I, meanwhile, had done little more than paint. Looking back, I can understand why he thought I had gone insane.

At the time, though, all I could see was the wraparound porch and 7½-floor-wide hallway that first caught my eye. I knew that behind the brown facade were good bones and venerable hardwood floors. An interiorist friend, who hadn't expected me to make an offer, had pulled up a series of the rug for me. The boards were scuffed and stained, but they were solid heart pine.

Plus, I thought the place was a steal. I bought it in December 2004 for \$170,000, and we managed to get made \$20,000 for fixing up the house, a project we jumped right into. For two months before moving in, we spent our free weekends—Jeremy's more, and I work for the local theater company—ripping out flooring, replacing cracked planks, and knocking down walls. It's amazing. It cost \$300 to have someone demo just one wall but you can do it. *Continued on page 78* ➔



THIS PAGE: An interiorist friend helped Jeremy with the living room. Doug M. Smith helped create the walls (left). Jeremy bought solid-heart floors and remodeled, making OFFICE TV. Charles is a writer at the neighborhood journal *Bay Street*.



TOP: The generous 710-foot-wide main hallway with its heart-pine floors and original beadboard ceiling, sets a happy selling point for this bungalow—despite having to meet all major remodeling work on-site. (REHOF). **ABOVE:** The 1920s bungalow sits on a one-acre property and is wrapped in five sides with a porch.



[Before]

"We got the look of new Shaker-style cabinets for \$20 apiece just by trimming out the existing ones."

with the basement, sun-worshippers, and pop box, and there were holes everywhere. We were one we'd have to cover the floor again. Just for fun, though, we decided to take a drive under it to see what would happen. Honestly, we were hoping for a miracle, since we hadn't budgeted for a new floor. Thankfully, once we refinished it and put down a coat of glossy polyurethane, the holes made it look purposefully distressed—on, as Jimmy says, "pocked." Now we laugh when people talk how we managed to get the effort.

Our luck continued in the kitchen. Jimmy finally wore a little crazy one day and guffed up the old vinyl floor while I was at work, so as when I got home. Sadly, it wasn't beautiful hardwood. I figured we'd have to shell out for tile or new linoleum to put over the pine, but Jimmy had seen someone paint a floor on TV and decided to give it a try. For two weeks, he painstakingly taped off the floor and created a diamond pattern with several shades of \$3-per-gallon "oops" paint that had been assigned to the house owner. It looked great, so we decided to install a new light, buy a restaurant supply cart for the island, and finish painting the place. Word of warning: Be sure you have enough "oops" paint before you start so that you don't end up trying to match it in full price. Jimmy nearly ran out before he finished the walls.

The kitchen didn't look complete, though, and we were window shopping for cabinets we couldn't pay afford. While looking at some Shaker-style doors, Jimmy suddenly turned to me and said, "You know, it looks like this is a piece of trim that on a Shaker door." Sure enough, when we got home, he took down a cabinet door, found a piece of lumber that to cut and lay on top, and managed to replicate the look. It's hard to believe those are the same cabinet doors.

We don't consider the cover finished yet. We'd like to add a dishwasher and new fixtures, but for less than \$300 in materials and a lot of work from Jimmy, it looks much much better

in 10 minutes with a sledgehammer and little know-how. Our toughest project ended up being the first one: the master bedroom. Working out that room was like visiting a hot house. There were at least five different paint colors going on, and the previous owner had thrown up a wall in the middle of the 15-by-16-foot room in an attempt to add a bath. While he hadn't done any plumbing, he had knocked out the chimney roof fireplace.

To bring back some of the charm, we started a few back muscles moving a seven-foot oak mantle from a closed fireplace in the guest room to top a new ventless gas stove in the master bedroom. While we needed how perfect a traditional wood-burning fireplace, I like how the mantel would sit just as warm up the room. 10 days in 10 minutes. Chalk-free shower was nice to have during the weekend-filled six months we spent sanding and refinishing the house's original pine moldings.

After turning out five samples with that porch, we tackled the dining room. It had not one, no two, but three layers of flooring on top of the hardwood: shag carpet, vinyl tile, and a duck broken barrel. Normally, that would be a major pain, but not a huge problem. Unfortunately, the previous owners decided that anyone a piece of the flooring curlicue popped up they could do the whole wall or something it back down. It had at least a thousand dollars tucked in! After about a week of six-hour days putting them out, my hands were crumpled from working

THIS PAGE: Homeowner Jimmy Myers is the kitchen for a kitchen with "oops" paint. Above the new diamond pattern floor, a Shaker glass door was repainted and new trim moldings applied to the old wood cabinets (p.104).



[Before]

What we did

Restored a chipped-up 1920s bungalow to a cozy home.

Remodeling cost: \$10,000 so far

Time taken: Four years and counting

What we loved: Using discounted fixtures, a restaurant cart, and "oops" paint to redo the kitchen.

What we enjoyed: Fixing donations to help turn the sitting parlor room into a three-segment bath.

What we wouldn't do: Nothing! It was all a learning experience.

Biggest challenge: The dining room's hickory floor.

looked like Swiss cheese after we replaced linoleum from the top layers of carpet, linoleum, and subfloor.

How we saved it: We embraced the Swis character "vacating" a dining room over the boards and topping with a fresh coat of glossy polyurethane.



FLOOR PLANS: The 1,800-square-foot finisher of the 1920s home, which had no interior hallways until the 1950s, had been shipped approximately 1920s. The new owners restored much of the original plan.

fix now, save (A LOT) later

By Laura Fisher Kater
Photographs by
Kristine Lavato

This Old House's experts help you address
9 little trouble spots around your home before they
cause big—as in big bucks—damage down the road

"From small things, Ma, big things one day come," as the song goes. It's especially true when it comes to your house. Left neglected, seemingly minor things—a gutter clogged the wrong way, a bit of crumbling gesso—can lead to bigger and expensive ones. The good news is that, in many cases, all it takes to head off catastrophe is a little preventive maintenance or an inexpensive repair. "Don't wait until it's an emergency," says TOH master carpenter Neven Abram. "Spot-check areas around your home, preferably twice a year, in the fall and spring. And when you do fix something, do it right so that you don't end up making the problem worse."

Read on to learn the telltale signs of some of the most common house-
hold breakdowns just waiting to happen—and how to fix them.

This compact variety of Japanese holly grows slowly and densely, making it an ideal choice for foundation plantings.

1: Mildew on foundation walls

Potential problems Overgrown foundation plantings can channel water down exterior walls, leading to mold and mildew. What's more, roots can work their way into foundation walls and floors.

Fix it now Trim shrubs yourself. Better yet, replace them with dwarf varieties that won't be a perpetual pruning headache. In many parts of the country, planting an early-blooming shrub as head start at establishing roots in the season's cool, moist soil. Save money by shopping and off-season sale (at garden centers or finding a neighborhood plant swap). "Just be sure that any new shrubs are at least 3 feet from the foundation," says TOH landscape contractor Roger Cook. "Otherwise they'll keep the siding from being able to breathe."

What you'll save Between \$400 and \$2,500 to hire a water-damaged foundation and all the time and money to deal with everything it can do to a healthy structure. thisoldhouse.com/bonus



A BETTER FIT FOR THE FAMILY
Homesman Eric and Elizabeth Rytenko with son Michael, 6, Max, 3, and daughter 12 are enjoying their new kitchen.



CABINETS AND COUNTERTOPS
The new kitchen's light green cabinets, inspired by 1950s designs, and the black countertop are a nod to the original kitchen.

GREAT ADAPTATIONS

MODERN FUNCTION, *Vintage Flair*

Borrowing from the pages of *This Old House*, these savvy DIYers gave their nothing-special kitchen a better layout and a stylish new retro look.

WHEN YOU WORK ALL DAY IN A HIGH-TECH JOB, it's nice to come home to a warm, nostalgic-looking kitchen. But don't let that soft vintage-look cabinets and old-fashioned touches—or the color and scale of homesman Eric and Elizabeth Rytenko—fool you. Behind the handsome, oil-stained brass hardware lies the soul of a smooth-running machine, where every detail was carefully placed by Eric, an electrical engineer, and Elizabeth, who turned the dining room into a hall of inspiration by taking the well-worn pages from *TOH*.

While their Louisville, Colorado, house was built circa 1910, the kitchen dated to the 1970s. "It wasn't old, just outdated," says Elizabeth. It had no little storage, the couple kept some of their cooking gear in the basement. Its layout was counterproductive too. When one person was rummaging in the fridge, no one else could navigate between it and the nearby peninsula to reach the eating area.

The Rytenkos had major ambitions and a microbudget, so their six-month redo would be totally DIY, from the tiled sink wall to the last coat of paint. For by far, while juggling kids, neighborhood get-togethers, and one-kitchen factions, they mapped out an open plan in which all the modern conveniences would be hidden. "It's an old house, and we both like older things," says Eric.

After a musing dozens of articles on kitchen redo, he says, "kitchen by kitchen" was the winning idea. Then they brainstormed a plan to suit their space. The first step was taking down the wall that separated the cramped kitchen from the adjacent dining room, giving the family one big L-shaped space and the much more air, light, and company.

Continued on page 94

by DEBORAH SALLADIN photographs by J. CURTIS produced by COLETTE SCANLON
styling by SUNDAY HENDRICKSON

Now, Eric begins building, each day painting the Shaker-style cabinets. That part of the job alone took six weeks, working nights and weekends, says Eric, "and probably saved \$30,000." He also constructed an island that serves as a prep space and divides the kitchen from the dining room, with columns that open on both sides. Eric and Elizabeth also refinished the oak floor. "The first time, it just didn't look right," he says.

"You can see the Old House touches everywhere," says Eric, pointing to subway tiles, a live-oak sink, a wall-mounted flourer, and the oil-rubbed bronze hardware. But there big ideas at the stage: those cabinets, a rolling ladder originally designed to gain access to library shelves, and a freestanding oak Hovener (or least how that evokes early unified kitchen).

Other touches are strictly Eric and Elizabeth's. Eric to give the room a true period look, they commissioned period-style trappings, such as the oak compressor, microwave, and dishwasher, behind false cabinet fronts.

Then Eric figured out how to make the refrigerator disappear behind a five-panel door. How'd that work? Read on.

ROLLING LADDER
Being handy isn't enough to design for years. The Hyattsville spread floor is rolling cabinets. When the spotted cherry ladder is kitchen in TCH, they create a country feel that Eric and Elizabeth love more than 100 years. Ladder: Futura Rising Letter Co.



homeowner tip
MICHELE
DUNN, COLORADO

"If you have more wall space than floor space, opt for shelves, to the ceiling, cabinets. You'll get plenty of storage with no need for costly kitchen pullouts."



CINK AND TILE An apron front sink, similar to one seen in TCH, became a great backdrop for the simple, rustic, old-fashioned subway tiles. This will be a well-used floor, Eric, who loves the look of the American Old House Kitchen.



FREESTANDING FURNITURE Before built the kitchen, Eric and Elizabeth were furnished with individual pieces. An example in TCH began the kind of fun and function a freestanding island can provide. The island was topped with a live-oak top.



...of course, we can't take all the credit

TCH staffers who thought they'd seen everything did a double take when photos of this Hyattsville remodel landed in the in box. A fridge that opens with a sliding door looks like the light that pops out of a cabinet... a false drawer front concealing a built-in seat? Those are just three of the quirky custom touches the family came up with on their own.

1. Pivoted fridge

One way to hide a fridge is to buy a pivot built-in model with a custom panel that blends with the cabinets. But disguising a bulky, widely standard fridge with a custom panel requires a lot more creativity. So Eric shopped for a sliding-door door, figuring he could cut it to fit and affix it to the fridge's front. To reduce the door's weight, he placed it (the back of the door) part of an aluminum. The result? Then he and some of the wood shop's creative designs to attach it. The fridge looked as if it had been an old-fashioned party with space above for air to breathe. He finished the small cabinet doors on top with sliding-side look-alikes.

2. Swing-out storage

The Hyattsville house had informal get-togethers... and the new layout practically makes kids and grown-ups alike get up after dinner and dinner. To get the party going, Eric installed a built-in bar, board of the main on wheels and in an upper cabinet. As for music, he added a sound system—hidden in a cabinet, of course—with ceiling-mounted speakers disguised behind salvaged heat registers.

3. Built-in vacuum

Where there are kids, there are cookie crumbs... so Eric rigged up his own spot on a vacuum, using a \$40 shop vac and some ingenuity. After hanging the cabinet from the basement ceiling, he moved the vacuum up through the floor and into a built-in drawer in the island that holds the dining area. A drawer front from a door covered the hose and wand and a patch built into the cabinet's front door. Now the kids take turns vacuuming as part of post-dinner cleanup. ■



Wainscoting

Covering your walls with wainscoting, made from wide boards—so “jacks”—and panels is any man's affair, if you know your way around a chop saw. And if you don't, there's wainscoting that arrives on your doorstep fully assembled and ready to install. On the following pages, we show these and other products and more basic design options, plus a how-to plan for creating a pleasing layout. Just the kind of knowledge you'll need to boost the architectural integrity of any bare walls in your home.

What's it worth?
Starts at \$2 per square foot for beadboard wainscoting that you assemble yourself and goes up to \$13 per square foot for custom-crafted hardwood panels.

Top strength toothbrush
paint or clear
polyurethane
brush and glass can
separate by marks
with a sponge and
soapy water

Where to use it

Kingston arrives for your walls, wainscoting is particularly well suited to rooms that take a lot of wear and tear.

1 Entrances In mudrooms, where boots, backpacks and wet umbrellas can damage walls, wainscoting makes a good choice because there are fewer corners at edges to sand and ding. The walls in more formal foyers are often clad in paneled wainscoting.

2 Stairs and hallways The walls of these narrow passages benefit from wainscoting's scuff and mark protection. The horizontal rails and the cap generally follow the pitch of the stair, the stairs or benchboard in a narrow vertical

3 Dining areas In dining rooms, tall wainscoting topped with a grooved glass rail displays fine china and serving pieces. For more casual kid-chic, wainscoting capped at chest height with a prominent top rail safeguards walls from being marred when diners' push backs from the table.

4 Family rooms and dens Adding wainscoting to areas where kids—and pets—congregate can have a lasting effect: the architectural equivalent of a shield. Rec rooms benefit too, with a cap rail that's wide enough to perch a drink. Ping-Pong paddles or pool cue chalk.

5 Bathrooms A traditional alternative to pricey tile walls, wainscoting made from water-resistant wood, specially treated MDF or solid surfacing helps protect the drywall or plaster underneath from water damage. It also has a scented effect in the shower, where solid panels feature ceramic floors, and tub enclosures can predominate.

6 Kids' rooms Children probably won't give two hoots about it, but parents will appreciate the way wainscoting looks and how easily it cleans up after being used as a canvas for finger paints and crayons.



pro advice

LISA HOPKINS, ARCHITECT, LEANING ROCK

"Use paneled wainscoting in rooms and entryways where you can stand back and appreciate it. Beadboard works better in close quarters—bathrooms, mudrooms, and utility areas."



Entry Two-tier wainscoting adorns the base of the French doors topped with etched-glass transoms. Double-paneled wainscoting, similar to shown, \$8.75 per sq. ft. Northwest Solutions, northwestsolutions.com

DEN Beige paint on the far panels and a clear finish on the side rails, stairs and top offer a warm contrast to the blue walls. Solid oak over plywood panels, similar to shown, \$17.15 per sq. ft., Elysium Lumber, elysiumlumber.com



PHOTOS: JEFFREY M. TAYLOR/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES; JEFFREY M. TAYLOR/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES; JEFFREY M. TAYLOR/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES; JEFFREY M. TAYLOR/ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES



Stairway This fully stained antique pine beadboard glows under a dramatic set of alpine lanterns. Beadboard, hand-painted beadboard, similar to shown, starting at \$9.60 per sq. ft., Goodwin Heart Piece, heartpiece.com

Bedroom White-painted beadboard ties together the trim and pine as a backdrop for the pedestal sink. Moisture-resistant MDF with 2-inch bead, similar to shown, \$2.75 per sq. ft., Harbortouch Beadboard, harbortouch.com



Dining room Deep white paint on beadboard and taller wainscoting provides a bright contrast for the teal walls. Shaker-style set, similar to shown, \$6.25 per sq. ft., Elm Farm Works, elmfarmworks.com

Kid's room This shaker design ties an intermediate chair rail to ground. Beadboard has bumping tops thrust. Double-height 3rd-panel wainscoting, similar to shown, \$12 per sq. ft., Castlewood, castlewoodinteriors.com



Design guide

Wainscoting patterns evolved with architectural styles. Here are the greatest hits



raised panel

Typically made for a door with thick beveled edges, panel-hack done by a pro. Each panel expands and contracts evenly to prevent cracking. Available for formal spaces, popular only in houses with Colonial design influences



beadboard

One tongue and groove design, popular in New England. Comes from the late 1800s, often as informal space. Sometimes comes in a variety of styles, but all share the same basic design: a single bead running along the edge that requires the panel to be set deep



flat panel

The flat-panel wainscoting style is a contemporary design. Generally, flat panels with raised wood trims are used in formal and semi-formal spaces. They are a contemporary design, often used in a modern or transitional style



board and batten

When paneling a wall, you can use the traditional wainscoting style, which features the panel. Alternatively, you can use a board and batten design. The board and batten design is a contemporary design, often used in a modern or transitional style



hybrid

The hybrid wainscoting design is a contemporary design, often used in a modern or transitional style. It combines elements of traditional wainscoting with modern design elements



Material matters

Wainscoting is built, how it holds up, and its counterpart on what it's made of.

Solid wood The original wainscoting material. Plant-based species, such as maple, or clear-cut the good stuff, such as walnut and cherry, to highlight its color and grain. Wood requires careful installation and finishing to prevent cracks and gaps caused by seasonal expansion and contraction. \$-\$\$\$

MDF Medium-density fiberboard cuts like wood but doesn't expand, contract, warp, split, or have knots. Comes either primed for paint or veneered. Keep away from water, which causes it to swell and break down. Specially treated moisture-resistant MDF, however, can stand up to humidity in a bath. \$

Plastic Made from either cellular PVC or the same solid surfacing material used for kitchen counters. Looks like paneled wood but won't rot, making it ideal for bath, laundry rooms, and even a kitchen breakfast. \$

Fiberboard The long, wide sheets make installation fast—but they'll bow, glue it to the wall, and finish with caps and base moldings. Unlike those in other materials, the groove profiles tend to be shallow and rough. \$

Photo: © iStockphoto.com/PhotoDisc



WAINSCOT IN A BOX

For about half the cost of custom wainscoting, order a ready-to-assemble kit, complete with center panels, rails, rails, and caps and base moldings. Milled with tongue and groove (see inset), components fit together like a puzzle. Choose from a handful of general sizes and designs. In pre-primed or veneered MDF. You supply your wall dimensions and the pieces arrive in a few weeks.

MDF flat-panel kit = \$23.00 per sq ft. New England Decor. newenglanddecor.com

sticks

Downsides: They're long and narrow, and they're not as strong as solid wood. But they're a good choice for a small room or a small project. They're also a good choice for a small room or a small project.



- A. Single-board sticks = 1/2" thick x 2 1/2" wide x 36" high. \$5.00 per sq ft. B. Veneer wainscoting sticks = 1/2" thick x 2 1/2" wide x 36" high. \$5.00 per sq ft. C. Double-board sticks = 1/2" thick x 2 1/2" wide x 36" high. \$9.00 per sq ft. D. Solid wainscoting sticks = 1/2" thick x 2 1/2" wide x 36" high. \$14.00 per sq ft. E. Filler for wainscoting sticks = 1/2" thick x 2 1/2" wide x 36" high. \$14.00 per sq ft. F. Filler for wainscoting sticks = 1/2" thick x 2 1/2" wide x 36" high. \$14.00 per sq ft.

sheets

Long sheets of plywood, solid surfacing, or MDF cover walls quickly with fewer joints. They're also a good choice for a small room or a small project.



- A. Beaded-panel MDF = 1/2" thick x 36" high x 36" long. \$14.00 per sq ft. B. Beaded-panel MDF = 1/2" thick x 36" high x 36" long. \$14.00 per sq ft. C. Beaded-panel MDF = 1/2" thick x 36" high x 36" long. \$14.00 per sq ft. D. Beaded-panel MDF = 1/2" thick x 36" high x 36" long. \$14.00 per sq ft. E. Beaded-panel MDF = 1/2" thick x 36" high x 36" long. \$14.00 per sq ft. F. Beaded-panel MDF = 1/2" thick x 36" high x 36" long. \$14.00 per sq ft.

planks

Plank wainscoting looks like high-end paneled wood, but they're actually made of MDF, which is a good choice for a small room or a small project.



- A. Veneer MDF = 1/2" thick x 12" wide x 36" high. \$5.00 per sq ft. B. Veneer MDF = 1/2" thick x 12" wide x 36" high. \$5.00 per sq ft. C. Veneer MDF = 1/2" thick x 12" wide x 36" high. \$5.00 per sq ft. D. Veneer MDF = 1/2" thick x 12" wide x 36" high. \$5.00 per sq ft. E. Veneer MDF = 1/2" thick x 12" wide x 36" high. \$5.00 per sq ft. F. Veneer MDF = 1/2" thick x 12" wide x 36" high. \$5.00 per sq ft.

How to get it

You don't need a pro to build wainscoting from scratch. Choose thrifty, assemble-yourself sticks or planks, or take it easy with ready-made sheets or panels.

panels

A wainscoting company's design and installation services are a good choice for a small room or a small project.



- A. Wainscoting panels = 1/2" thick x 36" high. \$14.00 per sq ft. B. Wainscoting panels = 1/2" thick x 36" high. \$14.00 per sq ft. C. Wainscoting panels = 1/2" thick x 36" high. \$14.00 per sq ft. D. Wainscoting panels = 1/2" thick x 36" high. \$14.00 per sq ft. E. Wainscoting panels = 1/2" thick x 36" high. \$14.00 per sq ft. F. Wainscoting panels = 1/2" thick x 36" high. \$14.00 per sq ft.

Design rules of thumb

Follow these guidelines for pleasing proportions

- ➊ **How high?** Generally, the cap sits about one-third the way up the wall. For the coting is 5 feet, go for 3-foot wainscoting. For taller wainscoting, such as one with a pilaster, cap it half the height the way up the wall.
- ➋ **How wide a panel?** They should all be the same, to avoid cutting individual panels down at corners and doorways to get them to fit walls of varying heights. Architects and kit makers use computer-aided design software to calculate panel widths that work for your specific room dimensions.
- ➌ **What to do under windows?** For baseboard, simply cut it to size. For paneled wainscoting, order a center panel that's the same width as your window. Its height will vary depending on the distance between your window's projecting bottom stool and the floor or on the top.
- ➍ **What about the base?** Baseboard topped with a profiled cap neatly under wainscoting in bedrooms and adds a little extra kick protection. Cover the joint where wainscoting meets the floor with shoe molding.



WAINSCOT OUTSIDE

Baseboard made of cellular PVC looks rustic, and panels, set like wood or MDF, but unlike its closest competitor, it won't swell, rot, or attract mold or insects in wet areas. For painted and painted-porch in plastic, no one will be the wiser. The walls of the porch above are clad in 3-inch-wide tongue-and-groove baseboard at \$4 per sq. ft. Ask Building Products 800.46.com.

Four ways to save

Get the look of wainscoting without the pricey panels

Painted on planks Polished steel stripes in alternating hues and thicknesses will give you the wainscoting look for a fraction of the cost. Look for the wainscoting look for a fraction of the cost. Look for the wainscoting look for a fraction of the cost.

Wall frames Install a chair rail and a decorative frame made from decorative panel molding beneath it. Paint the chair rail and everything below it a darker color for the best of both worlds.

Flex flat panel Use melamine, acrylic, and cap molding. The flex flat panel is a good choice for the best of both worlds.

Stain-grade wall veneer After baseboard plywood directly beneath. Then nail up plywood and stain it to look like wood. The plywood is a good choice for the best of both worlds.



vary the height

Wainscoting takes a sharp turn toward the ceiling for a dramatic bedroom hallway. Baseboard is 4 feet, wainscoting is 6 feet. \$10 per sq. ft. Mastercraft Baseboard baseboard.com

build in seating

Baseboard declines to the back and adds a subtle seat. \$10 per sq. ft. Mastercraft Baseboard baseboard.com



DIY online Wainscoting isn't just for pros. Look for a wainscoting kit at \$10 per sq. ft. Mastercraft Baseboard baseboard.com

wrap a bar

Baseboard covers the back of a bar, adding a custom look. \$10 per sq. ft. Mastercraft Baseboard baseboard.com

Ideas we love

Clever ways to use wainscoting on more than walls in bedrooms, baths, hallways, and kitchens



finish a tub Polished cellular PVC baseboard clings off water, making it a smart choice for a tub surround. It looks like wood, at \$10.50 per sq. ft. Pylon baseboard.com





Watch. Learn. Do.

Get inspired, and hone your home improvement skills with help from the experts at This Old House. Check your local TV listings for stations and showtimes. Or catch the crew on our webcams at thisoldhouse.com/tv.



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inside

CLEAN A ROOF

STOP HOSE BREAKS

FIX LOOSE KNOBS

MORE



32
tips, tricks, and
answers to
your home
improvement
questions

Q What's the difference between a file and a rasp?

A While both are used to smooth and shape wood, a rasp is a hand tool with a coarse, double-fluted edge that is used to remove large amounts of material. A file, on the other hand, has a finer, single-fluted edge and is used to smooth and finish the surface of a piece of wood. Both tools are used in a variety of home improvement projects, from sanding and smoothing to shaping and carving.



Our cast of window experts

TOM SILVA
General ContractorNORM ABRAM
Master CarpenterROB ROY THOMAS
Plumbing and Heating ExpertRANDY HAHN
Landscape ContractorKEVIN B. CONNOR
Bird

Q Last year I bought a 1910 bungalow with a mash-up of original single-pane windows, many without storms, and cheap vinyl ones—most with broken latches. The furnace is 15 years old. Which should I replace first, the furnace or the windows?

—BOB ST. PAUL, MINN. (ON MESSAGE BOARD)



Tom Silva examines a newly installed double replacement window. It looks like the original but has insulated glass and tight weatherstripping.

Tom Silva replies: A new furnace would definitely be more efficient than the one you have. But it would simply pump warm air into the house and out through your leaky windows, so I'd focus on the windows first.

To fit all the original windows with good quality storm windows. They are a no-brainer about as well as most replacement windows, and at a much lower cost. And they'll protect those valuable originals from the weather. Expect to pay about \$150 apiece for exterior storms, not including installation. They should be installed in burial or aluminum tracks at the sides and top, but leave the bottom flange unobstructed to allow condensation to drain. Then weatherstrip the existing windows.

Your vinyl windows present a slightly different problem. Assuming they're double-glazed, the best replacement solution would be to replace the sash locks so that the meeting rails don't leak warm air. These locks will improve your security too. Also, replace the weatherstripping if it's worn. You may find that your windows are so far gone that neither can be done. In that case, you might want to consider upgrading to wood or fiberglass replacement windows that go with the house's original windows.

While you're at it, see that your doors are properly weatherstripped, too, and seal gaps around the house with caulk, and fill large gaps with expanding foam outside. All this, plus

the attic insulation, should result in a noticeable improvement in your heating costs and your comfort. By the way, make sure you take advantage of any federal or state stimulus programs that can offset some of your expenditures. Put the savings from your reduced heating bills into a "new furnace" account.

Q ROOF IS TURNING BLACK
Oxidic north side of our roof the shingles are covered with black streaks. Can you believe what causes this and how to get rid of it?

—GEOFF HANSEN, WOODSTOCK, ONT.

Kevin O'Connor replies: According to Jan Baker of the Asphalt Roofing Manufacturers Association, those black streaks are caused by Gloeophyllum nigrescens, a type of blue-green algae that thrives on water temperatures and moisture. Shaded or north-facing roofs are most susceptible because they dry off more slowly after a rain. But even without rain, summertime humidity is often high enough to foster the growth of this algae, which is a type of photosynthesizing bacteria.

Baker says 1 gallon of bleach and 3 gallons of water with 1 cup of TSP substitute will get rid of the streaks. But before you begin, put on old clothes, protect your eyes with goggles, and spray your foundation plants with clean water to cover them with a soap. Spray the solution on the roof using a pump sprayer, let it soak in for 15 minutes or so, then rinse it off. The mixture is slippery, so don't stand on the roof or use a pole to spray it from a ladder instead.

Unless you want to repeat the process every year, hire a contractor to install strips of zinc or copper under the shingles near the ridge. Every time it rains, the strips release minute quantities of metal ions that flow down the roof, killing the algae before it has a chance to spread.

WHAT IS IT?



A-1 Disposable smoothing plane

B-1 Adjustable doorknob

C-1 Plastic brass basket

Dr.

Dr.

Dr.

Dr.

Dr.

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Dr.



To discourage wasps from nesting, yellow jackets try blocking their holes in the morning, taking away the location.

Q WASPS NESTING IN LAWN
What can I do to get rid of the yellow jackets living in the ground around my house?

—TIM HANSEN, CHICAGO

Eugene Cook replies: There are actually kinds of wasps and bees that nest underground. Most are beneficial, not aggressive, and valuable in pollination. But if you are sure that you have yellow jackets, the following suggestions might get rid of them.

First, try flooding them with water in the evening, after they're returned to the nest. It may take several attempts over a period of days to drown them or encourage them to move elsewhere. Or you could try covering each hole with plastic—again, in the early evening—and seal it against the ground with bricks or blocks for a few days.

If that doesn't work them or discourage them, you'll probably have to use an insecticide. There are many formulations of these chemicals, including some poison-free products such as most of *Assalto* brand.

From region to region, but you should find what you need at a garden center or home supply store.

Q TOILET SUPPLY LEAK

I returned to my house one day to find that the first floor was flooded with about 3 inches of water from a leaking toilet supply line. How can I prevent this from happening again?

—MICHAEL J. DONALD, WATERTOWN, ONT.

Richard Trethewey replies: Among the best ways to prevent a leak is to check the connection periodically. Even the smallest amount of seepage there is a sign to turn off the water and investigate immediately.

But if it was the supply line itself that failed, most likely a hose became brittle with age. In that case, you best defense against leaks is to use a chromed-brass supply tube. Nipples might find them a little tricky to bend and cut, but I've never known them to crack open. The next best thing would be to install a flexible braided steel or stainless steel.

By the way, the FloodSafe supply hose made by Water Watch Technology

Guarantees a 10-year life.

QUESTION
OF THE
MONTH

With help of overhead
garage doors from
Clayco Custom
Interiors, Dave and
Pete got the old stock
carriage doors
replaced in one

I'd like to replace my stock overhead door and put in a pair of carriage doors. What's involved? —JANET WHITE, GIBBSBORO, N.J.

Mark DiGiacca of Access Overhead Door replies: Your carriage doors, the kind that actually swing open on hinges, are expensive, custom-made items that few people consider practical these days. But you can still get that old-world look with the convenience of a modern overhead door by upgrading to a carriage look door, like the one by Clayco that we

installed here. Each door has four heavy-filled steel sections that slide up and down on tracks. The applied rails, ribs, and braces are made of a non-corrosive composite. To complete the look, we added black steel handles and brass strap hinges.

Installing these doors should be done by professionals. Each panel weighs over 100 pounds, and the springs can pop loose unexpectedly with damage to the cables. In one day, for between \$400 and \$500, a pro can make sure the new springs and tracks are installed properly so that the door will operate smoothly and keep its warranty. Here is an overview of the basic steps my crew and I took on installation day.

STEP-BY-STEP Garage door

1. Remove old door.

The new door arrives in four five-piece sections after we remove the opening and place it in order. (For this job, the owner had the sections painted with a sample before from Q2 Paint.) The first thing we do is take off the old springs, then move by one all the old door sections and old tracks in professional control away.



5. Add last door section.

Now we lift the last door section into place, insert its rollers into the tracks, and secure the last set of hinge bolts. The re-assembled door should now slide up and down freely.

2. Align the vertical tracks.

First, we cut out a square notch in the top corner of each door section. Then we center the bottom section in the opening, brace it upright, and shim it level. The vertical tracks slip over the roller end-bushings and are loosely attached to the door's joints. Once each track is inside, plumb the brackets are screwed tight to the joints.



6. Add the extension springs.

Two springs counteract the weight of the door and make it easier to lift. Before we can attach the spring, we lift the door open and tighten C-clamps to the brackets to prevent the door from closing. One end of each spring hooks onto the spring eyebolt, the other to the vertical bracket on the other end, and connects to a chain or pulley wheel. To keep the springs from snapping, before the track when the door is opened, we thread a steel cable horizontally through the center wheel's pulley.

3. Stack the door sections.

We guide the rollers of the next section into the vertical tracks, rest it on top of the first section, and secure it with hinge bolts that connect the sections. The same process is repeated with the third section. The top door section is left off for the moment.



7. Thread the cable.

The two cables transfer the spring tension to the door. We hook one end of each cable to a bracket at the bottom corner of the door and put it up to a chain or pulley attached to the upper track. The cables then loop around the chain on the spring end, pass to the bracket enclosing the upper track section. We remove the C-clamps. When balanced, a door will need the same force to slide it up and down.

4. Attach the upper tracks.

The curved end of the upper tracks are loosely bolted to the tops of the vertical tracks. Locking rollers hold up the upper tracks, after which, roughly level, an end bolt secures the brackets on the curved ends. Builders' jacks are then supported ends and the loosely bolted to metal hangers are screwed to the spring ring. Diagonal measurements between the bracket brackets tell us if the brackets are parallel. We make any adjustments needed, then tighten all the fasteners.



8. Add the hardware.

We adjust spring tension evenly on both sides of the door, either by twisting the handle on the bracket or by twisting the springs, eyeball connections to the hangers. To finish the installation, we install the lock to the inside of the door and the decorative handles and hinge cover hardware on the outside.

Cost: Starting at \$1,000

Time: One day to remove existing door and install a new one

Difficulty: This is a complex and potentially dangerous job best left to professionals.



Norm's tricks of the trade



No matter how careful I am when cutting trim on a miter saw, the cuts are sometimes a bit long or a hair short. How can I make them perfect every time?

—ADAM CORLEY, PORTLAND, OREGON

A "Perfect" is a worthy goal, but even the best craftsmen don't always get it right. Here are two tricks that will improve your chances.



1. NICK BEFORE YOU CUT Lower the blade until its teeth almost touch the wood, and position the plate without the tooth on the waste side just shy of the outline. Raise the blade, adjust your angle and make a light mark on the waste side how close you are. Repeat from the piece if you need to, and make the final cut. It's a snap to cut a little longer and always trim off a bit more using the rest block.



2. SHAVE OFF A HAIR When a piece of trim is up and a whisker too long, turn the saw off and lower the blade almost all the way. Slide the end of the stock you want to trim against the side of the blade and push into it enough to flex the blade slightly. Then, without moving the piece, lift the blade, tilt the saw and make the cut. You'll like it all the better.

Q I'm building a new room in my basement using 2x4 walls covered with vertical tongue-and-groove boards. I've told that I need to put blocking between the studs so that I have something to nail the boards to. How do I do that?

—TOM LEE, LOS ANGELES

A I wouldn't use blocking at all. Once your studs are up, simply nail 2x3 strapping horizontally across them. Space the straps no more than 15 inches on center—closer if the walls are less than 4 inches thick. The walls will be a bit thicker, but strapping is a lot easier than fitting blocking between studs.



will close automatically when they sense a drop in water pressure, which might indicate a leak. Such a device may save you some money the next time you're away. However, they're not suited to homes supplied by wells; the natural pressure fluctuations may trigger the valve to close even when there isn't a leak.

Q KNIVES WON'T STAY TIGHT

The old proverbial knicks on the doors and drawers in our kitchen are always coming loose. Do you know a way to solve this problem?

—DEBBIE, PLACED BENE, GARDEN CITY, N.Y.

Norm Abram replies: The machine screws might be too short to get a good grip on the knobs. If so, you'll need to buy longer screws. Be sure to make a mark on the wood because the threads have to match exactly. If you can't find

screws of the right length, buy long bolts and cut them with a hacksaw. Always put a nut on the screw before you cut, or it will end up as a damaged mess when you twist it off. Or use a wood filler to plug the hole and use a screwdriver to pull the wood and knobs, at smaller head screws sometimes do. These knobs are secured in a such manner so that you can't twist off what you don't want without damaging the threads. I've found that the bolts aren't always long where you want them to, so keep them at the same using longer pins.

If the knobs will loosen, put a drop of threadlocking liquid on the screw threads before you install the knobs. Mechanics use this to prevent bolts from vibrating loose. It's like a weak glue, so it holds the parts together but not so tightly that they can't be loosened later if you need to remove them.



OH, CROWN MOULDING HANGER This device allows you to work single-handedly with sheets of crown up to 12 feet long. Hang it from a nail in the wall, then adjust it until the top of the crown fits snug against the ceiling. \$9.95 byaskthisoldhouse.com

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FACTS	CLAIMS	REALITIES
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WARRANTY Three year bumper to bumper backed by a \$10,000 year old Nebraska Company	Three Year Warranty	Read the warranty. Most parts are limited to a fee paid by owner/consumer
HEAT 34 sq. copper acting as a heat type produces more heat than any other 1500 watt infrared heater	More heat	Some have no copper at all. Others only 5 ft x 12 in. therefore they cannot produce as much heat or hold it as long as the SUNHEAT which makes competitor's models less efficient
FIN Quiet fan with coated ball bearings with an incredible 80,000 hour life expectancy	Fan noise as quiet as competitor	Noise helps no quiet - one in 8 doublets gears; most have a life expectancy of only 30,000 hours
HEAT TIMES 6000 plus hours with heavy duty wiring and a three year guarantee easily replaceable by owner	30,000 hours	Wiring is very thin with the longevity approx. 3000 hours. Some heaters have only heat on the market one year or less
QUALITY No electronics close to heat output. All high quality heavy duty components and parts. Designed, engineered and guaranteed by a \$10,000 year old Nebraska Company. Built in our own factory under watchful eyes and every heater is inspected to the 1/8" by in-house quality control inspectors	Good Quality	Electronics located close to heat output with light wiring. Guaranteed not to be too hot but built in factories that do not specialize in building infrared heaters. For most, this is their first income or building infrared heaters and they are not quality controlled inspected in the US.

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The history of the mansion is a colorful tale. The farmhouse in rural Quince County was the site and headquarters of one of the area's best known families. The house was built by George Hickman in 1896 after he inherited the land it sits on from his father, John Gross Hickman. In addition to rearing four children here, George and his wife raised cattle, sold milk, and cultivated 17 acres of peach trees on the surrounding property. George's daughter is daughter-in-law and grandson recently donated the house and 1 1/2 acres of land to the Quince County Historical Society, which is looking for a buyer.

Why save H? The house is an excellent example of a well-preserved 19th-century Folk Victorian and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Most of its original details including the 18-inch doors, windows and trim are still intact and well-maintained.

What's needed: The historical society has rebuilt the foundation and added a new roof. HVAC system wiring and plumbing is in even. The exterior and installed a new kitchen floor. But there is still a lot of cosmetic work to be done, including repainting the walls, refinishing the woodwork, and finding a good living for the front porch. (407) 594-2001



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1. The clipboard house is distinguished from other dormitories in its accessibility: large firehoses on the front porch and girders. 2. An old farmhouse is the property is located here. 3. The house is surrounded by many beautiful flowers like this one was designed with cedar trees, or "dogwoods," which run from the front door to the back. This allowed birds to fly in and out of the rooms as it was pulled from the ground and built the other. 4. An original window in the front porch, the window that is in good shape and made by hand is located on the ground.

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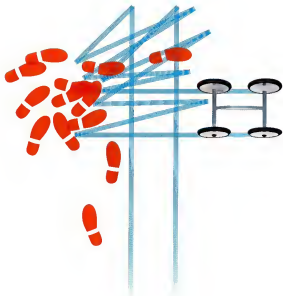
'Toughest decisions: Fire departures'

3.4.31 *Parasitiformes*. — Inlet, territory and throat, rusty and rust with orange.

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