

This Old House

75
outdoor
upgrades
under \$75
page 74

SPECIAL ISSUE

**great
gardens
made
easy**

**colorful flower borders
no-fail plant picks
beginner veggie beds**

**Green up
your lawn
reseeding tips
page 104
best mowers
page 94**

**BONUS
SECTION!
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cottage
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Simple how-to
**classic garden arbor
patio pebble mosaic
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{ May.10 } contents

LAWN & GARDEN

45 landscaping

Create an entry garden that will give your place a welcoming touch year-round

82 plant, grow, enjoy

Use our veggie gardening guide to help you bring homegrown goodness to your table

Idea file

37 before + after: kitchen

A more efficient layout and modern touches make a cramped place into a stylish roomer workspace

49 Photoshop redo

Test and redo: bring out the best in a plain studio house

59 budget redo

A determined DIYer makes a bland family room beautiful with a small list that has function and charm

74 75 outdoor upgrades for under \$75

Our product picks and makeover ideas for creating a stylish space outside

88 reader remodel

Reality's hand turns a four-month plan into a four-year project

TOH tv

57 When ways to preserve an old house

The TOH team helps bring a Second Empire back to life

upgrades

30 get this look

Colorful vintage-style kitchen

64 build it or buy it

Garden arbor

94 all about

Lawn mowers



on the cover



41 All Great gardens made easy
74 75 Outdoor upgrades
64 67 67 Simple how to
All in Green up your lawn

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imagination at work

contents [May 30]



For Mother's Day, give Mom a workspace stocked with all the tools she needs to bring her make-over visions to life.



27
HOME SOLUTIONS

home solutions

- 27 Build an outdoor window shelf for potted plants. 10 uses for terra-cotta pots. Spill up your tiles with vinyl decals. Body-friendly gardening tools and more

how-to projects

- 43 **paint ideas**
Give your foyer a colorful patchwork of petals
- 61 **animal house**
Pull your leashes and other goach props together with indestructible organizers
- 67 **weekend remodel**
Free up an old and tame basic materials are all you need to create a single-store mosaic

ask this old house

- 101 **Q + A** Prep clay soil planting beds. Silence an annoying neighbor. Pull up old, rotten wooden composite boardwalk, and more
- 104 **step-by-step** Rouse a lawn
- 105 **Mom's tricks of the trade** Make a straight edge to keep your circular saw cuts afloat

in every issue

- 10 **thisoldhouse.com**
- 15 **letter from This Old House**
- 19 **reader mail**
- 23 **checklist** Easy ways to improve your home right now
- 24 **home news** Fix up and live in a state park home, no fee! exterior paint, and more
- 109 **directory**
- 120 **save this old house**



61
UNRAIL
CLUB



67
WOOD
WORK



101
ASK THIS
OLD HOUSE

64
BUILD IT
OR BUY IT



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letter { from This Old House }

DIY—or die trying

"You know what they say?" my wife offered. "Why pay someone else to do it when you can get the blues yourself?"

She was being sarcastic, I think. Trying to tell me the scheme my brother and I had just hatched was unnecessary, or, as someone less kind might phrase it, "unbecom- ing."

The plan involved a little landscaping at my mother's, where my brother was going to have his wedding reception. Mom lives in a sweet but somewhat ramshackle house. Its aging porch is the property, a few parklike acres that skirt a lake. Problem is, a pretty steep hill sits between the house and the water.

Our idea was to build a shoulder-level walkback path from the back door to a two-story timber staircase we'd construct down to a gravel landing—which, because of a natural spring nearby, would need a dry well—connected to a walk that would wind in way under some shade trees along the shoreline to a picnic grove and three-step raised landing, where we'd hang a gangway to bridge the lake's shallows to deeper water, where we'd put a dock—nothing too big, maybe 13 by 15 feet, with outriggers, of course—or pontoon.

"Easy," I said. "It'll take a weekend, tops." My wife stared at me without speaking. I thought, *Just how sometimes you can almost hear the word about through someone's eyes.* "Mom will lend a hand," I said definitively, before adding, "and I've got Grandma will help."

In the end, even with Oben's—that's Grandma's—help moving the boulders, it took a couple of months of weekends. And though we got the project done, we expanded on my wife's old "You know what they say" adage to include the addendum "Why hire someone when you can get the mosquito bites yourself." "The poison my friend," "the mosquito yourself," and, no doubt from standing in the swampy water at the bottom of the dry well for cooling, "some sort of mass-focussing-and-unfocussing-like-yourself."

Was it worth it? Well, you know what they say? "No."

I mean, the results are great, and it costs a fraction of what hiring someone would have cost. But did we need it more than six or eight busy weekends? Let me put it this way: There's a story on page 78 called "75 Easy Outdoor Upgrades for Under \$75," and it's chock-full of smart, budget-savvy improvement ideas. Most can be accomplished in hours, at little risk to life or limb, leaving plenty of time to enjoy the results. Check it out and let me know what you think.

Scott O'Mellum
SCOTT O'MELLMAN, EDITOR
scott@thisoldhouse.com



THREE THINGS I LEARNED FROM THIS ISSUE

1. How a paint roller can help [p. 70]
2. How a needle and thread can build an outdoor room [p. 76]
3. Why robots aren't as good as 10-year-olds yet [p. 108]

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Be "The 100 Places to Buy an Old House" [March], highlighting older neighborhoods in each state. I was truly wowed when I went online [to the website.com/advertise] to see the Rhode Island selection and found my old home featured! I've lived in my home for almost 34 years, raising two children and renovating, in money allowed, but always trying to stay true to the character of both the house and the neighborhood. Much work and effort has gone into reviving Foxcroft Village (where I live) and Edgewood. Thank you for valuing not only my neighborhood and hard work but the work of all of us architect as well.

It seems that when it comes to wallpaper, TOBI readers have highly polarized opinions, particularly in reaction to our March *Home Solutions* "Smart Idea" highlighting papered stair treads, which sparked Oakley Rye's Stair Print (see sidebar, below)—in case you want it...for yourself.

It's as satisfying as a good conversation to receive reader letters as nice as those we got this month. There was great feedback on our "Best Places to Buy an Old House" story and helpful suggestions to solve our editor's squirrel problem, as well as some, er, strong opinions about the appropriate use of wallpaper. And, as usual, readers keep sending in clever adaptations of projects they've seen on our pages.

Editor Scott Overland's frustration over agains's eating the bulbs he and his wife had just planted (*Letter From This Old House*, March) roused the empathy of many readers, several of whom wrote to share some tried-and-true solutions.

I have been battling those little furry bodied crooks for 40 years with some degree of success. My solution is to plant the bulbs in a trench and cover them with a little soil, then lay down a strip of

how to reach:

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Filling cracks and sealing gaps with caulk and insulating foam sealants is an easy, effective, low-cost way to make your home more energy efficient. Plus, it can save you up to 20% on your heating and cooling costs. Below are some easy-to-follow home weatherization tips.

- Check for air leaks around windows and doors by slowly and carefully moving a lit candle or incense stick around the edges. Drafting smoke indicates leaks that need to be sealed.
- As temperatures rise and fall, your home expands and contracts. Gaps 3/8" deep and 1/2" wide are an acceptable product due to its superior flexibility, which allows for temperature fluctuations without cracking.
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Tips for Taming Tough Terrain

With a bit of creativity and the right equipment, even a challenging landscape can be sculpted into a beautiful—and usable—backyard oasis.

1 Try Terracing

Adding retaining walls to impossible-to-mow hillsides (those that rise more than a foot for every three feet of distance), increases usable yard and garden space, improves drainage and prevents erosion. A compact tractor with a loader attachment gets the job done.

2 Slope-Friendly Ground Covers

Native spreading or clumping plants with deep root systems will hold soil in place. Use drought-tolerant species at the top and water-loving varieties near the base.

3 Level the Field

The easiest way to flatten jagged rises and fill the dips between is to use a multi-purpose compact tractor with a box scraper attachment.

4 Overcome Obstacles

If your lawn is sloped or littered with large rocks and trees, consider a zero-turn rider. Cub Cadet makes the industry's only zero-turn riders with steering wheel control that are not only easy to maneuver, they're more stable and secure on uneven, hilly terrain.

Next month, look for "greener" ways to care for your own green space; in the meantime, visit www.cubcadet.com



YOU CAN'T GET ANY BETTER!

checklist { May 10 }

EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW

Q Show old wood a little TLC

May is National Preservation Month—a good time to restore vintage furniture's luster, whatever its finish. Clean with a damp cloth, then rub on a thin layer of paste wax, using a circular motion and following the wood grain. Wait 15 minutes, buff. The fresh coat will help guard against water and scratches.



Q What's on your checklist?

There are just six projects, planning and around my new house that I need to finish up and finish up.

—Anastasia A. Trede, Lexington, NC

E-mail us your ideas at checklist@theoldhouse.com

Angry and water by the garden? Inside 2 in. 5 in. to spread it. More.



Q Plant water lilies

Add a splash of color to a man-made pond with Hardy water lilies. Just fill two-thirds of a 10-inch wide heavy-duty pot (no holes) with garden soil, and plant the tuber at an angle so that its "eyes" grow toward the pot's center. Top with 1/2 inch of pea gravel to contain the soil, and place 6 inches below the water's surface.

Q Tune up your AC

Before summer heats up and makes you want to head down to your car, consider getting a checkup. Clean blocked condenser coils, clean or replace filters, and you can reduce energy use and extend your outdoor cool. For the warm-up, AC tune-up go to theoldhouse.com/homes.

Q Mount window boxes

Now's a good time to boost your home's curb appeal with new flower boxes. Here's how:



1. Mark where top of support brackets should sit (2 inches above window). If it's 2 inches for those that swing out (swing box). Mark brackets in place and mark 1/2 inch holes.



2. Holding each bracket level, drill pilot holes for screws. Fill holes with caulk to seal out water. (For vinyl siding, make 1/2 inch square spaces out of PVC and place underneath siding.)



3. Fasten brackets to house with 2 in. anchoring screws. Standard double screws. Screw into brackets. Fill with potting soil and flowers and enjoy!



reader project of the month

Hidden jewelry cabinet

MARIE FLANNERY, MINNEAPOLIS

Going off of *Salvage Style* (January/February, left), my husband and I converted an old medicine cabinet to jewelry storage, which we recessed into the wall and concealed behind a piece of art in our bedrooms (right). Thanks for the inspiration. We are TOH's biggest fans!

We took hardware class before replacing the art. The crochets, naps, daffodils, etc., grow right through the wire mesh with no difficulty, has 10-liter square mesh up front.

—ROSEMARY RYAN, MA

The owner of my local garden center recommended that I spray bulbs with Bonide's Slug Gun Hoe Pepper Wipe (bonideproducts.com). I put the bulbs in a bucket, spray them until they are coated, and then place. It solved my problem. They may take a bite, but they don't cause the whole bulb.

—LOU MORGAN, MA; PEPPER PINE, OH

After I touched bulb in its hole, I covered it with a handful of organic-basis moss. I then finish filling the hole with dirt and keep it down. A goodly seed of the moss digress the location of the bulb, so the squirrels can't find their treat. The bulb gets an extra dose of nutrients, too.

—POLLY WILLIAMS, ARLINGTON, VA

Decking garden

I'm responding to some inspiration in "Edging for Irregular Pavers" (Ask This Old House, March). First, to clarify, although my Gekko concrete pavers do resemble N.C. Ecker's "Rogelio," the design is my own. Second, because they interlock, the need for the border remains; you called for it. Due to this design feature, one can simply landscape up flush with grass or any other vegetation, leaving the seal base intact around the perimeter, which should remain embedded at least a foot beyond the stones.

—JOHN AUGUST VOLAND, MA

For more information and to request complete mold-coating and installation instructions, go to gedeck.com

Correction

4. Canna Drifted Lloyd should have been credited as the stylist for the April cover and the Before & After Kitchen feature.

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homenews (May 10)



By Tom Ichniowski

Score free housing

Facing tough times and dwindling budgets, 11 states give renters a little housing relief with tax credits that, in addition, a number—and lower-income ones—qualify for. California buildings-credited income of the nation's most scores this period with Florida's, which "tenant support" reaches along-term or fleeing lease, and the house, with up to \$1,000 payment and housing. Resident number programs exist in Massachusetts, Michigan, Delaware, and Indiana, but expect more to pop up as state parks struggle to save their most endangered homes. Call your state park service for more information.

Interior paint

No-fade paint

An oil-based, non-toxic, no-fade paint is so confident in its color that it won't fade. It's offering a 15-year guarantee, even for colors like red and dark blue. Which brand says pale test APV says its New® is water-based paint infused with a thermoplastic that resists ultraviolet rays and mold. Never fade is said to last twice as long as standard paint. It runs \$90 per gallon, and APV recommends it be applied by an approved pro. Visit apvpaints.com/for-sale

BBQ grates

BBQ grates

What's most important in how a home chef cooks the grill? A recent poll asked that very question. Here are the results.



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home solutions

inside 10 USES QUICK FIXES GARDEN GEAR MORE +



When plants are past bloom, pull down in new pots for fresh color.

▶ SMART IDEA

Potted-plant shelf

Here's a clever twist on the classic window box: a wood shelf that displays plants right in their pots outside your window. To make one, ask your lumberyard for a length of duck pine. Use a compass to measure and mark circles slightly larger than the diameter of each pot's base, spacing them evenly apart. Drill several pilot holes along your markings, then use a saw to cut out the circles (you may need to lay as even a long blade). Make the shelf stiff up joints by gluing together pairs of rock curls, a match glued to the shelf with stainless steel deck screws, and seal everything with a protective clear stain. Hang the shelf, then pop in some potted blooms, so replanting required.

home solutions PAINT MAKEOVER FUSS-FREE DECALS



Leave this space between "bricks" to approximate the look of mortar.

▶ WALKWAY UPGRADE

Roll on faux bricks

Replacing smooth concrete with natural stone or cast stone is the obvious way to go, but it can be quite costly. To instead of repaving, give your walkway a new look—without. Sweep the surface. Then prime it with a concrete sealer. Use Red Dye (a 1/2-gal. tub from Lowes.com). Let dry. Then, starting in one corner, use a 4-in. roller to create a "brick" with a bone, cobra head concrete paint. Paint another one below it, and so on. To make a border, repeat along the other side. Fill the space in between with a varying blend pattern of 5-inch bricks. Don't worry about keeping them exactly the same size or the lines perfectly straight—imperfections make the design to look. Let dry. Then, with a double take to be sure, you're done and your door. —NAT ALI/ADORN-GUEZ

▶ INSTANT STYLE

Stick-on tile accents

All-white tiled walls look clean, airy, but they can also feel unpleasantly anonymous. Now you can add a few patterned pieces—in mere minutes—with decals. Use a few to spice up shower walls, or add a whole row to break up a kitchen backsplash. As easy to apply as the ubiquitous peel-and-stick wallpaper, these removable vinyl stickers work on ceramic, stone, and plenty of splashes. Bonus: Opacite graphics will camouflage hairline cracks or old stains, too. To apply, clean the tile's surface according to package instructions (some stickers require dry walls, some use water), peel off the decal's backing, and position on the tile. Use a squeegee or credit card to smooth out any air bubbles, then let dry for about 24 hours. The decal should stay in place until you remove it—whether you change your mind in three months or three years.

—JESSICA DODD, PEER

These decals cover 4 1/2-inch squares, but you can also find options for 6-inch squares and subway tiles. Two sheets of left: Miles Tile Patterns. \$28 for six, 24-in. ones. Two sheets of right: Tiles, \$10 for four. www.tilepaper.com



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TRAVEL **AVALON** CLASS

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THE NEW TOYOTA AVALON



home solutions 10 USES

Terra-cotta pots

These sturdy clay containers can do more than hold garden plants. Here, some inventive ways to put them to work



4 Tidy twine.

1 Place a small pot upside down over a ball of garden lime. Feed the end through the pot's drainage hole to turn it into a dispenser.

2 Create a birdhouse.

Flip a medium pot upside down and adhere its flange on top with epoxy. Cover the entire assembly with masonry waterproofing, and fill the cavity with water.



† Barnish outdoor nests.

To make a scented candle that deters mosquitoes, create a wick inside a pot. Plug the drainage hole with caulk, then fill with melted paraffin, citronella oil, and Vytex granules, which hold the scent.

+ Dry kindling for your fire pit.

Slash twigs in a large pot set under an overhang. Let the porous terra-cotta absorb moisture, then use the wood as a fire starter.

5 Tie your garden.

Paint large and medium terra cotta pots a dark color, then turn upside down and arrange by size so that the tallest are at the back. Place a pettiely plant in each of each container to form a natural patio display.

6 Make a foundation

Drill a hole near the base of a medium not covered

 Shade fish.

Instead of pond plants, create shade for fish outdoors by turning a large pot on its side underwater. Surround the pot with stones to prevent it from rolling out of place.

9 Pot your seedlings.

Keep potatoes or onions cool and dry by storing them in a medium pot inside your pantry.

• Make rustic stacked shelves.

Place large pots upside down under each end of a plank of wood. Layer more pots and planks on top to reach the desired height.

—JENNIFER L. STANFORD

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home solutions

ERGO GEAR

CLICK LIST

FAST FIX

1 PRODUCTS

Dig in comfort

Gardening can be a pain in the neck (and back, and legs), but a simple change of gear can help reduce the stress on your body. Protect hands, knees, and other vulnerable areas with these tips, plus our picks for tools that can prevent aches.

—ELIZABETH HARRIS

● Shield hands

Avoid blisters and calluses by wearing the right gloves. For raising heavy leather crates, use leather. For more delicate work, try a fitted neoprene pair with padding to reduce friction. Men's Flowers and Women's Elite gardening gloves, \$30 per pair; blue-green.com

● Maximize leverage

For bending bushes and branches, look for long-handled loppers that have cushioned grips to absorb pressure and a cushioning gear just below the blade that multiplies force, making cutting easier. bypass loppers, \$40 each



● Protect your knees

Soften your joints from the hard ground while you plant and weed. Try a foam kneeler or pads that slip right over your pants. Thrive! knee pads, \$20, gardeners.com

● Test drive

Pruners come in lots of sizes and styles. So try them out for a good fit before you buy. 4a. Thrive! scissors with a thumb loop keeps them steady. \$13, mygarden.org

4b. The roll handle grip on this pruner reduces fatigue. \$80, barneysupply.com

4c. Rubberized handles and a finger loop add comfort to this Thrive! bypass pruner. \$20, mygarden.org

● Get a good grip

For jobs requiring frequent repetitive motion, such as digging, consider a gripper tool with textured inserts that handles you can hold easily. Thrive! Dig Grip, multi-use and broad, \$8 each, mygarden.org

4 CLICK LIST

Online garden planners

Before getting down in the dirt, shopping plans a successful garden with one of these easy-to-use virtual aides. —J.D.F.

For brand-new gardens
That tool box? Garden's ready supply. Company lets users map out a kitchen garden on a basic grid. Need extra guidance? Follow one of eight preplanned plots, all of which offer detailed planting information for each vegetable and herb included. gardeners.com

For formal gardens
Customize everything from your plot's size and shape to the number of trees, shrubs, flowers, borders, even fountains you want it to have with this step-by-step and simple-to-use, small-space planner. smallspaceplanner.com

For master gardeners
Learn which fruits and vegetables thrive best in one another, then make a schedule for essential tasks, such as sowing, weeding, watering, and harvesting, with this interactive planner growing.com

4 QUICK FIX

Mend a tear in a garden hose

To repair minor hose leaks, loop the wire and seal with tape. Get paper, glue, and a water-resistant rubber cement to affix a rubber patch to a piece of sand hose or bicycle tire (it will do) over the spot. Let dry. Then wrap the area with duct tape. This should keep your hose working until you can remove the damage and attach the replacement hose section with a brass fitting. —M.C.



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+ GIFT GUIDE

Help Mom get her designer on

Wondering what to give for Mother's Day? Consider gifts that help her home design obsession. Below: first-class-to-creativity workspace paired with essential organizer, decorating supplies and everything-but-the-kitchen-sink personalization. —CAMILLE BLUMHILL

1. Adjustable desk lamp: A stylish steel lamp offers crisp white light from three LEDs. Chrome desk lamp, \$100. [cb2.com](#)
2. Idea files: Magazine pages, life snippets, and web paper swatches show in nesting files. Cargo Mini Shelvesset, \$34 for three. [amazon.com](#)
3. Colored pencils: What artists use for true-to-life colors. Prismacolor set of 72 pencils, \$96. [dickblick.com](#)
4. Pro-style paper cutter: Great for trimming photos and artwork to size without wavy colored lines. Swingline 12-inch Cutlifter, \$63. [swingline.com](#)
5. Sawhorse desk: A sturdy black top offers a strong working project surface. Paint the unfinished legs a vibrant hue (we used Dutchboy's Auburn Vine). Vike System/Vike Lifestyle table, \$110. [ikea.com](#)

6. Scrapbook album: Sketchbook, graph paper, sticky tabs, and tracing to templates in one slim package to slip in her purse. Designer's Notebook, \$20. [chromabooks.com](#)
7. Pocket measuring tape: The professional shop for furniture without one. This 30-foot vinyl tape is housed in a sleek steel case. Biomat tape measure, \$29. [casslores.com](#)
8. Mini Fotomat: This portable printer instantly prints out 2-by-3-inch adhesive-backed images shot with a smartphone or digital camera. Fotopaper, \$50. [polaroid.com](#)
9. Heavy desk chair: Pencil-stained rattan gives an office stool a cottage look. Vintage sawtooth desk chair and cushion, \$309. [potterybarn.com](#)
10. Personalized pillow: Give Mom a gift card for a down-stuffed wool pillow she can customize from more than dozen mix-and-match colors and patterns. Design Your Own pillow, from \$95. [janeandjack.com](#)



+ Do-it-yourself inspiration board

Turn a \$30 farmhouse-style board into a backdrop for fabric swatches, photos, and paint chips. Simply attach each sheeting to the board with twine, and use the board to the hilt for inspiration.



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Same size, fresh look and function

A careful, detail-oriented redo pumped up a kitchen's traditional style and improved its performance. By DEBORAH KALZBERG • Photography by MATTHEW KIRKMAN



Open shelves display favorite pieces and contribute to the kitchen's city look.

The island was created from two cabinets, an epoxy-stained countertop and locked down to the floor.

Ask four strong-minded people to collaborate on a kitchen design and you may get open warfare. But call on product and graphic designers Robert and Bonnie Briggs of Lexington, Kentucky, local kitchen designer Liam Dabulski, and carpenter/cabinetmaker David Wilds, and you'll get a high-functioning, sophisticated setting for cooking and socializing alike—in less than three months. Robert and Bonnie assembled their dream team after four years of "bumping into each other and the pickled-oak cabinets and fluorescent lights of their Georgian-style house's 1950s kitchen. Robert, who refurbishes antique clocks and light fixtures as a hobby, caused a commotion that would show off a proud chandelier; Bonnie wanted an island packed with drawers and topped with pale marble. Wilds saw ways to widen a passageway and ease it with 18th-century style, and Dabulski worked her magic with off-the-shelf cabinets and accessories, assembling the pieces to create custom look pieces like the island and a collage-height bench. Today the kitchen's "a pleasure to walk in, everything is right where it's supposed to be, and we no longer bump into each other," says Bonnie. "Friends, kids, grandkids—everyone enjoys it."



before The kitchen had a map oak floor, but a solidly shaped island, a poorly placed fridge, and 1950s finished cabinets. Soft green cabinets, new appliances, stone counters, and a better layout made a small kitchen more useful.



after

Lots of open shelves and two structural changes—a larger window and a wider opening to the dining room—made the space more functional and brighter.

2 Replaced the island with one that fits the style of the house. Dabulski's facing the cooking and dining areas means no more hunting for platters and supplies.

3 Swapped out the stuck window for a triple unit and flush with the house to create a sense of light and air.

before

The 284-square-foot kitchen, with its swinging door, single window and bulky island, felt decidedly cramped.



1. Turned the closet into a niche for the microwave and refrigerator. Dabulski kept the cabinet and egg door at hand.



4 Had a pipe chucked below the cabinet doors to free the oven wall in window look.

5 Replaced a swinging door with a more contained passageway lined with built-in display cabinets.



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before+after: kitchen

• the key details

✦ **Inexpensive steel nails** hold bits and back lights when fixed up against with shaves on the Segura limestone backsplash. Eula MGA, Steven Wood Made



✦ **The coffered ceiling**, painstakingly shaped and milled to fit around lights and cabinetry reflects the owner's love of traditional architecture elements



✦ **A triple window** over the sink allows light off the limestone counter and backsplash and help opens up the room. The painted dishwasher sits handily between sink and island. Steve and Susan Wilson, Woodland, Porter Paint & Stained

Inspired islands

The legend of islands in every style at Woodhouse Antiques



✦ **Cherry-stained posts** made by the island company and terrace kitchen found at a home and helped form an assembly of stock cabinets into a furniture-like island and cabinets. Wood Made is a business inside Antiques



✦ **Custom display cabinets** are the perfect way that connects the kitchen to the dining room. On the adjacent wall, cabinets were stacked to the ceiling to create openness with filler strips closing any gaps



homeowner tip
KIMBERLY L. LONESTON, KY

"Keep a scrapbook of things you like. Photos we took at the Winterthur estate in Delaware inspired our glass-front cabinets."

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Paint a colorful patchwork

Warm up a small space with a lively pattern inspired by hand-stitched quilts

By DEBORAH SALOVEN

A bo-bo-tycoon can become a focal point if you have a few game left-overs and a bright idea. Ariene and Seth Perlmutter had already painted every other room in their 10-year-old Colonial-style house when they turned their attention to the front entry and its plain pine flooring and mustardy neutral walls. "I knew I had to do something to perk it up," says Ariene. Armed with five half-gallons of interior latex, she painted a patchwork quilt inspired by the checkerboard topped by much floral applique. Finding the right proportions for a 4½-by-13-foot space required some tinkering. "The rows had to be at least four squares across to give the pattern symmetry and proportion," she says.

After cleaning the floor, Ariene taped off 13-inch squares, allowing partial squares to bump up against the threshold at each end. She painted most of the squares the same color as the walls. Then she worked her way down the hall, using a 2-inch painter's brush and four color shades—deep blue, brick red, bright red, and teal green—in a semi-random fashion, as if stitching together fabric scraps. The elongated palette, in white, went down with the help of a hand-cut Mylar stencil. Their alternating red and blue colors being order to the patchwork.

The whole design got a protective top-coat of semitransparent shellac. It kept the floor from absorbing foot traffic and pets, and "it gives the pattern a subtle cue," Ariene says, "just like a well-sewn quilt." ■



The spirited floral design ties together all the colors from the neighboring rooms.

High-impact palette

Only white stenciled petals pop against a background of high-contrast colors like those from Blue



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Making an entrance

An entry garden ties your house into the landscape and welcomes you home each day

By KATHY HUNTER-JONES • Photographs by JESSICA HUNTER-JONES



Curved beds
draw the eye to
a yellow tulip, and
tie into other
garden on
the property.

Consider (1) a mantel against foundation plantings: those familiar beds of rhododendron, yew, holly, and camellia that used to cloak the high foundation walls of tall Victorian homes. "Foundation planting has become a safe choice—it's sure to move out," predicts Gordon Hayward, who works nationwide as a garden designer and lecturer, and is the author of 10 books on landscape design. Hayward is a proponent of the entry garden, wide borders flanking a front walk that serves as the garden's spine. "I want you to walk through and experience the front garden rather than pass it by," he says. A fine example is the entry garden he designed for the 1960s house shown above. To give the house's facade its due, homeowner Ramsey Yoder and her late wife, Perry, first commissioned stone steps and low walls to terrace the hillside and emphasize the four-door focal point. Then they called on Hayward to design a carefully composed garden that would deliver summer-long color, winter interest, and a mix of textures. He started, as always, by creating the winter garden first, placing evergreens and deciduous shrubs for year-round structure. Then he planned a sequence of blooming perennials and filled in with annuals, placing any fragrant plants close to the path. The resulting garden ties the house into the surrounding landscape, and, just as important, says Hayward, "it creates a sense of welcome, for your friends, your family, and yourself, too."

four seasons of interest

Among
framework of
evergreen trees
and shrubs
provides an
unchanging
backdrop for
seasonal color.
White-flowering
perennials and
annuals provide
lots of color all
summer and
into the fall.



pro advice
GORDON HAYWARD
GARDEN DESIGNER

To mixed borders
aim to juxtapose
textures that
contrast with
one another.
Generally, leaves
are categorized
as broad, strap
shaped, or finly.
So you might
place a broad-
leaved hosta next
to a finly-leaved
fern next to a
strappy daylily
for maximum
interest.



Illustration by JESSICA HUNTER-JONES



Plants that don't quit

Like all gardens, this one, located in Vermont, has peaked since it was first designed by Gordon Haywood: some species have taken off, others have withered on the windy side, and more evergreens have been added for winter interest. Here are some of the mainstays of the garden as it grows today.

1. Black-eyed Susan

Rudbeckia hirta (Perennial) Blooms from midsummer to late autumn; yellow petals around dark brown centers and very stems with fine, rough, bristling green leaves; growing to 36 inches high and 36 inches wide.

2. Russian sage

Perovskia atropurpurea (Perennial) Blooms from late summer to early autumn; small, deep blue flowers with silvery, silvery gray, leathery, upright stems; grows up to 48 inches high and 36 inches wide.

3. Lilac sage

Salvia verticillata (Perennial) Blooms in summer; dark green, finely leaved; upright to 40 gray purple flowers on long stems; growing up to 30 inches high and 30 inches wide.

4. Climbing hydrangea

Hydrangea petiolaris (Perennial) Blooms in summer; showy white, fragrant flowers; dark green, heart-shaped foliage that follows up the trunk; grows up to 30 feet high and 10 feet wide.

5. Coneflower

Echinacea purpurea (Perennial) Blooms in summer; showy yellow flowers; green, lanceolate leaves; growing up to 36 inches high and 36 inches wide.

6. Bee balm

Basil (Perennial) Blooms from midsummer to late autumn; small, white, tubular flowers; dark green, lanceolate leaves; growing up to 36 inches high and 36 inches wide.

7. Goathead

Achillea millefolium (Perennial) Blooms from early summer to midsummer; tall, upright, with plumbeous spikes of tiny flowers; stems are red; growing up to 36 inches high and 48 inches wide.

8. Siberian iris

Iris sibirica (Perennial) Blooms in early summer; purple, drooping flowers; on slender stems with glaucous foliage; grows up to 48 inches high and 24 inches wide.

9. Shabby chiquito

Hebe x exoniensis (Perennial) Blooms from late spring to mid autumn; small, pink, pink flowers; green, lanceolate leaves; growing up to 36 inches high and 36 inches wide.

10. Lady's mantle

Alchemilla mollis (Perennial) Blooms from spring to mid autumn; tiny, greenish yellow flowers; small, green, lanceolate leaves; growing up to 24 inches high and 36 inches wide.

11. Stonecrop

Sedum spectabile (Perennial) Blooms in late summer; rounded, purple, upright, gray foliage with starlike, pink flowers; grows up to 3 inches high and 12 inches wide.



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Tips for building an entry garden

Don't miss these tips and advice for creating a welcoming entry garden like the one shown in this story.

1. Start it right. Start by creating

planting beds on either side of the front walk that are at least as wide as the sidewalk. The border shows best if it's steep, leading toward the corners of the house, visually connecting it to the landscape. Though the beds are close to the house, the effect is balanced.

2. Plants agree. View the

garden from inside the house. Place evergreens and shrubs in the background, and plant perennials with varying heights in the foreground. Use the front door as a focal point, contrasting the shape and foliage with the greenery and the colors of the plants.

3. The border shows best. Take

design cues from the height of your house. If you're on a hill, use a border garden for a sense of scale. If you're on a flat lot, use a simple, symmetrical border. If you're on a hill, use a border garden for a sense of scale. If you're on a flat lot, use a simple, symmetrical border.

Transforming a bland box

Traditional touches in brick and wood enhance a straightforward stucco home

by DEBORAH GOODMAN • Photo illustration by HOWARD COZZI/AL



"Our house feels bare, and we don't like the color," says Rafi Bandman, who lives in this 1941 stucco house in Sherman Oaks, California, with his wife, Lora, and their newborn daughter. So we asked Washington, D.C., designer Frank Dutton for advice on how to spruce it up.

Dutton agreed with Rafi's assessment. "This house feels pale, featureless, blank—almost like a blank into the sky," he says. Adding a brick "water table" to the bottom portion of the facade would anchor the structure and help draw attention to the lower door, he says. He also suggests deepening the navy slightly, even though it would mean losing some space inside, to give a more prominent and provide better shelter. "A central entry would look out of scale here," he explains. Adding extra curves to brick-edged flower beds offers a needed contrast to the house's boxy form, and the warm-up color scheme feels classic and timeless. "The backswing is unexpected. It really fits how it greets the house," says Rafi. ■

Finishing touches

Warm, traditional colors pair well with stucco.



paint
Cheerful yellow and rich navy blue are a classic color palette.
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brick veneer
Dark brick is a classic color palette.
\$15 per square foot



path lights
Traditional lantern-style path lights add a touch of old-world charm.
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entry door
This entry door features the look of oak without the required upkeep. Stain or paint it any color you like.
\$150

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Colorful vintage-style kitchen

A vibrant palette and a mix of period accents invigorate this welcoming space. Here's how to put together a similar setup in your home. by KAZUO KAWABATA • Photograph by MATTHEW MILLMAN

Deep in an otherwise well-preserved period house, the kitchen tends to borrow from various historical eras. So when it came time for interior designer Kazuo Kato to give the blandly "updated" cook space in her 1904 San Francisco home an acquired-over-time feeling, she combined Victorian-era accents with hand-working details from the 1930s and '40s. Tame-yellow walls highlight glass-front cabinets with red trim (Kato's own design), while a cheerful checkered floor and vintage linoleum rug mix with lots of character-filled flea-market finds. Scoured stainless steel approximates the warm look of an old-time tin countertop.

Like what you see? Here are some ways to create a similarly eclectic look in your house. ■



green-glass hardware
This style of pull and knob (available in 1930 and 1940 styles) is light and airy.
Knobs: \$3-\$10 each and pull: \$7-\$20 each each

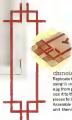


chinese chipendale chair
A vintage dining set works, but never to come by one more rustic with a classic look design that echoes the cabinet's ornate details.
\$175
bellechairs.com



glass-front cabinet

Glass panels, a solid finish knob, and exposed hinges give this custom cabinet from Crown Point the look of the century chair. Call 800-595-4554 for pricing.



fold-up step stool

To mimic the look of the fine martini bar at set, we coated this wood step stool with the designer's color scheme picks. Benjamin Moore's Ironwood and Strawberry Red. Oak stool. \$144. dutchcrafters.com



fiscal carries floorcloth

The hand-painted rug adds another layer of color and pattern—and it's water and stain resistant. 3-by-4 foot. Beardsley. \$342. bellawood.com



checkerboard floor tile

Follow the designer's lead and cut cherry, red and yellow 12-inch tiles into squares. Antebellum vinyl floor. \$3.50 per box at 40 tiles each.

get this look



art pottery vases

With their graceful shapes and pastel glazes, these vintage McCoy vases are as decorative as they are functional. Buy similar ones at auction sites, starting at about \$40 each. eBay.com



wall-mount bridge faucet

This fixture gets its retro appeal from porcelain lever handles, a gleaming chrome finish, and a built-in soap dish. \$159. www.mountandlark.com



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Wise ways to preserve an old house

This Old House TV teams up with a nonprofit to bring a foreclosed Second Empire into the future. BY DOUGLAS SNOOKIAN • Photographs: ANTHONY TRUZZI

"It wasn't until I could ever afford a house in Boston. I got really lucky," says Lanza Tolentino (shown below), the new owner of the left unit of this restored duplex in Roxbury. She grew up just a few blocks away. The 1870s Second Empire, like many older houses in the area, had sat vacant and in foreclosure until it was acquired by local nonprofit Nantux Community last year. That's when TOH TV stepped in to help. The show's producers put auction-going and transforming both spaces—making needed structural fixes as well—to enable Nantux to put them on the market to affordable housing. Combining period elegance with an updated layout and modern, well-priced materials, Lanza's first home is a study in smart renovation tactics for anybody who's living up an old place. Read on for the details.



before



small wonder

At just 1,000 square feet, the first floor packs lots of character into a relatively compact footprint. Upper (not shown) are three modest-size bedrooms and a master bath.

a facade that will stand the test of time
BEFORE Though architecturally intact, existing windows and shabby siding and trim made the house no eye-catcher. **ABOVE** Using existing exterior materials makes its makeover its best and will promote longevity. [A] The main and side is topped with slate, backless roofline changes that save a lot of time and money. [B] The porch is in front of the arched doorway and windows. "We also recessed the front door to further protect it from the elements," says TOH master carpenter Kevin Adams. [C] Wood windows were arranged for durable vinyl casings that offer great insulation. [D] It's a great under-pipe of the house weatherproof floor, cement siding and white trim bays the house in into the neighborhood, while red paint lines up the porcelains around the ramped roof bay.



before



before

a front parlor with restored glory
BEFORE This room, typically used to receive and entertain guests, was scarred by years of neglect and renovations and outright neglect. **ABOVE** and **LEFT** Personal touches make it the home's centerpiece once again. [A] New crownmolding made from lightweight, DIY-friendly polypropylene beams sealed in plaster. [B] The graceful marble mantel, similar to an original one, was found at a salvage yard. Placed where the fireplace once stood, it serves as a handsome focal point that anchors the sitting area. [C] Walls and trim are shades of white, with different finishes. Notice the paint's texture visually. "Lighter colors are often better than dark ones at highlighting the details and architecture of a space," says Travis McGough, the project's interior designer. [D] The bumper cut into the grid's best from new paneling and casework around the windows.



pro advice
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uponor

A wall of wired built-ins for \$1,310

Custom bookcases keep electronics out of sight, and, along with new tiles and fresh paint, transform a beer-bones family room. BY NADIA FORTIN/ELITE



Building up your know-how before starting a project can yield big bang-for-the-buck results. When Mario and Jeffrey Kramer moved into their Cakana Revival in Leavenworth, Oregon, only a few existing bookcase and shabby-gas-furnace broke up the 15-foot-long study room wall. The oak mantel was neatly nailed up, and the tiles were glued down, not grouted.

So Jeffrey, a hill-country, hillbilly woodsworker, dressed to make over the area with built-in floor-wide hand made mosaic and add charm to the sparse space. For months he researched Colonial-style motifs, electrical box-tops, and broadcast designs that would fit the couple's aesthetic. "Books, magazines, online materials—I read anything I could get my hands on," says Jeffrey. Then he stumbled over his final design, which included a hollow turned shelf and a built-in rear wall with a rose gear turning; they demoted the existing mantel, and made the cabinets in his garage workshop. He used inexpensive birch plywood for the frame, easy-to-get MDF for the cabinet doors, and finer poplar for the trimwork. Total cost, \$1,310—about 75 percent less than the built-in's \$500.

Now fully assembled, the wall unit is the focal point of the room and a shared source of pride for the couple. Says Jeffery, "I get to have my media equipment out of sight, and my wife can show off her prized possessions in the behind-the-scenes."

before The Hand-off white space had only a freestanding bookcase and a fireplace with a large mirror and a clock and a table with a lamp and a small table with a lamp.

AFTER: New gravel tile surrounds the firebox and creates a proper hearth, isolating the masonry in the adjacent kitchen. Oilyspout is contrasted to the crisp white enamel and wall of built-in.



Best Buy

the perfect tally:

demmed the existing market and surprised everyone by pulling up the carpet.	\$0
Schneidman did an inch square board for the fireplace surround and built-in. Covered it with polished granite tiles.	\$300
Built a cocktail and master using both plywood MGF and poplar timber.	\$950
Built out the upper shelves. Backing with 1/2 plywood framed with 1x4s and MDF.	\$30
Bought rope lighting and ran it along the unit's shelves.	\$70
Added a coat of Anticore and a new.	\$25
Put up a new molding and a new base.	\$35
Installed hardware including a new adjustable shelf pin.	\$130
Used a gallon of primer and 2 gallons of white paint for the built-in.	\$125
Total	\$2,010

.....

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1978 *Journal of Management Studies* 15(1)

The one-quadrant 12-habitat approach effectively got results among interested landowners: eleven plots and enough dead animals for genetic analysis. Improvement among models was demonstrated by visually inspecting camera traps.

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doi:10.1017/S0022292412001616

Leash control

Our decorative wall organizer lets you keep all your canine equipment in one convenient spot. BY KATHY DUNFORD • Photos by LAURA MOSS

Arko missed his walk this morning. Sad, since it's the English shepherd's favorite part of the day. "I walk him to the school bus stop with my kids every morning," says Arko's pack-maiden owner, Jennifer Maguire of Cincinnati. "But we just couldn't find a leash today, even though we looked everywhere. Even though we have four of them!"

What Jennifer needs is one go-to spot to keep all of Arko's leashes, not to mention his toys, collars, clothing, and poop bags. It'd be even better if that spot showcased those items as carefully as possible.

Our multifunctional wall organizer might be just what Jennifer and dog owners everywhere are looking for. It will give you a perfect place to hang your canine equipment right by the door, and an handsome looking and functional top shelf will serve as a decorative feature in your hallway or mudroom.

You can build the organizer in one weekend. All you need is some decorative plywood, crown molding, and a little bit of scrap lumber. Once you're done, you can mount it quite easily on your wall. Turn the page to see how it works, what to hang on it, and where to go for instructions on how to build one of your own. (We'll also tell you just how much walking you and your dog need each day.) We guarantee our organizer will make your life easier—and help ensure your dog won't have to give you that sad-eyed look because he missed his walk.



The shelf is designed to be mounted to standard flooring using two 2-inch deck screws.

animal house



Dog Walks 101

With their sporty leashes, comfy collars, and King toys, today's dogs are more accessorized than ever. That's why we asked our friend Lisa Peterson of the American Kennel Club for some guidance on how to keep the basics.

•**Leashes** The standard 6-foot-long leather or nylon leash is always a best bet. It's the same design: a handle to hold, a clip to attach to the dog's collar, and a clip to attach to the dog's collar. Expandable leashes are good too, as long as you expand them only in open spaces. Don't use them on the street, since they tend to get tangled up in trees, other dogs, and everything.

•**Bags** There are plenty of options, from standard plastic grocery bags to biodegradable bags to bags shaped like pines. And be sure to use proper etiquette when disposing of them. For instance, don't throw bags into your neighbor's trash can. Use your own or community trash cans.

•**Outfitwear** Some say collars and leashes do nothing but hamper our canine companions, but Peterson disagrees. Collars keep short-haired breeds, like the Chihuahua and dachshund, warm in cold weather they're not accustomed to. And bandanas protect paws from painful irritation caused by rock salt, antifreeze, and other chemicals. Dogs tend to lick their paws after walks, so bandanas might also prevent them from getting sick.

•**Treats and toys** Carry small treats with you while training a dog to walk properly. Retraining breeds, such as Labs, love to carry toys along with them on their daily walks. Just make sure the toys are easy to work.

FUNCTIONAL FEATURES

Our wall-mounted organizer gives you a one-stop spot for all your dog-walking needs.



shairing
The protective lip on our shelf prevents bags from falling off.

hooks
Three double hooks provide ample storage for leashes, collars, shairing coats, and collars. Place them where you want and add more if needed.



How often should I walk my dog?
The AKC recommends that all dogs get two 30-minute walks each day. That's enough to keep your dog—and you—in tip-top shape.

dog dispenser

A simple wood frame is covered with hard hat, making your poop-bag dispenser surprisingly decorative. Stuff the bags in one box, then pull them out from the bottom.



build it this weekend!

Have fun building this wall organizer in just one day! Let TCH's expert technical editor Mark Twain show you how at theanimalhouse.com/bonus



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Garden arbor

Put together a graceful, arched structure for climbing vines in a few minutes.
By MICHELLE STRICKER • Photograph by ALLAN WARD

A well-placed arbor is your garden's ultimate multitasker. It can serve as an entryway to an outdoor spot, frame a focal point, like a flowering shrub or garden shed, and, of course, take your beloved danden to new heights. The go-to material for this project is rot-resistant cedar, though you can also make it from treated lumber. This design takes advantage of a few simple shortcuts: The post-and-rail fence it connects, the arches are formed from a double layer of 1x6s, and the posts are made from doubled-up 2x6s, so you don't have to buy (and natch) pricey 4x4 posts. Just remember to use exterior-grade glass, film, and hardware to keep water and rust from spoiling your work. Pick up all the materials you need at home centers, or if you're buying an arbor instead, check out our picks on the next page for some of the options on the market. Whether left unfinished or given a coat of paint, you'll love how this piece adds personality to your outdoor space.



more
yard
how-tos

See related
Get directions for
making a link
at houzz.com

Adding plants
creates privacy
and gives the
arbor more of
an "entry" feel



build it
or buy it

build it

You can tweak this design by using diagonal lattice, adding more crosspieces to the arch, or making it taller.

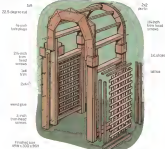
2. Make the arches. Cut, glue, and seal two staggered layers of 1x6s, with the ends cut at 22.5 degrees and the longer sides measuring 23 inches. Into the shape of an arch. Trace a shallow curve into the wood. Use a piece to cut through both layers. Make the second arch the same way, using the first arch to trace the curve.

3. Assemble the side frames. Attach two crosspieces between two 2x4 legs, all set on edge. Attach lattice strips to the frame's exterior about 1/4 inch from the top edge. Flip the frame over and lay a piece of lattice into the stops. Place a second set of staggered lattice, and secure them to the frame in all sides. Attach a shorter 2x4 to each leg to form posts; the 2x4s should be flush at the bottom. Make the second side frame the same way.

4. Install the postlets. Lay the arches on top of each other. Drill pilot holes for 2x2 postlets through both arches. Attach the 2x2s between the arches with glue and with screws through the pilot holes. Plug or fill the holes.

5. Assemble the arbor. Set the arch assembly into the shorter 2x4 legs. Attach it to the longer 2x4s. Use rebar to cover the joint between the arch assembly and posts. Install using ground screws for 4x4 posts.

Cost: About \$250 for cedar
Time: 10 hours
Difficulty: Medium. Cutting the arches requires precision, but the posts and lattice sides are straightforward to build.



buy it

Choose from basic, streamlined designs to stocky, trimmed-to-perfection masterpieces.

\$160+
basic

Made of a wood called Cedar Plank, this simple streamlined arbor comes prefinished for extra weather resistance. vinspire.com



\$600+
mid-range

For a higher-priced pick-up a red cedar arbor with beautiful green, some ironwork and a half-hatch arch. shopyard.com



\$875+
luxury

This cedar arbor with a modern water model boasts triple layer mahogany lattice and anyone who'll notice that you're a sturdy presence. theinstruction.com



Cooling Classic Homes the Modern Way



Window air conditioning units are noisy, drafty and unsightly. And installing conventional air duct systems in old houses often requires carving up closets and walls at great expense and disruption. There's an easier, more efficient way...

Halcyon

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- ☒ \$20,000 quotes for central air give you sticker shock
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- ☒ You're tired of paying to cool or heat rooms you don't use

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FUJITSU

*Savings may vary based on model selected, hours of operation and geographical location. (Savings claim based on 24,000 BTU system versus 12,000 BTU system.)

2. Lay the base

A. Prep the project site, and lay and level the concrete mix. The mosaic should sit on something slightly higher than the surrounding ground so that water won't collect on top of it. Take this into account when selecting your project site. Dig out or mount (at least 3 feet higher than your mosaic or at least 1 foot deeper if it's a bench). (The wire mesh proper drainage of the base and create enough space around the mosaic to accommodate.) Tamp 6 inches of gravel down into a 1-inch layer of stone dust into the excavated area. Pour dry concrete mix into the center of the excavation spot, and use a 2x4 to screed the mix to an even 2-inch layer that extends 2 inches beyond the mosaic's footprint on all sides.

B. Sweep the concrete mix. Using a garden sprayer or a hose with a fine mist attachment, lightly mist the concrete mix until its texture changes from a loose powder to a crumbly, dirt-like consistency.

C. Mark the mosaic's shape in the concrete. For a circular mosaic, 6 to 8 large nail bats (or a metal plate) sticking out to the length of the circle is ideal. Push one nail into the center of the installation spot (it'll be strong out), and draw a circle in the mix with the second nail. Draw a second circle at half the radius for an additional radial guide.



TIP Drying out of concrete mix will be enough to create a mosaic that's about 10 square feet.



3



3. Lay the center stones

A. Place the center stone. Rotate the mosaic so that you bury the bottom third of the stone in the dirt before it. (When all the stones are in place, you'll add a final topping mix between the joints.) Starting in the center, use a garden sprayer to dig shallow holes in the damp concrete mix. Place the first stone in the hole and pack concrete around it, holding it in place with your fingers.

B. Lay stones along the center stone. Using the spade dig shallow holes into the concrete mix next to the flat sides of the center stone. Set the second and third stones in place next to the first stone. Again, use your fingers to pack the mix tightly around them.

weekend remodel

4



4. Lay remaining stones

A. Fill in the joints. Working from the center outward, continue laying stones as described in Step 3A. The joints between the stones must be tight, and the stones should touch and adhere to the mortar. (If helping larger stones of various sizes next to each other, and level and reduce smaller or larger stones gradually as your pattern dictates.) Try to keep the height of the stones even as you lay them.

B. Set the remaining stones, edge or finish the surrounding field, and separate the base. When you're nearly done, lay a small sand or place a 2x4 across it and strike it with a rubber mallet to set and level the stones. (Don't be tempted to submerge a 2x4 here—it may bounce or bow when you strike it.) When the mosaic is complete, lay edging or a half of pavers, bricks, or tiles (stones are used to finish the joints together). If large pavers or tiles mosaic with a lot of extra concrete mix, then mix the mortar to fully saturate the concrete with the stones, and cover it with a plastic tarp. Let cure overnight.

5. Grout the stones

A. Spread the topping mix. Uncover the mosaic and make sure the stones are dry. Scatter topping mix onto the stones, working in a small section at a time, and use a paint brush to spread the mix into the joints between stones. Leave a recessed joint; it should be more than one-third the stones' height.

B. Saturate and shape the mix. Lightly mist the topping mix until it's fully saturated. (You can add more mix to the pool if the first layer settles too much after you misted it.) Allow the mix to absorb the water, then level it over for 30 to 60 minutes. Use a stiff-bristled brush to loosen and shape the joints by your liking.

C. Let the mosaic cure. Cover the mosaic with the color to help to hold moisture while it cures. For a harder cure, uncover the mosaic, and wet 4 to 6 times over the course of a day or two as it begins to set. Fully curing may take a couple of weeks, depending on the weather. When it's complete, buff the stones with a damp cloth to help move concrete to residue.



see more designs
Check out a wide variety of mosaic patterns at thisoldhouse.com/home

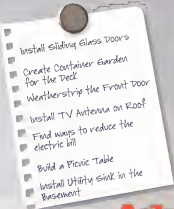
5



TIP The more topping mix you add, the harder the mosaic will set. Highly-traffic areas fill the joints with the mix and close to or flush with the tops of the stones.



Need help with your to-do list?



Ask
This Old
House

"Just Ask"

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This Old House & Home

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- beach glass colors
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Decorating ideas
get a little more
white sand, ocean
green, and a little
seafood pattern.
photographs by
this old house



This Old House & Home



Retro-replacible products and cabinet hardware set the tone for this kitchen's gingerbread-in-white play of colors and numbers.



When your biggest challenge is

deciding where to sit, you know you've come home to the perfect summer retreat. As the weather warms up, the goal is to unwind, so "you want the decor to be different," says Kristin Schell, who finished her family's Google+ post getaway in a smile-inducing style you might call retro casual. A big afternoon in the patcher round seat in the living room clears travel so that guests can turn to her past or the evening hole-in-the-wall. And everywhere you look, there's a nod to the colors of the day and era. From turquoise tea towels and aqua blenders to a chrome-finished vintage toaster and a '60s Chevrolet. Savannah, Georgia-based interior designer Jane Coats helped incorporate the new arrivals into the traditionally styled sea-house look as if it had been there for decades. She prevailed upon the builder to give the shaggy pine paneling on the walls a makeover by tone lock, scattered around some of the owners' vintage finds, used old shutters as door knobs and commissioned a dining table with a gastly worn finish. Even concessions to modern times, like the tiled back splash and concrete counters, are met with old-fashioned touches, such as a few huch made from cabinets with brackets and chicken wire door fronts. Lots of white and plenty of shut make everything pop," says Kristin. "But even on rainy days, when I sleep in the front door, I know I'm going to have fun."



1. bright light

Decorative lighting is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space.

2. retro refrigerator

The M1 White fridge is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space.

3. green glass

A green glass is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space.

4. chandelier worthy

A chandelier worthy is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space.

5. chrome trim

Chrome trim is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space.

6. multi-ship seat

A multi-ship seat is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space.

7. splash of color

A splash of color is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space.

1. abstracted

An abstracted is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space.

2. sky-blue hue

A sky-blue hue is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space.

3. vertical lines

Vertical lines are a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space.

4. the B&B style

The B&B style is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space.

5. reflected glory

Reflected glory is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space.

6. abstract

An abstract is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space.



An oversize ottoman creates an instant gathering spot. Top it with a tray to hold shells—or cold drinks.



Soft light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space. The bright light is a must for this space.



1

2

3

4

5

6

DURABILITY COMFORT INDEX

UNCOMFORTABLE

COMFORTABLE

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The Lincoln Memorials
Guest Wardsle Chair
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*If you fall in love with a unique piece, grab it.
Find a creative use for it once it's home.*



1. shelly chandelier

The Mossy Green cord pendant, 25 inches wide, features 50 swarovski crystals. \$189. lampsplus.com

2. work surface

The modern, industrial design, 18x24 inches, 20 inches high. Made of solid wood. \$120 per yard. www.etsy.com

3. striped shirt

Pink and white stripes. Features navy blue. Add \$10 per yard. \$10 per yard. www.etsy.com

4. fresh coat

Benjamin Moore's White Dove. Add \$10 per gallon. \$10 per gallon. \$10 per gallon. www.etsy.com

Playful use of vintage items in a modern setting. Just what you need for your home.



The combination chandelier was given its new look by a table made of salvaged gym flooring. Other found goods include the repurposed green cabinet door, the fine market stool, and many of the items in the custom shell chandelier.

The Home Depot

My Style



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Put and tie cords together with the help of a sunny day palette. Freshen up the room and take a play off a painted iron bed and metal wall shelf.



1. ocean accents

Decorate the room with a mix of blue and white accents. Add a touch of nautical style with a blue and white striped pillow and a blue and white striped throw.

2. navy frame

The blue and white striped pillow and throw are perfect for a room with a navy frame.

3. bedside table

A small, light blue wooden bedside table is perfect for a room with a navy frame.

To give a traditional house a lived-in look, mix vintage finds with lots of crisp fabrics and bright colors.

Home



1 night light

A large, textured, light-colored ceramic lamp base. The lamp is a simple, modern design with a wide, shallow shade.

2 display rack

A simple, modern display rack made of wood. It has a flat top and a slightly raised back.

3 face fans

A set of three face fans made of wood. They are simple, modern designs with a flat top and a slightly raised back.

4 face fans

A set of three face fans made of wood. They are simple, modern designs with a flat top and a slightly raised back.

Keeping the beach in sight

The outside house is packed with ideas that will let you relax and enjoy the view. Colorful all-weather fabrics resist fading. Sunbath is shown from \$45 per yard. Sunbath is shown from \$45 per yard. Sunbath is shown from \$45 per yard.



Outdoor fabrics and porch paint weather well under the assault of sun, rain, and sandy feet, letting kids be kids.



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The Old House & Home



its clinging tendrils make it easy to train and keep trimmed to prevent tripping, and its green leaves turn a rich reddish-purple in the fall. **\$10 per plant;** brighterblooms.com

7 Enliven your pool with wood lattice
covered with flowering vines for privacy where neighbors are nearby. Secure panels to either end of an open-sided front porch. 4-by-8-foot redwood lattice panels: **\$80** for two-dozen; corn.climateinc.com. Climatic vines in a variety of colors and types for most hardiest zones. Starter: **\$83**; cornplantsnursery.com

8 Take a trail to the **Sanctuary with tiki torches**. Parakeets assort of inexpensive bamboo torches with a high-end metal one. Three bamboo Polynesian torches: **\$10**; one-half inch core. One handcrafted, hammered copper round torch: **\$39**; daniel.com

12 Paint your garden gate a vibrant color. Red makes a bold contrast against green leaves and grass. Impatiens Latta High Gloss Metal & Wood paint. \$23 per quart. benjaminmoore.com/forinterior

13 Hang a mirror on a plain wall to give a small space a more expansive feel. It'll appear as if you

9 Display your house numbers on a wood-sawed post sunk into the soil at the end of your driveway. Paint or stain it to complement your entry door. Turned 47-inch #10 Traditional western hemlock. **\$52**; vintagewoodscapes.com

10 Turn a trough into a water garden. Fill a container you have on hand with water. Anchor each plant in its own pot of clay soil topped with a 1-inch layer of peat gravel. Place antilocks so that the plants' crowns are above the water surface. Grassy aquatic plants, about \$9 each. bigbox.com

11 Make your landscape glow at night. Fill "moon garden" with all-white blooms such as *Shasta daisy* and the palest varieties of *delphinium*, *foxglove* and *petunia*. Set them against the silvery foliage of *Lamb's ears*. About \$60 for one of each plant.



15 Create a relaxing—and romantic—destination in the yard by hanging a rope hammock fit for you and your spouse.

Two-person fabric
cotton outdoor
wind-resistant hammock
\$36; [amazon.com](#)

16 String all-weather electric lights from a trellis or over hanging branches to set a festive mood for all occasions. Clear string lights \$15 for 9 feet worldmarket.com



Large mirrors in various styles and shapes start at \$50; homegoods.com for more.

14 Make your front porch a breezy retreat even on still, hot days by installing a ceiling fan. Harbor Breeze 42-inch Gallery white outdoor ceiling fan \$70; lowes.com



properly mixed glue them one on top of the other with a two-part masonry epoxy. To prevent tall structures from tipping, bore a hole through each stone's center using a hammer and filed with a 1/4-inch outside bit. Thread the stones with a steel dowel sunk in the ground. **Cost:** \$5 per lb. **Kit:** \$29.95, 5-gallon kit: \$299.95, www.kit.com

17 Personalize fanny
pickets by altering
them in alternating fash-
ions—best to pick colors that tie in
with your home's design. Iron
on an Andy Warhol Maxfluor
Gems. Transparent stain
\$32 per gallon. Olympic center
for stores.

18 Tame an unruly garden hose inside a decorative metal pot. Garden hose container is a hammered copper finish. **\$66**; walmart.com

19 Build a raised bed (from a kit)
Painted after farmers brought ribbed steel sides have a rugged look and add more style than run-of-the-mill reinforced ties. 3-by-3 foot galvanized raised bed. **\$465**
gardeners.com

+20 Create a starfish-shaped terrarium for all species local plants in a planting bed. Collect stones from around your

2 Use pollinating powerhouses in your garden with a cordo-style bamboo hive for nontoxic, safe beekeeping. [silv.gardeners.com](http://www.silv.gardeners.com)

2 **+** **1** **Stitcher** will fix
and **2** **+** **1** **Outdoor** room.
Simply hang fabric panels
from the cornice of an
open-sided wood or metal
pergola. Smaller fishbowls
machine-washable cotton or
colored prints start at
\$600; vinyl, \$400.

25 **Exhale your plastic grill cover with an elegant fabric one in a neutral beige color.** The water-resistant Classic Veranda Carl BBQ cover in various sizes starts at **\$30**, walmart.com



24 Upgrade an all-weather carpet to define a seating area or place under a table to warm up a patio with color. Mad Hats woven recycled plastic 4 by 6-foot Oriental Turkish rug in Aztec. **\$48** (Driveway)

26 Change out deck post caps for eye-catching finials. Jewel-toned, crystal-shaped glass caps from Woodway start at \$16.90 each, while a set





27 Transform a shabby iron table into a fountain. Stagger its drainage hole drip into a submersible recirculating bubble, and fill the iron with water. For the full step-by-step, watch a video at theinspiredcave.com. Similar to shown, 18 inch black iron \$40, jensgardens.com. Beckett small pond/medium fountain pump, \$26; acehardware.com.

28 Boost your yard with lavender. The aromatic purple flowers grow best in hot, dry climates but most are tolerant varieties as well as ones that can weather a winter frost. Are also available. Low-lying cultivars for most hardiness zones start at \$6 per plant. thesantarygarden.com.

29 Design a hot-foot-bar-occurring patio by sheeking it from the sun with a deck shade sail. Coolaroo's 12 foot Triangle Sail sun shade \$64, walnut.com.

30 Light a picnic table with a candle-style chandelier hanging from an overhanging tree limb. Wrought iron tea iron valve candle chandelier \$50; candlecovecrafts.com.

31 Brighten a shady corner with a drift of chairmums. Japanese forest grass. Mikano/Noe macra All Gold \$30 per plant. avantgardens.com.

32 Ring water to your pond with hand-blown glass floats. The 3½ inch 6 inch orb bob on the water's surface.



33 For the three floats shown, walinglassworks.com.

34 Hang a chaise longue in your garden. Pavilionet.com a piping.



35 Turn a bench into a living area by surrounding it with three sides with a wooden slat screen to form the back and arms. Winter Hardy boxed \$5 for three small plants. corggardening.com.

36 Give a golden hop vine for its gold fine foliage, trailing flower clusters, and ability to climb 20 feet in a season. Let it tumble over a arbor or trellis. Hops are perhaps best known as an ingredient in beer, though this variety was bred more for its good looks. One plant \$16; gurney.com.

37 Make cool nights even with a warming fire in a patio pit. Bonus: Firewood costs less off season. Similar to shown, solar-cooper fire pit, \$58; walnut.com.



38 Spread up your front stoop with black-eyed Susan vines trained around a trellis. 15 inch high Globe topiary frame \$33 for two. amazon.com. Black eyed Susan vine \$4 for 30 seeds. peppercorn.com.

39 Sweep away wind options for a covered patio. With a arch look. Fitted with wind blockers they'll fill your garden with deep, ruffled flowers. One small and one large temple bell \$56; vivaterra.com.



40 Make your patio more private with a sturdy and stylish bamboo screen. 60 inch X 80 inch rolled bamboo fencing \$60 for an 8 foot long by 4 foot high section. homedepot.com.

41 Make final-tipped garden accents planting bed perimeter to safeguard blooms from drizzles. Arches, rose garden. \$47 for eight. tregetheatre.com.



42 Enjoy your flat pond at night by illuminating it with a submersible LED light. Unlike a landscape fixture which shines on the surface, a light placed under the water sets the whole pond aglow. Surfer submersible pond light \$23; target.com.

43 Add a vintage-style whistling and delight in watching the wind make it move. An updated version of the Folk Art dogs howl the metal Dutch hand whistling flaps its paws and wags its tail \$40; wendysweather.com.



44 Plant gently and space-saving two-tier herb garden to keep by the backdoor. Fill the containers with herbs, water them the other with soil. Place the smaller pot on top of the larger one and add herbs. Cheeserose, thyme, and dwarf purple and sweet basil. About \$3 per plant at your local nursery. 22 inch and 36 inch two-tier herb garden \$34 for both. garden.com.



45 Trade a wheel-rim spigot for a decorative basin with a handle shaped like a dragonfly or bird. Shut off the water supply, unscrew the old spigot from the hose, and then on the new one. Solid brass large spigot outdoor faucet \$46; signaturehardware.com.

46 Secure a handsome and easy-to-read rain gauge to a fence post. If less than an inch of rain falls one week it's time to break out the hose. Your plants will thank you! Vermont rain gauge \$22; sproutsgardensamerica.com.

47 Place pots with personality as a ledge or drop windows. Terra cotta ones with molded faces. The hand-made Cherful Face Old Man Face and Serenest Face \$6 each. kathringardens.com.



48 Trade your hard-to-reach metal wall clock for a concrete metal wall clock. Decorative but bird and frog motif. The two sides of the Lark Hawk indoor/outdoor clock and the weather-resistant the time and temperature \$50; bela.com.

49 Turn a plain concrete patio table into a lively installation by staining pavers different colors. Use a pump to spray a precolored concrete stain. Quilts a sun-dappled concrete stain comes in 29 shades of green, blue, red, gold and



gray \$30 per gallon. quilted.com for more.

50 Attract butterflies with nectar-packed flowers, including bright pink phlox and purple gamagrana. Butterfly's Delight collection \$79 for seven plants. specialty.com.



bed for small spaces and cooler gardeners. whiterosefarm.com

51 Turn a tree stump into a dining table. Slice it level at about 26 inches tall and crown it with a DIY pointed concrete top. For a 30-inch round top, build a plywood mold that's the same diameter but make the sides 1 inch deeper. Line the bottom of the mold with a bed of sand and pour in a 1-inch layer of wet concrete. Lay a few pieces of steel rebar in the wet concrete to provide extra strength. Top with a second



1-inch layer of concrete. Let cure and remove the sides of the mold, leaving the plywood base intact to help support the tabletop. About \$40 for materials at home centers.

52 Create a diamond-patterned twig trellis for perennials to scramble up in front of a bed of thick supporting sticks, set thin shoots at about a 90-degree angle, a few inches apart and parallel to one another. Repeat at the same angle in the opposite direction so that shoots cross each other. Lay the shoots together with twine where they intersect. For the full step-by-step, go to theoldhouse.com/boards. **No cost.**

53 Plant walk-on grassed cover between pavers to soften an expanse of brick or concrete. Low-growing and aromatic, Dianella is well suited for most hardcover zones. About \$4 per 3½-inch plant; stables.com/tanfora



54 Run rope lights under your bottom deck rail for atmospheric night lighting. Americas Lighting's indoor/outdoor 50-foot rope lighting kit with mounting clips. \$60; amazon.com

55 Keep grilling gear handy and out of sight inside an all-weather longed-top box that doubles as an exterior storage chest. Outdoor storage chest. \$56; stackandstack.com

56 Refinish outdoor metal furniture with blue, green, or yellow paint to break up the sea of wood on your deck. Rust-Oleum Painter's Touch Multi-Purpose Paint satin spray enamel in 25 colors. \$3.50 per pint; maak.com/tanfora

57 Pick up a flower bed with a decorative sprinkler. Handcrafted copper in the

shape of a rose, the 20-inch tall sprinkler comes mounted on a spike with a brass swivel for easy hose hookup. Spray diameter is adjustable from 4 to 25 feet. In-sprinkler. \$96; coppensprinklerworks.com

58 Upgrade a vintage metal window guard to serve as an ornate backdrop for potted plants. Simply attach the rose iron fence or wall and attach a pair of cast-iron flower pot rings. Find salvaged plants on eBay for about \$50. 8-inch flower pot rings. \$7 each; dotbest.com

59 Wrap string lights to create a paper cylinder for stylish, festive fresh luminaires. Secure paper around the base of the lights with double stick tape. Thomas and Betts Carlton white roundtop lights. \$28 for 30



handwiredandfells.com. Translucent Victorian-style 2½-inch paper printed with leaves or cherry blossoms. \$5 for 10 sheets; paper source.com

60 Distinguish young plantings with silver markers. These are made from vintage spoons and knives, and are decorated with colorful hand-drawn flowers. Markers. \$30 each; etsy.com/shop/daisychestnut



61 Soften the hard edges of a masonry retaining wall with trailing

blooms, such as clematis. Rule: The gentler the vines with little up-and-downs, the bigger bunches of vibrant flowers. Clematis. Trailing Bellflower. \$29 for six plants; springlightandroses.com

62 Enhance the look and comfort of patio furniture with throw pillows that echo the colors of your garden. Classic throw pillows more than a dozen quick-drying, UV-resistant fabrics start at \$20 each; pioneerhome.com

63 Add geometric outdoor to garden themes to garden themes. Choose a design without any complex curves, such as diamonds and squares. Hand saw to make the cuts. Quick-cut the job with Black & Decker's Handi Saw; handisaw.com/responsesaw. \$40; dotbest.com

64 Get your own Hyperlule tough and filled with rugged stone plants, which will thrive in the



porous container. Hyperlule has the look of weathered granite, but it's actually a DIY material made from cement pebbles, and perlite. Combine the ingredients, add water, pack into a wood form and let cure before popping

off the mold. For the full step-by-step, go to theoldhouse.com/boards. Hyperlule container about \$90 for materials and plants at home centers.



65 Make a big impact with small plants by grouping them together inside well-mounted shadow boxes made from weathered wood scraps. Cut the boards to the desired length, nail them together (no fancy nailing corners required), and hang in your fence or garden wall. **No cost.**

66 Show potted plants a vibrant fall. It's easier to tug around than a repurposed plastic bag and much easier on the eyes. Large tubing in red. \$66; salsburyusa.com

67 Uplight your favorite tree with solar-powered lights, no wiring required. Warm White High Output solar spotlight. \$34.50; yonderlight.com



68 Support a path underneath a flower-filled pot by using a wooden frame as a planter stand. Cut 2-inch x 8-inch planks to the height of the pot. Center it inside and anchor in place with a layer of gravel on the





bottom: quick setting concrete in the middle and soil on top. Plant the pot with flowers, and slide the umbrella into the pipe sleeve. A 5-foot length of pipe and 50-pound bag of Quikrete Fast Setting concrete mix, about \$30 total, works fine.

69 Invite hummingbirds with a handcrafted feeder. Blown from recycled glass, the Pot de Creme has two feeding tubes to encourage multiple birds at once, and comes with a decorative metal hanger and a recipe for nectar solution. \$60, charlesangsystems.com

70 Create a cascading three-tiered planter for your porch by repurposing hanging wire baskets and foraging fruit and vegetables. Line baskets with coco fiber mesh-cut to fit, and plant with trailing flowers, such as marigolds. \$20/planter. Woven Wire 3 Tier Hanging

baskets, \$22; charcoal.com. Good for ref. \$19; garden.com



71 Connect the dots between two areas in your yard with stylish Sweet Slipping Stones. \$39 for three mesh-backed rounds. waukegan.com

72 Transform your patio to bring in a fence or tree. A plant hook. Wire 20 gauge wire around the top of each jar. Sing and twist with needle nose pliers, leaving into a space at the ends to secure another length of wire as a loop hanger. Hook on the hanger and light all wires.

with glass, instant bright. A dozen half pint mason jars, 100 feet of 20 gauge wire, and 25 lights. \$21 total. Thegraftandhardware.com

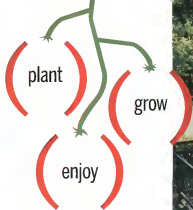
73 Dress up your mailbox with leftover from other projects. Try using missing scraps to bring out the wood part and brightly colored tiles left over from a kitchen backsplash or bathroom shower enclosure to create a crafty mosaic on the box itself. No cost.



74 Give the kids a place to picnic table so that they can sit comfortably while making mud pies. Kids indoor/outdoor picnic table. \$55, target.com

75 Between an extension and a wall with an exposed fruit tree. Go with tradition and choose a pear or an apple tree, or try a fig tree for a less formal look. Decide the horizontal

supports on which to train young branches with 14 gauge wires pulled through eye hooks screwed into the wall. Secure the branches to the wires with soft twist ties or hose. Oak 14 gauge steel galvanized wire. \$8 for 300 feet, and heavy-duty eye hook screws. \$6 for six. homedepot.com. Similar to shown Fig tree. \$29, burrtrigardens.com. ■



The *benefits* of vegetable gardening go way beyond *cutting food costs*. Here, the TOH guide to planning, planting, and relishing your own *backyard harvest*

There's nothing like the earthy rewards of a past-garden career as the sweet taste of a juicy tomato and water from the sun. And the taste is even sweeter when those you've grown on your own. For parents like Phil Niclos and Michelle Rasmussen, backyard vegetable gardening has irrefragable benefits, too. "We want our kids to appreciate the way things grow and to understand the value of food," Niclos says when asked why he dug up part of the family's New Jersey lawn to put in the formal 18-by-32-foot veggie garden shown here.

His garden, now in its third season, has thrived, but not every homeowner is so lucky. Why do some fail where others succeed? At least one aspect of soil preparation, plant selection, or growing won't be right. "Often, just a few tips can make all the difference," says Katie Pendola, who teaches vegetable gardening for the Seattle Tilth gardening education program (seattletilth.org). Her first tip is to grow what you like. "Don't attempt too big a garden. If you start small, you make small mistakes," she says, "and it's a lot easier to achieve success."

by Joanne Haber • photographs by Colin Smith





LEFT At 10 by 32 feet, plot producers veggie all-sources for a family of four, with plenty left over to share. They raised beds and grow paths make it easy to sit a fox and make an English country garden ABCs. Homeowner Michele Ray collects leucis, carrots and other goodies for a basket for friends. **OPPOSITE** Besides growing vegetables, such as tomatoes and beans, it's a few unusual ones: These red carrots grow especially sweet.

Making a plan

To grow well, vegetables need good soil, the right amount of water, and moisture. You can amend poor and soil deal with soil needs as you build the garden by building raised beds, then make frames that hold soil above the grade line, to keep vegetables above mud, or by watering in dry weather. But there is a practical work-around for deep shade. Then, somewhere in the Number 1 site requirement. Picking plants like tomatoes, eggplants, peppers, and pumpkins need sun at least 6 to 10 hours a day. If your garden gets a few hours less sun, you can still grow peas and also plants that have edible parts underground, such as potatoes, turnips, carrots, and beets. If your garden gets only 4 to 6 hours of sun, focus on garlic, leeks, asparagus, Swiss chard, collards, and kale can all still do well.

Seattle Tith's community garden plots are 14 feet square, a nice size for novices if you can up to the space. Create a horseshoe-shaped bed within it, and you'll be able to reach everything from the center or perimeter. In a larger garden you'll probably want rectangular or curved beds with paths between them. Beds 2 to 4 feet wide generally work best. "Just make sure the bed isn't more than twice the length of your arm," says Penick with a laugh. Make main paths at least 3 feet wide so that you can get a wheelbarrow through. In a small garden it often works best to divide a bed into square-foot sections. Devote each one to the number of plants that can use the space efficiently. So you might put in more bush beans, since they need about 6 inches between plants, or 16 onions, spaced 3 inches apart.

Once you've settled on a tentative size, make a few garden, sketch various plans for planting beds and paths on paper to help you choose a design.

Building the beds

That's a hard way and an easy way to build garden beds. You can skim off the soil with a flat shovel and dig down deeply to remove the soil and turn in compost and whatever other and amendments you need. Or you can just layer things on top. Start by mowing down any tall grass or weeds. Shovel on a couple of inches of compost. Cover that with a weed-suppressing layer of cardboard or multiple sheets of newspaper. Top that with a mixture of brown and green plant material, just as if you were building a compost pile. "Mix it up, like in a salad," Penick advises. If you want to plant right away, add a few inches of compost or topsoil, and the beds are ready to go. Or wait a season and let microorganisms in the soil make the compost for you. After you harvest your first crops, you can "kiss the dirt," going down twice as deep as a shovel blade, to incorporate everything and return to the soil. "But do this just once," Penick says, to keep from undermining the soil structure.

Every vegetable garden benefits from a few inches of compost each year. But what about adding lime, other trace minerals, or fertilizer? To learn what you need, get a soil test. The University of Massachusetts offers a \$13 test to gardeners in all states that measures pH level and any heavy metals, and identifies nutrients and organic matter that plants need (umass.edu/plsoilsoilsoil).

Even though you probably won't need to water much early in the season, it's smart to plan ahead for the hottest, driest days of summer. You'll use the least water and minimize disease problems if you irrigate in a way that delivers moisture directly to the soil rather than spraying it in the air. Seattle Tith's advice against using molder hoses made of recycled rubber tires if

RIGHT Penick starts out garden and sharing it with as they grow. Most eventually become red, so green-yellow in some type of your want something to bring about. **BOTTOM** Lettuce grows best but ferns better and seedling a flower stalk. To be sure you always have young lettuce to harvest, plant a few new seeds every few weeks.





"Small seedlings transplant best. If plants in flats have a solid block of roots, they're past their prime."



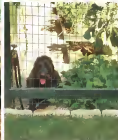
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build a raised bed

For Whittemore's contractor
Rory Cook's idea by stir-fry
making a salad vegetable dish
@whittemore.com/Instagram



common
questions
answered

Seattle Tiffins
Laura Mather
responds to the
top 5 questions
posed on its hotline
(206-461-0224)
by gardeners
nationwide

- (1) **What should I use to build raised beds?**
There are lots of options: ordinary red resistant wood (such as cedar) or juniper (which is rot-resistant), concrete or granite blocks, tubes of sheet-piled metal with nitrogen source, such as alfalfa meal (available with a layer of topsoil every spring; the tubes can be locked apart and used as the soil) or no edging at all—just mound up the soil to create a berm.
 - (2) **What kind of soil should I use in a raised bed?**
Just add enough matter to soil dug from elsewhere in your yard. If you buy compost make sure it is registered for use on organic farms (they buy bagged soil, they buy bagged soil, get a potting mix).
 - (3) **When can I plant my first natives outside?**
Once the soil in the root zone is at least 50 degrees F. Use a soil thermometer to test it.
 - (4) **How much fertilizer do I need to add?**
Possibly none. If you focus on an amazing focus that has enough organic matter and minerals and the right pH level (around 6) and is moist (vegged), a soil test will tell you what to add.
 - (5) **What's the white stuff on my squash leaves?**
It is the powdery mildew fungus that thrives when humidity is high. Minimize the risk.

infected by withering early in the day so that soil and leaves dry by nightfall. It appears early in the season (June/July), control the spread by culling off infected leaves. Late in the season, it doesn't reduce harvest, so it is mostly a cosmetic issue. Don't compact delicate plants at home, seed from the municipal operation where the compost piles get hot enough to kill spores.



Homeowners Caroline and Matthew Manning take photos of their remodeled front porch with their 5-year-old daughter Ruby and their dog.

But the bank decided the house was more than they could handle, especially with the city citing them for not meeting property codes. So they sold it to us for \$12,100 less than they paid! That should have been a giant red flag! In fact, that said, "You have no idea what you're in for!" But hindsight is 20/20.

The craziest part is that I truly believed we could do this project for about \$10,000 and have it done in four months while doing most of the work ourselves. It's kind of good to write that. I feel like I'm confessing to a room full of recovering exorcists, "Hi, my name is Matt."

While very kindly accepting that we began renovations on the outside and worked our way in, I got started. For the first few weeks, I patched siding and air-sealed some of the exterior's rotted trim with pressure-treated wood, trying to stay ahead of the painters I'd hired. Carole, meanwhile, began work on the neglected front yard, digging out stumps and building rock walls.

Once the exterior was in decent shape, one of the first big inside projects was taking out the load-bearing wall between the small kitchen and din. I had been given a quote of \$900 for a ready-made laminated wood header beam, but that just seemed ridiculous to me. After using TOPP general contractor Tom Silva's advice on Facebook, I decided to do something similar and get one for \$179. It was pretty exciting to install and connect it. I was really enjoying the work, but my original four-month deadline quickly came and went with no real progress toward making the house livable.

What really sent the timeline off track—in a fiery crash over a cliff—was my unexpectable compulsion to do every possible thing myself: demo, design, electrical, window installation, framing, finish carpentry, and so on. I seriously considered doing the HVAC myself. And my plan until about Month 11 was to do the rough plumbing, too, but I finally had to let that one go due to time. Honestly, I think the only reason I had contractors paint the exterior was that I'd lined them up before we closed on the house, i.e., before I lost my mind.

The hardest part was juggling the remodel with being a dad, husband, and employee. For that first year, I would go to my engineering job extra early so that I could leave early and spend a few hours with my family at my first house, where we were still living. Then I headed out to work on the new house until about 2 a.m. It was like I was pulling an all-nighter every single day—and it was wearing down my body.

About a year in, it finally and spectacularly sank in: I was over \$200,000 in debt; I had sacrificed my health

... might. My house might be the same, but my family is happy. The space is a low-budget charmer that's a lot more livable than the one we started with.

BELOW: A back door renovation that's a game-changer for this house.





BEFORE: The dreary kitchen was cramped and poorly laid out. **AFTER:** Nine walls, including mahogany stone-clad fireplace, black counters, and stainless-steel appliances, all installed by the homeowner, help bring a lighter, brighter feel to the space.



[before]

What we did

Remodeled a dreary 1980s American Postmodern.
Remodeling cost: \$180,000, plus the \$150,000 cost of the home.
Time frame: Four years.
Where we saved: Using butcher block for the kitchen counters instead of having engineers do stone installed.
Where we splurged: Replaced the lower hardwood floors with marble and granite tile.

What we would do differently: Add a window seat on the stair landing for a cozy nook.
Biggest challenge: Trying to juggle family and a full-time job while doing most of the work myself.
How we solved it: Agreeing to choose people over the house as often as possible, making time for kids' soccer games and for dinner as a couple.



FLOOR PLANS: A connected hallway replaced a half-battled wall between the kitchen and new breakfast area. An old sleeping porch above was turned into the new master bath.



[after]

"I saved about \$1,500 by spraying a thin layer of foam insulation and topping it with fiberglass batts rather than installing full-depth spray foam."

BEFORE: Layers of wallpaper hid the living room's grandeur.

AFTER: The original dark, by-the-way, no-frills white is now marble and granite, with a new sleeping porch and master bath.

one with my family, and after all that I was maybe, maybe, 20 percent done. But I was so totally dedicated to doing this house myself, I asked for a four-month leave of absence from my job—and was really so quiet in my request was denied. Luckily, my supervisor grew up in a house her dad built, so he actually seemed to understand what had gotten into me.

Setting my leave in June 2006, I spent two months roughing in electrical, installing insulation, and putting up drywall. The old walls were so uneven, every wall had to be shimmed to make the new drywall flush with windows and door jambs. Finally, the place was starting to look like a home rather than a work zone.

Things went well until one of the 80-pound rocks from

a waterfall and pond that Candice was installing rolled over her foot, breaking it. It was our second serious injury to the emergency room (the first being my own trip for a large splinter a year before). After looking her over and taking care of the foot—thankfully, we were still living in the comfort of our first home—I got back on track with the remodel, and things kept progressing smoothly even after I returned to work in October.

For the first six months of 2007, I patched hardwood floors, filling in holes where massive cold-air returns had been and weaving the old kitchen and den floors together with boards salvaged from the foyer. Elsewhere, I removed walkways, patched places, and refinished hundreds of feet of original oak woodwork. Candice and I



After a weather-damaged house was restored to a modern, comfortable home, the homeowners had plenty of room to relax and satisfy their needs.

decided it was finally time to get our first home on the market, assuming it would take a few months to sell.

It took us five days! We had to move within a month. Gone was our refuge from the rain and the stress. We'd have nowhere to retreat to when things got ugly. Granted, we had clean, dry, brand-new appliances, and semi-casual walls and floors. But after piling our possessions into the basement, we had to sleep on mattresses on the floor and dine on blankets in the living room for several weeks.

With no working sink, we washed our hands in the bathtub and improvised a curtain rod to use the door less shower. Kitchen counters became a top priority. We ordered some very nice engineered stone ones, but the \$4,500 price tag ate at us, and we decided to cancel them. Instead, we outfitted the whole kitchen for \$100 using 4-foot slabs of maple butcher block. Shower doors, sinks, and window coverings also followed, and, by the end of the year, we were beginning to unpack our boxes from the basement.

Of course, just as things started feeling less urgent,

disaster struck. In the summer of 2003, we took a week-long family trip to visit my parents. And when we returned, it felt like we were stepping into a nightmare. The new pipes I had installed a week before we left had sprung a leak, flooding the master bath, kitchen, and basement. My heart sank to see so many months of work ruined. The flood restoration company we called in had to bring dozens of fans and three industrial-size dehumidifiers to clean up the mess.

Paradoxically, repairing the damage from this assault tragically inspired me again, and I tackled a bunch of projects I had left hanging, such as installing baseboards and priming out the basement fireplace surround with built-in shelves and a TV nook. And, late year, I finally finished the kid's bath.

I'm really proud of all the work I've put into this house. There are still closet doors left to install, and maybe one day I'll get to painting pillars by the front walkway, but for now we're happy with our home. I don't think we'll be looking for a new remodeling challenge anytime soon. ■



Mark: \$250 On your recent visit to our house and the rest of the work you did, I see we didn't have about your report. Please send us a photo and after photos. I'll be a pro and send you the rest of the work you can help any details.

Old House: Mark: Remodeling 135 West 58th Street, 10th Floor, New York, NY 10019
Or e-mail: remodeling@oldhouse.com
Or e-mail: remodeling@oldhouse.com

ALL ABOUT

Push lawn mowers

A mower is essential equipment for anyone who wants a trim and tidy lawn. That Old House's experts tell you how to choose the best one for your grass-cutting needs. **By Neil Vuglak**

Come summer, no other tool in your shed is as more active than the lawn mower. It's what takes the wild and clumpy nature, turning it into a living carpet of lush, verdant greens, ball games, and lounge-chair lazing.

But like any machine that gets used a lot—about 30 times a season—it wears out and needs to be replaced. If it's been a while since your last mower purchase, you might be surprised at what's available. These noisy, exhaust-spewing 2-cycle gas engines have been replaced by quieter, cleaner, 4-stroke machines. Mower decks have been reshaped so that mowing blades can slice and dice clippings with maximum efficiency. Plus, you can now get no-pull, self-propelled mowers, one-touch height adjustment (no fiddling with each wheel), and safety controls that stop the blade but not the engine.

If referring to your cop of mowers, new battery-powered mowers, including a few robotic ones, have largely replaced electric models that left you mired in an extension cord. And for you emergency types, even the old-fashioned push reel mower has been updated, so it's easier to operate and the blades don't need to be sharpened as often.

On the following pages, we help you make your pick and offer guidance from the pros on how to use it safely and without burning your grass. Before you head out for another round of grass-cutting, check out the latest in lawn mowers and mowing techniques.

Evolution of the lawn mower

Tending to your lawn is a lot of work when you're spending all the work.



1800s In the early days, English peasants used hand tools to mow their lawns and fields.



1850s Engine-powered mowers were used in the early days of the American West.



1900s Gasoline-powered mowers were used in the early days of the American West.



1950s The first self-propelled mowers were used in the early days of the American West.



1980s The first self-propelled mowers were used in the early days of the American West.



1990s The first self-propelled mowers were used in the early days of the American West.



2000s The first self-propelled mowers were used in the early days of the American West.



2010s The first self-propelled mowers were used in the early days of the American West.



2020s The first self-propelled mowers were used in the early days of the American West.



Battery or not?
A push mower spins a blade on a vertical axis. A gas mower's blades spin on a horizontal axis. Reels cut cleaner than rotors but aren't suited to large lawns.

How much do they cost?
Push mowers are the most expensive mowing at \$50. Gas-powered mowers start at \$130. Battery-powered at \$300 and robots at \$700.

How long do they last?
Most mowers will run 10 years or more with regular maintenance. Gas and battery are two to five years.



How much maintenance?
Most mowers will need regular sharpening blades at the start of each season. Gas mowers require the most upkeep; push and battery need the least.

Push it or let it propel itself?
The self-propelled option makes mowing about 20 percent easier, but adds nearly 80 percent to a mower's cost.

Many mowers in the U.S. use gas-powered push types that are easy. Their size, power, and capacity make them a practical choice for most homeowners.

ALL ABOUT Push lawn mowers

Which mower is right for you?

Consider these important factors before you invest in a new mower.

Lawn size. Gas-powered mowers with standard 19- and 22-inch cutting decks can tackle yards up to one-half acre, so you can finish the job in about an hour. Battery-powered mowers top out at about one-third acre before needing a recharge. Eighteen-inch push reel mowers are ideal for tiny yards up to 2,000 square feet. Areas larger than one-half acre are best handled by tow tractors.

Upside. All mower blades require sharpening. For gas- or battery-powered rotary mowers, that's twice a season. New push-reel mowers go about three years between resharpenings. A gas-powered mower also needs 45- or 60-minute oil changes and an oil filter change annually, and its fuel drained or stabilized with an additive at the end of the mowing season. The rechargeable battery in battery-powered and robotic mowers lasts about two years; a replacement costs \$300 to \$600. The only annual maintenance a push-reel mower needs is gear or chain lubrication.

Storage. Most gas mowers take up about 4 square feet. Battery-powered push-reel, and robotic mowers can be hung on a wall if space is limited. Keep all mowers dry to prevent metal parts from rusting.

THE FOUR MAJOR TYPES



Gas-powered: A 4-cycle engine turns a rotary blade at 3,600 rpm. \$330-\$900. *Stevens Craftsman 38314*, \$150; *craftsman.com*. **PROS:** Has the most power; features, such as optional no-kick-back mowing time as long as the tankless fuel CO2S. *Reserve other types, heavy-duty mowers, the most reliable, difficult to start, fast maintenance, storage space bag.*



Battery-powered: A 24- or 48-volt lead acid battery spins a rotary blade at 3,500 rpm. \$300-\$400. *Stevens Black & Decker 24V CM1*, \$200; \$400; *blackanddecker.com*. **PROS:** Quieter than gas-powered engines; little maintenance beyond blade sharpening; no fuel or plastic debris; no emissions; easy to start, CO2S. *12- to 24-hour charge times; cuts for only 45 minutes or one charge.*



Robotic: A battery-powered blade cuts the grass in random patterns within a boundary defined by a buried wire. \$700-\$4,000. *Stevens Robotic Mower*, \$1,300; *robomower.com*. **PROS:** Programmable; needs no mowing or oil changes; built when lawns stop cutting off 8 miles or the grass is wet; quiet, CO2S. *Expensive; has only an 8-inch cutting width; will cut over a hole to finish the yard.*



Push reel: Five steel blades rotating on a horizontal axis slice the grass cleanly like a scissor, against a stationary cutting bar. \$80-\$200. *Stevens Scotts 2000-80*, \$140; *scotts.com*. **PROS:** Quiet; inexpensive; no fuel to buy or add; no oil; low maintenance; may be able to CO2S. *Most have a non-mulching width, 14 to 28 inches, and a cutting height of less than 2 inches; won't mow or cut grass that's 6 to 8 or tying down.*



Is it time for a new one?

Here are the signs that it's time to start shopping.

Hard to start. A gas mower that takes too many pulls to start or that skips running shortly after starting may need fresh gas, a tune-up, or a thorough carburetor cleaning. If none of those fixes the problem, your mower is a prime candidate for replacement.

Inefficient. Compared with engines made in the '80s, today's gas mowers run 10 to 15 percent longer on the same amount of fuel. The current crop of battery-powered mowers runs 30 percent longer per charge than models from the '90s.

Fall of fumes. Newer gas engines release 70 percent fewer emissions than their counterparts of just 15 years ago. Battery- or electric-powered mowers are the healthiest alternatives for you and the environment.

Versatile 3-in-1s that mow, bag, or shoot clippings out the side are the new standard. Here are the features that make lawn care less of a chore.

Versatile 3-in-1s that mow, bag, or shoot clippings out the side are the new standard. Here are the features that make lawn care less of a chore.



Starter: A pull cord (shown) is most common, but push-button starters, key-electric starters, are gaining popularity.

POWER: It is measured by foot pounds of torque or cubic centimeters (cc) of cylinder size, depending on the ruler. The higher the number, the better. Torque ranges from 50 to 7½ foot-pounds; cylinder or bore 125 to 280 (bore is 138 cc).

engine: An overhauled water engine juiced more fuel efficiency and power for 100-hp. The new fuel system and water pump will also improve the engine's fuel economy.

ball bearings. Squeeze the end of the starting cord to force the spring on top to coil it. This safety feature is standard on all heavy mowers. Some single-engine models use a blade brake (Schubert's) to pull the blade out of the engine saving time and engine wear.

bag: Used only when mulching, sending out after a rain spell when clippings are looking for a mulching blade is properly done (turn into small bits).

Wheelchair manufacturing is done by putting down the funds and turning the money into a wheelchair. Thriller and suspenseful stories are just the stories that the book is about.

side discharge: *n*
Dugging along much more profit-
able than the topsoil method
because it takes a lower and
deeper slippage to the side.
Also a good way to remove
debris in the soil.

dedic: Dedication is not a book, it's an attitude. "dedicated" shaped into (dedication) provides a more subtle but equally effective message.

height adjustment: A single lever alters the blades' cutting height—no don't have to raise or lower each wheel individually.

blade: The winged edge on a sawing blade (shown) lifted grass up inside the deck, where it soaked again before being imperceptible to us blown back onto the lawn.

Shower: Code Carver
 DC 500 \$400
 collected again



Getting whacked by a heavy machine stresses your horse. Follow these steps to limit the trauma.

Getting whacked by a heavy machine stresses your horse. Follow these steps to limit the trauma.

Sharpen the blade. A dull blade rips grass, leaving jagged edges that turn brown, are slow to heal, and invite disease. Start each mowing session with a sharp edged blade, and resharpen it in July at any time you make a rock, root, or large branch. To hone your sharpening skills, visit theoldhouse.com/bonus.

Don't eat too much at once. Timing more than one third off the grass blades, several heights at a time, that's a sign you're mowing and wait a slow down the engine. Mowing to a widely growing schedule helps you stay on that one-third target, but after a growth spurt or mowed area, now the desired more than half the grass is instead of one deep cut. If clippings are too long to match, collect them in a bag.

Leave the grass long. A lawn with 3- to 4-inch-long grass blades does a better job of blocking weeds, keeping the soil moist, and growing deep, drought-resistant roots. A shorter cut with the fall makes leaf raking easier.

Notice the patterns. To avoid compacting the soil, vary your mowing pattern. If you mow left to right one weekend, go up and down the next time and diagonally after that. If you go in a circle, reverse directions each week.

Toss the treadmill Pushing a rotary mower over flat terrain for an hour burns about 374 calories. Switching to the self-propelled option reduces the effort to 305 calories. Push reel mowers deliver the best workout: 408 calories per hour.



MOW PATTERNS IN YOUR LAWN

Cutting the grass becomes a source of artistic expression with a hand-filled roller that attaches behind your mower's deck. The roller pushes down the real grass blades to create either dark or light stripes. They come straight or curved (shown), or artists can turn the checkerboard or diamond patterns you see on baseball fields and golf courses. The roller works best on cool-season grasses: fescues, bluegrasses, and ryegrass. LawnEditor: \$80; patternsyourlawns.com



Roger Cook's safety tips



1 Cut when the grass is dry. You can slip on wet grass, and the blade can't cut as much if it's wet.

2 Stay safe. Mowers shouldn't be operated on slopes of more than 15 degrees—a rise of 1 foot in every 4. Grasshopper graders now across the slope. Mowing up and down hills invites accidents if you slip.

3 Protect eyes and ears. Don't take a chance that something will rocket out and hit you. Safety goggles are a must. And when using a chainsaw, use ear protection.

4 Mind the plug. Always take off the spark plug wire before working under the deck of a lawnmower.

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no gas, no oil

A rechargeable 66 volt lithium-ion battery runs this self-propelled mower for about 45 minutes. One hour recharges and lowers the 20-inch deck from 3 1/2 to 4 inches. #K0422, \$450. kobalt.com



easy push reel

The blades on this 28-inch reel don't touch the cutting bar, so you don't have to adjust or sharpen them as often. The front wheel is adjusted with a side lever, allowing a cutting height of 1 1/2 inches, compared with most mowers. #K0420, \$200. kobalt.com



no-sweat mowing

An onboard solar panel recharges the battery, so this robotic mower can run for 10 minutes and cut up to one-half acre before returning to its base for a 45-minute recharge. Cutting height 1 1/2 inch to 2 1/2 inches. #K0421, \$1,000. kobalt.com



mulch master

Then adjust blades and chiselings into four sets to create a single blade. Thanks to a 1000-watt motor, this features self-propelled rear wheels with gearless variable speeds, multipoint plastic decks, and matching air-blow-erase controls. Cutting height 1 1/2 inch to 4 inches. Model #K0423, \$500. kobalt.com

clean fuel

A propane cart for the same 450 used for camp stoves powers this mower for more than 1 hour. Propane vents 98 percent from the top and can be up to 90 percent heavier hydrocarbons than gasoline, and there's no residue drain or cleaning required at the end of the season. Cutting height 3 1/2 to 4 inches. #K0424, \$450. kobalt.com



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inside PLANT IN CLAY STIFFEN A DECK FIX A CHIMNEY MORE ➔

47
tips, tricks, and
answers to
your home
improvement
questions

Q Do robot mowers work and are they worth the money? If not, then how will we know when the day of the robot is really here?

—JIMBARDO, CHINA

A For those mowers to work, first suppose they're worth the money if you really don't want to mow, or hire a law service, and your sanity is bigger than 5,000 square feet. No. I believe robot mowers have arrived when they can mow almost five times that area, have an onboard GPS to steer them efficiently without the need for buried wires, and there's a network of repair shops you can go to when they need fixing. —ROGER COOK, TOLAND/DAY CONTRACTOR

PHOTOGRAPH BY
TERRANCE JACKSON

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Our best of home experts



TOM SILVA
General Contractor



JOHN KRAUSS
Window Consultant



RICHARD TRETHEWEY
Plumbing and Heating Expert



ROGER COOK
Landscaping Contractor



KEVIN D. CONNOR
Host



How should I prepare planting beds when the soil has lots of clay in it?

—NINE GROZDAN, WESTALL, PA



Roger Cook replies: Clay soil is one of the toughest soils to grow in because it compacts easily, retains enough water to suffocate roots, and turns rock hard when it dries.

The solution is to remove some of the existing soil and replace it with organic materials, such as grass clippings, bark, leaves, or wood chips. That's how to proceed.

First, call 811, the service that finds underground pipes and wires. Once you know it's safe, dig down about 1 foot and pile the soil on a tarp. If there's a tree in a bed, be careful not to injure its trunk or roots as you dig. If the soil is hard, lay a 4-inch perforated drain pipe at the edges of the bed once the excavation is complete. Cover it with 6-inch mesh and wrapped in filter fabric; the pipe will help remove excess water that can't easily drain into the surrounding soil. The pipe should run to daylight, or to a dry-well if there isn't enough slope.

Now add 6 inches of organic matter and work it into the bottom of the bed by hand or with a small rototiller. Add 3 inches of the original soil—they typically contain lots of

nutrients like the ones growing in this bed don't do well in clay-heavy soil. Removing some of the clay and mixing in a high percentage of that churning compost will make them much happier.

good materials, such as calcium, potassium, and magnesium—then all again. Till in 3 more inches of compost, then top off with enough compost to get the grade the way you want it. Top dress the beds every year with wood chips and compost, and use the soil pH level and mineral content periodically to make sure it's compatible with the plants in the bed.

Finally, choose plants that like clay soil. Some favorites such as ferns like "Northern Star," Asta magica, lilac, Viburnum triflorum or V. dentatum, and compact forms of red twig dogwood, and geraniums like rubraea (scarlet flowers), deeply, red-blossomed (black-eyed Susans), and Solinus triflorum "Autumn Joy." With annuals, your choices are tiny.

WHAT IS IT?



- A Detail hand scraper
- B Childproof window lock
- C Engineered flooring clamp
- D Or...

NORTH AUSTIN
SUE PAGE BH

SUMP PUMP CONCERNS
The summer-wide sump pump alarm basement cycles off and on almost constantly. It keeps our basement dry, but I'm worried that it might fail. Is there any way to know if it's about to stop working?

—JOHN HUNTER, ST. JOHNS, MD

Tom Silva replies: Not really. The first indication of a problem usually is water in your basement. Good-quality submersible pumps can easily last 10 years, and 15 isn't uncommon, but any pump that runs a lot will have a shorter life than one that only kicks on once in a while.

There are many reasons for a pump to run constantly. The most likely one is that poor outside drainage is causing poor sump to fill too quickly. Make sure your gutters are clear and that downspouts are sending water at least 10 feet from the foundation. Maybe the pump is too small for the job. Lift the pump a few inches and see if it stops. If it does,



The crumbling flue tiles and cracked mortar around them mean that it's time for both to be replaced by a masonry skilled in chimney work.

put a couple of bricks under the pump to support it, being careful not to obstruct the float that triggers the control switch. Or maybe the check valve was installed backward and all the water in the exhaust pipe is just draining back into the sump after the pump shuts off. It would be wise to call in a sump expert to sort out the problem.

In your case, I'd be just as worried about a power failure as a pump failure, so if you're getting a new pump, you might consider installing a backup pump connected to a battery, such as Little Giant's SP55 (littlegiant.com).

CRUMBLING CHIMNEY
The top of my chimney is in bad shape, but my wife and I don't like the idea of going there and working on it myself. Before hiring someone to do the work, can you tell me what needs to be done?

—JENNIFER COLUMBIA, NJ, MD

Kevin O'Connor replies: Masonry restoration expert John Lambert

agrees with your wife and recommends that you turn the work over to a brick mason because "it's important to get the details right." He says your existing flue liners and mortar chimney crown are beyond repair and must be replaced. Here's how Lambert fixes this type of problem.

First, he removes the crown, the top few courses of brick, and the clay flue liners down to their first mortar joint. After the new flue liners and brick have been inserted in place, he builds a form for the new crown using a sheet of galvanized steel as the form base. "Concrete and brick expand and contract at different rates," he says. The short process is then from bonding. Also, unlike your existing crown, the new crown's edges should extend at least 1½ inches beyond the face of the brickwork to have a drip-edge mold into the masonry. Lambert lays a rebar in mesh in the form for strength and straps each layer with galvanized coated with a foam release agent. The traditional crown

Construction 24

ask oldhouse

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

FOR landscape and lawn care, Cook, gently notes, the weather is usually too dry to spray until the end of May.

We have a patch of our lawn that never seems to grow grass. What are we doing wrong? —BILL CORNE, SOUTHERN PA

Roger Cook replies: There are many reasons for grass not to fill in. Lack of water or sun, poor soil, and heavy foot traffic can all create bare spots in the lawn. Reseeding is easy, but each step is critical. Make sure you're throwing your money on the ground. Everything depends on preparation and timing. The best seasons to

reseed are early spring, after the forsythias bloom, or fall, as long as temperatures are higher than 40 degrees F during the day. Removing thatch and exposing topsoil are essential steps because grass seed has to be in firm contact with the soil before it will grow. Buy fresh seed—the expiration date is printed on the bag—and plant it during a stretch of dry weather, heavy rain can wash seed away.

Grass takes a least three weeks to sprout. You can start mowing when the seedlings are 1½ inches high. In three months the patched area will blend in with the rest of the lawn.

STEP-BY-STEP Patch a lawn

1. Dethatch
More than an inch of thatch can smother upturns dead grass, and roots with an inch or more of thatch. Use a dethatcher to remove any soil clumps and sticks before seeding the bare spots.



3. Spread the seed
To ensure a good crop of grass, broadcast double the amount of seed recommended on the package, about 5 pounds per 1,000 square feet. Scatter the seed evenly by hand until the lawn is evenly covered. For larger areas, use a mechanical spreader. Sweep the seeds out of neighboring flower beds.

2. Add a layer of loam

We bought bags of and dropped in a 2 to 1 ratio to create a rich loam that will hold in to the moisture grass seed needs to germinate without much. For larger areas, have a landscape supply yard deliver the materials. Once mix there, pour from side. Spread a 1/2 inch-thick layer over the detatched area with a shovel and an iron rake.



4. Rake them in

Turn a flat rake so that the tines face up and push the seeds into the loam and the area looks more like dark loam than light seed. Then mist with water once or twice daily to keep the top 1/2 inch of loam moist, but not wet. When you mow the seedlings, keep the clippers low so they can suffocate young grass roots. After three months, reduce watering to twice a week, a half inch of water at a time.

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Norm's tricks of the trade

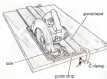


I can't seem to get a straight cut when I'm using my circular saw with a straightedge. What am I doing wrong? —JIMMIE DOLPH, LONG BEACH, MISS

A Maybe your straightedge isn't stiff enough. It might be bowing as you cut. If you really want a straight cut every time, here's a simple guide you can make out of 1/2-inch scrap plywood. The guide, sometimes called a shooting board, can be up to 8 feet long, but I find 4 feet to be a useful size, especially for crosscutting plywood.

1 To make the guide, take a piece of 1/2-inch plywood and cut it to the size of a table and saw. It helps to cut off the factory edges. The remaining piece is the base. Snap a line on the base 3 inches from the edge you cut, then glue and screw the strip of plywood with the factory edge on the line. Make cut your saw slide 1/8 inch deep, put the rule against the guide strip, and trim the base.

2 Toss the guide and the base a trimmed edge with the curve on the workpiece. Then clamp the guide at both ends. Slide the blade so that it is 1/8 inch ahead. March forward the work. Place the rule against the guide strip, start the saw, and cut away.



DIP

SHEDDING TOOL

The SolidSider holds up the ends of heavy fiberglass roof cladding for easy one-person installation. The dial allows the exposure for each course to be fine-tuned. \$35 per piece; solidsider.com



a critical gap that allows the liners to expand and contract.

Lambert fills the form with concrete—"much more durable than mortar," he says—mixed with nylon fibers to minimize cracking. To encourage drainage, he slopes the top of the crown so that it slopes away from the flat by 1/4 inch per foot. After the concrete sets up, he takes the cardboard off each flue and fills the gap with a foam backer rod and high-quality 10-year silicone sealant.

Once the form comes off and all the work has been washed clean, Lambert grouts everything—bricks, mortar joints, concrete, and clay flues—with a penetrating, breathable, elastomeric water repellent, such as Penosol's Siloxone PD (penosol.com). "Make sure it's on as a seal," he cautions. "Sealers can trap moisture within the masonry." Finally, Lambert puts a stainless-steel cap over each flue liner to keep out water and animals and to prevent sparks from landing on the roof.

The water repellent needs to be reapplied every 10 years or so as part of your regular chimney maintenance. The silicone around the flues should be checked every couple of years and replaced as necessary.

Q DOWNSPOUT DRIP TORTURE

The downspout from the dormer gutter drops straight down about 5 feet and dumps directly into a lower gutter. For quite some time after it rains, we hear a loud clapping sound coming from the lower gutter, even when we're indoors. What can we do to get it to stop?

—SUSAN SMITH PARKING, NY

Tom Silva replies: It sounds as if your dormer gutter is draining too slowly. First, make sure it's clean; there may be accumulated debris that's trapping water. Next, check that the upper gutter is sloped properly toward the downspout—at least 1/4 inch per foot—so keep water from backing there. I'd also put an elbow on the bottom of the downspout, in line with the lower gutter, so prevent any drips that do occur from shooting into the lower gutter.

WOBBLY DECK

The boards on my second story deck were originally laid diagonally across the 2x6 joists. But because so many boards were rotten, I replaced them all with Trex composite decking laid perpendicular to the joists. Now the deck shakes a little when I walk on it. Is there any way I can solve this problem?

—PETER KUNIG, NORTH BRADDOCK, N.J.

Norm Abram replies: There are a couple reasons for the wobble. Boards installed on the diagonal make for a rickier deck than one where the boards are lapped at 90 degrees to the joists. And composite decking just isn't as stiff as solid wood. Even so, you probably did the right thing by laying the Trex boards on the perpendicular. Standard 16-inch composite decking can only be installed on the diagonal if the joisting joists are spaced 12 inches on center or less.

Here's what you can do to stiffen your deck. Go underneath and install a row of 2x6 blocks down the center of the deck, perpendicular to the joists. Stagger them just enough so that you can nail or screw them in place through the end grain. Then fasten two treated 2x6s to the underside of the joists so that they run from corner to corner, forming an X. Where they cross, make a lap joint so that both boards will fit flat against the joist. Attach the 2x6s with 4x4 inch flat-head like-adhesive screws (diameter 5/8 inch), which are stronger than standard screws and aren't being concealed by a wood screw. Place one screw in each joint, then go back and add one more screw to every other joint. ■

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428, 430, 432, 434, 436, 438, 440, 442, 444, 446, 448, 450, 452, 454, 456, 458, 460, 462, 464, 466, 468, 470, 472, 474, 476, 478, 480, 482, 484, 486, 488, 490, 492, 494, 496, 498, 500, 502, 504, 506, 508, 510, 512, 514, 516, 518, 520, 522, 524, 526, 528, 530, 532, 534, 536, 538, 540, 542, 544, 546, 548, 550, 552, 554, 556, 558, 560, 562, 564, 566, 568, 570, 572, 574, 576, 578, 580, 582, 584, 586, 588, 590, 592, 594, 596, 598, 600, 602, 604, 606, 608, 610, 612, 614, 616, 618, 620, 622, 624, 626, 628, 630, 632, 634, 636, 638, 640, 642, 644, 646, 648, 650, 652, 654, 656, 658, 660, 662, 664, 666, 668, 670, 672, 674, 676, 678, 680, 682, 684, 686, 688, 690, 692, 694, 696, 698, 700, 702, 704, 706, 708, 710, 712, 714, 716, 718, 720, 722, 724, 726, 728, 730, 732, 734, 736, 738, 740, 742, 744, 746, 748, 750, 752, 754, 756, 758, 760, 762, 764, 766, 768, 770, 772, 774, 776, 778, 780, 782, 784, 786, 788, 790, 792, 794, 796, 798, 800, 802, 804, 806, 808, 810, 812, 814, 816, 818, 820, 822, 824, 826, 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3514, 3516, 3518, 3520, 3522, 3524, 3526, 3528, 3530, 3532, 3534, 3536, 3538, 3540, 3542, 3544, 3546, 3548, 3550, 3552, 3554, 3556, 3558, 3560, 3562, 3564, 3566, 3568, 3570, 3572, 3574, 3576, 3578, 3580, 3582, 3584, 3586, 3588, 3590, 3592, 3594, 3596, 3598, 3600, 3602, 3604, 3606, 3608, 3610, 3612, 3614, 3616, 3618, 3620, 3622, 3624, 3626, 3628, 3630, 3632, 3634, 3636, 3638, 3640, 3642, 3644, 3646, 3648, 3650, 3652, 3654, 3656, 3658, 3660, 3662, 3664, 3666, 3668, 3670, 3672, 3674, 3676, 3678, 3680, 3682, 3684, 3686, 3688, 3690, 3692, 3694, 3696, 3698, 3700, 3702, 3704, 3706, 3708, 3710, 3712, 3714, 3716, 3718, 3720, 3722, 3724, 3726, 3728, 3730, 3732, 3734, 3736, 3738, 3740, 3742, 3744, 3746, 3748, 3750, 3752, 3754, 3756, 3758, 3760, 3762, 3764, 3766, 3768, 3770, 3772, 3774, 3776, 3778, 3780, 3782, 37

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The history: It is said that President Woodrow Wilson built here, in this Folk Victorian cottage back in 1902. Well, that was before he was actually president—but still it's a pretty big deal. The purpose of his upstairs Hodgenville, Kentucky was to visit the site of Abraham Lincoln's birthplace. His host was Thomas's first cousin, J.W. Taggart, a lawyer who built the place in 1889. The house later belonged to June Bennett, who opened a series of home neat-dress and lived here for half a century.

Why save it? If the fact that a future president lived here hasn't been enough, consider the place a yellow-popper millwork, which retains its original shellac finish. It's a stroke is a complete three and of soap to clean it up. The five-bedroom, three-bath house also has three wood mantels and many of its original doors and windows.

What it needs: The current owners of the neighboring Lincoln home want to expand and are looking for someone to rescue the house to another location. They estimate that would cost around \$15,000. There's plenty of cosmetic work to be done, and the electrical and plumbing systems need to be upgraded. Still, just imagine bringing a home fit for a president.

—MICHAEL GOODMAN



7 The 1889 Folk Victorian features a full-length porch supported by decorative columns. Note the original floor, the ceiling, the original mantel and stained-glass window. 8 A photograph of the house's original owner and builder, J.W. Taggart. 9 This attractive original doorway leads from the back foyer to the dining room. 10 The house still has three original mantels, all elegantly decorated with carved carvings.

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