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SAME
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p. 37

PLUS

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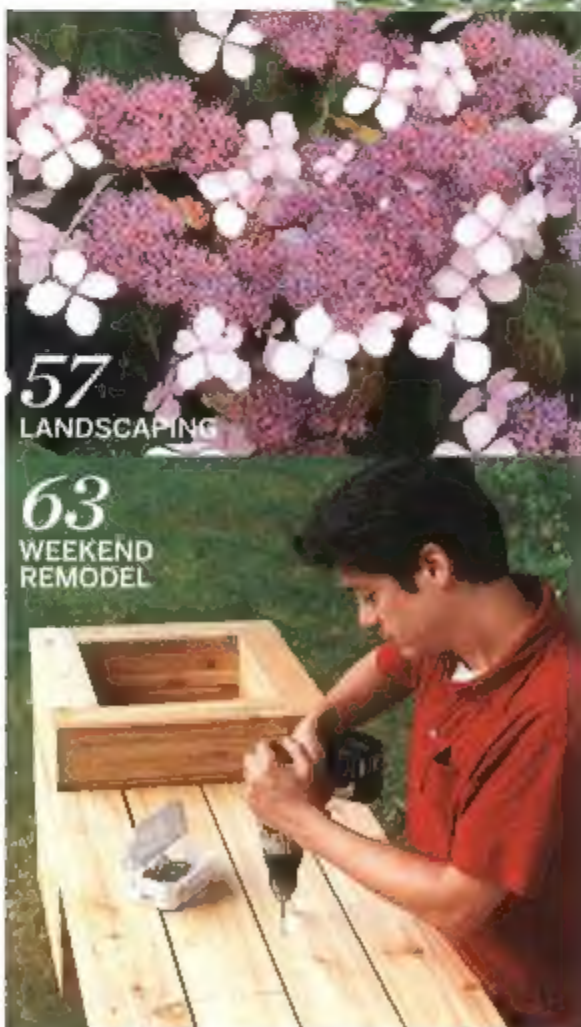
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PHOTOS: (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) WINGELL; T. WESBER; ALISON WOOD; ROGER FOLEY; KYLEA SMITH; COURTESY OF MONKOVIA

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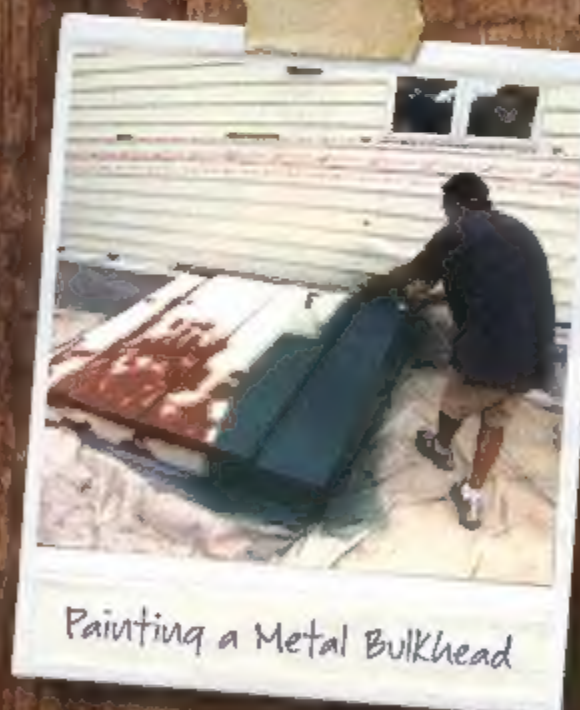
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letter { from This Old House }

One big happy...

I had just kissed my wife good-bye to leave for the office and was trying, while on my way out the door, to make a plan to meet her for dinner later that night.

I said, "So, I'll see you after your doctor's appointment, right?"

"No, no, she can't do that," he said. "She's got yoga after the doctor on Tuesday."

I don't know what was more of a surprise: that our electrician, Guido, was on a ladder in our bedroom or that he knew my wife's schedule better than I did.

Truth be told, though Guido startled me, the loss of privacy, so many years into our remodel, isn't that much of a surprise. The lines, dear reader, have blurred.

We've had one contractor try to sell us a time-share in Costa Rica; another store his kids' birthday presents in our laundry room; a third name his daughter after my wife; a fourth decide he'd spend his time teaching my visiting mother Spanish; and a fifth at some point years ago start to feel guilty and stop charging us for his work, which is fine, I guess, because he's never managed to finish anything.

Yup, somewhere along the way my home became more like a halfway house. Actually, sometimes it feels more like a prison—with me as an inmate. Is that obvious to you? To me, the signs are everywhere. Just look—even in the picture here, I'm behind bars.

I guess that's why I greet this time of year with relief. The warmer weather and longer days give me a chance to put the more complicated, more contractor-driven work of the interior remodel aside for the simpler pleasures of the backyard.

Or in my particular case, for finishing a deck project I started five years ago and which is finally receiving its appropriate railing, salvaged from an old building, as I write this. Yes, that glacial progress—and the safety concerns of not having a railing for so long—tend to cramp one's ability to entertain, but then we've never been big on entertaining.

I mean, there was the time we had Christmas Eve dinner with our first contractor's crew. Or the other time, when our HVAC guy dropped by and decided to stay for pizza and a couple of episodes of *Law & Order*.

Hmmm...law and order. I could use some of that around my place.

Scott Omelianuk

SCOTT OMELIANUK, EDITOR
scott@thisoldhouse.com

PHOTO: MICHAEL LEWIS

P.S. If you are, in fact, the type for entertaining, you'll find a ton of inspiration in this issue, from DIY projects to design ideas for decks (should have read that one five years ago) to an outdoor kitchen planner. Turn the page to get started.



THREE THINGS I LEARNED FROM THIS ISSUE →

1. How a "come-along" used like a whale-bone corset can improve your house's posture. [p. 82]

2. How fishing line can help you tie up loose ends in an emergency. [p. 24]

3. How a paper plate can keep your head and shoulders neat and tidy. [p. 26]

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readermail

As summer approaches, readers have been writing to say thanks for TOH's ideas, contribute their own, or ask astute questions. And a pair of new subscribers offered a look at the handsome fireplace project, below, that we hope is the start of a beautiful relationship.

Inspired rookies

I just want to let you know how much I am enjoying *This Old House* magazine. My husband and I own my great-grandparents' 78-year-old gable-front cottage. It has good bones but needs TLC. We have only been homeowners for about a year and are rookies when it comes to remodeling and home repairs. We knew we would need help, so we turned to TOH. Every issue has articles and tips that have gotten us through our recent projects. I have also found inspiration for future projects. Thank you!

—KAREN ERICKSON, LANSING, ILL.

Wallpaper cubbies

Wallpapering the back of cubbies [Home Solutions, April] is an attractive way to spice up a room. Quilting cotton is sold in myriad patterns and colorways, and



would be a cheap alternative. The same technique you give to apply paper can be used with fabric.

—DENISE PERRY, ST. JOHNSBURY, VT.

Color-coordinated

Great Before + After: Kitchen in April. The appliances look like they were painted to match the cabinets. How was this done?

—KEITH KHOREY, BY E-MAIL

The editors reply: Nice trick, right? The fridge and wine cooler are designed to accept custom panels, which the cabinet-maker painted to match.

how to
reach
us

The editors: This Old House magazine, 135 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10020. Or e-mail TOH_letters@timeinc.com.
→ Include your full name, address, and phone number. Published letters are edited for clarity and length.

Fireplace surround

AARON AND LINDSAY TAYLOR,
BEAVERTON, OREG.

We really liked the look of the tin-tiled fireplace surround in your January issue. After moving into our new house last year I found a mantel on Craigslist, brought it back to life, and installed it in our living room. We had been planning to put tile on the surround but held out for some inspiration—we found it in TOH. (And started our subscription!)



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checklist { June 2011 }

EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW



□ Touch up exterior paint

Have exterior renovations roughed up your home's paint job? June's the best month to give it a refresher. Before you dig out old cans of the original color, make sure it hasn't faded. If it has, scrape off a quarter-size paint chip and bring it to your local shop to get the color matched. Then use the new hue for any fixes.

□ What's on your checklist?



"I'm ordering firewood. Because it's unseasoned, it'll cost less, then

I'll let it dry out all summer so that it will be ready by winter."

—Mike Rau, Everett, Wash.

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

✓ Train your vines

As your climbers go through a growth spurt this month, keep your yard looking tidy by securing untethered shoots. Loosely tie young or wayward tendrils from twiners, such as clematis and Japanese wisteria, to supports using cotton twine; avoid wire or nylon thread, which can cut into stems. To secure sprawling vines, like climbing roses, use garden tape made of flexible plastic or Velcro ties, which can be repositioned easily as the plant grows.



Tie string to the vine's support first, then make a loose loop to hold up a tendril.

□ Tune up the AC

Whether you have a window unit or a central-air system, ensure your air conditioner can handle the heat with this routine maintenance: Clean or replace filters monthly. Next, check the unit's evaporator and condenser coils, and remove any dirt with a vacuum or garden hose. Avoid airflow obstructions by trimming back foliage around the coils at least 2 feet.

TOH TIP

□ Summer lawn fixes

By now, you shouldn't have to do much to your lawn other than water it. But if you've got yellow spots or weeds, follow these tips: 1_ The main cause of browning is too little water. Soak grass early in the morning to prevent moisture from evaporating in the sun. 2_ Pull dandelions and other weeds by hand, or spot-treat with herbicide. 3_ See bare patches near walkways? Aerate, then top-dress with compost and new seed. 4_ Let grass blades grow 3 to 3½ inches tall to shade soil and help stop weed seeds from taking root.



□ Inspect your loo

Before your bathrooms see a bump in traffic when school lets out for summer, get the toilets in top shape. Turn off the water, then lift the lid on each tank and make sure the chain is securely fastened to the lever and flapper (the rubber part of the flush valve that seals water in the tank). If water pressure is low when you flush, unclog small amounts of buildup from the holes around the bowl's interior rim with a wire clothes hanger. For more bathroom how-to's, visit thisoldhouse.com/bonus.



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MARKETER
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12:01 PM
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2:45 PM
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- Home ownership accounts for nearly \$2 trillion of our GDP.³

Homes sales estimate is 5.36 million homes as of January 2011. U.S. Annual Energy Review, National Association of REALTORS®. The "average impact" is an estimate based on the U.S. National Association of REALTORS® Bureau of Economic Analysis, GDP, fourth quarter and annual 2010 release.

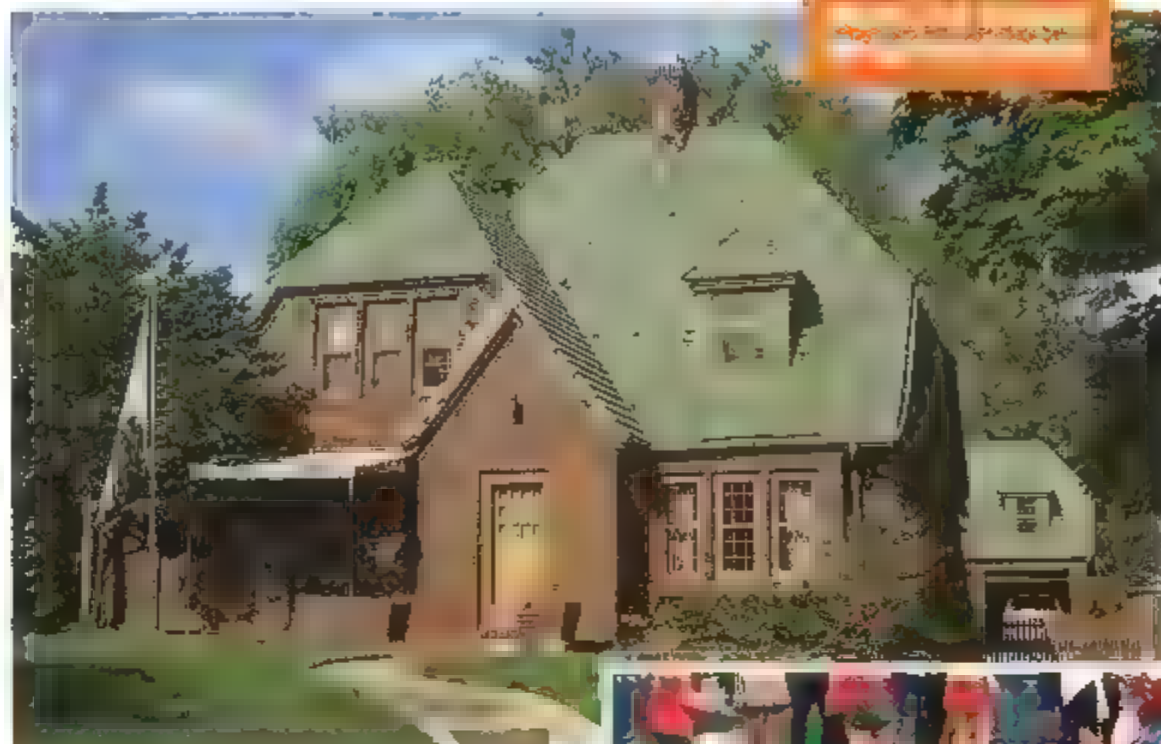
America needs jobs.
Housing creates them.
HouseLogic.com/jobs



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homenews { June 2011 }

Here's another one of our picks from
2011's Best Old-House Neighborhoods



Field Club Historic District, Omaha

- > Walk to golf courses and grocery stores
- > Fixer-uppers for \$125,000
- > A great place to raise kids

THE NEIGHBORHOOD Located southwest of downtown, Field Club got its name from the Field Club of Omaha, a smashing good time country club that opened here in 1898. Many residents are longtime members who walk over to swim laps or hit a few golf balls whenever they please. Those who forgo the annual dues find plenty of free recreational opportunities at nearby Manscom Park. "This is the kind of place where several generations of the same family might live," says Jill Nienaber, president of the Field Club Homeowners League, which since 1947 has been keeping the area fun and



QUALITY OF LIFE

A Tudor Revival (TOP) represents just one of Field Club's diverse architectural styles. Children get patriotic at a neighborhood Fourth of July parade (ABOVE).

beautiful with home tours, parades, and historic lighting restoration projects. **THE HOUSES** The oldest properties are ornate and cavernous Queen Annes built in the late 19th century. Other styles include American foursquare, Colonial Revival, Mission, and Tudor Revival. The average price of a house here is \$200,000, but fixer-uppers can go for around \$125,000. **WHY BUY HERE?** Thanks to the recent completion of a mixed-use development a few blocks north of the neighborhood, a slew of new restaurants, shops, and pubs—as well as a grocery store and a movie theater—have opened within walking distance. A local bike trail gets you there in less than 5 minutes. —KEITH PANDOLFI

Find your next home

See all the winners—one from each state and the best of Canada—at thisoldhouse.com/best_places

America needs jobs. Housing creates them.

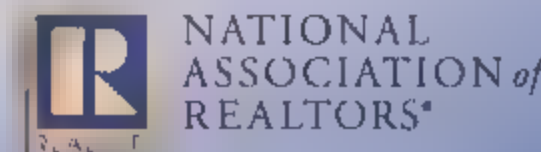


For every two homes sold, one job is created.

Every time a house is built, bought, or sold, American jobs are created. In fact, for every two homes sold, one job is created. That's 2.5 million jobs created or maintained, in average year of home sales.

Strong federal government support for home ownership equals strong support for American jobs. The National Association of REALTORS® supports responsible housing finance reform and we believe that home ownership must play a pivotal role in growing our economy. Learn more today at HouseLogic.com/jobs

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home solutions

Edited by Jessica Dodell Feder

WAGON PLANTER

SAFE AT HOME

SAFETY GEAR

MORE



→ SMART IDEA

Storage that stacks up

Beef up your garage or shed's storage with this rustic shelving unit. Made from slatted fruit crates, it's a breeze to build. Just place the crates—check local orchards for extras or find vintage versions on eBay for as little as \$8 each—on top of one another, one at a time. Drill pilot holes in the corner braces to prevent the wood from splitting, then fasten with 2-inch deck screws. For extra support, screw the unit into a wall from inside the crates. The resulting shelves are sturdy enough to store pots, plants, even galoshes, and can easily weather any mud or dirt that comes their way.



Ceramic-coated deck screws won't rust, even if the crates get wet.



→ GARDENING

Herb planter on wheels

Looking to spice up your container garden? Dig out Junior's rusty old Radio Flyer and turn it into a mobile planter that can go from a sun-steeped corner right to your kitchen door. Here's how to get rolling.

STEP 1

To create drainage holes, start by making divots in the bottom of the wagon with a nailset. Using the divots as guides, drill through the metal with a 1/4-inch high-speed steel bit.

STEP 2

Line the wagon with a 1-inch layer of gravel to improve drainage and keep the holes from clogging.

STEP 3

Add potting soil, stopping 1 inch below the wagon's lip. Plant herbs with similar water and sun needs, and top with mulch. Then wheel to a sunny spot and watch your new garden grow. —GILLIAN BARTH



→ CLICK LIST

Big bargains for home goods

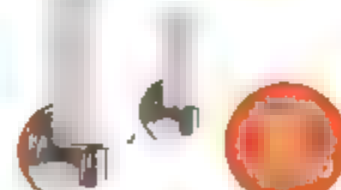


For seriously good deals on fixtures and furnishings, sign up for members-only flash sales sites. Many are offshoots of big-name online retailers, creating an account is free, and e-mail alerts make it easy to find sales without aimless clicking. The only catch: limited quantities on goods, and prices that last only a few days. Here, three bookmark-worthy picks. —DANIELLE BLUNDEL



> eziba.com

At Overstock.com's private sale site, you can find C.G. Sparks dressers and Savoy House ceiling fans for half off. Keep an eye out for themed sales—a recent "Perk Up Your Patio" event featured teak benches, chairs, and tables. Shipping is always \$2.95.



> jossandmain.com

Check here for deeply discounted high-end housewares from the 4,000-plus brands carried by parent company CSN Stores, plus special offerings from exclusive vendors. Last month, these Galco light fixtures sported a price tag of only \$43 each.



> thefoundary.com

Score home essentials on the cheap at this site from online marketplace Hayneedle. Past events include big ticket items from brands such as Furl Knives and Dyson. The site has also introduced "Designer Gallery" sales with furniture and decor handpicked by design pros.

Boldly goes where no man has gone before



New iRobot® Scooba® 230, the floor-washing robot, cleans awkward spaces and difficult places.

iRobot
www.irobot.com/oldhouse

Six surprise disaster-kit essentials

You won't see these items on standard preparedness lists—but experts agree they can help you weather any emergency nature throws your way



Even if you don't live in an area usually affected by severe storms, the start of hurricane season offers a good reminder to give your emergency kit a once-over. To ensure you've got what you need, check with a relief organization like the American Red Cross (redcross.org) for the recommended must-haves. Then read on to discover some handy supplies you may not have thought of that can help you safely ride out an emergency.

1_ Fishing line "You can tie almost anything with it," it's the Swiss Army knife of string," says Bill Bega, president of Bega Enterprises Inc., a disaster restoration company in Rockville, Maryland. In a pinch, use this super-strong, waterproof filament to tie a flapping door closed or secure a tarp over a broken car window.

2_ Vinyl tablecloths Cheaper than tarps, these water-resistant spill-catchers can provide an instant island of clean, especially after a disaster where dirt and debris litter the floor, says Abby Harrison, a Hurricane Ike survivor who teaches emergency prep classes in Houston.

3_ Triple-duty weather radio A

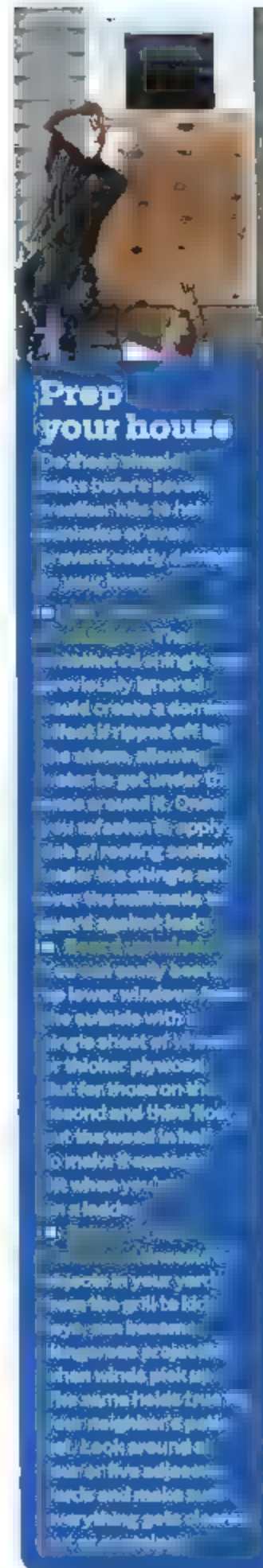
hand crank radio is a standard emergency item, but one that also charges small gadgets and serves as a flashlight. Try the Rover by Eton (\$50; brookstone.com) which has a USB cell phone charger and an LED light—brighter and more impact resistant than an incandescent, says the Red Cross's Keith

Robertory. Just 90 seconds of cranking buys you 15 minutes of power.

4_ Baby wipes Staying clean when water is in short supply doesn't have to be a challenge. Baby wipes work wonders at removing grime, whether you want to use them to sub for a shower or clean food-prep surfaces (for this, get lotion-free versions).

5_ Reinforced work gloves "When cleaning up after a storm, the last thing you want is to get pierced by broken glass or a rusty nail with flood water on it," says Robertory. Cushioned gloves will keep your hands dry and protected. Look for options with rubber or leather grips on the palms to prevent them from becoming slippery.

6_ Solar-powered fan "After a storm, it's often hot, and if the power is still out, it can be sweltering," says Bega. To cool things down without electricity, charge a solar fan on your windowsill as soon as you receive a storm warning. —NATALIE GINGERICH MACKENZIE



Your kitchen renovations could easily go up in FLAMES...



Most home fires start in the kitchen. Be prepared.

Kidde's Kitchen Fire Extinguisher is the only UL-listed extinguisher specially designed for cooking oil fires.

Its non-toxic and non-corrosive agent makes clean up safe and easy. Plus, the pressure gauge shows the unit is ready to use in an emergency.

Install Kidde's Kitchen Fire Extinguisher in your home today.

Visit www.kidde.com

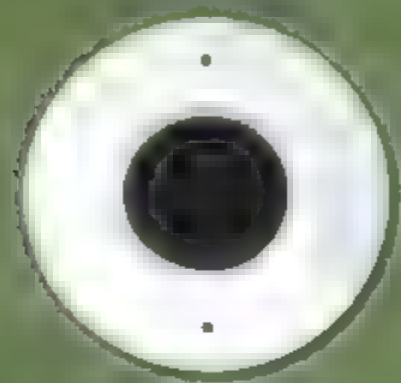
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You are always greener with the new Unico System Green Series. The Green Series provides the most energy efficient comfort possible throughout your home.

The Unico System
Green Series

Learn all about it at
unicosystem.com/thisoldhouse

EYE PROTECTION

→ SAFETY GEAR

Cover your eyes!

There's nothing like the prospect of a splinter in the eye to convince a DIYer of the value of good safety glasses. Just ask *TOH* master carpenter Norm Abram, who's known for always reminding his viewers to put on a pair. Here, five tough new options, suitable for every project you've got in sight. —D.B.



built-in brighteners

This frame's two side-mounted adjustable LEDs provide directional light, perfect for detail jobs such as rewiring an overhead fixture. 3M Light Vision II. \$18. acehardware.com

for heavy-duty jobs

Stripping furniture or using paint thinner? The gel trim on this low-profile shield forms a tight yet comfortable seal to protect you from splashes. Encon XPR36. \$12. toolsource.com



cut outdoor glare

Choose these mirrored specs, which offer 99.9 percent protection against UV rays, for reducing peripheral glare when doing outdoor tasks, like fertilizing the lawn. Encon Veratti V6. \$13. safetyglassesusa.com

vision booster

Amber lenses make your surroundings appear brighter, so use this pair when it's overcast. Wear readers? You won't need them, thanks to bifocal insets up to +2.5. Crews Klondike. \$11. safetyglassesusa.com



two-in-one convertible

An adjustable headband takes this hybrid model from sunglass style to goggle in a snap—plus its antifog gray lenses protect eyes in full sun without distorting colors. Crews Rattler. \$10. safetyvests.com



reader tip

DEREK BRANN, SOMERVILLE, MASS.

"When drilling overhead, punch a hole into a paper plate and slide it over the bit. Hold the plate steady as you drill to catch any dust—and keep your floor (and head) clean."

SHARE YOUR TIPS

Post them at thisoldhouse.com/tips



CATCH UP WITH THE CREW



Auburndale and Los Angeles Projects airing now. For local listings, visit thisoldhouse.com/tvschedule.

Exclusively on PBS Presented by



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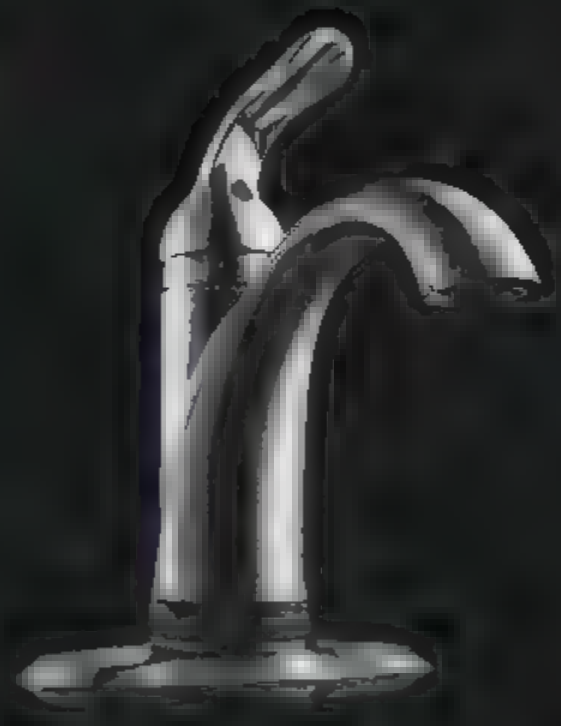


State Farm

LUMBER LIQUIDATORS



Sometimes your hands
could use a hand.



TOUCH2O TECHNOLOGY NOW IN THE BATHROOM

Touch anywhere on the spout or handle with your wrist or forearm to start and stop the flow of water. Another way Delta is more than just a faucet. For more information, scan the QR code or visit deltafaucet.com/touchbath



before+after: kitchen

Same size, sunnier spirit

10101 N. ...
By DERORAH BALDWIN Photographs by JOE SCHMELZER

It can pay to take your time. Ten long years passed before Kristin Sharpe and her husband, Mike, finally did something about their kitchen's bumpy tile countertops, crammed cabinets, and lack of gathering space. But as they pondered every possibility, from demolishing a wall in their Southern California ranch house to building an addition, they also refined their vision. The result: a same-footprint redo, put in place by general contractor Michael Dubin. "We did a lot of research and testing," says Kristin. To create a more spacious feel, they enlarged a pass-through to the family room, where their twins, now 9, hang out; added a skylight; and restricted the palette to vanilla and chocolate—right down to the walnut floor. Light reflecting glass tile and pendants as delicate as soap bubbles brighten the space. "With the bigger pass-through, I can watch the kids while cooking," says Kristin, "and finally we can all gather in the kitchen for dinner." The wait, in other words, was worth it.

before The old space had faded tile counters, vinyl floors, ceiling-lowering soffits, and no place to eat.
after Opened up with a skylight and an enlarged pass-through, the same-size kitchen packs in style, storage, and dining space.



before



Cocoa-colored glass tiles melt into the quartz countertops for a seamless look.

before+after: kitchen

† The built-in bench seat, a natural gathering spot for Kristin and the twins, is a space saver and doubles as storage. Table and chairs: eCustom Finishes.

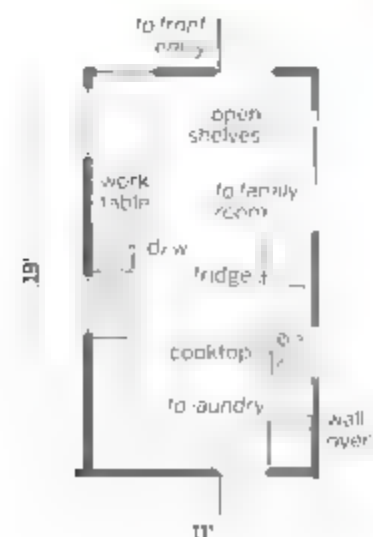
† The pro style range with its dramatic black finish, accents the brown and white color scheme, while the fridge hides behind white cabinet panels. Range and range hood: Viking. Fridge and micro: convection oven: KitchenAid. Fridge pull: Hickory Hardware.



after

- The footprint and the appliance locations stayed the same, but storage and style were amped up by tearing out soffits and installing tall cabinets and other built-ins.

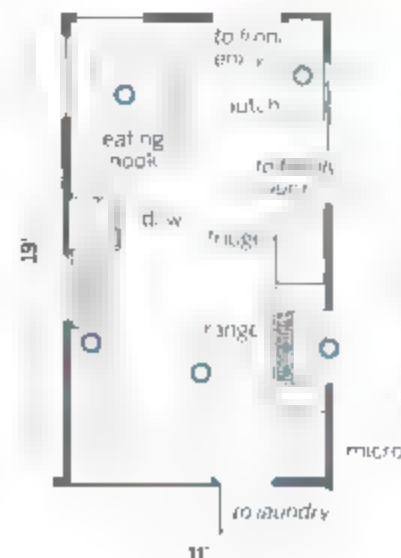
before
At 209 square feet, the kitchen lacked prep space, storage, and a family dining area.



1 Added a banquette with deep drawers for linens, baking supplies, and small appliances, and a table for meals.

2 Removed soffits to make way for ceiling-height cabinets.

3 Opened up the room with a skylight and new casement windows.



4 Built in an oak hutch that holds office supplies, display shelves, and a TV.

5 Doubled the size of the pass through over the stove to channel light and provide a sight line from the cooking area to the family room.

So quiet, it screams German engineering.

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Because every decibel makes a difference. An increase of just three decibels is the sound equivalent of running two dishwashers at once. That's why Bosch engineers build 18 sound reduction technologies into the 800 Plus, making it the quietest dishwasher in the U.S.* From a frictionless motor to triple layered sound-deadening insulation, we shave decibels off wherever we can. It's engineering that speaks for itself. www.bosch-home.com/us

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the key details

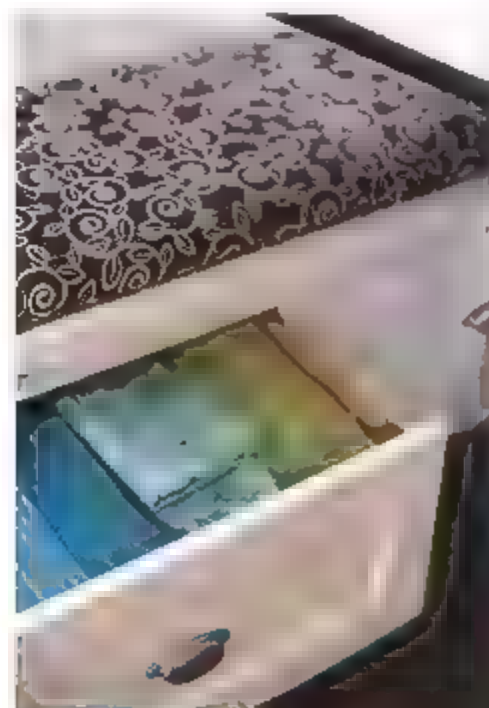


homeowner tip

KRISTIN SHARPE
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

To make our ranch house feel bigger and less chopped up, we stuck to a single palette throughout."

✦ The banquette has capacious drawers with vintage-style bin pulls and a contemporary-print cushion. Fabric: Premier Prints



Wired-glass fronts add a subtle texture to the hutch.



✦ The oak and white-quartz hutch, designed by homeowners Kristin and Mike with a niche for the TV, reverses the color scheme of the white cabinets and brown countertops on the sink and range walls. Custom cabinets and hutch. Creative Woodworks. Countertops, CaesarStone. Hardware Aino. Flooring: Hallmark Hardwoods

✦ Hand-blown glass pendants add a sculptural element over the sink and dining areas. Pendants: Niche Modern. George Nelson Sunburst clock: Kirch & Co



ARE YOU KIDDING YOURSELF?

YOU THINK HEALTHY DIET AND EXERCISE ARE ENOUGH TO LOWER HIGH CHOLESTEROL. BUT FOR 2 OUT OF 3, IT MAY NOT BE.

For 2 out of 3 people with high cholesterol, diet and exercise may not be enough to reduce their cholesterol. If you haven't been able to lower your high cholesterol enough on your own, stop kidding yourself.

When healthy diet and exercise are not enough, adding Lipitor may help:

- Along with diet, Lipitor has been shown to lower bad cholesterol 39% to 60% (average effect depending on dose).
- Lipitor has been extensively studied with over 18 years of research and is backed by over 400 ongoing or completed clinical studies.
- More than 20 million people have been prescribed Lipitor.

Talk to your doctor about your risk and about Lipitor. Learn more at lipitor.com or call 1-888-LIPITOR (1-888-547-4867).

Please see additional important information on next page.

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IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION: LIPITOR is not for everyone. It is not for those with liver problems. And it is not for women who are nursing, pregnant or may become pregnant.

If you take LIPITOR, tell your doctor if you feel any new muscle pain or weakness. This could be a sign of rare but serious muscle side effects. Tell your doctor about all medications you take. This may help avoid serious drug interactions. Your doctor should do blood tests to check your liver function before and during treatment and may adjust your dose.

Common side effects are diarrhea, upset stomach, muscle and joint pain, and changes in some blood tests.

INDICATION:

LIPITOR is a prescription medicine that is used along with a low-fat diet. It lowers the LDL ("bad" cholesterol) and triglycerides in your blood. It can raise your HDL ("good" cholesterol) as well. LIPITOR can lower the risk for heart attack, stroke, certain types of heart surgery, and chest pain in patients who have heart disease or risk factors for heart disease such as age, smoking, high blood pressure, low HDL, or family history of early heart disease.

LIPITOR can lower the risk for heart attack or stroke in patients with diabetes and risk factors such as diabetic eye or kidney problems, smoking or high blood pressure.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.



DON'T KID YOURSELF

Find out more at lipitor.com

IMPORTANT FACTS



LIPITOR
atorvastatin calcium
tablet

(LIP-ih-tore)

LOWERING YOUR HIGH CHOLESTEROL

High cholesterol is more than just a number, it's a risk factor that should not be ignored. If your doctor said you have high cholesterol, you may be at an increased risk for heart attack and stroke. But the good news is, you can take steps to lower your cholesterol.

With the help of your doctor and a cholesterol-lowering medicine like LIPITOR, along with diet and exercise, you could be on your way to lowering your cholesterol.

Ready to start eating right and exercising more? Talk to your doctor and visit the American Heart Association at www.americanheart.org

WHO IS LIPITOR FOR?

Who can take LIPITOR:

- People who cannot lower their cholesterol enough with diet and exercise
- Adults and children over 10

Who should NOT take LIPITOR:

- Women who are pregnant, may be pregnant, or may become pregnant. LIPITOR may harm your unborn baby. If you become pregnant, stop LIPITOR and call your doctor right away.
- Women who are breast feeding. LIPITOR can pass into your breast milk and may harm your baby.
- People with liver problems
- People allergic to anything in LIPITOR

BEFORE YOU START LIPITOR

Tell your doctor:

- About all medications you take, including prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and herbal supplements
- If you have muscle aches or weakness
- If you drink more than 2 alcoholic drinks a day
- If you have diabetes or kidney problems
- If you have a thyroid problem

ABOUT LIPITOR

LIPITOR is a prescription medicine. Along with diet and exercise, it lowers "bad" cholesterol in your blood. It can also raise "good" cholesterol (HDL-C).

LIPITOR can lower the risk of heart attack, stroke, certain types of heart surgery, and chest pain in patients who have heart disease or risk factors for heart disease such as:

- age, smoking, high blood pressure, low HDL-C, family history of early heart disease

LIPITOR can lower the risk of heart attack or stroke in patients with diabetes and risk factors such as diabetic eye or kidney problems, smoking, or high blood pressure.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF LIPITOR

Serious side effects in a small number of people:

- **Muscle problems** that can lead to kidney problems, including kidney failure. Your chance for muscle problems is higher if you take certain other medicines with LIPITOR.
- **Liver problems.** Your doctor may do blood tests to check your liver before you start LIPITOR and while you are taking it.

Call your doctor right away if you have:

- Unexplained muscle weakness or pain, especially if you have a fever or feel very tired
- Allergic reactions including swelling of the face, lips, tongue, and/or throat that may cause difficulty in breathing or swallowing which may require treatment right away
- Nausea, vomiting, or stomach pain
- Brown or dark colored urine
- Feeling more tired than usual
- Your skin and the whites of your eyes turn yellow
- Allergic skin reactions

Common side effects of LIPITOR are:

- Diarrhea
- Muscle and joint pain
- Upset stomach
- Changes in some blood tests

HOW TO TAKE LIPITOR

Do:

- Take LIPITOR as prescribed by your doctor
- Try to eat heart-healthy foods while you take LIPITOR
- Take LIPITOR at any time of day, with or without food.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. But if it has been more than 12 hours since your missed dose, wait. Take the next dose at your regular time.

Don't:

- Do not change or stop your dose before talking to your doctor
- Do not start new medicines before talking to your doctor
- Do not give your LIPITOR to other people. It may harm them even if your problems are the same.
- Do not break the tablet.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- Ask your doctor or health care provider
- Talk to your pharmacist
- Go to www.lipitor.com or call 1-888-LIPITOR.

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1. BOSCH If you didn't notice it was a Bosch you'd never know it was there. German engineered to operate as low as 40 dBA, Bosch dishwashers are the quietest in the U.S.

202. AUTOMOTIVE

2. FORD F-150 The next F-150 has arrived and from a frame that's twice as strong to revolutionary interiors, it's the toughest F-150 ever.

3. GMC SIERRA Home improvers need Professional Grade support. GMC Sierras are that and more. Whether you're putting up paneling or adding a new suite of rooms, GMC Sierra will make the task easier.

4. TOYOTA AVALON Introducing the latest in fine travel. Ample space, reclining rear seats and an increased by smooth ride. The new Toyota Avalon Comfort is back.

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5. DIY NETWORK DIY Network is an on-air, on-line network that provides in-depth project instructions, demonstrations and product tips for home and hobby enthusiasts.

6. GREAT STUFF™ INSULATING FOAM SEALANT GREAT STUFF™ Insulating Foam Sealants are designed to fill and insulate gaps, cracks, window doors, electrical wiring and other areas where unwanted penetrations occur.

7. ELDORADO STONE Eldorado Stone, the most believable architectural stone veneer in the world, is truly a brilliant and rich texture to create memorable interior and exterior spaces. For more information, visit our website.

8. JAMES HARDIE SIDING Engineered for Climate™ siding up to the elements, regardless of location or harshness of the weather. Now that's peace of mind.

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204. FINANCIAL SERVICES/REAL ESTATE

11. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® Looking for resources you can use to maintain and enhance your home's value? Visit HouseLogic brought to you by the National Association of REALTORS.

12. STATE FARM No one understands your insurance and financial needs like your neighborhood State Farm Agent. We live where you live.

205. FLOORING

13. ARMSTRONG LAMINATE FLOORS Look so real, it's unreal. True to life designs, dramatic beauty and sophisticated styles make up our collection. Learn more at our website.

14. LUMBER LIQUIDATORS Lumber Liquidators is the leading retailer of quality hardwood flooring at the lowest prices. They offer a variety of brands including Beldwood.

206. HOME FURNISHINGS/DESIGN

15. CURTAINWORKS Beautiful ready-made curtains with quality details that rival custom window treatments—at much lower prices. Curtainworks provides how-to instructions to make window decorating effortless.

207. KITCHEN

CROWN POINT Family owned and operated Crown Point Cabinetry has been handcrafting the finest quality solid wood custom cabinetry for over 25 years. Available nationwide.

16. THE HOME DEPOT The Home Depot is more than a store. It's where you find the know-how to get your home improvement projects done right.

208. LAWN/GARDEN, POOL/SPA, PATIO

CUB CADET Cub Cadet is the leader in premium outdoor power equipment with innovative products including walk-behinds, riding tractors, zero turn mowers and chore equipment.

17. SUNBRELLA Awnings made with Sunbrella fabrics provide UV protection, expand outdoor living spaces and keep interior furnishings from fading. Visit our website to learn more.

18. TREX® Trex Transcend™ Decking and Railing system. Now offering new tropical finishes and integrated Deck lighting. And still a 25-year limited warranty against fading and staining.

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BEHR PAINTS A paint and primer in one, BEHR Premium Plus Ultra™ White is the latest innovation from BEHR Paints.

19. BENJAMIN MOORE Benjamin Moore ARBORCOAT™ premium low VOC waterborne deck and siding stains are easy to apply and outperform the best oil-based stains on the market.

20. DAP Protect your home with DAP® 3.0™. With Quick Dry™ Technology, it's ready for water exposure in 3 hours, versus the 24 hours some brands require. Dap 3.0™ is all you need to know.

21. MINWAX Al Minwax, we're always working on new ideas, formulating innovative products and looking for better ways to beautify, protect and restore wood. Visit our website today.

22. THOMPSON'S WATERSEAL Keep your deck looking beautiful with long-lasting superior protection from Thompson's Water Seal Advanced. The most powerful protection against water damage guaranteed.

23. TRUE VALUE EasyCare and WeatherAll® paints are ideal for a variety of projects. When you choose our quality paints you get both beautiful color and long-lasting, durable finishes backed by our lifetime guarantee.

24. UGL Protect your home with Drylok® Masonry Waterproofer. Guaranteed to stop water above and below grade. For additional information or a dealer near you, visit our website.

212. PLUMBING FIXTURES/HVAC/BATH

25. DELTA All Delta® faucets are more than just faucets—because we pair smart features with beautiful design. Visit our website for more information.

26. MOEN Moen develops beautiful, reliable and innovative faucets, showerheads and accessories designed for your life. Free literature is available.

27. TRANE Trane has a tradition of quality, innovation and reliability lasting more than a century. That's why we say "it's hard to stop a Trane."

28. UPONOR Uponor is a leading manufacturer and supplier of PEX plumbing and radiant heating systems for residential and commercial building markets across North America and Europe.

29. YORK York's Premium Air Conditioners, Heat Pumps and Furnaces are sleek, quiet and efficient. Homeowners have a choice of multiple home comfort systems including multi-stage cooling and modulating furnaces.

213. SPECIALTY ITEMS & SERVICES

30. ANGIE'S LIST The premier spot to find reliable ratings and reviews on local contractors and home service providers. Since 1995, Angie's List saves time and money.

31. DIRECT BUY DirectBuy members pay direct from the source prices on virtually everything for the home. One visit to DirectBuy can save you thousands of more.

32. NKBA The National Kitchen & Bath Association is dedicated exclusively to the kitchen and bath industry. To get the NKBA's free consumer workbook, visit our website.

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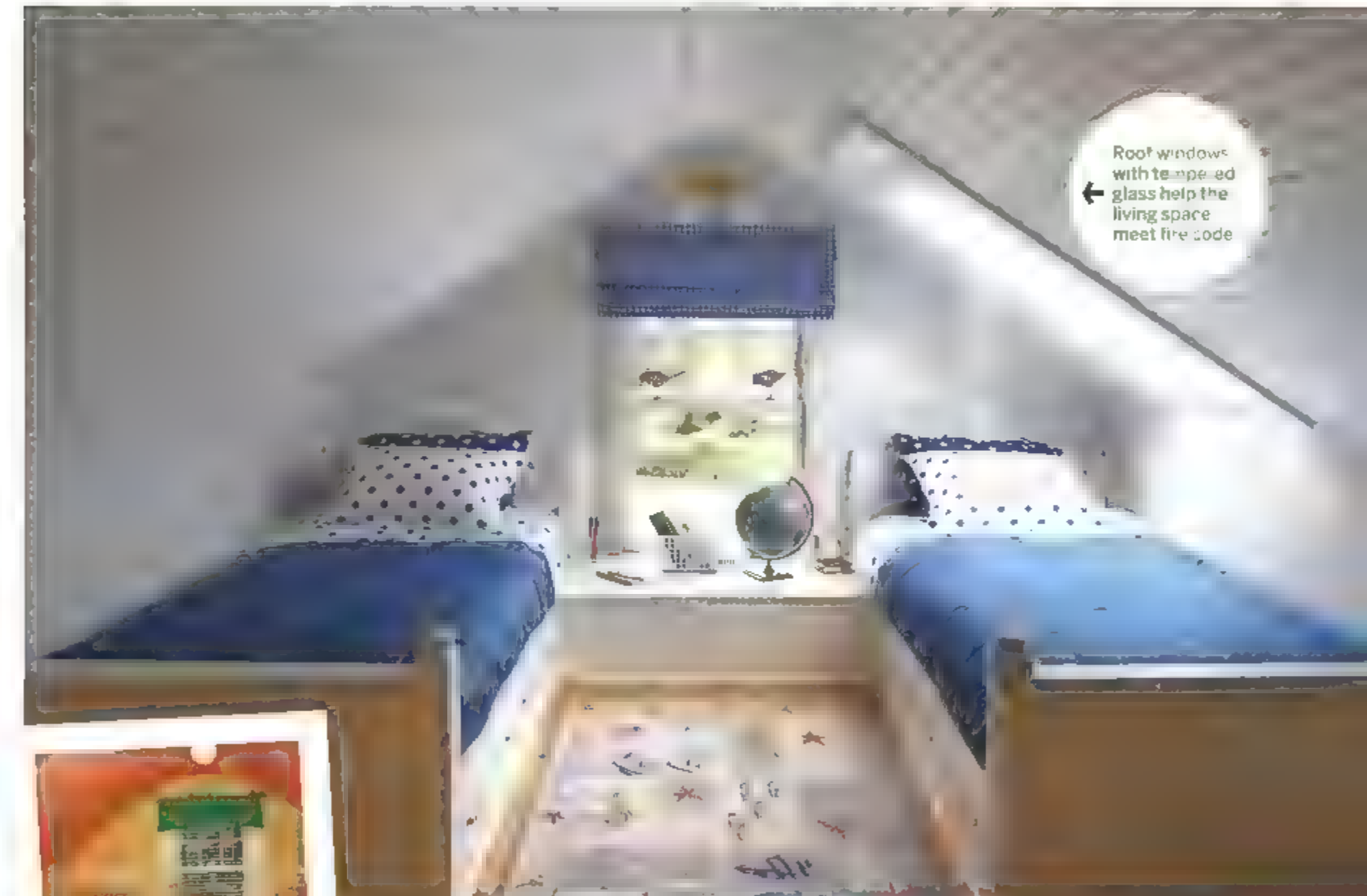
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YORK
It's time to get comfortable.

before+after:
attic

All tucked in

Clever built-ins tuck every square inch of an attic bedroom with so much charm that it's a joy to be there. By DEBORAH BALDWIN • Photographs by JULIAN WASS



before Freestanding furniture, little light, and shabby, not-chic finishes made the attic bedrooms feel smaller.
after Snug built-ins with below-bed storage, roof windows, pine flooring, and lots of glossy beadboard opened up the space and made it more functional.

Ask kids, and they'll tell you the ideal place to sleep is in a tree house or on a sailboat, like Max in *Where the Wild Things Are*. Architect Darren Helgesen incorporated that spirit in this attic redo at a century-old house in East Hampton, New York, where he used warm finishes and smart details to turn the dark, sloped-ceilinged space into a shipshape two-bedroom suite. The homeowners, Bill and Cory Laverack, had already renovated the rest of the house. "We used a lot of beadboard and liked it," says Cory, an interior designer, so Helgesen continued it here, calling on general contractor Ronald Gray and carpenter Paul Strisi to fit together beaded boards and built-ins as neatly as jigsaw pieces. The team also rejiggered an existing bath and put down a pine floor. "It was always their favorite place," says Cory, recalling how the couple's four kids would hide out upstairs with friends every chance they got. "And now it's the ultimate sleepover space."

before+after: attic

→ Deep drawers with soft-close glides hold clothes and linens, and the built-in bedside table hides ductwork. A mirror-image bedroom occupies the space at the other end of the hall



↑ The hallway's vaulted ceiling extends to the door frames; when closed, the wall-height doors have triangles of space above them to channel air and light. Doors: TruStile Knobs Baldwin Hardware Hinges: Von Morris



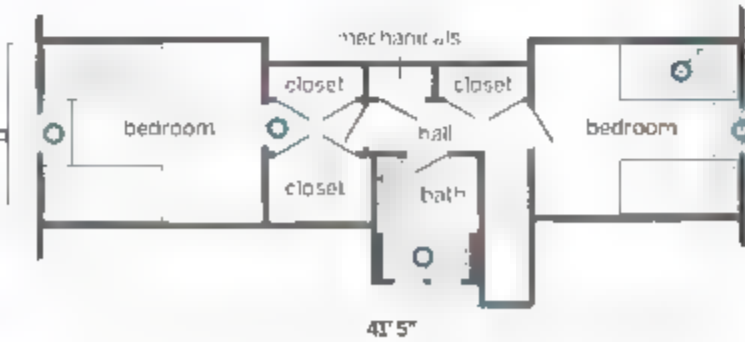
A sash stop prevents kids from opening the window more than 6 inches.

• before + after

Adding roof windows, rebuilding the bath, and lining the space with built-ins and glossy beadboard made the space feel bigger.

1 Raised the peak of the ceiling (including the hall and door frames) to about 6 feet 10 inches.

2 Built in bedside tables and twin beds with deep drawers that replace dressers.



3 Moved the tub to take advantage of the light brought in by a pair of double-hung windows.

4 Added roof windows, which bring in light and double as emergency exits.

5 Replaced the panes in existing windows with safety glass.

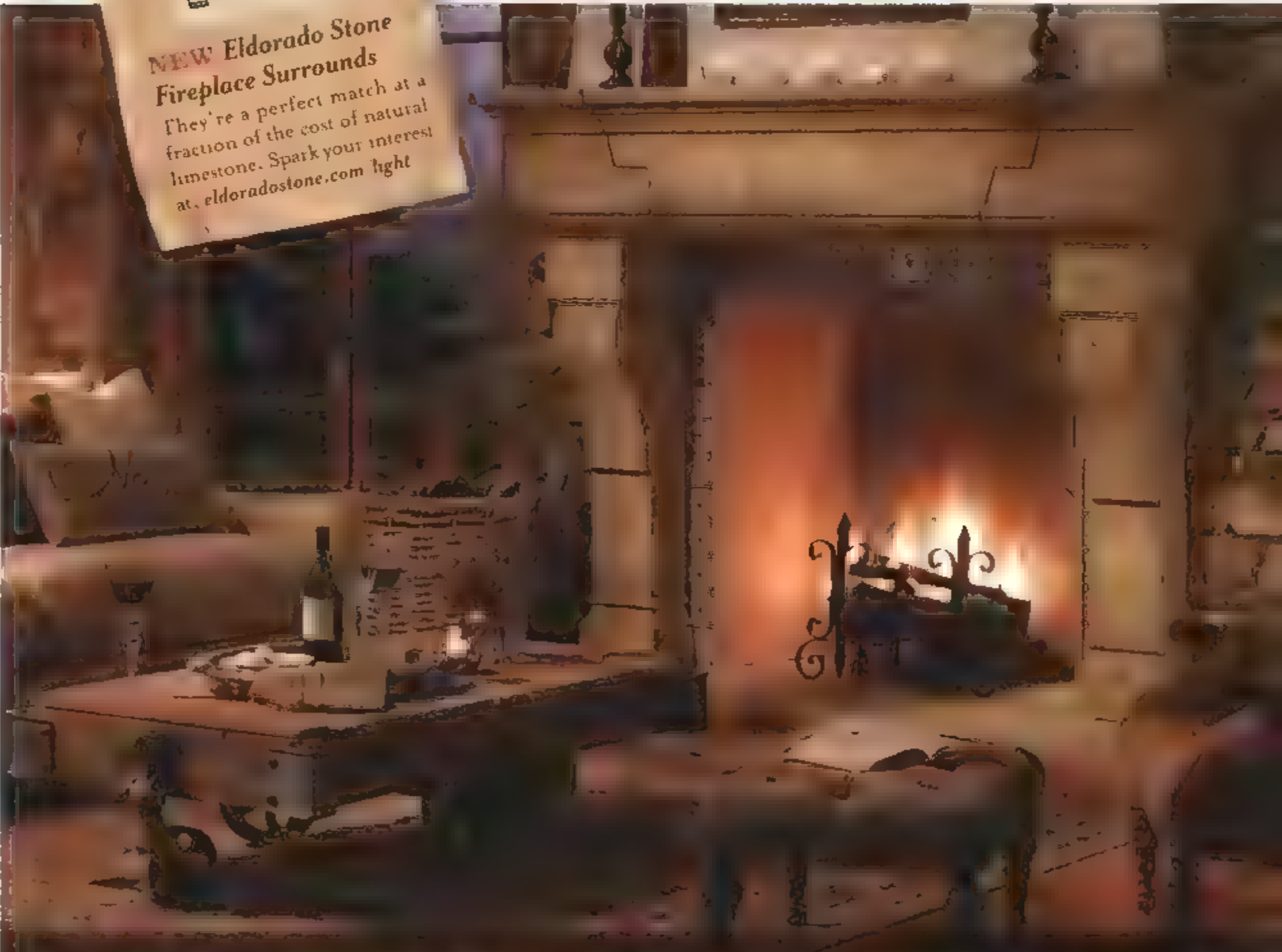


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THE MOST BELIEVABLE ARCHITECTURAL STONE VENEER IN THE WORLD

before+after: attic

↓ The bath alcove's window trim and shutters are made of vinyl to resist water damage. Tub: American Standard. Fixings: Newport Brass. Shutters: Summit Hill. Ceiling wallpaper: Hinson & Company. Bucket: Home Goods.



↑ Wall-mount sconces with streamlined porcelain bases frame the medicine cabinet and reinforce the period look. Sconces: Rejuvenation.



↑ The pedestal sink, porcelain-lever faucet, and framed-mirror cabinet hark back to the 1920s, not long after the house was built. Sink: Porcher. Faucet: Waterworks. Custom medicine cabinet: Graystone Builders.

→ Shaker-style pegs take the place of towel bars. The room's beadboard walls and trim were finished with moisture-resistant oil-based paint. Paint: Benjamin Moore's Ivory White.



Give a new piece an aged look—fast

Bypass the flea market and go straight to a faux-aged finish with crackle

By ERIC HAGERMAN + Photographs by WENDELL T. WEBBER

Vintage-furniture hounds spend years tracking down painted pieces that have just the right patina. You can shortcut that journey with contrasting shades of flat latex paint and a special medium that comes out of the can as a milky liquid, goes on clear, and shrinks and cracks the paint color layered on top of it, revealing glimpses of the base shade.

To artificially age the kitchen island shown here, decorative painter Ingrid Leess started by priming it, then brushing on a coat of flat lime green. The following day, she applied a thick layer of crackle medium, using a clean brush and taking care not to overwork it and dry it out. She let it dry for an hour (the medium must cure for 1 to 4 hours to work), then used a clean, dry brush to add a coat of purple. Soon after, it began to shrink, revealing bits of green—and faux history—beneath. A protective clear coat is an option, but here an unvarnished finish reinforces the worn look. ■

age in a can Sandwich a medium like Sherwin-Williams' Faux Impressions Crackle between two contrasting colors and watch the surface shrink and crack.



PAINT Benjamin Moore's Sweet Pea (base coat) and Autumn Purple (top coat)

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE DIRECTORY PAGE 147

June 2011 **THISOLDHOUSE.COM** 43

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A total bath redo for \$2,238

All new fixtures and finishes transform a scary swamp of a bath into a soothing soaking space fit for a young family. By DANIELLE BLUNDELL • Photograph by DAVID LAMB



the project tally:

Gutted the bath, offsetting the cost of dumping debris by selling the original copper pipes and the claw foot tub	\$0
Scored a cast-iron tub on sale	\$150
Laid ceramic tiles rather than reslate squares for easy care flooring of the idea	\$85
Advised designer took a few tiles from a big box store, or a vintage-inspired shower	\$150
Hired a contractor to tile the shower surround, install drywall, and paint the walls	\$525
Installed a new toilet, a pedestal sink, and a faucet	\$604
Mounted two sconces flanking a beveled mirror and a ceiling light	\$332
Put in a new window, a towel bar, shower hardware, and a wire shower curtain rack	\$192
total	\$2,238

Sometimes it takes an addition to the family to kick a remodel into high gear. Such was the case for Lisa and Jim Steele of Syracuse, New York. The couple was "skeeved out" by the grimy lone full bath left behind by previous owners, and they dealt with the eyesore by taking quick showers—never baths. But with son Coby, now 3, on the way, they envisioned tub times full of toys for their little one. So, shopping sales and eBay for discounted fixtures, they began to create an inviting bath in their 1925 cottage, piece by piece.

After gutting the place, Jim changed all the plumbing to Pex, installed the cast-iron tub Lisa wanted, and laid glazed porcelain tiles on the floor instead of pricey slate. To free themselves up to finish the kitchen and nursery first, they hired a contractor to tile the shower surround, put up the drywall, and paint the room. The finishing touches, including a new sink, toilet, and sconces, were put in right before guests came to see the baby. Now the whole family can't get enough of the space. Says Lisa, "Coby asks for a bath every day."



{before}

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shopping

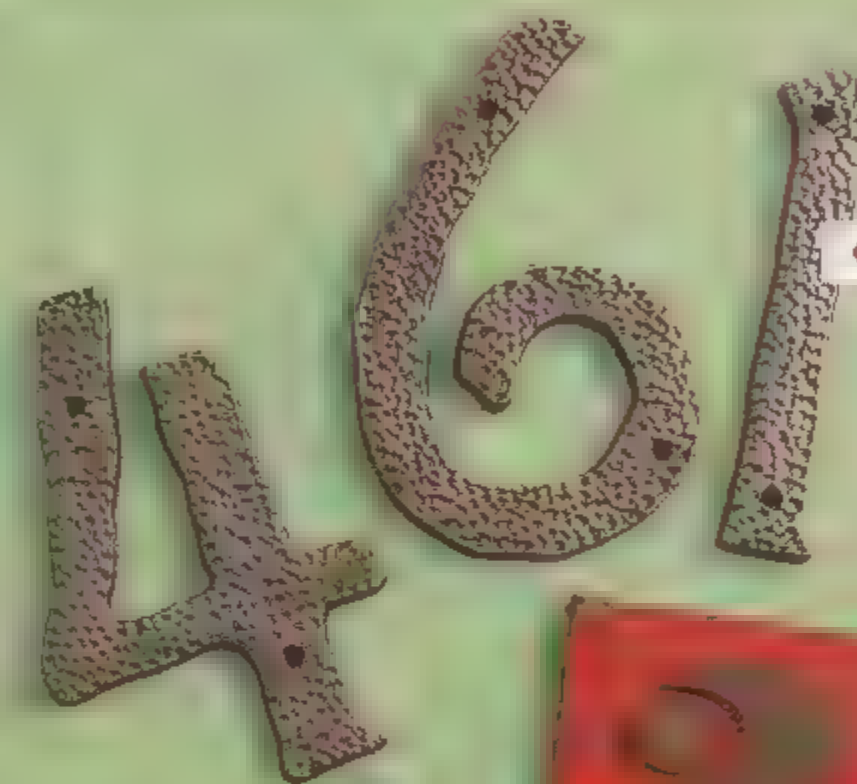
Handsome house numbers

Detailed digits offer an inexpensive way to boost your home's curb appeal.

By DANIELLE BLUNDELL • Photographs by ALISON ROSA

There are simple house numbers that quietly go about their job displaying your address, and then there are digits so striking they achieve the level of functional art, inviting the gaze of passersby. Just about any set can add a hit of texture or color to your home's entrance, but carefully chosen ones also reinforce its architectural style and make a welcoming first impression.

Most house numbers come in all-weather finishes sealed with lacquer or glaze, but when it comes to choosing a style, the options are almost endless. Materials run the gamut from shiny brass and satin stainless to white clay and terra-cotta tile, with numbers (and, often, letters) rendered in a wide range of typefaces, both traditional and modern. Here we've zeroed in on 21 options that span three general time periods, so whatever era your home dates to, we're sure to have your number.



← 19TH CENTURY

ATLAS HOMEWARES
Size Up to 3½"W x 5½"H
Made of Zinc with a
lacquered copper finish
Cost \$14 each
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MID-CENTURY →



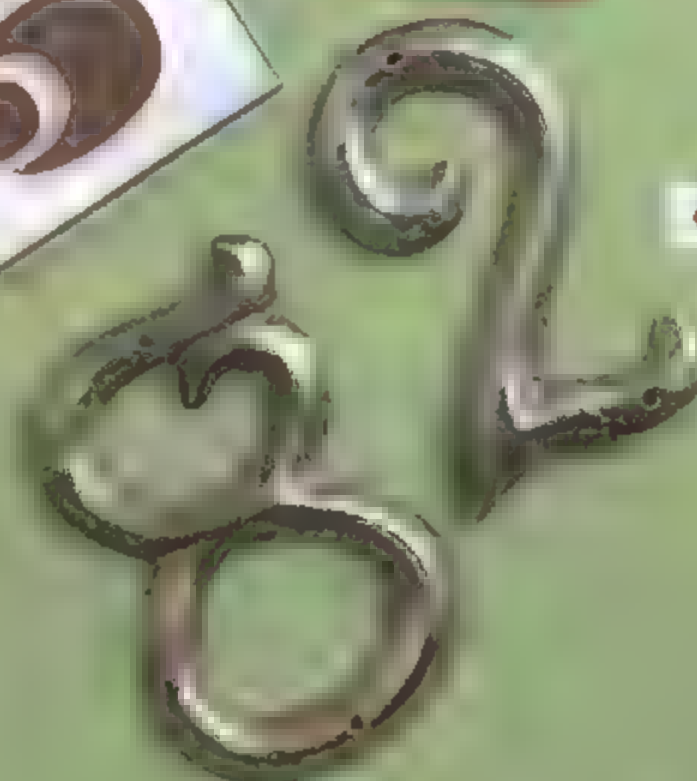
HEATH CERAMICS
Size 4"W x 4"H
Made of Glazed ceramic
Cost \$45 each heathceramics.com



pro advice

TERRY TALKEN, CO-OWNER, SHOP4CLASSICS

"Most municipalities require numbers to be at least 4 inches tall so that safety personnel can see them easily from the street, but check local ordinances before mounting new ones."



← PRE-WAR

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METALWORK
Size Up to
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Made of Recycled
white bronze that
will patina
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shop4classics.com

19TH
CENTURY

746

ASHLEY NORTON
Size Up to 4"W x 6"H
Made of Solid bronze with a
dark oil-rubbed finish
Cost \$23 each
doorhardwareusa.com



ALLIPIRELLI
Size 4"W x 8"H
Made of Glazed ceramic
Cost \$20 each: habitatter.com

22

ASHLEY NORTON
Size Up to 2"W x 4"H
Made of Solid bronze
with a light finish
Cost \$21 each;
doorhardwareusa.com

53

POTTERY BARN
Size Up to 6"W x 10"H
Made of Cast aluminum with a bronze finish
Cost \$14 each: potterybarn.com

ROCHEFORD HANDMADE TILE
Size 4 1/2"W x 6"H
Made of Hand-glazed
terra-cotta
Cost \$25 each:
housenumbertiles.com



RESTORATION HARDWARE
Size Up to 3"W x 5"H
Made of Polished solid brass
Cost \$10 each,
restorationhardware.com



ECCOBYFJON SERIE
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PRE-WAR

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Made of Cast zinc with a lacquered nickel finish
Cost \$14 each;
atlashomewares.com

81

ROCHFORD HANDMADE TILE
Size 4 1/4"W x 6"H
Made of Hand-glazed white clay
Cost \$25 each;
housenumbertiles.com

30

PORTEOUS TILES
Size 3"W x 6"H
Made of Hand-painted glazed porcelain
Cost \$22 each;
fair oak.com

579

PORTEOUS TILES
Size 3"W x 6"H
Made of Hand-painted glazed porcelain
Cost \$22 each;
kensingtonarttiles.com

8

4

RAVENSTONE TILES
Size 4"W x 6"H
Made of Hand-glazed ceramic
Cost \$30 each (\$23 for accent piece);
ravenstonetiles.com

MID-CENTURY

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207

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Made of Cast zinc with a black finish
Cost \$21 each;
atlashomewares.com

31

HEATH CERAMICS
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Made of Glazed ceramic
Cost \$45 each;
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ECCO BY FJORDS
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Pyramid trellis

By JENNIFER STIMPSON • Photograph by ROGER FOLEY

Whether you call it a pyramid, an obelisk, or a tutor trellis, this distinctive garden structure is a hallmark of cottage style. Trellises have a long history of supporting climbing and vining plants, and the tapered, freestanding version shown here remains a fixture of many an English garden, where it gives clematis and other flowering climbers a sturdy platform and a chance at sun. But we wouldn't fault you for using a trellis in a purely decorative way, either.

Whatever your intention, you can find plenty of trellises at plenty of prices at garden centers. If you go that route, pick a model that's sturdy and not too tall to maneuver so that you can haul it inside in the winter. Alternatively, you can build one yourself without too much fuss.

To make our pyramid trellis strong, lightweight, and weather resistant, we used 2 by 2 inch strips of cedar—they may be stocked as lattice at the lumberyard, which can be left unfinished. You can customize yours by adding more pickets or crosspieces, or by varying their positions. You can even mix the tricky cut-to-fit cap in favor of a store-bought post cap or finial if you sub in a nailing block. However you customize it, the finished product is sure to provide a fresh focal point.

Western red cedar obelisk \$434
rustic cedar, 2011

Find a full cut list as well as tools and materials to build this trellis at thisoldhouse.com/bonus



build it •

First refer to the online cut list to size the lumber, then follow the steps below

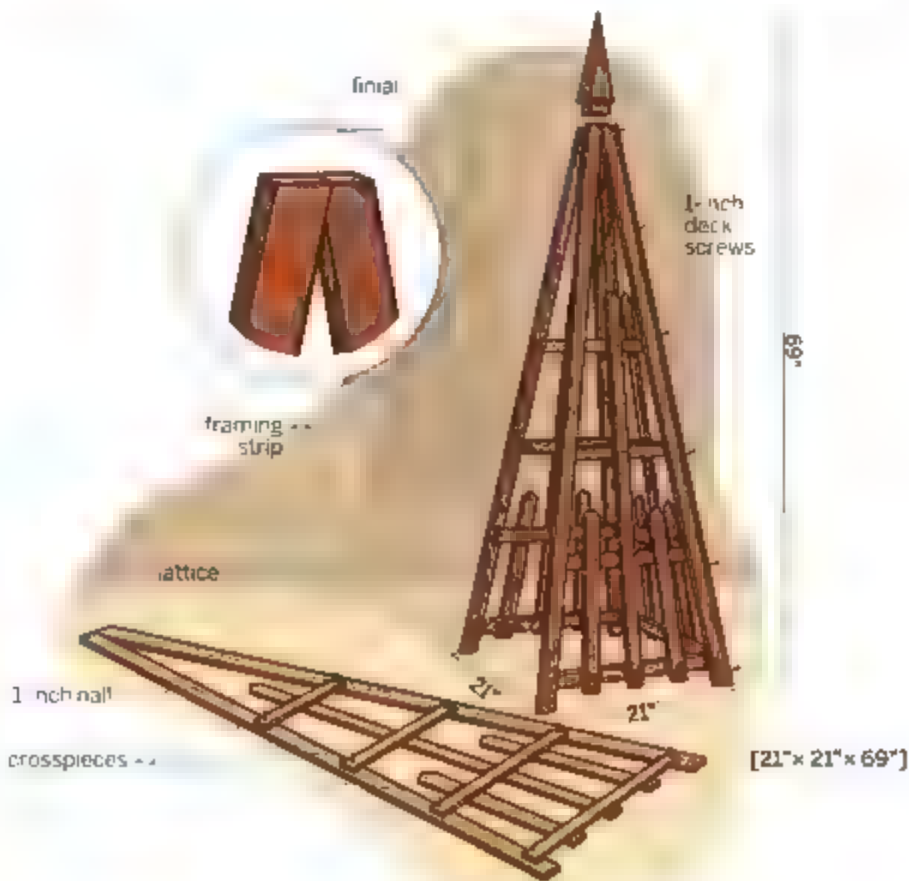
1. Make the finial. Create a 3-by-3-inch block. Cut a 4x4 to length and rip material off two adjacent sides. Using the cut list and detailed instructions at thisoldhouse.com/bonus, rip angles along each side to produce a pyramid shaped finial. Notch its base to create a nailing ledge for the A-frame peaks.

Cost: \$50 for cedar
Time: 3 hours
Difficulty: Moderate. The structure comes together easily enough, but the cap requires some tricky cuts.

2. Miter the pieces. Once the framing strips' ends are mitered at parallel 10-degree angles—to get an A-frame that's flat at the top and bottom—one of each pair must be mitered again at the tip for the peak to fit against the finial. Hold one strip against the nailing ledge with its outside edge flush with the finial's outside edge and angle, hold its partner in the A-frame with its outside edge flush with the end of the nailing ledge, leaving a gap for the adjacent side's A-frame. The second strip's tip will overlap the first. Scribe the overlap and trim it off with a utility knife. Repeat for all pairs.

3. Build the sides. Lay out an A-frame and set equally spaced crosspieces on it, leaving a 1/2-inch gap at either end. Nail them in place. Flip the assembly over and nail a tall lattice strip to the crosspieces, bisecting the A, and the two shorter ones flanking it. Repeat for the other three sides.

4. Assemble the trellis. Position the peak of the A against the nailing ledge, flush to the left edge of the finial. Drill pilot holes and screw it in place. Repeat on all sides. Finally, screw through pilot holes in the face of one framing strip and into the adjacent one's edge at each corner of the trellis. ■



• buy it

You'll find many different designs and construction materials for this popular garden accessory

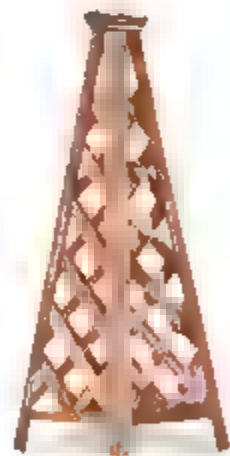
\$64+
basic

Protect the natural wood with paint or stain before putting it outdoors. When growing season ends, fold it like an umbrella for easy storage. amazon.com



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A solid copper cap finishes off this sturdy option, which is made of western red cedar to resist rot and insects naturally. elegantarbors.com

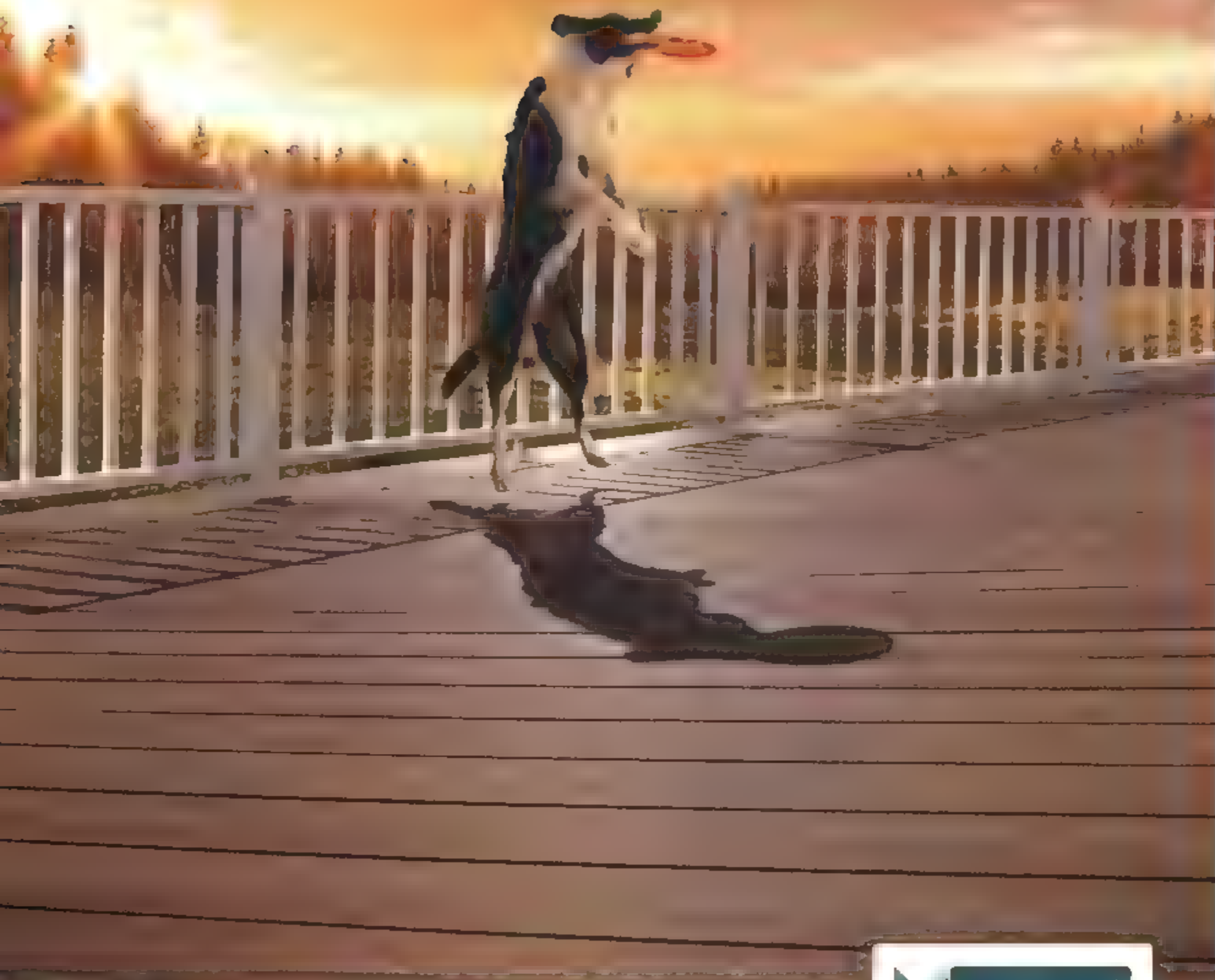


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The factory-applied finish, cross-braced design, and decorative ball finial make this model stand out in any garden or yard. walpolewoodworkers.com



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By DEBORAH BALDWIN + Photograph by KRISTINE LARSEN

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Bowl depth: 8 1/4 inches **Height:** 11 inches
Weight: 45 pounds **Warranty:** One year

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Tips for growing hydrangeas

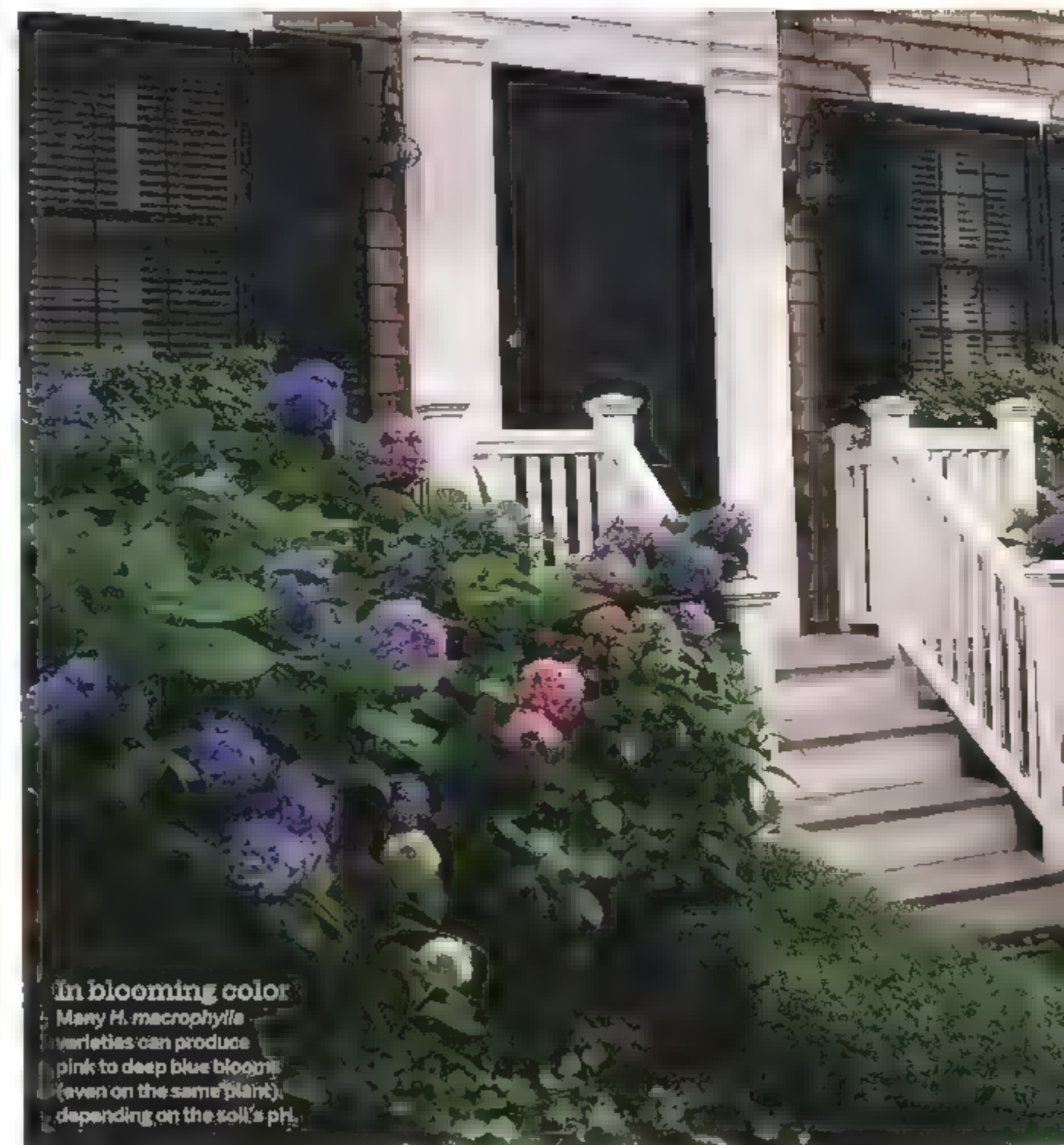
These classic flowering shrubs are prized by homeowners from North to South. Here's how to get them to bloom their best. By SAL VAGLICA • Photograph by NINA BRAMHALL

They're a summertime staple in yards across the country: big orbs of blue nodding on the outstretched arms of leafy green shrubs. These so-called mopheads (a type of *H. macrophylla*) were imported from Japan, China, and Europe in the 19th century—the reason, perhaps, they're the type of hydrangea most familiar to us. But this family of plants actually offers huge variety. There are delicate lacecaps that have flat heads dotted with color and ringed with four-petaled florets, and panicle hydrangeas with white cone-shaped flowers. There are also easy-care species native to the U.S., such as the shade-tolerant oakleaf hydrangea and cold-hardy smooth hydrangea.

Need a little help coaxing your own hydrangeas to perform better? We've got answers to the most common queries about growing these garden favorites.

Q: Often my hydrangeas just don't bloom. Am I doing something wrong?

A: First, take a good look at how they're sited. Hydrangeas generally need some sun and like some shade. In the South, nurseries grow them under pines or shade houses to filter sunlight. "For most hydrangeas, the farther north they are, the more sun they can stand," says horticulturist and hydrangea expert Michael Dirr. "In the South, they can get away with just three hours of sun." Generally, Dirr says, hydrangeas in Southern gardens should be planted in locations with morning sun and after-



In blooming color
Many *H. macrophylla* varieties can produce pink to deep blue blooms (even on the same plant), depending on the soil's pH.



pro advice MICHAEL DIRR, HORTICULTURIST
"Whether to prune hydrangeas is often debated, but studies have shown that dead-heading spent flowers definitely encourages more and bigger blooms."

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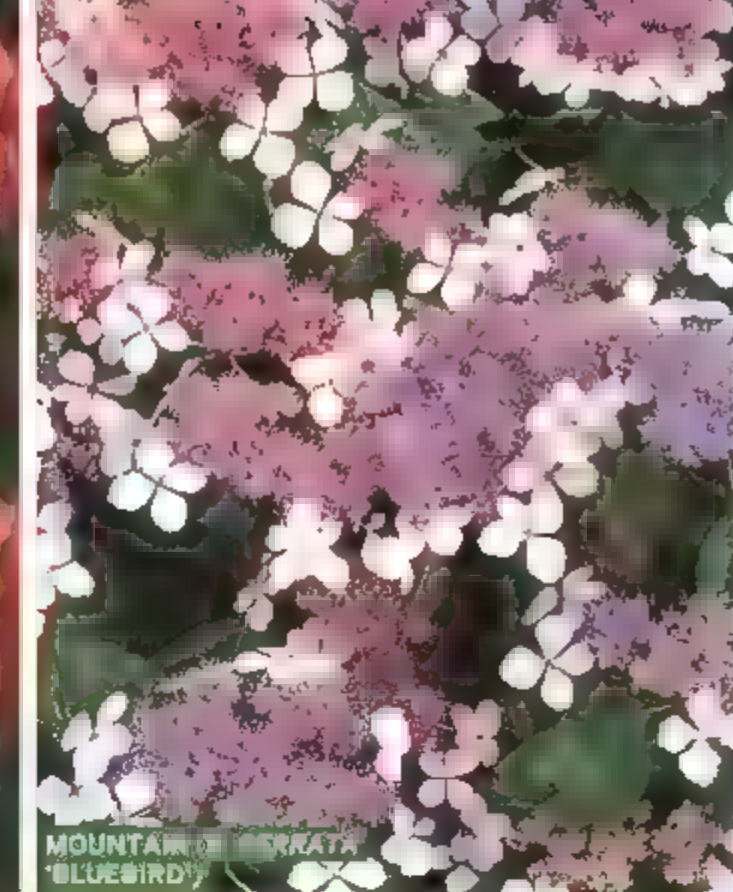
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Cold-hardy choices

TOP: A popular native, *H. arborescens* is prized as a reliable bloomer in cold climates. Usually seen as the classic white 'Annabelle,' this pink 'Bella Anna' is a brand-new hybrid that reblooms all summer. **RIGHT:** TOH landscape contractor Roger Cook clips large flowers from a mature peegee. These tree-like shrubs reach up to 25 feet tall, with white to pink conical-shaped, mid-to-late-summer blooms.



SMOOTH HYDRANGEA
'BELLA ANNA'



MOUNTAIN HYDRANGEA
'BLUEBIRD'

Compact lacecap

LEFT: With smaller blooms and a compact habit, *H. serrata* is a small-space-friendly alternative to larger macrophylla lacecaps, growing just 3 to 6 feet high and wide.

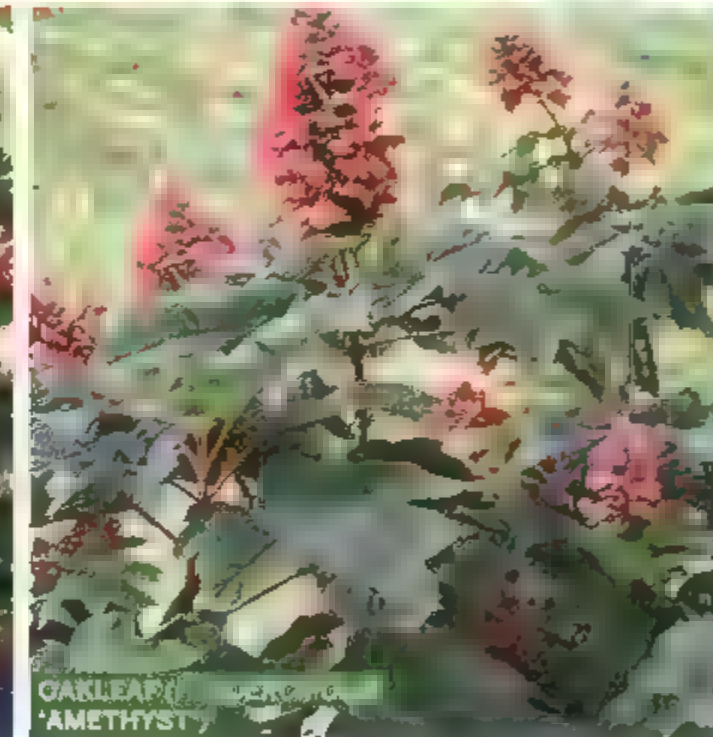
noon shade; in the North they can do well in full sun as long as they get plenty of water and aren't subjected to dry winter winds. Temperature is as much an issue as sun, particularly for mopheads, which are susceptible to drooping from heat stress. They love a coastal setting, where breezes dissipate the heat, and thrive in the salty air. If full sun exposure and high heat are issues, you might try another old-time favorite, peegee hydrangea (*H. paniculata* 'Grandiflora'), which can withstand those conditions. If, on the other hand, your yard is short on sun, try oakleaf hydrangea, which prefers partial shade.

Another issue that can affect bloom is a late-spring or early-fall cold snap; the buds on bigleaf hydrangea (*H. macrophylla*) are particularly vulnerable because they flower on the previous year's growth. If unpredictable frosts are a problem where you live, consider two cold-hardy types: smooth hydrangea, which is native from New York to Florida and as far west as Arkansas; and peegee hydrangea, which is also the most drought tolerant.

Last, consider how and when you prune. If you're cutting off more than just dead branches or spent blossoms in fall or early spring,



PEEGEE HYDRANGEA
'GRANDIFLORA'



OAKLEAF HYDRANGEA
'AMETHYST'

you're removing the old wood, which carries the new season's buds for *H. macrophylla*. "And I always use half the amount of fertilizer recommended on the label," says Durr. "That way you'll be encouraging blooms and not more leafy growth."

Q: That raises the question: Should I be pruning at all?

A: If your hydrangeas are sited correctly, with enough room to grow, the only pruning required is to remove dead wood—be sure to take it off at the base of the plant if the whole branch is dead—and

spent flowers. In Durr's experience, all hydrangeas benefit from regular dead-heading to encourage more blooms. Left unpruned, they will produce fewer flowers because of a growth-inhibiting chemical released by the terminal bud at the tip of the stem. Don't prune past August, though, because any new growth is susceptible to an early-fall freeze.

Q: What's the story with reblooming hydrangeas?

A: One way to guard against the vagaries of mistakenly cutting off buds or losing them to a



BLUE HYDRANGEA
'ENDLESS SUMMER'

New and improved

ABOVE: The big blue Endless Summer hybrid mophead reblooms all season. **LEFT:** Oakleaf varieties produce spectacular fall color and late-summer white to pink blooms.

cold snap is to grow some of the newer reblooming hybrids. These have become staples at home centers since their first introduction, in 2004. Some to consider are 'Endless Summer,' a blue mophead, and 'Twist and Shout,' a pink to blue lacecap (go to endlesssummerblooms.com for stores). 'Let's Dance Moonlight' is a new reblooming pink mophead (go to monrovia.com for stores). These hybrids bloom throughout the summer on both the current and past year's growth, so they will produce blooms on the new growth

even if the old growth is nipped in the bud by cold temperatures.

Q: Is it okay to transplant my hydrangeas now?

A: It's easy to move hydrangeas. Just prune mature shrubs down to a manageable size, and dig up as large a root ball as you can handle. Place it in a new hole, backfill, add a slow-release fertilizer, water well, and top dress with 2 inches of organic compost. Though you can move a hydrangea anytime, it's best to do so when it's dormant, in early spring or late fall. For oakleaf and panic hydrangeas, dormancy is key.

Q: My blue mopheads are looking faded. What can I do to boost their color?

A: According to Durr, the easiest way to preserve the natural color of a hydrangea is to site it where direct sun won't bleach it out.

Otherwise, you need to tinker with the soil's pH, boosting blue color by making the soil more acidic (a pH of 4.5 to 6) with the addition of aluminum. You can intensify pinks by making the soil more alkaline (a pH of 6 to 7) with added lime and phosphorus. You can even turn a blue-flowering plant pink—and vice versa—using these amendments in the recommended amounts for the plant's size. Check your soil's pH with a test kit first, or send a soil sample to your local extension office.

Naturally white cultivars, such as most peegee and oakleaf hydrangeas, tend to resist color change. Some rebloomers may have less-crisp coloration naturally, and so may not intensify to the degree of popular older *H. macrophylla* hybrids, such as the mophead 'Nikko Blue' and the lacecap 'Blue Wave.' ■



Multiply your plants via cuttings

Hydrangeas respond well to several propagation techniques, including layering and dividing (see thisoldhouse.com/bonus for the how-tos). But Durr's method for rooting softwood cuttings in summer will yield a bunch of new plants in about four weeks.

To do it, locate a stem of softwood between the hard, woody growth at the bottom of the plant and the fleshy green tip by bending the softwood should snap cleanly. Cut a softwood shoot that has several leaves. Trim it into 5-inch-long pieces that each have a leaf toward the top. Remove extra leaves. Durr goes a step further and cuts the remaining leaf in half to minimize evaporation (and the need for watering). Dip the other end in powdered rooting hormone, plant the cuttings in trays filled with a soilless mix and perlite. Cover with a plastic bag and stash in a shady location, misting regularly to keep the leaf hydrated. After four weeks, tug on it to check for roots. Once roots are developed, transplant to a bigger pot and feed with a slow-release fertilizer. By next spring, cuttings will be ready to go in the ground.



planting how-to

See a video of TOH landscape contractor Roger Cook planting a hydrangea at thisoldhouse.com/bonus



freshstep.com

Cats everywhere are having a hard time smelling their litter boxes.

Warming up a bland ranch

A revamped entry and other details introduce cozy charm

By ERIC HAGERMAN + Illustration by HOWARD DIGITAL



"It's an eyesore," says Ginny Joyce, lamenting the brick-enclosed entry porch of her ranch in upstate New York. "I've been thinking about how to change it for a long time."

By chance, so had architect Erica Broberg Smith of East Hampton, New York. "My grandmother has that same style house!" she exclaimed when we turned to her for ideas. To introduce "visual relief in the long front elevation," she'd open up and frame the entry with fieldstone half walls, tapered columns, and a stout beam. Board and batten style siding on the garage and window shutters help draw the eye upward, creating the illusion of height. A fenced front garden also breaks up the long house. Joyce's reaction? "It's darling. Now I know the brick needs to go."

Finishing touches

Earthy colors and tall rectangular shapes break up the low-slung house →



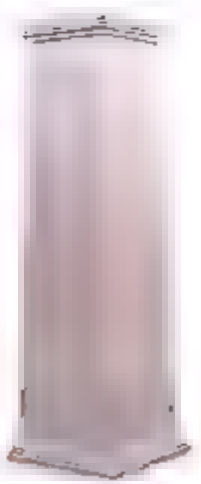
paint

Warm hues of bark cream and rich red define key architectural features. Sherwin-Williams. \$49 per gallon



sconce

This hand-riveted copper lantern sconce comes in sizes 10 to 22 inches high. Bevelo. from \$275



columns

Tapered posts made of PVC are as durable as they are handsome. whoesahome.com. from \$237



entry door

Narrow styles echo the garage's board-and-batten siding and add to the illusion of height. Simpson. from \$1,100

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How to build a planter bench

Assemble a stationary bench between sturdy planters made from stacked cedar boards

By JENNIFER STIMPSON Photographs by KOLIN SMITH

Cost: \$350 for cedar construction
Time: 8 hours
Difficulty: Easy The quick cuts and joinery make for a simple stacked installation



There is lawn furniture, and then there is what you might call landscape furniture — an outdoor seating built right into the terrain. Done right, it can create a little oasis in your yard or deck. Take for instance this bench with planters for pie. Senior technical editor Mark Powers made the entire installation from rot- and weather-resistant cedar lumber using lap joints, a sturdy construction method meant to keep the planter walls from bowing against pressure from roots should you decide to plant trees. See how the project comes together step by step on the pages that follow.

For complete
instructions,
turn the page



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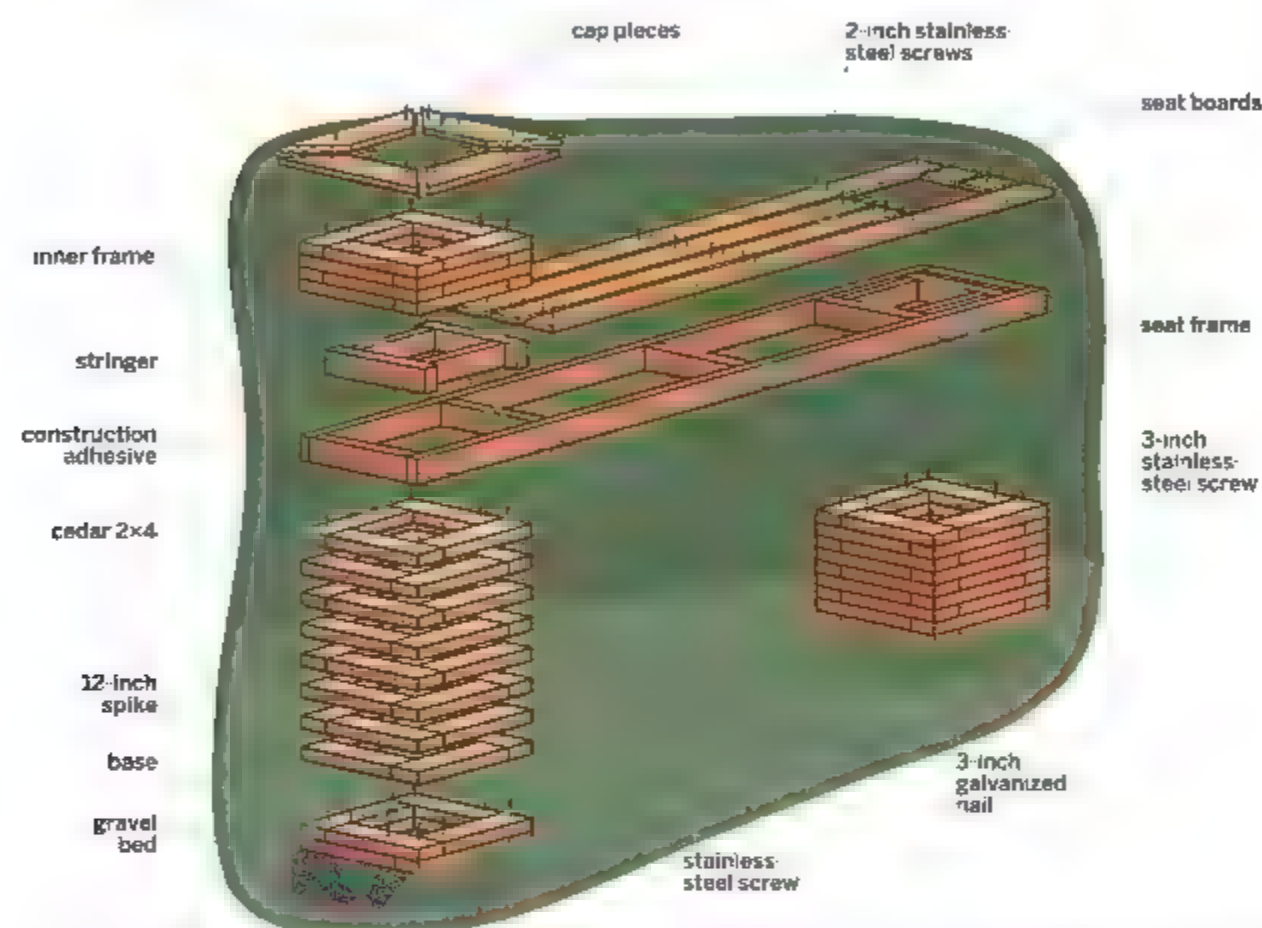


Day-to-day timeline

FRIDAY Cut the boards and excavate the planter footings (Steps 1-3).

SATURDAY Level the base and build the planters and seat (Steps 4 and 5).

SUNDAY Cut the short planter's opening and trim the tall planter (Steps 6 and 7).



tools
 4-foot level
 miter saw
 circular saw
 jigsaw
 Speed Square
 drill/driver fitted with a 3/4-inch paddle bit
 garden spade
 hammer
 hand tamper
 caulk gun

materials
cedar 2x4s Get twenty 8-foot boards to make the 16-inch planter pieces and the 82 1/2-inch long seat frame.
cedar 3/4x6s Get four 6-foot boards to make the 63-inch long seat and one 8-foot board to trim the tall planter.
3/4-inch gravel for drainage below the planters and to fill the assembled planters. Get at least 1/2 cubic feet (three bags).
potting soil to top off the planters filled with gravel. Get four 32-quart bags.
construction adhesive Get 4 tubes.
3-inch stainless-steel deck screws
2-inch stainless-steel deck screws
3-inch galvanized siding nails
12-inch galvanized spikes Get eight.

The dimensions of our finished bench:
 84"L x 23"D x 18"H

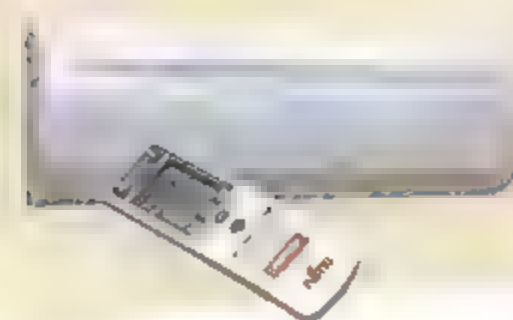


1. Cut the boards and build the seat frame

A Cut the pieces. Refer to the cut list at thisoldhouse.com/bonus. Using a miter saw, cut boards for the seat, seat frame, planters, and inner frame. Fasten or clamp a stop block to the work surface, as shown, so that you can cut pieces to equal lengths quickly and precisely.

B Assemble the seat frame. Set the seat frame pieces on edge with the two sides and a center stringer sandwiched between the front and back boards. Drive 3-inch screws through the front and back boards and into the ends of the three crosspieces, as shown.

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*Savings may vary based on mode, selected hours of operation and geographical location. Example given based on 26-SEER system versus 13-SEER system.

2. Pick a location

A Account for uneven ground. Look for a flat spot and lay the seat frame on the ground. If you have an incline, place a 4-foot level lengthwise on the frame and stack 2x4s underneath the low end until it sits level. Count the number of 2x4s it takes to level the frame; you'll need to add this number of courses to the downhill planter.

B Lay out the planter bases. Stand the seat frame on edge to line up the planter boxes and decide which end gets the tail one. Arrange four boards against the frame on the ground in a pinwheel brick pattern—a frame with each board butting into the tail edge of the next as you work clockwise. Line up the base of the tail one flush with the end of the seat frame; for the short planter, inset the base so that it lines up with the inside edge of the frame at the end, as shown. This overhang creates a decorative cap for the short planter.



3. Prepare the base

A Mark the gravel beds. Sink the head of a garden spade into the ground along the outline of each planter frame to create an accurate footprint. Set the boards as described.

B. Excavate the soil. Place a tarp near your work area. Dig out the beds to a depth of 6 inches, piling the dirt on the tarp for easy removal. Keep the walls plumb and the bottom level.

C. Add the bed gravel. Add 2 inches of gravel in each hole and tamp it down to create a solid and level foundation for the planters. Add another layer and tamp it down, repeating as necessary until your bed of gravel sits 2 inches below ground level. Now add a 1/2-inch layer of sand or potting soil to make it easier to level your first course of each planter box.



Tip If you don't have a hand tamper, you can make do with a scrap block of 2x4. Use the end of the board to pack the gravel into a level field.

NEW from ^{This Old} House

easy upgrades for your bath
and fun projects for your family



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What's Inside:

- 15 great ideas for updating your bathroom
- 15 easy-to-follow step-by-step instructions
- 15 color photos of finished projects
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- 15 easy-to-follow step-by-step instructions

15 Great Ideas That Mom, Dad, and Kids Can Build and Enjoy!

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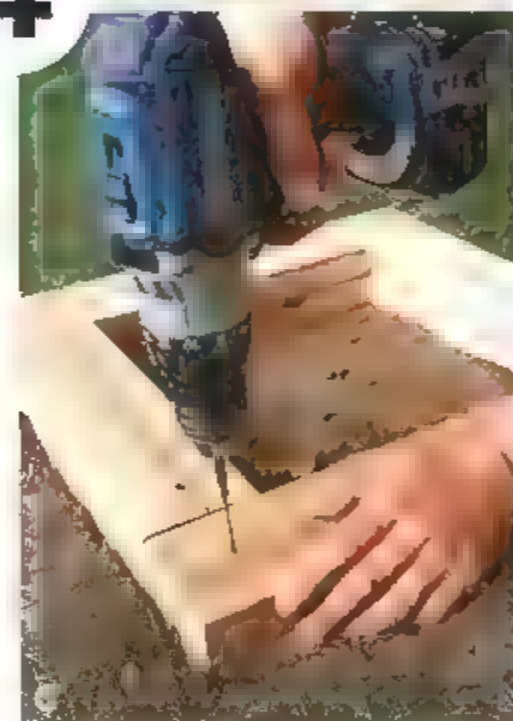
- Easy step-by-step instructions and full-color photos
- Fun, family-friendly projects and safety tips
- Great ideas from This Old House
- Special instructions for kids and step-by-step guides
- 15 easy-to-follow step-by-step instructions

4. Establish the base

A Set the first course. Lay the first course in the footings in your pinwheel pattern. Place the seat frame on top of the boards to square them up, making sure it ends flush with the tall planter box and overhangs the short planter box slightly at the other end. Lift off the seat frame and rest a level on the first course of boards. Strike them with a hammer to settle them into a level plane. Sweep dirt or sand underneath the boards to fine-tune.

B Lay the second course. Using a caulk gun, apply adhesive in a zigzag on top of the boards. For strength, lay the second course in the reverse direction so that each board overlaps a joint on the first course. This is optional.

C Secure the courses. At each corner, sink 3-inch stainless-steel screws through the second course and into the first to secure the boards into one solid assembly.



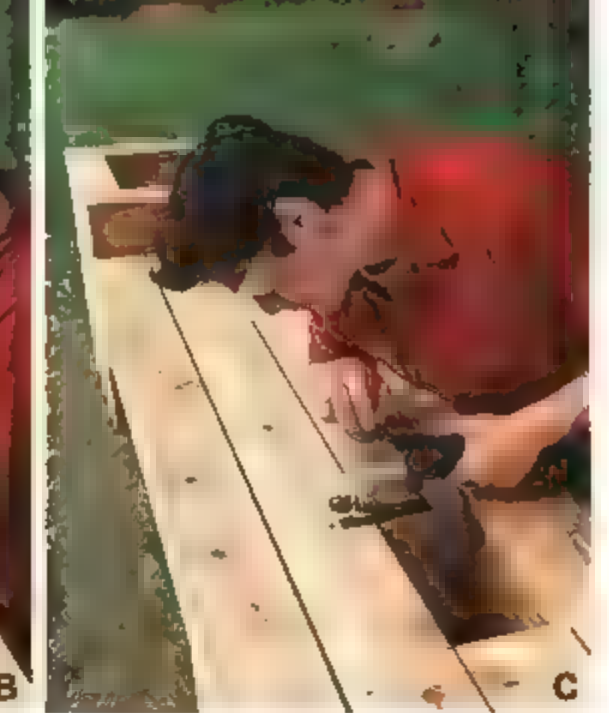
5. Erect the planters

A Drill pilot holes for the spikes. Anchoring the planters will keep them from shifting out of place. Fit your drill with a paddle bit large enough to accommodate the spikes (we used a 3/8-inch bit). Drill a pilot hole all the way through the center of each side of the bases, as shown.

B Drive the spike. Hammer a spike into each pilot hole until its head sits flush with the surface. After each spike, use the seat frame to check for square and level, making adjustments as needed. Next, apply adhesive on the second course and lay the next course of boards, continuing to lap the joints as in Step 4B. Nail the boards in place with 3-inch galvanized nails. Continue gluing and nailing courses, overlapping the joints with each layer, until the planters reach the height you want for the bench. (Nine courses above ground will give you a common bench height of around 18 inches.)



Tip As you add courses, run a block along the corner joints to ensure that the ends of the lapped boards sit flush with the sides.



6. Install the inner frame and the seat

A Assemble the inner frame. Use the seat frame as your next course. Since its boards sit on edge, you need an inner frame to make up for the width of the other courses. Place two crosspieces on edge flush to the inside walls of the planter, then cut two shorter pieces to fit between them, also flush to the inside walls. Mark where the pieces meet one another, remove them, screw them together, and pop the inner frame back into place. Screw through the seat frame into the inner frame's crosspieces. To secure the assembly, drive 3-inch screws at an angle through the inside edges of the inner frame and into the planters, as shown. Now position, glue, and nail four more courses onto the box that will become the tall planter.

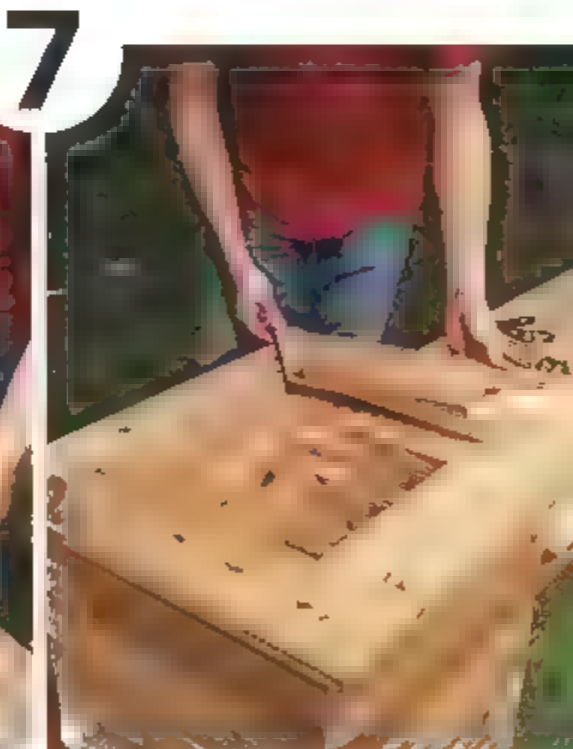
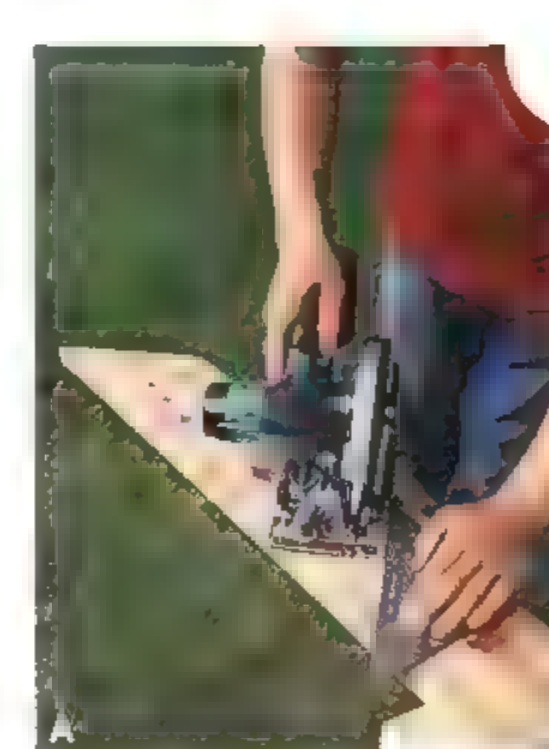
B Install the seat boards. Add a frame stringer alongside the tall planter, but not touching it, to support the seat boards. Position them 1/4 inch from the tall planter and overhanging the frame at the opposite end by 1 1/2 inches. Leave a 1/8-inch gap between the boards, and let the front and back boards hang over the seat frame an equal distance. Sink 2-inch screws through the seat boards and into the framing.

C Cut the planter opening. Peek between the seat boards and lay out cut lines with a straightedge. Insert the jigsaw blade between the seat boards and cut along the inside edges of the planter, as shown.

see how it's done

Watch a step-by-step video of this and other outdoor projects at thisoldhouse.com/bonus

Tip Be sure to start with the clutch of your drill/driver on a low setting when driving stainless-steel screws—they strip easily.



7. Cut and install the cap

A Miter the cap pieces. On a 1/4x6 board, use a Speed Square to draw opposing 45-degree angles so that the distance from short point to short point equals the inside edge of the tall planter. Using a circular saw guided by the Speed Square, cut the pieces. Repeat to create three additional cap pieces.

B Secure the cap. Apply construction adhesive to the top edges of the tall planter. Set the mitered boards in place, flush with the inside of the planter. Sink two screws through each board to secure them. Finally, fill both planters with gravel topped off with potting soil for your favorite topiary or bloomers. ■

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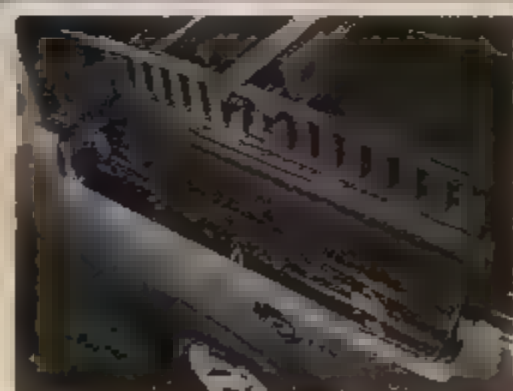


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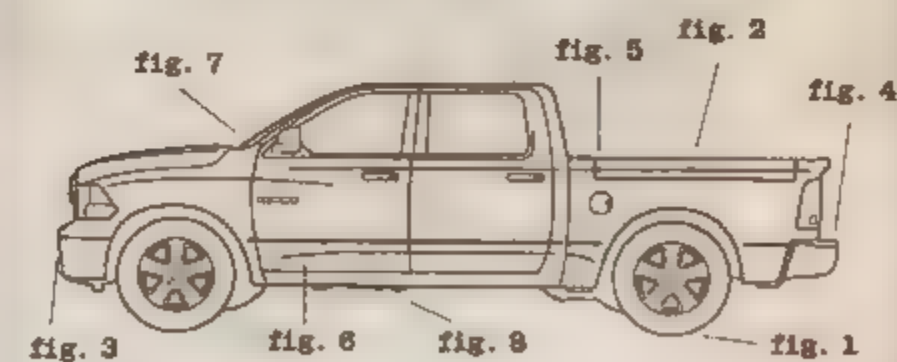


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PERIOD PERFECT at any price

WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING to work more vintage character into your home, sometimes only the best restoration-grade fixture, finish, or decorative detail will do. Other times, though, you might be just as content with a lower-priced look-alike. Coming up: the lowdown on 12 splurge-worthy reproduction pieces, plus their wallet-wise counterparts. Invest in the best or get the look for less? THE CHOICE IS YOURS.

By
Heather MacIsaac



Subway tile

Lining station walls in 1904, when New York City subway trains made their maiden voyage, the easy-to-clean, 3 by-6-inch white tile became an instant must-have finish for bathroom walls.

← Splurge

Subway tile has become so ubiquitous that its original appearance has almost been forgotten. The historically accurate ones from Subway Ceramics are $\frac{3}{16}$ inch thick with a flat surface, a square edge, and a glossy white glaze. Coupled with pencil thin grout lines, they're a dead ringer for vintage subways. **36FT00** 3x6 field tile, **\$16** per square foot, subwaytile.com for dealers

↑ Steal

Thinner than the real deal at $\frac{1}{16}$ inch and with eased edges, Daltile's subways come in three white glazes—handy when matching new tile to existing porcelain fixtures. **Rittenhouse Square** 3x6 field tile in Arctic White, **\$2.66** per square foot, southcypress.com

Onion porch lantern

Named for its bulbous globe, this lantern—originally fueled by whale oil—has been a popular fixture for the entries of New England coastal cottages for more than 100 years.

Splurge →

New Hampshire craftspeople solder the body of this hearty lantern from solid brass. Only its globe, neither clear or seeded glass, is exempt from the maker's lifetime warranty. But the heavy-gauge wire cage should protect it from no-leakers. **Northeast Lantern Caged Outdoor Onion Light**, 10½ inches high in Dark Antique Brass, **\$380**, lightinguniverse.com



Steal →

This brass lantern is machine-crafted, but an oiled bronze finish and bubbles in the seeded glass globe give it vintage style. Five feet of chain come in the box, giving you the option to let the lantern hang or flush-mount it on the ceiling. **Cape Cod Porch Light**, 9 inches high in Sienna Bronze, **\$144**, houseofantiquehardware.com





Hex mosaic floor tile

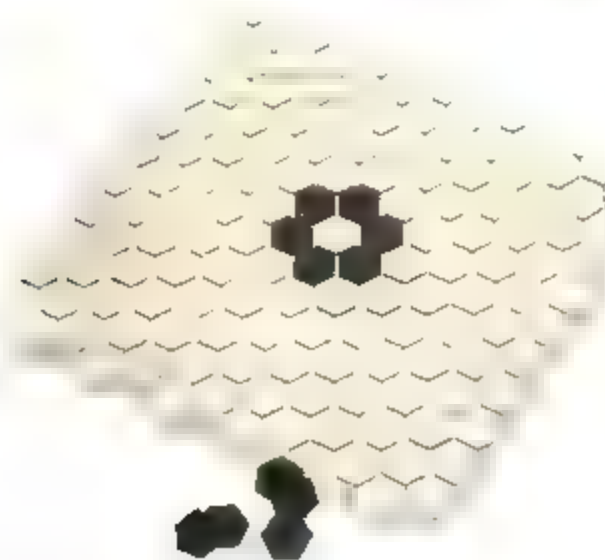
Prized by Victorians for its good looks and fortitude against frequent scouring, patterned black-and-white hex tile remains a top pick for kitchens and baths.

← Splurge

Dry pressed in steel molds, these unglazed porcelain hex tiles have the square-cut edges characteristic of vintage original. The snowflake design is one of 13 historic patterns that can be made to order in just about any color combination imaginable—just remember. For the most authentic look, light gray is the color of choice for grout. **Black snowflake No. H1205** floor shown with an additional Greek key border. **\$23** per square foot. restorationtile.com

↓ Steal

The closest prefab match to the snowflake pattern is a flower. But you can create the snowflake yourself by cannibalizing a few sheets of plain black hex tiles. Simply pop out the white tile above each flower petal and replace it with a black one secured to the mesh backing with a dot of hot glue. **Unglazed Porcelain Flower Hexagon 1"**, \$6.95 per square foot, and **Unglazed Black Porcelain Hexagon 1"**, \$7.50 per square foot. luxetile.com



Victorian screen door

Often with spandrels in the corners and fretwork along the rails, screen doors from the late 1800s matched the gingerbread-draped entries in which they were hung.

↓ Splurge

This solid wood door's traditional mortise and tenon construction will withstand weather and wear. Removable screens can be swapped for tempered orplex glass screens, making it a snap to convert when seasons change. The return on your investment begins with the first year of energy savings. **Southern Grace 32-inch screen door** in primed poplar. **\$568**, vintagedoors.com

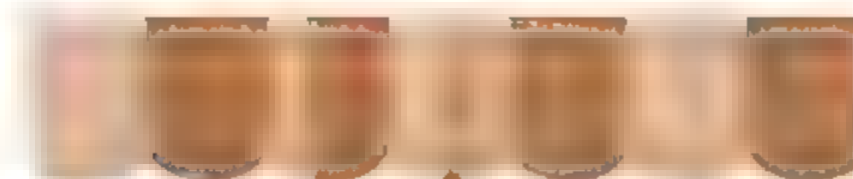


↑ Steal

Vinyl has its advantages. This screen door comes in white only, but it never needs to be painted. And if you're worried about rot or warp, like a wood door can, its solid vinyl frame can be trimmed to fit with common cutting tools. **Georgian 32-inch screen door**. **\$152**; homedepot.com

Fishscale shingle siding

A hallmark of Queen Anne style houses built from 1880 to 1910, wood shingles shaped like fish scales often decorated gables and dormers.



↑ Splurge

The real deal: these vertical grain western red cedar shingles come in 8-foot-long self-aligning panels. They go up fast, and they come single as opposed to multiple courses, so there's little waste. Panels are unfinished, so homeowners can customize the color paint palette or go with a historic color scheme. **Fishscale Cut Cedar Shingle Panels**, \$11.50 per square foot, uninstalled. vintagewoodworks.com

↓ Steal

Patterned after real wood shingles, these textured polymer ones come in 28 fade-resistant colors. The multicolored 12 1/2 by 32-inch panels have an integral locking strip for wind resistance and a seamless look. **Cedar Impressions 6 1/4" Half-Round Shingles** in Barn Red, about \$3.50 per square foot, uninstalled. certainteed.com



Craftsman pedestal sink

Designed to complement modest bungalows, circa 1910 bath sinks had an unfussy, clean-lined look.

↓ Splurge

Handmade of vitreous china with drips for a 12-inch spread, faucet, this pedestal comes with a limited lifetime warranty and a mounting hardware for easy installation. **St. Thomas Liberty**, \$595; deabath.com

← Steal

The open-back base of this porcelain-enamelled cast iron sink hides plumbing. Drips are for a 12-inch spread faucet. It comes with a five-year warranty but no mounting hardware. **Randolph Morris Pedestal**, \$246; vintagetub.com

Classical crown molding

Used for centuries to hide the intersection where walls meet ceiling, crown adds polish and elegance to almost any room.

↓ Splurge

Artisans handcraft this plaster crown, which has a garland motif on its integral frieze. And they do it with just three natural ingredients: gypsum plaster, burlap, and water. **No. FM311**, 6 1/2 inches high. **\$14.50** per linear foot, uninstalled. hydepark.com

→ Steal

From a distance, this high-density polyurethane molding masquerades as plaster. The lightweight paintable foam may have less ornate ornamentation, but it's easy for homeowners to install themselves. **No. UT-5303**, 5 1/2 inches high. **\$4.62** per linear foot, uninstalled. gocellngmedallion.com



Farmhouse sink

A favorite in hardworking American kitchens since the turn of the 20th century, farmhouse sinks have a protruding "apron front" that was originally designed to prevent water that sloshed over the rim from damaging wood cabinetry.



← Splurge

This 35 1/2-inch-wide beauty is molded from a single piece of dense and extremely durable fireclay, it's coated with a scratch-resistant glaze on both the front and the sides, allowing it to be undermounted or dropped in. Choose either a white biscuit, matte black, or gloss black finish. **Franke Fireclay Apron Front Double Bowl Sink** in white, \$1,354; kitchensource.com

↓ Steal

A set trimming up on this 36 1/2-inch-wide drop-in ceramic sink makes it ideal for kitchens with laminate counters, which have an unfinished edge around the sink cutout. A drainboard on the back provides a place to set wet sponges. One predrilled hole limits faucet choices to single-hole models and eliminates add-ons, such as a soap dispenser. **Domsjö double-bowl sink** in white only, \$299; ikea.com for stores



Distressed floorboards

Whether it's color variations, old nail holes, or tiny insect borings, floors with patina harken back to earlier days and give the rooms in which they are laid a warm, rustic look.



← Splurge

Made from dead or fallen red oak trees salvaged from forests, this solid 3/4-inch-thick tongue-and-groove flooring is speckled with wormholes and knots. Boards come unfinished, and professional installation is recommended. **EcoAmerican Country Wormy Red Oak**, 3- to 6-inch random-width boards, \$7.50 per square foot installed; ecotimber.com

Steal →

They bear the telltale signs of wood with saw marks and knots, but these planks are laminate—a textured melamine veneer over a high-density fiberboard substrate. The flooring is DIY-friendly and ready to walk on from the day you put it down. Sold in eight plank bundles with up to eight different "grain" patterns per box. **Historic Oak in ash**, \$5 per square foot installed; mannington.com



Box staircase newel

The newel posts in Craftsman-style homes from the early 20th century were chunky and square, and built like a hollow box.



← Splurge

Nearly identical to one featured in the Universal Work Catalog of 1927, this Mission-style post features stile and rail construction with a floating center panel. **Mission newel**, 7 1/2 by 5 1/2 inches in red oak, \$700; vandykes.com

← Steal

By routing a simulated raised panel into a flat board, the maker of this simpler newel can sell it at a steep discount. **Contractor-grade box newel**, 6 1/2 by 5 1/2 inches in red oak, \$154; stairpartsusa.com



Push-button doorbell

By the early 1900s, electric push-button bells with cast brass or bronze rosettes had largely replaced door knockers as the way to announce your arrival.

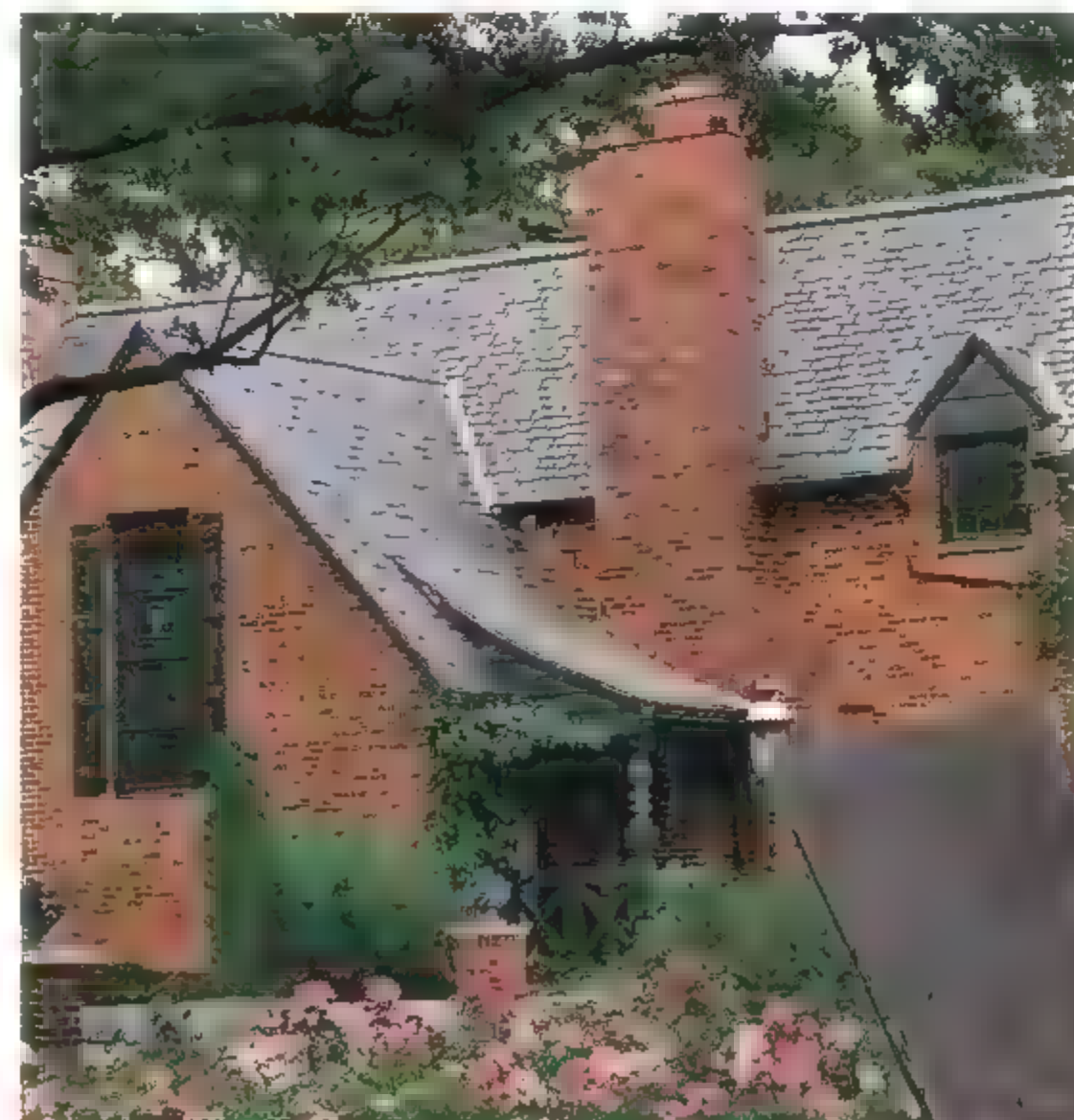


← Splurge

This Georgian-style brass push bell has a high-relief ribbon and reed design cast with a traditional lost wax technique. The bell's mounting hardware is concealed, and its push button features a long-lasting LED light. Available in 30 hand-polished finishes. **Ribbon & Reed bell push** in finish No. 609, \$155; vonmorris.com for a dealer near you

Steal →

Forged of solid brass and plated in one of seven finishes, this push bell is the hand-buffed to a luster. It's mounted to the door surround with exposed screws and lit by an LED bulb. **Lighted Doorbell Button with Ribbon and Reed rosette** in French Antique, \$19; capecodbrass.com



Slate roof tile

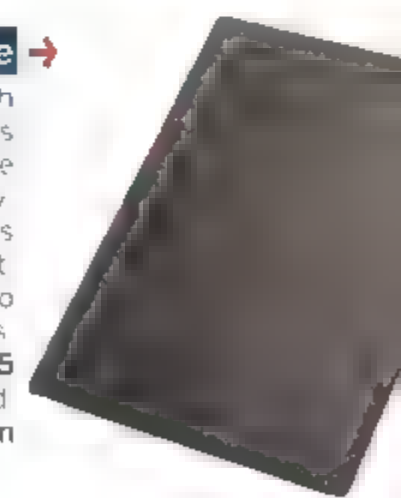
Showing off prominent rooflines to their best advantage since the mid-1800s, slate can last lifetimes and come in an array of earthy colors.

Splurge →

The third, fourth, and fifth generations of the family that sets this Vermont quarried slate have personally attested to its durability, estimated at over 100 years. It's also naturally acid-resistant, noncombustible, and able to withstand freeze-thaw cycles. **Natural slate** in black, about \$5 per square foot installed; sheldonslate.com

← Steal

This polymer tile mimics 1/2-inch-thick natural slate with a rough edge. To achieve authentic color variations, the manufacturer bundles its shingles in as many as 10 different tones per pack while only making a cheaper than the real thing. The savings with synthetic slate is usually in the installation, which on average can cost about 40 percent less. **Multi-width polymer "slate"** in black, \$4.15 per square foot installed; davinciroofscapes.com



PHOTOS (THIS PAGE) SINK AND FLOORBOARDS: WENDY WEBBER; TOPPHOTO: WEBBER; POSTS: DOORBELLS: SLATE: WENDY WEBBER



BETTER *than* EVER

Sagging, cramped, and utterly charming, this 19TH-CENTURY WHALING COTTAGE was saved by an artful top-to-bottom redo and a homeowner with a keen eye for detail

FOR A REAL THRILL,

try stripping an antique cottage down to its bones. "The most exciting thing was, it had bowed like a wooden ship's hull, and the walls were out of plumb maybe six inches on one side," says general contractor Eric Thompson, recalling his amazement at seeing what years of patching and praying had kept hidden. "That's an insane amount."

Local historians weren't sure when the one-and-a-half-story cottage had been built but put their best guess at between 1830 and 1850, when the village of Sag Harbor, a port at Long Island's east end, was flooded with whale money. Now here it was, wind whistling through and a little the worse for wear, as if it had taken the town's name a little too literally.

BY DEBORAH BAIRD
PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEITH SCOTT MORTON
PRODUCED BY COLETTE SCANLON
STYLING BY PAMELA ABRAHAMS



Rustic meets refined

Staring at the weathered, exposed beams, a homeowner with a keen eye for detail

It was also under the care of an anxious new owner, Paul Rogers, who had summered in the town as a child and returned to buy his “dream” house in a restless burst of nostalgia. He was acutely aware of the precious nature of his find, which sits in a district on the National Register of Historic Places. But he also realized that to save it he’d have to do more than just paint.

Before poking its ribs and thumping its core, “I really lived in the house,” Paul says, cohabiting for five years with its creaky beams, leaky windows, and quirky lay out. Over the decades a kitchen and screened porch had been tacked on in back, and a one-story addition with a den, bedroom, and bath stuck on one side. Another bath had been inserted upstairs. To get to it from the master bedroom, you had two choices. Leap over the stairwell or go around it and hang your head on the sloped ceiling.

When Thompson finally opened up the cottage, he found not only bowed posts and tired joists (“precariously separate from the frame,” in Paul’s words), but a roof saddled by a heavy patchwork of cedar and asphalt shingles. A chimney was deteriorating, the basement was diminutive, and the floors were as off-kilter as the walls.

Paul was eager to bring the amenities up to snuff, too: Homes lacking central air, a pro-style range, and Wi-Fi are now, after all, as rare in Sag Harbor as sperm whales. “I loved this old house,” he says. “But it wasn’t quite livable for the 21st century.”

Working fireplaces, cozy bedrooms, and sight lines to the garden also sprang to his mind. But first came the question of how to straighten the place and brighten its warren of dark, stooped rooms.

THE CREW BEGAN WORK IN BACK, tearing off the old kitchen and porch. With the help of architect Gregory Zack, Paul mapped out a step-down addition with a basement large enough for a workroom, a kitchen open to a sitting area on the first floor, and a real master suite overhead.

The sitting area would in turn open onto a small deck, which would step down to the lawn, then to a stone patio, in effect lengthening the house while cap-

italizing on its deep, narrow lot—and incidentally giving the cook a great view.

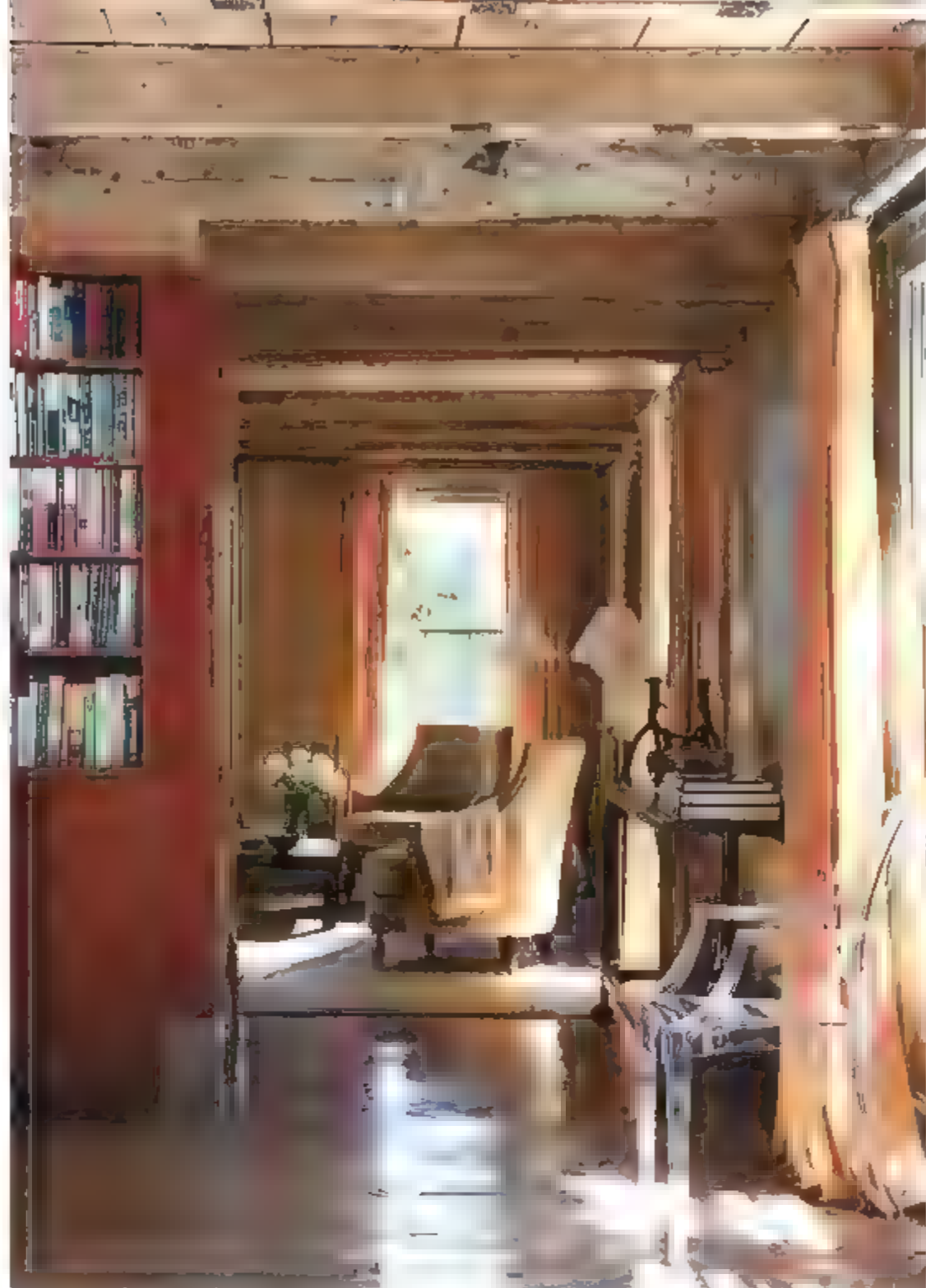
Thompson was soon joined by another seasoned builder, Dwight Stephan, and as the work unfolded, other old-house saviors joined in. The result was an every-man-on-deck group venture led by a homeowner with a curator’s eye.

Framed with hand-hewn timbers, the cottage sat on locust posts and a stone foundation. To improve its posture, Thompson used a come-along (which like a whalebone corset. To make it more true, his crew jacked up the house to level the floors—or almost level them. “We did some shimmying and bolstering,” he says, “but we still wanted it to feel old. We didn’t want a four-inch dip, so we made it an inch and a half.”

Upstairs, the plan was to remove the worn ratters, raise the roof, and drop in a dormer, yielding a more livable second floor. But not so fast. The preservation-

Opening upward

ABOVE: Exposing the ceiling added height and airiness to the once-cramped dining and living rooms.



Modern touches

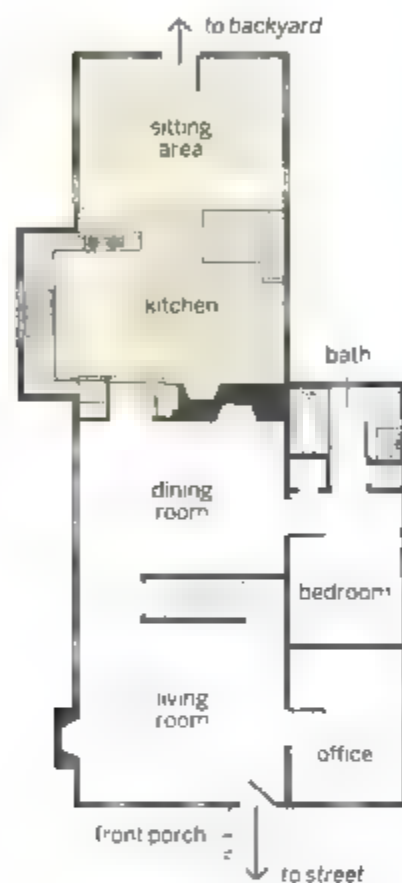
ABOVE LEFT: Ceramic tiles fill notches originally cut in the joists for lath. “They were the perfect size,” says homeowner Paul Rogers, “and better than filling in with wood putty.”

ABOVE RIGHT: A rustic table, made with a salvaged bar top, keeps the connection between kitchen and sitting room open and airy. LEFT: Ceiling-hung cabinets hold the vent hood and frame an opening that allows the cook to keep an eye on guests. Paint: Benjamin Moore’s In the Midnight Hour (cabinets), Concord Ivory (walls).

Floor plans

The whole-house redo raised ceilings, opened sight lines and enlarged the three-bedroom cottage to 2,200 square feet with an addition that replaced the old kitchen and screened-in porch.

1st FLOOR



2nd FLOOR



mindful building inspector objected to demolition of the roof and an exterior wall where Paul had found dozens of painted boards holding the shingle siding in place. "That's how they built in those days, they threw up whatever they had and shingled over it," he says. Eventually a deal was struck that allowed him to put up plywood walls and beefier rafters while giving the historic flotsam more visibility inside.

Ceilings tumbled, along with a crumbling chimney and a brick flue that had vented the old gas furnace. A replacement chimney went up to serve the dining room fireplace and a new one in the kitchen. Walls were stuffed with insulation and ductwork and covered with wood over drywall. "That meant thicker windowsills and jambs, which give the house a strong old-world feel," says Paul.

The amount of handwork was pretty 19th century, too. "We back-primed each piece," Thompson says of the new clapboards, "then let it dry, installed it, and had it sit for a year so the oils could leach out before painting."

Continued on page 88 →

Bright aerie

The master suite includes a reading nook, ABOVE, and a bedroom, RIGHT, lined with pine boards that hide ductwork while showcasing brass fixtures and an ornate register grate. Paint: Benjamin Moore's Buckland Blue (walls)





Getting the vintage look

To enhance his circa 1840s home **BEFORE**, owner Paul Rogers (on wheels, **TOP**), focused on architectural details, from the fit of the clapboards to the addition's 19th-century gable and six-over-six windows, **TOP** and **RIGHT**. His tips put to work on this project

- 1. CHOOSE WINDOW SASHES** that echo the originals, down to their wood frames and brass chains, and complement them with metal screens (Paul chose copper mesh) and wood storms. Replace panes in existing window sashes with wavy vintage glass.
- 2. INSTALL CLAPBOARD SIDING AND CEDAR ROOF SHINGLES** with the tighter fit and smaller reveals favored by 19th-century builders.
- 3. INCORPORATE SALVAGED WOOD.** Oak lath recycled from the house and pine boards salvaged from a demolished house nearby became flooring, wall paneling, and stair treads. Two of the cottage's original rafters now decorate a guest-bedroom ceiling.
- 4. KEEP THE FLOORS' OLD LOOK AND FEEL.** Paul left a little sag in his wide-plank floors and finished them with a "smoked hickory" stain.
- 5. USE THE SAME BASE MOLDING AND DOOR CASING** throughout to unite existing and new rooms and give them a consistent look.



cook up a great

outdoor kitchen

Been hankering for an open-air cooking area? Here, our guide to the ingredients it takes to make a five-star space. Incorporate as many as you like—and as your budget allows—then save the rest for summers to come by Jessica Dodell-Feder

1

add a countertop

Ready to upgrade a basic barbecue? Start by creating a place to slice tomatoes and plate burgers. Here, a peninsula of tumbled cast-concrete blocks and a stone counter turns a freestanding grill into a built-in. D.Y. this setup for about \$350 by stacking blocks on a bed of tamped drainage stone, securing each block with masonry glue. Incorporate blocks of varying sizes and recessed panels to make the unit look less monolithic. Then top it off with bluestone stair treads for the counter.

Money-saving option: Forge a built-in and pull up a small table, such as Poly Wood's Ivy side table (\$99; homedepot.com).



2

light it up

There's nothing worse than fumbling in the dark when it's time to see if the chicken's done. Task lighting takes care of that problem and can range from a basic corner light to the graceful gooseneck fixtures shown here. Keep in mind that running an electrical line will cost a minimum of around \$400 to \$600, but it offers the option of outlets for conveniences like a side burner or a blender.

Money-saving option: Vintage-style battery-operated plug-in lights, such as Maccor's (lch.com), can do the trick for just \$2.



3

build in storage

Along with building a propane tank, cabinets can provide a convenient spot for everything from grilling utensils to dinner plates. Here, the homeowners built a 20-foot concrete block wall with voids for cabinets clad in stone and topped the unit with granite. Then they ordered custom cabinets and a awes made with weather-resistant Spanish cedar at a cost of about \$6,000.

Money-saving option: Get pre-fab base cabinets, such as the Inmar brand polymer options from W. Travis (from \$52; wtravis.com).



4

install a sink and appliances

When an outdoor kitchen is more than a few steps from the house, it may pay to install cold water and waste lines for a sink, as well as a small fridge for cool drinks. Adding a hot water line, too, and a dishwasher can make cleanup that much easier. Count on plumbing costs to start around \$1,500 (even more if you're adding hot water). Outdoor-rated undercounter fridges start around \$1,000; rust-resistant stainless steel dishwashers at \$750.

Money-saving option: Look for a sink that hooks up to a garden hose and drains into the ground, such as Ames True Temper's Garden Sync II (\$29; ama.on.com). Cool drinks in a tub elevated on an iron stand, like Pier 1's red-painted galvanized metal option (\$70; pier1.com).



5

provide shelter

Too much sun? A pergola may be the answer. Made with treated lumber or PVC, a slatted structure can cost \$40 to \$200 per square foot and can be tied into the house framing or secured to freestanding posts. For more protection from sun and rain, add a plexiglass or metal roof, like the one shown here.

Money-saving option: A market umbrella, such as Home Decorator's 11-foot version, which comes with a stand, can provide overhead shelter (\$419; homedecorators.com), as can a shade sail made of outdoor fabric (\$40; hayneedle.com).



▶ see how it's done
Follow along as a TOH pro builds a faux-stone grill and sink stand at thisoldhouse.com/bonus



LEFT: A close-up of the faux-stone grill and sink stand, showing the built-in grill and sink area. The stand is made of wood and has a rustic, stone-like finish. The grill is built into the top of the stand, and the sink is built into the side. The stand is surrounded by lush greenery and trees.

6

add a hearth

The ultimate outdoor kitchen accessory—a fireplace—comes at a price that can cost from \$1,000 for a basic clock structure with a sticker finish to \$15,000 and more for one made with stone. To bring down the cost of the nearly 15-foot-tall fireplace shown here, architect Jane Frederick chose less pricey brick with a stone trim. Raising the hearth allowed it to double duty as a bench. Now the homeowners can enjoy the space virtually year-round.

Money-saving option: A portable fire pit and a hot-tub-style stove (\$1,000 each) can save you about a third of the price. ■



ALL ABOUT

Gutters

The experts at This Old House lay out everything you need to know to select and maintain these unsung heroes of roof-water management **By Jim Gorman**

An inch of rainfall doesn't sound like much. But when it falls on an average-size roof, it adds up to a 1,900-gallon torrent sluicing off the eaves. That's an awful lot of water that can cause an awful lot of damage if your gutters aren't up to the task of controlling it. Yet we barely give gutters a second thought until they're clogged and overflowing, or ripped from their moorings by ice and snow.

So now that summer's here, it's time to take notice. Maybe a simple cleaning is all your gutters need, or maybe they need to be replaced altogether.

If you're starting fresh, there is a veritable deluge of shapes, sizes, and materials to choose from. Aside from pricey, maintenance-heavy wood troughs and short-lived vinyl ones, the best option for most of us is metal—elegant copper, understated zinc, rugged steel, or affordable aluminum. Metal gutters are durable and need relatively little care.

In these pages, we guide you through the choices and explain the essentials of installation and upkeep. Plus we show you how to add ornamentation to ratchet up the overall curb appeal of your home. Then what? Bring on the thundershowers!

Anatomy of a gutter system



Round downspouts drain water more efficiently than rectangular ones.

VITALS

How much do they cost?

The least expensive materials—vinyl, aluminum, and coated steel—run \$1 to \$8 per linear foot, the most expensive—copper and zinc—se for \$9 to \$18 per foot. Prices do not include installation.



DIY or hire a pro?

Straight sections of vinyl or aluminum sold at home centers or online are well within a DIYer's grasp. Call in a pro if your house is taller than one story or if you want seamless gutters, which are custom-made on site.

How long do they last?

Anywhere from a few years to the lifetime of your house, depending on the material you choose and how well they're installed and maintained.

How much upkeep?

If trees tower over them, gutters need periodic cleaning, even when fitted with gutter guards. Pine needles are especially notorious for causing clogs.

Material choices

In general, the more you pay, the longer your gutters will last

vinyl The least expensive, most DIY-friendly option because the sections just snap together. Color choices are limited, although it can be painted. Vinyl won't rust or rot but becomes brittle in extreme cold and intense sun. It can bend and bow under heavy rain, wind, and snow loads. Available in K-style (shown), half-round, and a faceted U shape. Look for a warranty of at least 20 years. **COST** \$1 to \$2 per foot

aluminum This popular, low-cost metal won't rust and comes in an array of colors, including ones that resemble aged copper and zinc. Available in seamless or in sections held together with rivets or screws and sealed with caulk. Lightweight (.025-inch thick) and medium weight (.027-inch) aluminum are susceptible to denting and bending; heavyweight (.032-inch) aluminum lasts longer, about 25 years. **\$1.50 to \$8 per foot**

Mounting methods

Gutters attach to the eaves two ways—to the fascia—the boards that cover rafter ends—or to the roof. Fascia-hung gutters are sturdier and more secure, but if the fascia is nonexistent or covered with crown molding, roof mounting may be your only choice.



Bracket Cradles trough from underneath so it's open and easy to clean. Cast brackets are stronger than stamped ones. Place every 32 inches, or every 24 inches in snow country.



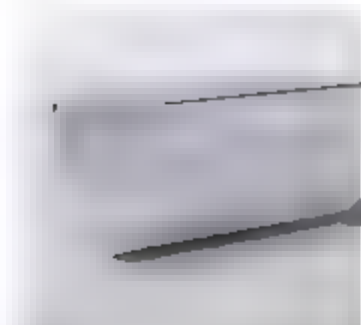
Hanger Bridges interior of gutter, largely hidden from view, but interferes with cleaning. Hangers with built-in screws (shown) hold better than spikes and don't mar gutter faces.



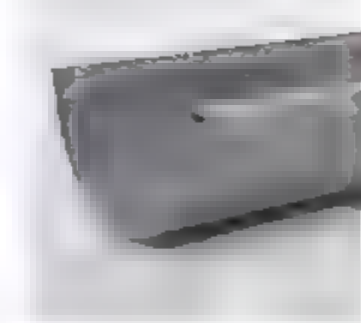
Wedge Levels gutters front to back. The T-wedge (shown) works best with fascia hangers. For fascia brackets, use solid wedges like those from classicgutters.com.



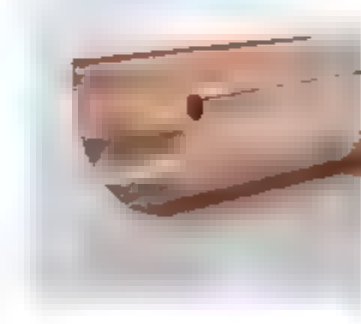
Roof hanger Use as a last resort when gutter can't be hung from fascia. In areas with severe winds or winters, choose hangers with rods, which are stronger than flat straps.



steel To prevent rust, it's coated in zinc (galvanized), a zinc-aluminum alloy (Galvalume, shown), or blended with chrome (stainless steel). Available in seamless or sections; joints should be soldered. Galvanized steel lasts eight to 15 years before it rusts. Galvalume has a 25-year warranty; stainless steel never rusts. Choose 26-gauge or thicker. **COST** \$2 to \$8 per foot for galvanized, \$2 to \$4 for Galvalume, \$4.50 to \$12 for stainless



zinc Strong, rustproof and weathers to an attractive matte gray. Professional installation recommended because of its high contraction and expansion rate when temperatures change. Seams are soldered, but the process is more difficult than with copper. Lasts 30 to 50 years, depending on its proximity to saltwater. Vulnerable to acidic runoff from cedar-shingled roofs. **COST** \$9 to \$10 per foot



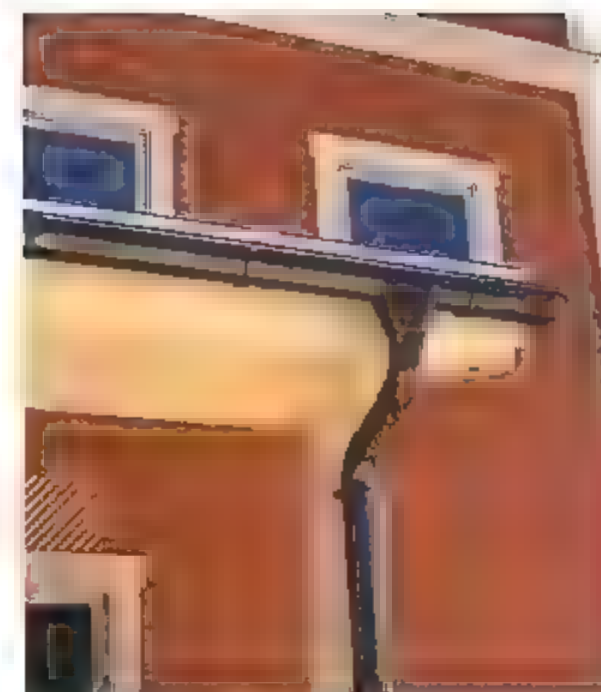
copper Never rusts or needs painting; should last 100 years in any climate. Available in seamless or sections, and in three weights: 16, 18, and 20 ounces. Seams should be soldered. Oxidizes to a matte brown in a matter of months; blue-green over decades. If you prefer gray gutters that don't leave green stains, select lead-coated or tin-zinc-plated copper. **\$11 to \$18 per foot**

Gutter types

Pick a shape that suits your house style and a material that suits your budget

> HALF-ROUND

These semicircular troughs with its curved front edge is a natural fit on traditional homes. Goes best with round downspouts. Comes in 5-, 6- and 8-inch widths. Their curved side walls allow half-rounds to drain more thoroughly than K-style.



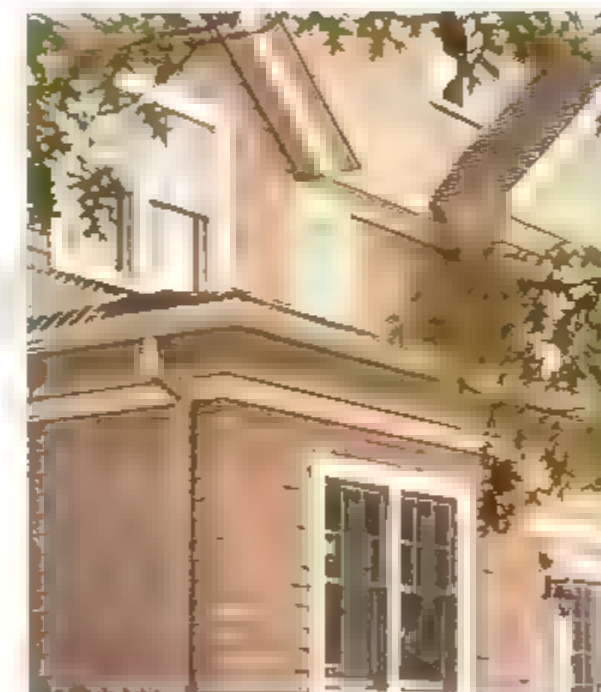
Shown: 5-inch, 26-gauge painted galvanized-steel sections, \$5 per foot. pcraingutter.com



Shown: 6-inch, 20-ounce zinc, \$10 per foot. canadianraingutters.ca

> K-STYLE

This most common gutter shape became popular after World War II. It has a flat bottom and a profiled face that resembles crown molding, often fitted with rectangular downspouts. Comes in 5-, 6-, 7- and 8-inch widths. Handles more than twice the runoff of a half-round of the same width.



Similar to shown: 5-inch, .032-inch-thick aluminum sections, \$1.57 per foot. guttersupply.com



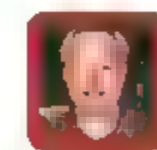
Shown: 6-inch, 16-ounce copper sections, \$12 per foot. brothersgutters.com

> LEAF BARRIERS

An aluminum hood with activated claws weaves into a narrow slot that blocks most debris. These gutters must be professionally installed at a cost of \$20 to \$40 per foot, and when necessary, professionally cleaned, typically an included service.



Shown: 5-inch, .032-inch-thick aluminum K-Guard, about \$23 per foot. kguard.com



pro advice

GENE STUCKY
PARK CITY RAIN GUTTERS

To drain properly, a gutter should slope at least 1/4 inch for every 10 feet of run. Increasing the pitch increases a gutter's handling capacity, but the gutter may look askew over a long run. The easiest way to check pitch: Dump in a bucket of water and watch how it flows.



Gutter upkeep

One way or another, debris will find its way into your gutters, and someone—you or a gutter service—will have to climb a ladder and clean them out. Here are some basic tricks of the trade to make the job easier.

- > **Use a standoff.** It lets you rest a ladder on the roof, preventing gutter scratches and dents and increasing ladder stability.
- > **Stay on the ladder.** Falls are more likely if you work from the roof.
- > **Protect your hands.** Wear gloves and use a gutter scoop.
- > **Start at the downspout.** You'll give standing water a way out.
- > **Check the elbows.** If clogged, use a forceful spray from a hose to open them up. Otherwise, take them apart, drilling out any rivets, then reassemble the pieces with short stainless-steel sheet metal screws.
- > **Flush.** Once gutters are clean and downspouts are reattached, hose them down to make sure they're draining as they should.
- > **Check the brackets or hangers.** Tighten, relocate, or replace hardware if it's loose or if water accumulates in low spots.
- > **Seal leaks.** When the gutter is dry, fill small holes and seams from the inside using a butyl-based gutter caulk. Scrape away old caulk and clean the surface before applying the new stuff.



pro advice

TOM SILVA, TOH GENERAL CONTRACTOR

One good way to prevent clogs is to fit your gutters with big downspouts, either 4-inch round or 3-by-4-inch rectangular. Bigger downspouts also allow a gutter to handle more runoff without overflowing.

Debris stoppers

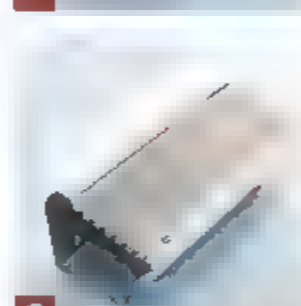
No device completely eliminates the need to clean, but these add-ons significantly reduce the number of trips up and down the ladder.

1



1. Gutter Genius DIY Water follows the hood's round edge into the gutter; debris slides off. Install it yourself and remove it when the trough needs cleaning. 15-year warranty. \$1.67 per foot; guttergeniusdiy.com

2



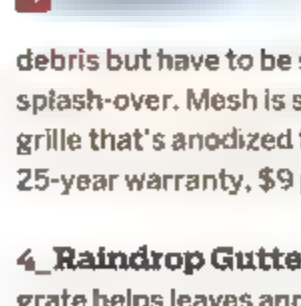
2. Leaf Defler XL UV-protected foam lets only water through. A snap to install as long as the gutter has a front lip or hanger. Not visible from the ground. Easy to remove and shake clean when needed. 25-year warranty. \$4.64 per foot; leafdefler.com

3



3. Gutter Glove Pro Fine-mesh stainless-steel screens block all debris but have to be swept occasionally to reduce splash-over. Mesh is supported by a stiff aluminum grille that's anodized to allow mounting on copper. 25-year warranty. \$9 per foot; gutterglove.com

4



4. Raindrop Gutter Guard A slick plastic grate helps leaves and needles slide off but lets in plenty of water to flush away any small debris that may get in. 10-year warranty. \$3.26 per foot; raindropgutterguard.com

by the numbers

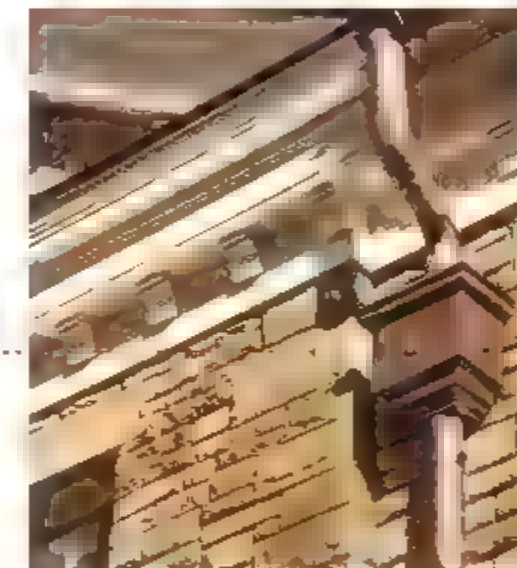
Calculate the correct gutter size and number of downspouts for your house by going to thisoldhouse.com/bonus

Dressing them up

Who says gutters aren't glam? Here are some ways to highlight your home's hardworking runoff-control system*.

conductor head

Gives downspout extra time to drain in a downpour or consolidate runoff from multiple gutters. Shown: copper Windsor conductor head for 4-inch downspout, \$433, guttersupply.com



decorative boot

Fitted to the bottom of a downspout, it provides a classy and rugged exit point for water. Shown: cast aluminum garden boot for 3-inch downspout, \$160; classicgutters.com



rain chain

Leads water from the gutter directly to the ground, without any clog-prone elbows. Typically anchored to a gravel dry well. Best for houses with deep overhangs, chains tend to splash during downpours. Shown: Waxed bronze rain chain, \$22 per foot; abraingutters.com

downspout bracket

These solid cast pieces fix downspouts to the house, secure against wind and theft. Shown, for 3-inch round downspouts: (1) Waxed bronze Fleur-de-lis, \$40; abraingutters.com; (2) Brass Rope, \$29; classicgutters.com. For 2-by-3-inch downspout: (3) Brass Fleur-de-lis, \$51, guttersupply.com



fascia bracket

There's no stronger way of supporting a gutter, or more graceful ornamentation, than a solid cast bracket. Shown: (1) Aluminum Acanthus Leaf, \$13.50, and (2) Brass Queen Anne, \$29; classicgutters.com. (3) Waxed bronze Curved Bracket, \$31, abraingutters.com



*Beware of combining dissimilar metals. Brass and bronze play well with copper but will eat through aluminum or zinc. Aluminum and zinc make weak stainless steel pairs with everything.



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ask this old house

inside

CONTROL HUMIDITY

REMOVE RUTS

FIX DECK RAILS

MORE



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

Q What's the
best way to
quiet a squeaky
door hinge?

JIM PARRETT, RVINE, CALIF.

A Sewing-machine oil (like
the kind they used to put
in these old-fashioned
oil cans) works just fine, as
long as you don't overdo it.
Tap the hinge pin up a little bit,
then place a drop or two on the
exposed shaft. Open and close
the door a few times to work
the oil in, then apply a couple
more drops to the shaft before
tapping the pin back down. Wipe
up any excess oil with a rag or
paper towel. That should stop
the squeaking for a while.

TOM SILVA
TOH GENERAL CONTRACTOR



PHOTOGRAPH BY
VICTOR SCHRAGER

→ Our cast of veteran experts

TOM S. LVA
General ContractorNORM ABRAM
Master CarpenterRICHARD TRETHEWEY
Plumbing and Heating ExpertROGER COOK
Landscape ContractorKEVIN O'CONNOR
Host

We need to repaint our home. How should we protect the roses planted close to the house and growing on a trellis against a foundation wall?

—MARY RILEY JOHNSON, CTY. TENN.

If you ever plan to paint a rose trellis, tie the stems to it; do not weave them between the laths.



Roger Cook replies: What worries me most when a house is being painted isn't paint drips or dust but physical damage to the foundation plants, particularly roses. Here's how to go about protecting them.

On the day before contractors start work, tie up all the plant stems with jute twine to make them more compact and less vulnerable to being broken if something falls on them. Then drive four stakes equally spaced around the freestanding plants to serve as barriers against accidental contact, and as a visual reminder to the contractors that they should keep ladders away.

I like to use 2x2 tree stakes that are long enough to stick up above the plant by 6 inches or so. A couple of stakes in front of the trellised roses would be a good idea, too.

As soon as the contractors are completely done, remove the stakes and cut off the twine.

SQUEEZING OUT HUMIDITY

In the summer, the humidity inside my house runs between 70 and 80 percent, even with the air conditioner going. And in the winter, it doesn't get below 50 percent. I asked several heating

contractors about installing a whole-house dehumidifier and they all said the same thing: "Just get a portable unit." Would that really be effective?

SYLVIA FIELD, WEST GROVE, PA

Richard Trethewey replies: A portable dehumidifier is not a terribly efficient way to solve your problem. But they are relatively inexpensive—you can get one for between \$150 and \$350—so you could try one as a first step. A unit can remove 30 to 70 pints per day, depending on its efficiency, but only from its immediate vicinity. It may take a week or more before you notice any results.

A single whole-house unit, on the other hand, can wring up to 150 pints of water out of the air in a day. Most are attached to ducts—either your existing HVAC ducts or a separate duct system—so they deliver dry air throughout the entire house. They're priced from \$1,000 to \$3,000.

While air-conditioning systems do take some moisture out of the air, a whole-house dehumidifier kicks in automatically if the AC isn't on long enough to bring the relative humidity down to the recommended 30- to 50-percent range. Even better, these big units help you stay comfortable during those "shoulder" seasons, when the air is humid but not hot enough to merit air-conditioning.

When comparing different units, portable or whole-house, give preference to those with a high "energy factor," a measure of how efficiently electricity is used to extract one liter of water. Energy Star-rated products have an energy factor of at least 1.2.

All that water needs a place to go. Portable units come with a removable reservoir, but you can save yourself the chore of emptying it by connecting a garden hose to the unit



A - Shock absorber for riding-mower seat

B - Drain auger

C - Corkscrew weeder

D Or...

FOR THE ANSWER SEE PAGE 112



A shallow stair tread is hard to fix without rebuilding the entire stairway.

and running the hose to a sump pump or floor drain. Whole-house units come with a pump so that you can pipe the water out to a sink.

Portable dehumidifiers are sold at home centers; you just plug them in. An HVAC pro should size and install whole-house units. Maintenance for either unit is minimal—just change the air filter yearly, and make sure the internal portions are clear of dust.

DEEPER STAIR TREADS

The carpeted stair treads in my 1910 home are very shallow. Can I remove the carpet and replace the treads with ones that are deeper, or would that upset the stair's functionality?

—ROB N GIVENS, NORTH BERWICK, MA NE

Norm Abram replies: Sorry to say, simply installing deeper treads will not improve a stair's functionality. In fact, if the front edge of the tread projects too far from the riser, your stair could become a tripping

hazard. Building codes typically call for the tread to overhang the riser no more than 1 1/4 inches. Anything more could easily break off or catch your toes as you go up the stairs.

I suspect the stair was built that way because of limited space or headroom or both. Building a new stair is the only way to increase the depth of the treads, but that might not be possible without major structural changes to the stairwell. Check with your local building department for code requirements. The standard building code for stairs allows a maximum rise of 7 1/4 inches and a minimum tread depth of 10 inches. The minimum headroom in all parts of the stairway is 6 feet 8 inches, measured vertically from the front edge of the tread.

REPAIRING LAWN RUTS

A few years ago, my gardener left some ruts while mowing my newly installed sod lawn. They're still there, making it hard to walk

on the lawn. Can I get rid of the ruts without digging up the yard?

—JEW SINGRO, GARDEN GROVE, CALIF.

Roger Cook replies: Lawn ruts have a way of sticking around for a long time. That's why when I cut new sod the first two or three times, I use a 20-inch walk-behind mower.

Basically, what you have to do now is loosen up the compacted soil. Just make sure your lawn is dry before starting work, and dig gently to avoid damaging any built-in irrigation lines.

There are two ways to do this. The first method works well for wide or really deep ruts. Take a sharp lawn edger or square-point garden spade and make a continuous lengthwise cut down the middle of each rut. Then make a series of crosswise cuts 6 inches apart across the rut. Gently peel back the sod and use a spade fork to loosen the exposed soil. Add a bit of new soil, if necessary, to bring the area back up to grade, then rake it smooth, flip the sod back into place, and water thoroughly.

The second method is somewhat easier but works best on shallow ruts. Place a spade fork near the rut's outer edge, then push it into the soil under the bottom of the rut at a 45-degree angle. Push it as deep as you can, then gently pry up the sod. Try to lift the grass slightly higher than the surrounding turf because it will settle. Repeat the procedure from the rut's opposite edge, then water the area.

To avoid ruts in the future, don't mow the day after a rainstorm. Also, vary your mowing pattern. For example, if you last mowed the lawn lengthwise, the next mowing should go widthwise. After that, go at it 45 degrees off the lengthwise axis, and the next time 90 degrees from that. Repeat until it's time to put your mower away for the season.

QUESTION
OF THE
MONTH



Washed, rounded stones ensure that a dry well will disperse roof runoff properly into the ground.

We have a downspout that dumps rainwater onto our front walkway, which in winter turns into a sheet of ice. Is there a way to fix this problem?

—TABBY MCCARTHY, OLANTHE, KANS.

Roger Cook replies: A wet walkway is not only a slipping hazard, it contributes to damaging frost heaves that can break apart pavement. If you can't relocate the downspout, route the water under your walk and out to a dry well buried in your lawn. This perforated, open-bottom plastic

barrel, which sits in a hole and is surrounded by stones, captures water coming off your roof, and lets it slowly disperse into the ground. Your walkway will be drier, and your storm drains will be less overloaded.

To determine how many dry wells you'll need, enter your roof area and soil type into the calculator at ndspro.com. When you're ready to start digging, follow the steps on the next page. After you're done, fit your gutters with leaf guards so that the dry well won't fill up with debris.

Cost: \$70 for a dry well, \$125 for stone and other materials

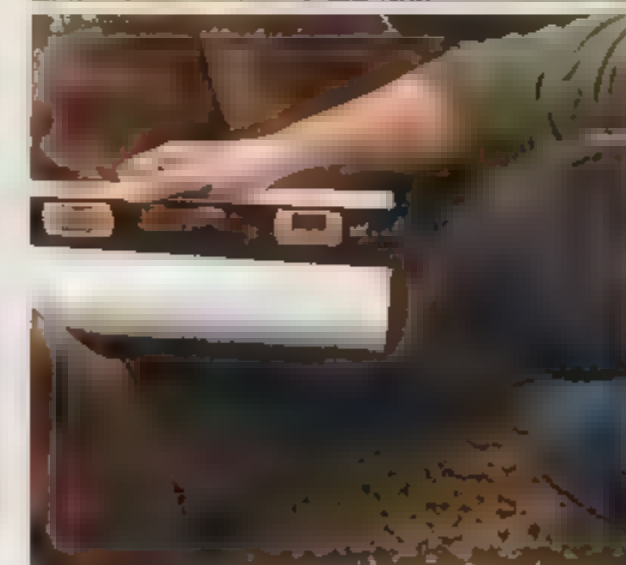
Time: One day

Difficulty: Hard Digging a deep hole is strenuous work

Install a dry well

1 Dig the hole and trench

Coming out from the downspout at least 10 feet from the foundation (and 3 feet from any property line), dig a hole about 4 feet deep and wide. With a long-handled shovel, tunnel under the sidewalk and dig a trench 1 foot deep and 6 inches wide that slopes gradually toward the hole. Shovel the soil onto a tarp. Save the sod to patch over the hole.



4 Check the pitch

The pipe should slope toward the dry well 1/4 inch per foot of run. A 2-foot level will show a 1/2-inch gap under one end when held level. Adjust the pitch by adding or removing soil under the pipe. When the pitch is set, attach the adaptor to the downspout using stainless-steel sheet metal screws, then backfill around the pipe. Trim the opposite end if it's too long.

2 Line the hole

Line the hole with landscape fabric cut from a 6-foot-long roll. The material prevents soil from clogging the stones around the dry well. Leave enough fabric outside the hole so that you can cover the stones once the dry well is installed.



5 Install the dry well

Assemble the dry well, then use a hammer to knock out the 1 1/2-inch-diameter drainage holes and one of the 4 1/2-inch ports. Shovel a 6-inch-deep layer of washed 3/4-inch rounded stone into the hole. Set the dry well in the hole and slide the port over the PVC pipe. Center the dry well and fill around it with stone until you reach its top edge.

3 Set up the pipe

Buy enough 4-inch-diameter PVC pipe to reach from the end of the downspout to a point 14 to 16 inches into the hole. Also buy an elbow and a downspout adaptor (shown). Remove the existing elbow from the bottom of the downspout. Then, dry-fit the pieces and lay the pipe in the trench. Once you have a good fit, glue the pieces together with PVC cement.



6 Fit the overflow emitter

Using a reciprocating saw, cut a 4-inch hole in the dry well's lid and put the lid on. Take a length of 4-inch pipe and glue on an overflow emitter, which lets excess storm water escape. Trim the pipe so that the top of the emitter will sit at ground level when the pipe is glued to the lid. Cover the dry well with landscape fabric and top it off with soil and sod.

LOOSE DECK RAIL

Our deck railing is very wobbly, and I'm concerned for my kid's safety. Is there a way to make the railing more secure without having to disassemble everything? TONY SERRA AGAWAM MASS

Tom Silva replies: A wobbly deck railing is usually due to loose support posts, so check those first. There are different ways to tighten them depending on how they are fastened to the deck structure.

If the posts are nailed to the inside or outside face of the rim joists, secure each post through the rim joist with a couple of lag screws or through bolts. Be sure to drill pilot holes to avoid splitting the posts, and put a washer under each bolt head. Stagger the locations so that the bolts won't line up horizontally or vertically with each other.

For posts on the inside of the rim joist, you can also install blocking—short 2x4s the same width as the joists—to brace each

post. Set the blocking piece perpendicular to the deck joists, with the post sandwiched between the blocking and the rim joist, and screw or bolt it to the post.

Once the posts are solid, make sure the railing is secure by driving decking screws, which hold much better than nails, through the railing and into the posts.

THISTLES TAKING OVER

My yard grows thistles better than anything else. I've put weed-block fabric under mulch and spent hours digging, pulling, and spraying with weed killer, but the thistles keep coming back. Is there any way to get rid of them for good?

—FRED DOLL, SHEFFIELD VILLAGE, OHIO

Roger Cook replies: Thistle is an invasive weed that's hard to beat because of its deep and extensive root system, which can grow up to 3 feet deep. Unless you dig up every



D+ SPRING BOLT

This invisible connector uses two springs, each one anchored in a hole in the pieces being connected. Twisting the pieces engages the springs, which pull the pieces tightly together. To loosen, twist them the opposite way. \$5; spring-bolt.com

bit of a root, it will grow back. The easiest way to kill this weed is with a glyphosate-based herbicide, such as Roundup. Check the labels and buy the one that has the highest glyphosate percentage.

The keys to thistle control are persistence and timing. One approach is to spray the weeds after the flower buds form but before they bloom, to stop them from producing seeds. But I prefer to wait until they are weak, when spraying packs the biggest punch. Here's what you do.

In June, just before they flower, cut the thistles down to the ground. They'll grow back—that's okay—just let them keep growing until September. That's when you hit them with the herbicide. At that point, they'll have used so much energy to re-sprout that the spray will knock them flat.

Thistles are tough customers, so a few may grow back the next year. Keep after them with the same strategy until the infestation is under control.

WINDOWS PAINTED SHUT

The guys who painted the outside of our 1920 house also painted shut all the wood double-hung windows. I don't want to break the antique glass or split the wood trying to free each sash. What do you suggest that I do?

—JILL SEVERN, LEXINGTON, GA

Tom Silva replies: If the paint is fairly fresh, you can sometimes take a wide putty knife with a flexible blade and cut through the paint seal between the sash and the stop. Tap the putty knife handle lightly—and I mean lightly—to get it started, and then wiggle it up and down both sides of the sash.

But if the paint has hardened, you'll have better luck using a handsaw with a small, heart-shaped blade that has teeth around its edge. It goes by various names, including sash saw, window opener, or window zipper, and can be found at hard-

ware stores, home centers, or paint specialty stores for less than \$10.

Lay the blade flat on the sash and slide it along the wood as you slice through the paint film between sash and stop. Work carefully—one slip can gouge the woodwork—but once you get the hang of it the saw does a great job, and quickly, too.

send your questions to ask oldhouse

go to thisoldhouse.com/asktoh or write to Ask This Old House, This Old House magazine, 135 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10020.

Include a complete address and daytime phone number. Published questions will be edited for clarity and length and may be used in other media. We regret that because of the volume of mail received, we're unable to reply to unpublished questions.



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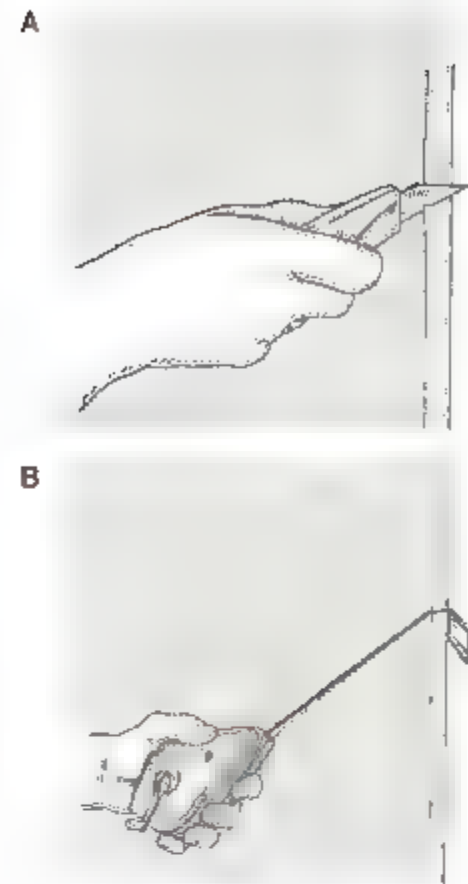
Q Whenever I try to snap angled lines on drywall, the chalk line's hook slips. I don't want to put a nail in the edge to hold the hook. What should I do instead?

—ALLAN J. WICKLUND, RIVERHEAD, N.Y.

A The hook on the end of a chalk line is a handy device when you pull the line perpendicular to the edge. But if you have to snap angled lines across a sheet of drywall or plywood and you're working solo, make a small notch in the

edge of the sheet with a utility knife where you want the line to start (A).

Slip the line into the notch leaving the hook on the sheet's back side (B). Now you can pull the line taut without worrying about the other end slipping.

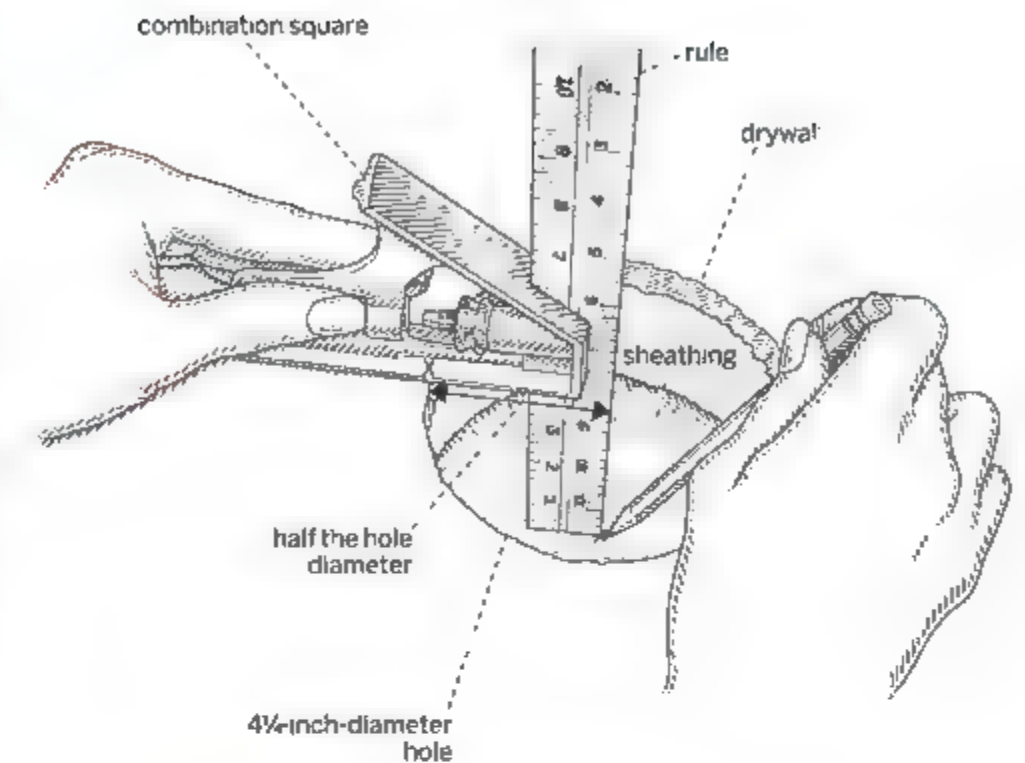


Q I have a dryer exhaust vent pipe to install through an exterior wall. How do I make a hole in the drywall that will line up perfectly with the hole in the siding? **JOE REED, WILLIAMSBURG, KY**

A Starting inside the house, make a small hole in the drywall and check for studs, wires, and pipes. Once you know you have a clear spot, cut the hole for the pipe in the drywall. Take out any insulation that's in the way. Dryer-vent pipe is usually 4 inches in diameter, so the hole should be about 4 1/4 inches across to provide some wiggle room for fitting. Vent kits typically have a collar that covers minor gaps between drywall and pipe.

Here's the trick. Use a combination square to locate where to drill the hole in the sheathing and siding. Measure 2 1/8 inches—half the hole diameter—from the edge of the rule to the square's leg and make a mark on that leg, as shown. Align this mark with the edge of the drywall, slide the rule to the sheathing, and mark where the corner of the rule and the sheathing meet. Do this in several locations around the hole just to verify the center point.

Now drill a small hole at that point through the sheathing and siding. That hole will show you the center for the bigger hole you'll then cut from outside the house. ■



PHOTO, OPPOSITE PAGE: WENDY; ILLUSTRATIONS: HARRY BAILEY



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes



✓Yes



xNo



✓Yes



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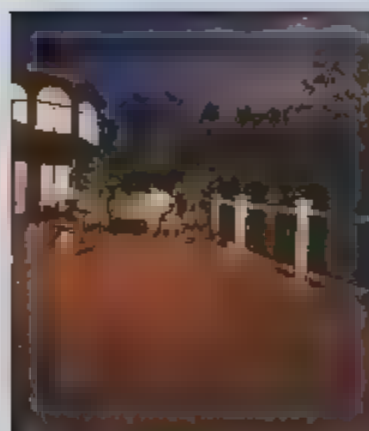
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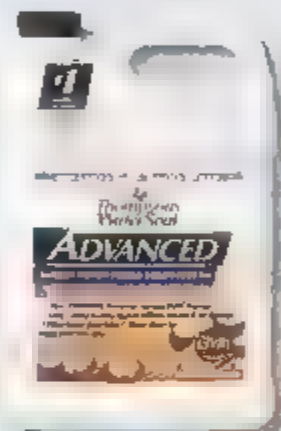
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Cover: For information, see the listing for "Cook Up a Great Outdoor Kitchen."

Before + After Kitchen: Same size, sunnier spirit (pp. 29-32). **General contractor:** SD Development, Moore Park, CA, 805-241-8108. **Tile:** Alys Edwards Tile & Stone, Anaheim, CA, 714-917-6720, alysedwards.com. **Paint:** Desert Suede (walls) and Swiss Coffee (trim), Dunn-Edwards, dunnedwards.com

Before + After Attic: All tucked in (pp. 37-40). **Architect:** Darren J. Heigesen, Amagansett, NY, 631-324-4868, darrenheigesen.com. **General contractor:** Graystone Builders, Bridgehampton, NY, 631-537-1414. **Roof windows:** velux GP MO8, velux.com. **Bed linens:** Garnet Hill, garnethill.com. **Rug:** Fishers Home Furnishings, fishershomefurnishings.com

Paint Ideas: Give a new place an aged look—fast (p. 43). **Decorative painter:** ngrid Leess, New Canaan, CT, 203-972-0631. **Paint:** Sweet Pea (base coat) and Autumn Purple (top coat), Benjamin Moore, benjaminmoore.com

Price Wise: Copper fire pits (p. 55). **High End:** 40-inch Copper Fire Pit and 34-inch Safety Spark Guard, frontgate.com. **Budget:** Camp Chef FP29LG 30-inch Del Rio Copper Gas Fire Pit, amazon.com

Landscaping: Tips for growing hydrangeas (pp. 57-59). **Thanks to:** Michael Durr, Plant Introductions Inc., Watonsville, GA, 706-340-4100, plantintroductions.com, and author of *Hydrangeas for American Gardens* (Timber Press). **Hydrangeas:** Smooth Bella Anna and Bigleaf 'Endless Summer' endlesssummerblooms.com. Mountain Bluebird and Oakleaf Amethyst, monrovia.com

Photoshop Redo: Warming up a bland ranch (p. 61). **Thanks to:** Erica Broberg Smith, Architect, East Hampton, NY, 631-329-9928, ericabrobergarchitect.com. **Paint:** SW604, Otter (house), SW6314, Luxurious Red (doors, shutters), SW0050 Classic Light Buff (garage gable trimwork), Sherwin-Williams, sherwin-williams.com. **Sconce:** Cotton Exchange, 10-inch lantern, Bevoio, bevoio.com. **Columns:** Square Tapered PVC Column Wraps, 48 inches, wholesale1111work.com. **Entry door:** Traditional Panel, 2638 Stain Grade, Simpson Door Co., simpsondoor.com

Better Than Ever: (pp. 82-89). **Architect:** Gregory Zack, New York, NY, 646-245-3922. **General contractors:** Thompson V Construction, Hampton Bays, NY, 516-729-9772; and Highland Construction Co., Center Moriches, NY, 631-874-2853. **Paint:** Spice Gold (living room), In the Midnight Hour (kitchen cabinets), Concord Ivory (kitchen walls), Buckland Blue (master suite walls), Stingray/Gaiveston custom blend (trim throughout), Harbor Gray (clapboard), Brilliant White (exterior trim), Benjamin Moore, benjaminmoore.com. **Living room:** Vintage window panes, Fairview Glass, fairviewglass.com. **Curtains:** Spruce Design and Decor, sprucedesignanddecor.com

Floor lamps, mirror, and armchairs: Mecox Gardens, mecoxgardens.com. **Console table and lamp:** Comerford Hennessy, comerfordhennessy.com. **Sofa:** Crate & Barrel, crateandbarrel.com. **Kitchen:** Range and range hood, Wolf, wolfappliance.com. **Sink, door casing, base molding, and seeded glass for cabinet fronts:** Van Dyke's Restorers, vandykes.com. **Faucet:** Blackman, blackman.com. **Dishwasher:** Bosch, bosch-home.com. **Pendants:** Suffolk Designer Lighting, suffolksdesignerlighting.com. **Backsplash tile:** Alan Court & Associates, 631-324-7497. **Master suite:** Armchairs: Ralph Lauren Home, ralphlaurenhome.com. **Bed:** Crate & Barrel, crateandbarrel.com. **Sconces:** Visual Comfort, visualcomfort.com. **Vintage fan:** ebay.com. **Register grate:** Reggio Register, reggioregister.com. **Sisal rug:** The Carpet Man, thecarpetman.net. **Bench:** Mecox Gardens, mecoxgardens.com. **Patio:** Red sofa, chairs and accent pillows, Restoration Hardware, restorationhardware.com. **Lotus stool:** amazon.com.

Read This Before You Build Your Deck: (pp. 90-93). **Thanks to:** Bill Hensley, American Deck Northwest, Westminster, MD, 443-985-6677, amdeck.com. **Riser lights, post-base trim, and post cap:** Deck Depot, deckdepot.com. **Rail connectors:** Decorators'ulp, comforlocaldealers. **Lattice skirt:** The Home Depot, homedepot.com

Cook Up a Great Outdoor Kitchen: (pp. 94-99). **Thanks to:** Sandra Moffatt, McHale Landscape Design, Annapolis, MD, 240-417-2989, mchalelandscape.com. **Light it up:** Designer/builder: Gary Marsh Design, 415-897-7623, garymarshdesign.com. **Build in storage:** Designer: Troy Sober, Gregory Lombardi Design, 617-492-2808, lombardidesign.com. **Builder:** S+H Construction, 617-876-8286, shconstruction.com. **Install a sink and appliances:** Designer: Tom Stout, Stout Landscape, 310-876-1018, stoutlandscape.com. **Add a hearth:** Designers/builders: Michael and Jane Frederick, Frederick & Frederick Architects, 843-522-8422, farchitects.com

All About Gutters: (pp. 100-105). **Thanks to:** Tony Cobb, NRGCA, Grandville, MI, nrgca.org

Ask This Old House: Question of the Month (pp. 110-111). **Thanks to:** NDS Inc., Woodland Hills, CA, 800-726-1994, ndspro.com

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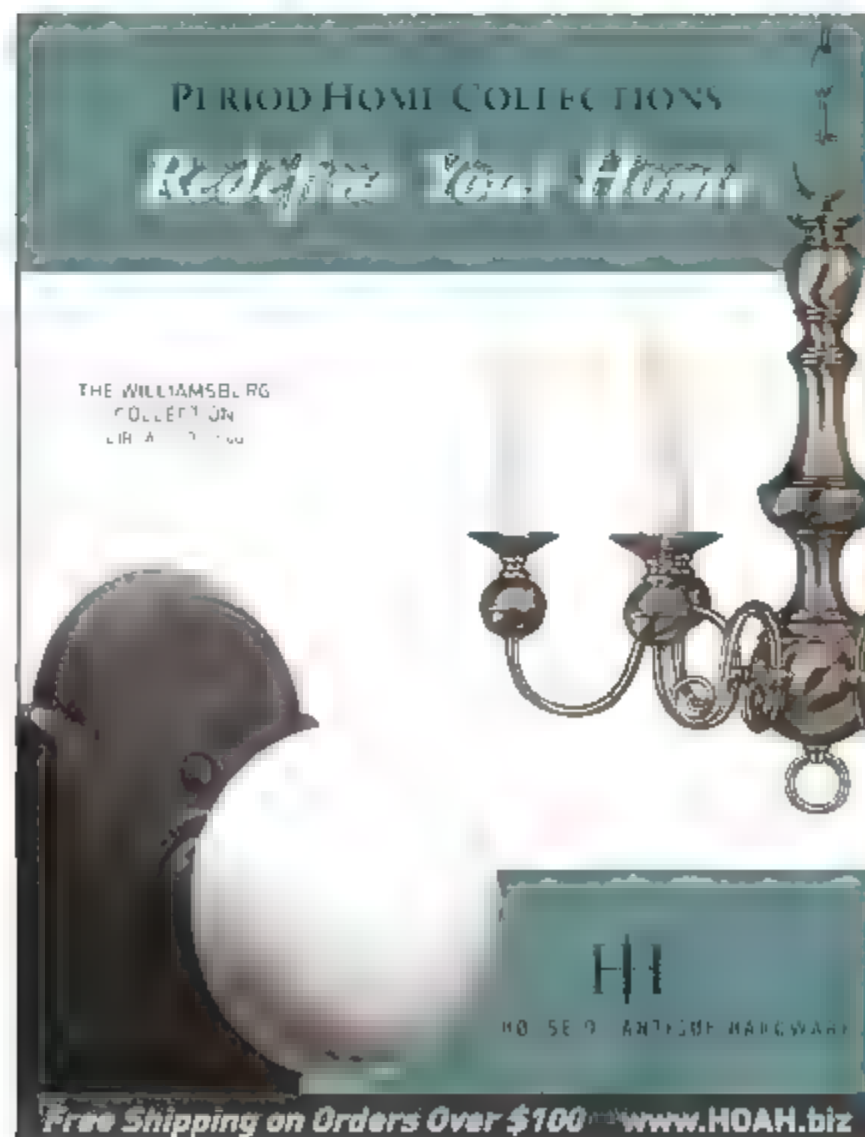
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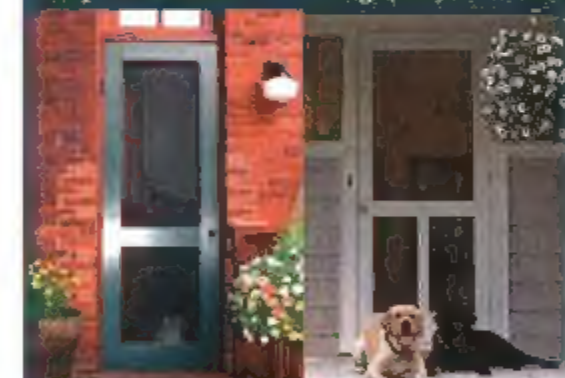
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The history: Now empty and boarded up, this forgotten Queen Anne once played a pivotal role in the religious, commercial, and journalistic history of Wilson, North Carolina. It was built in the mid-1880s by Pleasant Daniel Gold, a prominent minister. Along with his son John (one of 11 Gold children raised here), he started what later became the *Wilson Daily Times*, still this city's go-to news source. In 1922, the house was purchased by Ephraim J. Harrell, a cofounder of the Acme Candy Company, which became one of the largest candy manufacturers in the state.

Why save it? Just a short walk from a revitalized downtown, the 3,400-square-foot house has been vacant since Mr. Harrell passed on, in 1983. Over the years, it's seen its fair share of vandals and break-ins, but retains its architectural integrity, with ornate spindlework, built-in cabinetry, and almost all of its original doors and windows.

What it needs: The structure is stable and the slate roof in good shape, but the place needs paint, plaster repair, new plumbing and electrical systems, a new kitchen, and new bathrooms. All restoration work is eligible for a 30 percent tax credit. So why not move here and add your own chapter to Wilson's history?

—KEITH PANDOLFI



1 The two-story, four-bedroom Queen Anne has decorative arched braces in the front gables. A wraparound porch with round columns was added in the 1920s. 2 In the wide center hall, the original staircase rises from the rear of the house. 3 This kitchen hutch is one of the house's remaining built-ins. 4 An ornate spindlework screen frames the front-parlor bay window.

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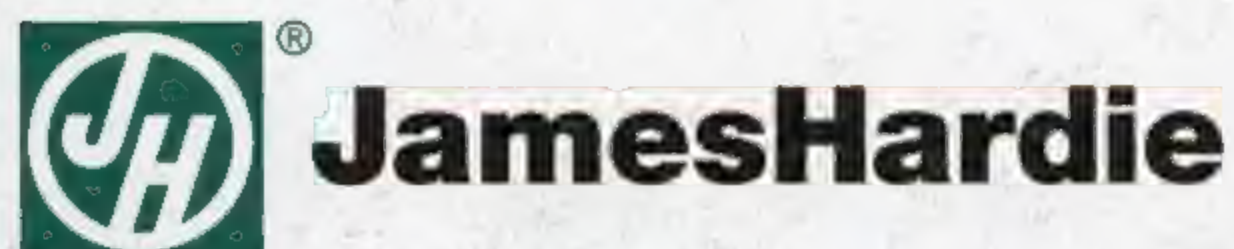
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