

This Old House

70
PAGES OF
problem-
solving
advice

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walls, floors, doors with
our 15 favorite hues!

and SECRETS OF
GREAT EXTERIOR
PAINT SCHEMES

Plus

Kitchen redo
for family living

Easy garden
path how-to

Give your backyard
a French café feel



**MAKE YOUR
HOME SAFE**
with one
phone call
p. 90

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47
SHOPPING



TRANSFORM YOUR HOME WITH COLOR

- 43 **paint ideas**
Create a wall pattern your eyes will see as over-the-top life
- 47 **shopping**
Cherry-blossom sets
- 67 **Photoshop redo**
A Folk Victorian comes alive with these bold paint makeover
- 76 **the power of color**
TOH's 25 hand-picked paint hues will transform your home
- 94 **all about**
Exterior paint

idea file

- 83 **before + after: kitchen**
A colorful approach pays off with an inviting, light-filled space
- 87 **before + after: bath**
On Farmhouse and modern function view a farm bath
- 84 **hostess!**
Use our guide to this many splendor potential to add luster to your landscape
- 90 **is your home due for a checkup?**
A pro inspector now could uncover dangers that would cost you down the road

TOH tv

- 63 **a neglected Cape Cod gets a new lease on life**
All the latest project house, a skillful renovation undoes past slights, restores space and adds charm

You can share these ideas and more on our website at www.toh.com.

[May 2012] contents



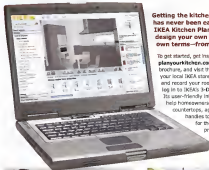
on the cover



- 47-50 Reinvent your rooms with color
- 51-54 Exports of great color for paint schemes
- 55 Kitchen redo for family living
- 56 Easy garden path how-to
- 60 Give your backyard a French café feel

Cover Photography: JEFF LARSEN
Styling: JESSICA LARSEN

Dream It. Plan It. Build It.



Getting the kitchen of your dreams has never been easier. With the IKEA Kitchen Planning tool, you can design your own kitchen—on your own terms—from start to finish.

To get started, get inspired! Browse planyourkitchen.com, pick up an in-store brochure, and visit the kitchen showroom in your local IKEA store. Collect your best ideas and record your room measurements, then log in to IKEA's 3-D Kitchen Planning tool. Its user-friendly interface is designed to help homeowners easily combine cabinets, countertops, appliances, islands, and handles to create a kitchen that works for them. And throughout the process, the planning tool will keep track of your selections, providing you with a price and shopping list.



Cabinetry YOU Can Do

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Smart Design Features

The right features can enhance your kitchen, elevate your overall cooking experience, and make life easier. Like these cabinets with fully extending drawers that allow for an easy overview of drawer contents. Doors and drawers with the specially high-end feature of soft-closing hinges for quiet closing. Caron base cabinet pulls and corners for better advantage of every inch of storage space. And RUTGERS ergonomic accessories that keep your frequently used items neatly organized and easy to find.



To start planning your dream kitchen today, visit planyourkitchen.com.

And for a gallery of inspiring kitchen designs from IKEA, scan the bar code from your smartphone.



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71

WEEKEND
REMODEL

Light up your landscape with a garden lantern hanging from a cedar lamp post you can build.

We tell you everything you need to know to make it all come together.



home solutions

- 21 **Step up your bedside table's style** with decorative molding. 30 **Uses for mayonnaise:** glow flowers you can dine on. Keep your basement well-lit. Tips for disposing of hazardous household products and more.

how-to projects

- 31 **salvage style** Turn vintage beams and stock pipe into a handsome dining table.
39 **landscaping** The quality of your garden photographs will blossom with this pro photographer's tips.
71 **weekend remodel** Hang a lantern from a lamp post you can build yourself.

ask this old house

- 103 **Q + A** Learn about resolving concrete forms, hang planters, bushel-sized trees, antique fence holes with a forlorn bit and more.
106 **step-by-step** Lay a stepping stone path.
109 **Neem's tricks of the trade** Remove hinge screws.
110 **TOH tested** Cordless reciprocating saws.

in every issue

- 8 **this old house.com**
13 **letter from This Old House**
14 **reader mail**
16 **checklist** Easy ways to improve your home right now.
112 **directory**
120 **save this old house**

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51

SALVAGE
STYLE



16
JULIO LEST



59
LANDSCAPING

110

TOH TESTED



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EDITOR: David Dwyer

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PUBLISHER Charles R. Samson

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NEW YORK, NY 10017-1000

MANAGING EDITOR Michaela Miller, Taylor & Francis | **SENIOR ASSISTANT EDITOR** Emily West
ASSISTANT EDITOR Emily West, Emily West | **ASSISTANT EDITOR** Emily West
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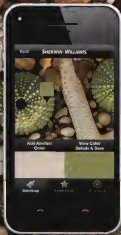
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letter {from This Old House}

The shock of it all

I was climbing the ladder to work on a living room paint project when my phone beeped. It was my brother, asking, "Can I get your help today?" he asked. "I want to upgrade my electrical panel to a 200 amp service."

Now, to be honest, upgrading a light fixture makes me uncomfortable—replacing a whole panel terrifies me. "That's a job for an electrician," I reacted back, and then his speed dial to contact the conversation. He picked up and immediately said, "It's okay, I watched a video on YouTube."

"Oh, good," I said, "that'll give me something to tell the coroner." "No, sis, I don't understand how he could have died—after all, he watched a video on YouTube." He was serious, though. "I spoke to the power company. They gave me the meter and a just-cutting plug like a lamp from an outlet and kills the power to the house."

"The meter?" I was puzzled. "We are not going to mess with the meter!"

"It's easy," he said. "The utility sent a lady out about a month ago to replace it, and it took, like, 45 seconds." "Yeah," I laughed. "If a highly trained full-time employee of the regional utility can do it, it's gotta be a piece of cake for us." And that should have ended it. But then he said, "Come on, someone has to call 911 when I'm crawling on the floor."

I mean, it's no secret that my brother and I argue—and argue a lot. Sometimes we can't stand each other—mostly when he's wrong about something, which, you know, usually. But in a lucid moment on his last day on earth?

Anyway, the rest of the story turned out to be less scary than it could have been. The home center was one of the last parts we needed (big surprise there), and instead of working we spent the rest of the day driving from one store to another in search of it. But that was okay. It gave me a chance to deal with more beeping on my phone—namely, Hundreds of e-mails from TGH readers objecting to an ad in the back of the April issue that featured a bikini-clad model. For many folks, TGH isn't just about the home, it's an extension of home. And we still are our own measure of what's appropriate on the warm side of the front door. Lots of people like we let something in over the threshold that we shouldn't have. Perhaps you saw the ad too. In any case, I want to tell you the same thing we told every single one of those e-mail writers.

We want you to know that the editors of TGH care deeply about our relationship with you guys and work hard to keep your trust. The decision to run the ad was not an editorial one. But we're glad to report that our publishers have heard your thoughts, and they want to ensure you that ads of this type will no longer appear. Our sincere apologies to you all, and, most importantly, thanks for telling us what's on your mind; we've been used that you pay such close attention to—and care so passionately about—This Old House.

Scott O'Malley
SCOTT O'MALLEY, EDITOR
scott@thisoldhouse.com



THREE THINGS I LEARNED FROM THIS ISSUE

1. **How vintage beams** and new gas grills can give you a rustic dining experience (p. 24)
2. **How a desktop**—or any room—can become a spacey dining lounge (p. 22)
3. **How garden flowers** can make your taste buds bloom (p. 26)

checklist [May 2012]

EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW

Learn your home's lore

Celebrate National Preservation Month by uncovering the story behind your home. Start at city hall and pull old deed registers, building permits, and tax assessments to see who owned your home decades ago—maybe even came across old photos. Have a newer home? Lend a hand to your local preservation group to maintain a neighborhood landmark.



TOH
TIP

What's on your checklist?

"Trying to replace the two windows that look into the back deck with French doors to give myself direct access to the outdoors."
—Bryan Drake, December 1st
E-mail us your ideas at checklist@theoldhouse.com.



Ready patio gear

Welcome warmer days this month with a cheerful place to dine al fresco. Seat cushions and a patio umbrella freshly out of winter hibernation will spruce up an outdoor tablespace. If your colorful outdoor textiles are spotted with mildew from storage, revive them with a mixture of 3 gallons warm water, 1 cup bleach, and ¼ cup mild laundry soap, scrubbing with a soft-bristled brush. Dry off metal umbrella parts. Wash wood furniture with a solution of 1 gallon warm water, 5 tablespoons liquid dish soap, and 1 tablespoon bleach.

Inspect your water heater

Scary but true: A faulty relief valve could lead to a pressure buildup inside your water heater and cause it to explode or shoot like a rocket through several stories. To keep this system in balance, regularly check the valve on top of the tank. Place a bucket under the discharge tube and slowly lift the lever halfway to release 2 cups of water. Then close the valve and check for water leakage out of the tube. If you see a steady drip, turn off the heater and call a pro to replace the valve immediately.

Plant greens and garnishes

For a homegrown salad in a snap, plant quick-growing, cool-season crops early this month. Jericho romans, Sangria butterhead lettuce, and radish varieties, like Cherry Belle, can all be sown now and be ready to harvest in about a month. Have some patience? Try heat-tolerant Red Ace lettuces, which take about two months to grow.

Spruce up the tub

One sure way to make Mother's Day Déjà Vu more relaxing? Ensure the real centerpiece in good shape now. Scrub away old caulk with a 5-in-1 tool and clean the area with bleach. Once it's dry, use a configuration tool silicone caulk to reseal the sealant. (For a complete step-by-step, visit theoldhouse.com May 2012.) Boost the spa mood with a small vase of fresh flowers.



PHOTOS BY JENNIFER GRIFFIN FOR THE OLD HOUSE; PHOTO BY JENNIFER GRIFFIN FOR THE OLD HOUSE; PHOTO BY JENNIFER GRIFFIN FOR THE OLD HOUSE

Very high triglycerides is a medical term for something serious:

TOO MUCH FAT IN YOUR BLOOD.

Ask your doctor about the FDA-approved medication made from omega-3 fish oil: LOVAZA.

If you have high cholesterol, diabetes or are overweight, you may also be at risk for very high triglycerides (≥500 mg/dL), which is a serious medical condition. There's only one FDA-approved medication for treating very high triglycerides that's made from omega-3 fish oil: LOVAZA, along with diet, has been clinically proven to lower very high triglycerides in adults. Individual results may vary. LOVAZA has not been shown to prevent heart attacks or strokes. LOVAZA is only available by prescription. You can't get it at a health food store. So if you think you might have very high triglycerides, talk to your doctor about getting tested and ask about LOVAZA.

LOVAZA is used along with a low-fat and low-cholesterol diet to lower very high triglycerides (≥500) in your blood. Before taking LOVAZA, talk to your healthcare provider about how you can lower high blood fats by losing weight, if you are overweight, increasing physical exercise, lowering alcohol use, treating diseases such as diabetes and low thyroid (hypothyroidism), and adjusting the dose or changing other medicines that raise triglyceride levels such as certain blood pressure medicines and estrogens.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION FOR LOVAZA

Tell your doctor if you are allergic to fish or shellfish as LOVAZA may not be right for you. Talk to your doctor about any medical conditions you have and any medications you are taking, especially those that may increase your risk of bleeding. In some patients, LDL (bad) cholesterol may increase. Your healthcare provider should do blood tests before and during treatment with LOVAZA to check your cholesterol and triglyceride levels. If you have low blood sugar, you may require additional monitoring. Possible side effects include burping, upset stomach, and change in sense of taste. How supplied: 1 gram capsules.

Please see important Patient Information on the next page. 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.

For more information, visit LOVAZA.com or call 1-877-LOVAZA1.



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LOVAZA
omega-3 fatty acid capsules

Important information:
LONAZA is not a diet
pill. It is a prescription medicine.

Read the Patient Information that comes with LONAZA before you start taking it, and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking to your doctor about your condition or treatment. For more information, visit LONAZA.com or call 1-877-LONAZA.

What is LONAZA?
LONAZA is a prescription medicine called a lipid regulating medicine, for adults. LONAZA is made of orlistat. It helps with the absorption of fat in your diet. It is used along with a low-fat and low-calorie diet to help you lose weight. LONAZA is used to help you lose weight. It is used along with a low-fat and low-calorie diet to help you lose weight. LONAZA is used to help you lose weight. It is used along with a low-fat and low-calorie diet to help you lose weight.

What are the possible side effects of LONAZA?
The most common side effects with LONAZA are: loose stools, oily or greasy stools, and a change in your sense of taste. LONAZA may affect certain blood tests. It may change your sense of taste. LONAZA may affect certain blood tests. It may change your sense of taste.

What are the ingredients in LONAZA?
LONAZA is a prescription medicine. It is used along with a low-fat and low-calorie diet to help you lose weight. LONAZA is used to help you lose weight. It is used along with a low-fat and low-calorie diet to help you lose weight.

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Mayonnaise

Who knew that our favored BLT condiment was so versatile around the house? In a pinch, use it to help you tackle these everyday tasks.

1 Remove tree sap.

Coat still tacky tree sap with mayo and let sit for a few minutes. Wipe away the softened sap with a clean rag.

2 Slide a ring off a swollen finger.

Put a generous amount of mayo around the ring. After a few minutes, you should be able to slide it off easily.



4 Make plant leaves shine.

Bring luster to dusty houseplants by adding a dab of mayo to each leaf. Buff with a paper towel or a soft rag.

5 Banish fingerprint smudges from stainless steel.

Cover messy prints with a thin coat of mayo, and use a clean, dry cloth to wipe them away.

6 Silence a squeaky hinge.

Place a dab of mayo on a cleaning and rub it into

a noisy hinge. Open and close the door a few times to work it in and wipe away any excess.

7 Kill head lice.

Before bedtime, comb mayo through hair and cover with a shower cap overnight. In the morning, comb out hair, then shampoo and rinse thoroughly. Repeat as necessary.



10

8 Get rid of tar.

Use mayo to coat tar that's stuck to your shoes or car. Let sit for several minutes, then scrape off.

9 Rub out winter rings.

Cover winter rings on wood furniture with mayo. Let sit for a minute or two. Wipe off and buff with a soft, clean cloth.

Remove sticker residue.

Roll mayo in an old brown paper bag and the like, let sit for a few minutes, then rub it off. The oil dissolves adhesives.

—SAL NALICA

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Build around you.

Why Energy Efficiency Should Top Your Window Wish List

With rising costs of heating and cooling these days, windows should be more than beautiful—they should help you save energy.

Qualified or listing windows can cut the energy options making the heat out of your house in winter and conducting it inside in summer. The good news, today's high performance windows are far more efficient than those of the past. Choose the right window for your climate zone and your home's exposure, and you could save as much as 15% to 25% on your monthly heating and cooling bills, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.*

What to Look for in an Energy Efficient Window

- The ENERGY STAR® logo, signifying a meets federal guidelines.
- Insulating gases (like argon or krypton) between the panes of glass that slow the transfer of heat.
- Low Emissivity (Low-E) glazing options designed to optimize energy efficiency for your home's exposure and climate without damaging your view.
- Solid-wood frames are less thermally conductive (and, for easy no-fuss maintenance, aluminum clad interiors).

Marvin® is a leading leader in energy efficient windows and doors. With more than 100,000 options that meet or exceed stringent federal ENERGY STAR standards, Marvin allows you to choose a beautiful and customized, energy efficient solution for any project in any climate.

If you can dream it, Marvin can build it. Explore your options at Marvin.com

*Estimated savings are based on typical efficiency in the U.S. Data from the U.S. Department of Energy, ENERGY STAR EnergyGuide resource, available at www.energystar.gov/choose and www.energystar.gov/choose.

How to Read Energy Efficiency Labels



Thanks to third-party, unbiased ratings from the National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC), comparing window performance across manufacturers and with a manufacturer's product line is easy.

1 Regional Rating: The shaded portions of the map show areas of the country in which the window meets regional ENERGY STAR standards.

2 U-Factor: The U factor indicates the rate of heat loss in a window or door. The lower the U factor, the greater a window's resistance to heat flow and the better its insulating properties.

3 Solar Heat Gain Coefficient: SHGC measures how well a window's glazing blocks heat caused by sunlight. The lower the number, the less heat gets in. A score of 0.40 or less is a recommended maximum of most.

4 Visible Transmittance: VT is a measure of how much total light is transmitted through the window. Windows glazed with a VT of 0.60 or more look clear. Windows with lower VT scores let less light in but can slightly darken rooms.

At Marvin, we're committed to building energy efficiency into product performance while bringing you inspiration to life.

MARVIN
WINDOW AND DOOR

Build around you.

Cord-free string trimmers

[illegible]

Autoparc Antibes
Rue du Commerce

The 16-watt, cordless gives you ultimate choice for plug and can be finished in 30 minutes or less. Select 22 inches of line to conserve battery power, or chop down to 10 inches for a faster spring drawbar that offers serious slicing power. The battery is rechargeable without the manufacturer's outdoor tools. Ryobi P2000, \$129. ryobitools.com



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Sawzall the head 90 degrees to the wall for easier, 90° angled edges that cut vertically instead of horizontally. Taller folks will appreciate its telescoping aluminum handle, which extends up to 14 inches so that clipping isn't necessary. **Tools 61496, 6170, tools.com**



Problem-solving ceiling paints

Let's face it: Putting these called Kith wall can be a pain in the neck—literally. These new products won't do the job for you, but they'll make the task quicker, easier, and longer lasting.



Charles Brown

The new VGC low spatter formula helps the paint cling well to the ceiling - so it's less likely to spatter on you, the indignity of deciding the drops as you're rolling an off-white coat. **Mathis + Chow** 800.anythangpaint.com

Mostly stone
and rubble

The particles in this paint interlock more tightly than those in a traditional formula, so when dry (it takes a mere 30 minutes), it can resist water stains and mildew—two big plagues of ceilings that suffer leak damage. **Behr's** *ePlymurt* Fluoridite (Shen, Glenside, Pa.) \$29. behr.com



CONTENTS


 This no primer needed paint conditioner is added to help deliver a crisp bright white finish and a matte surface that disguises blemishes in just a single application.

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roofing to the family doctor. Written by people
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Angie Hicks, Founder



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Grow an edible bouquet

In the past three years, spending on vegetable gardening has risen 22 percent, while flower sales have dropped. But why choose one over the other? To add color to your garden—and plate—by planting these bright, edible bloomers. —SILLIAN SMITH

Heartburn

This annual grows happily in a well-drained container. Plant seeds, inches deep, in bloomers in four to six weeks. Stuff the flowers with herby cream cheese and turn into a salad for a sensory punch.



Lawrence

You'll need a well-drained soil to grow this perennial. Grind the buds into a powder and mix it with powdered sugar or sugar for a little extra sweetness. It's every girl's favorite! —
Lemonade & Wildflower Press



• Cardiorespiratory

After Pate breaks it full size, remove the pellets from the bitter center (if) and mix them into pasta made to add extra color and an earthy, chew-like taste.



+ DayLines

Threats: parasitoids
Drill into hull and
crawl on the sloped
sides or remove
the bitter shavings
from the center and
spoon chicken salad
into the flower cup.
White, cream, and
yellow varieties.
Taste sweet and

+ **Psychiatry**

The leaves of this drought-tolerant perennial can thicken soup and fortify salads with omega-3 fatty acids. The flowers, leaves, and stems are all edible: with a saffry, radish-like green



Prevent basement leaks

Spring rain is great for nourishing a garden, but not so great if it gushes into your below-grade rec room. These preventive measures will help keep your house dry from the bottom up. —ANNALEA DREYER/STON

CLEAN YOUR CUTTERS = 75000

slatted gutters overflow, water can pool around your foundation. Remove any leaves and debris left over from winter, then install leafguards and downspout extenders to direct water 10 feet from the house.

CHANGE THE GRADE: Make sure

surrounding soil is pitched away from the house at a slope of at least 1/4 inch per foot so that water drains toward your yard, not your foundation. Simply add soil, raking it smooth, until the grade is highest at the house's perimeter.

REPTILES IN CHECKS: *Gerrhonotus* spp.

with aggressive roots, like silver maples, should be planted at least 20 feet from your house to protect your foundation. Smaller species, like white fir, require only 10 to 15 feet of clearance.

Recycling made simple

We all know that plastic water bottles can be recycled, but what about, say, the cardboard and plastic-strengthened packaging your cell phone came in? To clarify the answer to such questions, the GreenBlue Sustainable Packaging Coalition is launching a pilot program to add easy-to-read recycling labels to consumer goods. The labels (see example

Spill out a variety of in-store packaging components can be recycled and sometimes where there's even a specialist for plastic bags and liners, which are accepted primarily at retail stores and other drop-off spots. Companies such as Walmart, Costco, and Costco Plus (for house-branded products) will soon begin showing the new labels on select packaging. Seventh Generation has been using them since January. To learn more, visit new2recycle.info. —ROTH PANDOLFI



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Get 50495 PROTECTOR Weatherproofing Wood Stains and Finishes. The advanced 100% acrylic formula seals in the beauty and adds to the weather for a deck, you'll be proud of. It delivers complete weather protection from sun, rain, snow, and more. Restores beauty and protect your deck, railings, and fences. Available in Solid Color, Semi-Transparent and Transparent.





Handle household products safely

[illegible]

But only as much as you need

Many WPCs, particularly liquidlike solvents and cleansers, have limited shelf life. So check labels carefully, and be wary of purchasing items in bulk. Will you really use that entire 12-pack of oven cleaner before it expires?

Give away leftovers

Your next door neighbor or even a local nonprofit organization might need the half acre of land and obtain that right otherwise gather dust in your workshop. Community gardens will often accept trim and unwanted fertilizers and pesticides. tiny.cc/Ask-around or just ask at our Craigslist forum as you will find leads for your treasure.

Try natural alternatives:

Handmade-cleaning products can be a lot less harsh than store-bought versions and carry no dangerous chemicals. You can make all sorts of cleaning concoctions to make a perfectly fine furniture polish, for instance. For a list of DIY cleaners with recipes, go to thefairyprint.com/may2012.

Gather broken electronics for one big drop-off.

Don't kick these to the curb—your town may fine you for doing so. Big box retailers Best Buy and Office Depot collect many types of products for recycling, and some towns offer drop-off programs.

Check local resources for disposal options

Latex and other disposal of HHPs vary by location: contact your local sanitation department if you're not sure how to get rid of something. If they can't help you, try your state's environmental agency, says Dratz.



Shelter songbirds

Over the past four decades, some finch and chickadee populations in the U.S. have declined by 40 percent. Give these little tweeters a safe haven by outfitting your yard with a few habitat must-haves.

No Protection

Two of the main threats to native songbirds are, ironically, other birds. English sparrows and European starlings steal their nesting spots and destroy their eggs. Fend off these predators with a nest box that has an opening just big enough for the songbirds you want to attract. Avoid birdhouses with exterior perches that give predators easy access to their prey.

☐ National Institute of Standards and Technology

Attract local songbirds with native trees and shrubs they can use for shelter and raising young. Bonus: Many of these plants bear fruit that will last birds when they're gone.

☐ *Real and water*

Longhairs feast on caterpillars to EE your yard with trees and perennials that draw beetles and moths. Provide fresh water in a low shallow container and change it every day or two. For more tips, go to www.thecrabapple.com.

of the following: (1) the number of people who have been exposed to the hazard; (2) the duration of exposure; (3) the intensity of exposure; (4) the frequency of exposure; (5) the route of exposure; (6) the age of the exposed person; (7) the sex of the exposed person; (8) the genetic susceptibility of the exposed person; (9) the presence of other diseases or conditions; (10) the use of other drugs or substances; (11) the use of protective equipment; (12) the use of control measures; (13) the use of personal protective equipment; (14) the use of engineering controls; (15) the use of administrative controls; (16) the use of training; (17) the use of safety procedures; (18) the use of safety equipment; (19) the use of safety signs; (20) the use of safety barriers; (21) the use of safety nets; (22) the use of safety harnesses; (23) the use of safety ladders; (24) the use of safety platforms; (25) the use of safety cages; (26) the use of safety enclosures; (27) the use of safety shields; (28) the use of safety curtains; (29) the use of safety screens; (30) the use of safety doors; (31) the use of safety windows; (32) the use of safety floors; (33) the use of safety walls; (34) the use of safety ceilings; (35) the use of safety roofs; (36) the use of safety foundations; (37) the use of safety supports; (38) the use of safety bracing; (39) the use of safety anchoring; (40) the use of safety fastening; (41) the use of safety locking; (42) the use of safety tagging; (43) the use of safety labeling; (44) the use of safety marking; (45) the use of safety identification; (46) the use of safety documentation; (47) the use of safety communication; (48) the use of safety training; (49) the use of safety education; (50) the use of safety awareness; (51) the use of safety culture; (52) the use of safety management; (53) the use of safety planning; (54) the use of safety implementation; (55) the use of safety evaluation; (56) the use of safety improvement; (57) the use of safety innovation; (58) the use of safety research; (59) the use of safety development; (60) the use of safety progress; (61) the use of safety achievement; (62) the use of safety success; (63) the use of safety excellence; (64) the use of safety leadership; (65) the use of safety vision; (66) the use of safety mission; (67) the use of safety values; (68) the use of safety principles; (69) the use of safety standards; (70) the use of safety norms; (71) the use of safety practices; (72) the use of safety habits; (73) the use of safety attitudes; (74) the use of safety beliefs; (75) the use of safety perceptions; (76) the use of safety emotions; (77) the use of safety cognitions; (78) the use of safety behaviors; (79) the use of safety outcomes; (80) the use of safety impacts; (81) the use of safety benefits; (82) the use of safety costs; (83) the use of safety risks; (84) the use of safety hazards; (85) the use of safety threats; (86) the use of safety dangers; (87) the use of safety perils; (88) the use of safety calamities; (89) the use of safety disasters; (90) the use of safety catastrophes; (91) the use of safety tragedies; (92) the use of safety misfortunes; (93) the use of safety setbacks; (94) the use of safety reversals; (95) the use of safety declines; (96) the use of safety downturns; (97) the use of safety downturns; (98) the use of safety downturns; (99) the use of safety downturns; (100) the use of safety downturns.



SPRIVA is the only once-daily inhaled COPD treatment that does the following:

- Helps relax & open airways for 24 hours
- Helps reduce COPD flare-ups

And, SPINNA is steroid-free

If you have COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), which includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema, you know how difficult it can be to breathe. While nothing can reverse COPD, SPIRINK relaxes your airways to help you breathe better. Talk to your doctor about lifestyle changes and SPIRINK.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Do not use Spiriva® Handihaler® if you are allergic to tiotropium or ipratropium (e.g., Atrovent®) or any of the ingredients in SPIRIVA. If your breathing suddenly worsens, your face, throat, lips, or tongue swells, you get hives, itching or rash, stop taking SPIRIVA and seek immediate medical help.

SPRINT HandHaler is not a rescue medicine and should not be used for treating sudden breathing problems.

Do not swallow SPIRIVA capsules. The contents of the capsule should only be inhaled through your mouth using the HandiHaler device.

If you have vision changes or eye pain or if you have difficulty passing urine or painful urination, stop taking SPRIX[®] and call your doctor right away.

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. Learn more at SPIRIVA.COM, or call 1-877-SPIRIVA.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT BREATHING BETTER.



Please see Important Safety Information on ivabradine.

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see what Delta can do

Opened up for family living

More space, together with a generous island, smart details, and a dress-up room, turns a former gallery into a major magnet for family and friends

By CHERYL BOLDWIN • Photographs by MATTHEW BERGMAN



Open shelves facing the family room create display space.

One way to know what's wrong with a house is to live with it for a couple of years. A great way to fix it is to share your vision with an architect and a carpenter who have already created something similar—in the architect's own home. "That was my apprenticeship," says wood worker Dave Michael, recalling his path from the vaulted beeches of architect Jon Sarkisian to the century bungalow for David and Jennifer Dilley. The Royal Oak, Michigan, couple had worked with Sarkisian on the roof of a finely-crafted furniture store when they asked him to bump out their 1940s bungalow, enlarging its kitchen to suit a family of four. "They wanted to keep the scale cozy," says Sarkisian, who expanded the space—but not too much—with a light-channeling barrel-vaulted ceiling and an open plan. The homeowners served as their own general contractor and had a hand in configuring the cabinets and marble-topped island. Says Jennifer, author of the snow-white-and-cherry-red scheme, "I always tell friends to wait before renovating. It gave us time to figure out what would work for us and the house, and get as exactly what we wanted."



before The narrow kitchen was a hallway between the dining room and the open family room. **after** Jennifer and David Dilley, with Matthew, 3, gather in the bigger, brighter space. Credits: Photo Roomworks; Prep work: Native Trails

before + after:
kitchen



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before+after:
bath

From washed-out to Craftsman-style

A formal bath is reborn with contemporary function and authentic period style

by DEBORAH GALLAGHER • Photographs by CARRI DUNN



A custom stain and four crafts of lacquer bring out the natural grain in the woodwork.



(before)

before: The 1980s bath had chrome and an awkward ship-up-and-in tub. After: Knowing its footprint, the space gained. Plaster-style statement light fixtures, bay windows and columns made with AZEK® stain while oak finishes. Photo: D. Palmer

Nothing concentrates the mind like a flood. Once Carter and Rachel Cox got over the shock of seeing their Shabby farmhouse up to its ankles in water—a broken pipe had burst while they were out of town—they saw opportunity. So did CG&S Design-Build, which helped build out the Coxes' house, in West Lake Hills, Texas. "They are passionate about Craftsman and Prairie style," says CG&S architect Stewart Davis, "so we took a fresh look at everything," starting with the master bath, where the designers incorporated period style woodwork, hardware, and tile in colors borrowed from the landscape, and a limestone pedestal ledge that suggests a watercolor by Frank Lloyd Wright. "The lines are well orchestrated without being busy or ornate," Carter says. "I'm on-site and a blacksmith, and Rachel is a floral designer, which captures our appreciation of things handmade in the traditional way." They also appreciated the men's attention to detail, including woodwork finished by the same pro who restored their soggy farmhouse. After the flood, Carter took to thinking, "We could finally address all our disease." And today? "We couldn't be more delighted."

before + after: bath

the key details

Tile in three sizes and colors provides subtle contrast, while the tub pairs period-style fittings and a tiled lip with stylishly updated feet. Tub: Parsons + Albert; fittings: Strom/Jurbing by Day of the Owl



Black hardware brings out the grain of the oak, which was finished with a custom walnut-stain stain. Knobs: Creek Stone Metals



"We used a limestone pencil ledge to cap the tile wainscot, serve as a window stool, and unify the room."



before + after

Closets gained up space in the 12¹/₂-square-foot bath, and taking a shower meant climbing up and into the tub. The footprint stayed the same, but the closets were added and the doorway shifted to make room for the shower and storage.

1. Installed large custom oak windows to frame the view and increase ventilation

2. Replaced the drop-in tub with a speckled version of a claw-foot tub

3. Removed the closet to flank the tub and added a shower that is open on one side



4. Built in a double vanity with ample storage and enclosed medicine cabinets, leaving the glass-front counter top clear for display

5. Added a bank of cabinets, which creates a niche for the toilet and holds linens and handpans.



Craftsman-style nookcase flanks a display cabinet with sealed glass fronts. Sources: Hixson/Don Forge; Cabinets: Amazonia-Cabinetry

The shower is lined with marble tile and floored with light from the clerestory windows. Tile: American-Clay

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Find out if ADVAIR® can help you breathe better and take center stage in your own life.



ADVAIR helps improve your lung function so you breathe better.* That way, you may be able to take more of a leading role in your own life. Unlike most COPD medications, ADVAIR contains both an anti-inflammatory* and a long-acting bronchodilator working together. ADVAIR is not for, and should not be used to treat, sudden, severe symptoms of COPD. It won't replace a rescue inhaler. Ask your doctor about ADVAIR.

To get your first full prescription free and to save on refills, visit ADVAIR.com or call 1-800-870-4197.

ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50 is approved for adults with COPD, including chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or both.

You should only take 1 inhalation of ADVAIR twice a day. Higher doses will not provide additional benefits.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION ABOUT ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50 FOR COPD:

- Do not use ADVAIR to treat sudden, severe symptoms of COPD. Always have a rescue inhaler on hand to treat sudden symptoms.
- Do not use ADVAIR DISKUS if you have a severe allergy to milk proteins. Ask your doctor if you are not sure.
- Do not use ADVAIR more often than prescribed. Do not take ADVAIR with other medicines that contain long-acting beta₂-agonists for any reason. Tell your doctor about medicines you take and about all of your medical conditions.
- ADVAIR can cause serious side effects, including:
 - serious allergic reactions. Call your healthcare provider or get emergency medical care if you get any of the following symptoms of a serious allergic reaction: rash, hives, swelling of the face, mouth, and tongue, or breathing problems;
 - sudden breathing problems immediately after inhaling your medicine;
 - effects on heart: increased blood pressure, a fast and irregular heartbeat, chest pain;
 - effects on nervous system: tremor, drowsiness;
 - reduced adrenal function (may result in loss of energy) changes in blood sugar, potassium, certain types of white blood cells;
 - weakened immune system and a higher chance of infections. You should avoid exposure to chickenpox and measles, and, if exposed, consult your healthcare provider without delay. Warnings

of existing tuberculosis, fungal, bacterial, viral, or parasitic infections, or ocular herpes simplex may occur.

lower bone mineral density. This may be a problem for people who already have a higher chance of low bone density (osteoporosis).

eye problems including glaucoma and cataracts. You should have regular eye exams while using ADVAIR. **premenstrual.** People with COPD have a higher chance of getting pneumonia. ADVAIR may increase the chance of getting pneumonia. Call your doctor if you notice any of the following symptoms: sore in the mouth (leukoplakia), production, change in mucus (sputum) color, increased cough, increased breathing problems.

Common side effects of ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50 for COPD include: throat in the mouth and throat, throat irritation, hoarseness and voice changes, viral respiratory infections, headache, and muscle and bone pain.

*Measured by a breathing test in people taking ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50 compared with people taking either fluticasone propionate 250 mcg or salmeterol 50 mcg. Your results may vary.

†To not know how often inflammation works in COPD.

‡ADVAIR.com apply. See ADVAIR.com for eligibility rules.

§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.

Please see Brief Summary of Important Safety Information about ADVAIR DISKUS in adjacent page.



ADVAIR DISKUS 250/50
Fluticasone propionate 250 mcg and salmeterol 50 mcg inhaler

ask GlaxoSmithKline

Norie Abram and Richard Threlkney stop for a photo with the 'MyTidUpLife' home improvement radio show. Norie greets fans at the Lumber Liquidators booth.

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Put up a wall of faux tile

Use tape and contrasting finishes to trick the eye and give a room a new look

By JENNIFER BALLPUGH Photography by VICKIE L. TUCKER

Gleaming, oversize subway tile set with thick ribbons of mosaic: It's the last thing you expect to see in a foyer or a dining room. But when the work is done with paint, the result can be a perfect, playful visual effect.

Decorative painter Ingrid Leers "tiled" this foyer wall in two days, using 1-inch-wide decorative adhesive painter's tape and latex paint in two colors and finishes. "The stagger-and-glaze delivers lot of punch, and it certainly goes up faster than the real thing," she says.

For maximum effect, she used a base coat of flat gray to create the look of grout lines, and high-gloss gold to make her glazed-ceramic-likes. "Sevensixties work well," she notes, "but the impact comes from the contrasting finishes, you could also choose flat white and glossy ivory."

Turn the page for the step-by-step process, from blank wall to orange fad.

Give a brush through the wet paint to give the tile subtle texture.



shiny meets matte

Any color combination will do—even two shades of white. But contrasting sheens are key. Choose a flat base for the tile coat (the "grout") and a high-gloss finish for the top coat (the "tile").



1. Make a story stick. Once the grout color has cooled, dry, wrap a 3-foot or longer stick with 1-inch painter's tape at 8-inch intervals; you'll use this to mark out the "grout" lines. If you prefer narrower grout lines, use narrower tape.



2. Use the story stick to mark the grout lines. Using a ladder, the story stick, and light pencil marks, mark the top and bottom of each horizontal grout line. Do the same to mark the vertical lines. Let the marks guide you as you peel down rows of delicate-adhesion painter's tape to form a grid of 8-inch squares. Extend the tape a bit at each end for easy removal.



3. Remove portions of the vertical grout lines. Use a single-edge razor to help remove 8-inch lengths of vertical tape from every other row; this will turn the squares into 8 by 16-inch rectangles that are staggered, as shown in step 4.



4. Seal the edges of the tape and roll on a coat of paint. Using a utility knife or a credit card, press down the edges of the tape to discourage bleeding.



5. Roll on the second color. Working in 4-by-8-foot sections, roll on a coat of high-gloss paint. Before it has a chance to dry, draw a lightly loaded 4-inch brush through the paint from left to right, which will give the "tiles" a bit of texture.



6. Remove the tape. When the paint is dry, gently pull up the tape at an angle. Add a small table and a table saw, and your wood brick is a job accomplished. ■

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Cheery bistro sets

Turn a corner of the deck, a tiny terrace, and even a shady spot in the yard into an instant dining area with these charming tables and chairs. BY DANIELLE KNOTTING • Photography by LISA BRUN

Stylishly built using lightweight materials, bistro sets have long been loved for their portability and simple elegance, offering cozy seating for two just about anywhere you put them. They date to 19th-century France, when lemonade sellers used them to create apron-casual cafes along the banks of the Seine. Originally, they were crafted with wicker, bamboo, and tabletops of wood that leaned on cast-iron frames, and could be folded for quick storage. Today, bistro sets come in several styles—both easy-to-fold and more substantial fixed sets, some with comfy rockers or armchairs—as well as in high-tech materials, such as no-paint resin and weatherproof powder-coated steel. Here and on the following pages, some eye-catching sets, any one of which we'd love to have in our backyard.

period-perfect

FLORISS
Made of powder-coated steel.
Table size: 30 1/2" x 25 1/2"
Seating: A closeup of the original 1940s
Parisian folding chairs was used to create
these day-blue chairs with a coordinating
table. \$300 per set of two chairs and table.
terracotta.com





white and weathered
WILLOW GROUP
Made of powder-coated steel
Table size: 28"W x 23"H
Resins: The sleek and fold-up set appears to be solid but are actually sturdy metal with a distressed painted finish. \$105 per set (with two chairs). www.rehabornatobrook.com



vibrant foldaways
SEARS
Made of powder-coated steel
Table size: 28"W x 23"H
Resins: This lightweight folding set is made to allow easy, 6-lb. folding frame and rounded corners on the top surface the look of the square table. \$140 per set. sears.com



lacy look
WAYFAR
Made of painted wrought-iron
Table size: 27"W x 23"H
Resins: The solid design of the chair backs, seats, and table top give this off-white folding set a vintage feel. \$225 per set. wayfair.com



stylish stackers
VERMOREL
Made of powder-coated iron
Table size: 27"W x 29"H
Resins: The metal green stacking chairs and table from Italy come with a 10-year warranty without risk of rust. \$499 per set. hugoboss.com



barrel backs
GARDNER'S SUPPLY
Made of powder-coated steel
Table size: 29"W x 23"H
Resins: Reminiscent of old-fashioned ice-cream parlor seating, this bright set has curved backs and a pretty painted design on the seats and tabletop. \$149 per set. gardners.com



curvy in cobalt
GARDNER'S SUPPLY
Made of powder-coated steel
Table size: 29"W x 23"H
Resins: Reminiscent of old-fashioned ice-cream parlor seating, this bright set has curved backs and a pretty painted design on the seats and tabletop. \$149 per set. gardners.com



sunny apture
CHARLESTON GARDENS
Made of powder-coated wrought-iron
Table size: 30"W x 28"H
Resins: Made in order by Michigan craftsmen, the sculptural chairs and table are made with a 10-year warranty. \$1,095 per set (including set cushions). charlestongardens.com



clean and contemporary
STRAIGHTWOOD
Made of resin and powder-coated steel
Table size: 33"W x 27"H
Resins: The sleek and fold-up set appears to be solid but are actually sturdy metal with a distressed painted finish. \$105 per set (with two chairs). www.rehabornatobrook.com

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salvage
style

Add a lived-in look with vintage wood

Used for furniture or as finishing touches such as trim or wall paneling, reclaimed beams and boards impart a timeworn patina even to new rooms. By AMY R. HUGGINS Photographs by VIBISTRELLARSON



Reclaimed
wood
adds character
to any space.

Reclaimed from the ruins of old homes, factories, and outbuildings, reclaimed wood has a history, life, quality, and character you won't find in the new studs sold at your local hardware or home center.

Many vintage beams, joists, and boards were originally cut from trees that grew slowly as they competed for sun and nutrients in forests. This made for tightly spaced growth rings and wood that's typically harder and more dense than lumber sourced from many of today's quick-yield tree farms. Some species, such as American chestnut and longleaf pine, that were widely used around the turn of the 20th century aren't even available anymore because



SHOP SMART Redoorgans as vintage wood at reuse centers that demolish buildings, such as Build It Green! NYC and The ReBuilding Center in Portland. Design

of light or poor forest management. And to preserve what biodiversity we have left, federal regulations now limit the harvesting of other chivalding species. From a salvager's perspective, such actions are also common sense. Why log the living when we can recycle what our forefathers chopped down 100 years ago?

Thankfully, buying reclaimed wood has gotten easier and, in some cases, cheaper, given the rising cost of new hardwood, which is often imported from far-flung locales. Expect to pay \$2 to \$10 per linear foot, depending on the type and dimension. Where you shop also impacts the price. Reuse centers tend to sell old wood "as is" at a discount, but you often have to contend with splinters, grime, and rot. Dealers specializing in vintage lumber charge more to exchange for a wider selection and re-milled wood that's ready to install, whether as a rustic mantel shelf or second-and-third-generation

Then there are the lucky finds, such as the three Douglas fir beams (shown) that I rescued from a Dumpster. Their mature size—between 4½ feet long by 15 inches wide—made them ideal for a conventional dining table like the ones I've been admiring at all those trendy farm-to-table restaurants cropping up everywhere. Read on to see how I made mine.

STEP-BY-STEP

Use old beams to make a table

Match the way you place table tops constructed of joined three reclaimed beams from below using 2x6 wood slat strips secured with ¼-by-2½-inch lag screws. The industrial look base is made from ¼-inch gas pipe and coordinating elbows, tees, and flanges, all from the home center. See a blueprint for the base at thelifehouse.com/may2012.



Tip! About \$150 for the gas pipe base (elbows, tees, flanges, and ¼-by-2½-inch lag screws) plus the wood (see page 14) is a reasonable price for the shell of the table. The weight of the wood and the size of the table make this a two-person job.

1 Assemble the pipe base. By doing a dry fit with the base resting on the beams and straps, you can ensure proper alignment by loosening or tightening the fittings. Length and width can vary, but table height is typically 28 to 30 inches.



5 Secure the straps. Clamp the straps to the beams, and drill pilot holes for the lag screws, staggering them every 4 inches. Use a spade bit to bore recesses for the screws heads, and fasten in the field areas with a socket wrench.

2 Cut the two wood straps, and bevel the ends using a compound miter saw. The straps should be a few inches shorter than the width of the three beams clamped edge-to-edge.



6 Attach the base. Position the connecting flange for each of the four legs on top of the straps, and mark the screw holes. Remove the base, and drill pilot holes at the marks for ¼-by-2½-inch wood screws. Replace the base and drive in the screws.



3 Get a sense of the length of the top, and use a T-square and pencil to mark outlines across the face of the beams on both ends.



4 Cut the beams. With the beams face up and clamped edge-to-edge, use a circular saw to make a straight 90-degree cut along your pencil line on each end. Flip the beams face down, and bevel the bottom edges by adjusting the blade on your circular saw to a 45-degree angle (shown below). The bevel gives a bevy-top lighter, more finished look.



7 Sand the top. Turn the table right side up and, wearing a dust mask and protective glasses, use a random orbit sander fitted with 60- or 80-grit paper to remove the rough top layer. Follow with a finer grit to smooth it.



8 Complete the table by applying shellac to dress the wood and seal it. Let dry, and follow with a coat of beeswax polish to fill surface cracks. Now gather your friends for a celebratory get-together to christen your new table. ■





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Please see more detailed Medication Guide on next page.

Pradaxa
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Take more artful garden photos

It's the season to take pics of your green space and record your yard's transformation. Bonus: You'll be all set with images to enter in next year's TOH Reader Remodel Contest by 11/15/2012. —Photography by MATTHEW BENSON

With all the smart-look into cameras (and even cell phones) these days, it's never been easier to photograph your garden. You just point and shoot, right?

Well, sometimes it really is just that simple—but even then, there are tricks of the trade that can make a huge difference in the quality of your shots. For example, have you ever thought of holding your camera down so low that you can't overlook through the new-finder? Photographer Matthew Benson, a frequent *The Old House* contributor and the author of the new book *The Photographic Garden* (Kodak), sometimes does just that. A particularly striking example of the trade is his portrait of a lily (bottom, left), which was taken by holding the camera at waist level, capturing the underside of the leaves inside against the sky. A delicate white blossom tinged with purple rises above olive-green leaves that look almost anachronistic, their veins bulging. "It may end up with a lot of necks poking," Benson says of his experiments with unconventional camera angles, "but something magical can also happen. I got a unique perspective that makes for a compelling image."

And that's just the start of his practical tips for transforming garden photography from simple snapshots into images that really tell a story. Coming up: this accomplished pro's top five techniques to try.



What's the best camera to use?

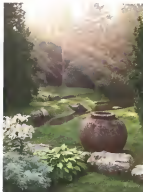
My advice is always the same: the one you have with you. If you find an expensive camera with interchangeable lenses too cumbersome to take with you, then it's the wrong camera. If you can't be bothered with choices and parts, a quality point-and-shoot will do."

—MATTHEW BROWN, PHOTOGRAPHER

1

Get up early, stay out late.

Eager to capture the first light of day filtering through leaves wet with dew, Benson usually starts just before dawn so that he can figure out where the light will break through and can be ready to capture it. There is no better time to photograph the overall sweep of a garden, he says. "Light at midday compromises the beauty of the garden, turning delicate plantings into stark shadow and glare." But at the beginning—*and end*—of the day, shadows and beams of light lengthen, and colors almost glow.



2

Shoot into the sun.

Taking family snapshots, you've probably had your subjects squint into the sun to avoid shadows on their faces. For great garden photographs, it's just the opposite. "The most important change you can make to improve your garden photography is to learn to shoot into the light," Benson says, because backlighting brings out details, emphasizes shapes, and makes everything seem alive. Position yourself so that buds, borders and petals are between you and the sun. You'll need to override the automatic exposure control on your camera's through, and set the shutter speed to match the light on the plants, not the sky. If your camera has a program mode, use that. If not, you might be able to focus on a flower, depress the shutter halfway to lock in the exposure reading, then move the camera (without lifting your finger) to frame the shot, you wait before pressing down the shutter the rest of the way.



4

Keep changing position.

Every time you enter a garden has three dimensions, so good photographers don't settle for taking pictures from only one direction. Shoot from above, from below, from both sides, from close in, from far back. Benson tries it all, always looking for an inherent balance, whether perfect symmetry (flowered in formal gardens), asymmetrical arrangements with a large object on one side and two smaller ones on the other, or strong vertical or diagonal lines (above). He has found that shots taken from above—from another's window looking down, for example—can be good for revealing a garden's overall design. But these photographs usually lack intimacy, so he advises taking the majority of your photographs from eye level. These are more likely to capture the sensual pleasures of a garden, such as smell, touch, and delicacy.



3

Shoot through or from behind.

Frame an image with an object or objects in the foreground so that people viewing the photograph feel as if they were moving through the frame to something beyond. For instance, use a pergola or an arbor to frame a picture of a person sitting on the other side of it. Another example: Benson shot this mayhalls grove (left) without, of focus, magnolia blossoms in the foreground framing branches filled with sharply in-focus blooms a bit deeper into the garden. The effect is to make you feel like you're standing in the grove, surrounded by the brilliant flowers.



5

Find a theme, tell a story.

How a garden changes over time is one obvious story line. To do it well requires shots that show the overall plan of the garden, as well as mid-range views and close-ups. But Benson points out, there are many other stories. Think of the patterns that specific plants create: studies of heads, cups, elements and garden ornaments. The leaf patterns on an arbor gate (above) may hint at the weathered grandeur of the garden beyond. Pick an element of your garden that you love—a color, a shape, a recurring motif—and shoot just that, then complete the story with broader views. Above all, aim to find a story to tell that's all your own. ■

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FROM THE TOH TV JOB SITE

A neglected Cape Cod gets a new lease on life

Now complete, the latest TOH TV project showcases a head-to-toe yet cost-conscious remodel that helped this outdated house live up to its potential. **By DEBORAH HANCOCKIAN • Photos by the HATREK**

When Geoff Allen and Michelle Foster bought their 1925 Cape Cod, in Farmington, Rhode Island, its water-front location was by far its strongest selling point. The latest TOH TV project house had suffered from years of budget-buster renovations and inadequate maintenance that had left the exterior shabby and the interior cramped and dreary. So the couple turned to architect Mary Dorsey Brundage and general contractor Andy Tiplady to figure out how to make it suitable for raising their young daughter.

In addition to tackling structural and mechanical upgrades and steep renovation challenges—beating curb appeal, rugging floor plans, adding an extra bedroom and bath—the project team had to work within a tight lot and a no-bell-and-whistles budget. “Constraints helped us think creatively,” says Tiplady. They came up with a skillful remodel that manages to maximize space and brings out the house’s latent charm. Read on to learn how they pulled it off.



small house, big changes

STORY: Three stories of the 1,600-square-foot house looked neglected with its dispirited siding, unsharpened windows, and overgrown landscaping. **LEFT:** A second-story addition, including a new covered porch and a small bumpout on the southeast corner, adds about 400 square feet inside and improves the house’s proportions dramatically. Double-hung windows also help unify the facade and suit the home’s traditional style. The red cedar shingle siding will weather to a handsome gray, along with the gutters, which were cut to a new pitch to divert rain into eaves and to suggest the rippling bay across the street. **RIGHT:** Mary Dorsey Brundage. **ABOVE:** A new kitchen island gives the dining family a dedicated spot for tackling food prep.

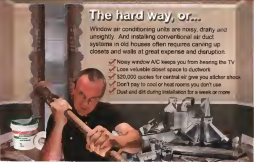


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See how a bold paint makeover brings out the best in a home's architectural detail

By DEE HAGEMAN • Illustrations by JOVONNE DIGITAL



Before

"Are you sure you want to get in the middle of a domestic dispute?" asked Jerry Lescanovic when he asked us to help him and his wife, Sonia, choose colors for their 1895 farmhouse in western New York. The one thing they agree upon is that the all-white house could benefit from a colorful paint job. But which hues? "I like some of the historic, muted shades and creams," says Jerry. "My wife is into more vibrant tones—she's talked about a deep red—but I'm afraid to take the leap."

To nudge them over the edge, we enlisted the help of architectural color consultant Bonnie Krone of Concord, Massachusetts. "This house has a lot of elements that lend themselves to different colors without it becoming overboard," she says. Playing penicillin, she produced three palettes, each with four hues, at right, and, on the following page, let red for her and a welcoming blue, too. "What does the happy couple think?" "Holy cow—they are all so beautiful!" says Jerry. "I love the first one, and Sonia loves the red as well as the blue... now what?" Nice try, Jerry, but we'll let you two work it out from here.



Dark-brown colors are typical of historic-era paint schemes.

Pick a palette

If green isn't your thing, flip the page to see the same house dressed in red and in blue.

Historic olive

The colors are historically informed but a little less saturated than the others. Green, cream, and white of the period," Krone says. Gold pulled from the green siding highlights the striped globe and an early porch replacement in green—made it the best design. Sherwin Williams's colors in Betty Green (2), Mountain Gold (2), Paper Linens (3), First Brick (4), Avocado (5), and Clapper Tan (6).





PROJECT OF THE WEEK

Share your top
three choices.

HOW TO INSTALL BELGIAN BLOCK DRIVEWAY EDGING



After a season's worth of snow, salt, and shoveling, your driveway could use new life. Give your home a curb-appeal boost by adding a neat row of Beigan block edging to each side of the driveway. When you're finished, plant colorful flowers to enhance your front yard even more.

You'll find a huge selection of tools to help with this or any home project at The Home Depot nearest you. For easy instructions and lists of the tools and materials you'll need for this and other seasonal projects, go to thisoldhouse.com/project.

PROJECT OF THE WEEK CALENDAR

- April 5 Belgian Block Driveway Edging
April 12 Pearl Kitchen Cabinets
April 19 God's New Lawn
April 26 Build a Raised Planting Bed

[photoshop reds](#)

Bold berry red

Eden's dam is burn red or historic rose, this color is much lighter," says Krimes. "That makes it more fun and appealing than the live option." Contrasting the red with a berry-tinged blue in the same depth of tone and tinting the house in a creamy yellow creates a refreshingly updated look. Benjamin Moore's Raspberry Thistle (3), Pale Navy (2), Lichen Chiffon (3), Silver Pine (4), and Goldenrod Glow (2).



Truly cool blues

Blue is America's favorite color and even though the owners didn't ask for it, I wanted them to see how welcoming it is," says Krome. Playing traditional blue-joint (jazzed-up) and a modern indie/garage blue rock, balladists [is] unexpected-but-ach the energy gold standard (jazz: struts) Golden Marriage Krome (2) Blueberry Hill (2) Eggs (3) Midnight Haze (4) and Home Gold (5)

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How to build a pathway lamppost

Pick up some stock cedar and a hanging lantern to construct a custom garden fixture. by JOSEPH TRACIO Photography by KOLIN SMITH

Cost: \$200 (not including the lantern)

Time: Two days

Difficulty: Easy. Aside from several angle and dovetail cuts, the build is elementary.

If you're looking for a stylish and original way to spruce up your home's landscaping, well, look to the night. This outdoor lighting project is deceptively simple to build. Made of re-routed waste on and color, the fixture consists of a 2x4 center post to anchor it, a horizontal arm to hold the lantern, and two chadding that yokes the 2x4s together and creates attractive shadow lines. Fitted with a handsome copper-and-glass candle lantern, it creates 20x4s beauty day and night.

The Old House senior technical editor Mark Power installed our lamppost along a garden path but says its proportions would complement virtually any outdoor space, from a petite flower terrace. Turn the pages to see how it comes together. And if you'd prefer to wire the lamppost for low-voltage lighting, he shows how to do that, too.



For complete instructions, turn the page.



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Image: THEOLDHOUSE.COM



4

4. Assemble the lamppost

A. Lay out the cladding. Disassemble the post and arms. Arrange the three 2x4 pieces that make up one side of the lamppost as shown.

B. Position the 2x4 parts. Lay the 2x4 outer post on the boards. To center it, use a 3-inch-wide scrap wood block and shift the 2x4 until the block's flush with one edge of the 2x4. Mark the 2x4's final position with a pencil, and repeat the process for the lantern arm.

C. Join the post parts. Remove the center post and arms, apply construction adhesive to the back of the first piece of base trim and press it to the lamppost's surface. Tack the 2x4 pieces with a pneumatic finishing nailer and 2-inch-long nails. If you installed the electrical cable as directed, be sure to keep the feeders within 1/4 inch of the inner edge of the 2x4. Apply construction adhesive to the exposed faces of the 2x4s and set the remaining cladding in place. Use your combination square to align it with the opposite layer of cladding. Press the boards down. For added strength, you can tack this cladding in place with a pneumatic finishing nailer and 2-inch-long nails. If you do, be sure to fill and sand the nail holes.

5. Install the dowels

A. Bore the dowel holes. To strengthen the joint between the post and the lantern arm—and to lend the piece a handcrafted look—install two hardwood dowels. Use a combination square to draw a 45-degree line where the post intersects the arm. Make two marks along the line, 2 1/2 inches in from each corner. Slip a scrap board underneath the joint. Then use a drill and 5/8-inch-diameter spade bit to bore two holes at the marks, go completely through the other side.

B. Fit the dowels. Soak waterproofer carpenter's glue or polyurethane glue onto a 1/4-inch hardwood dowel. Tap the dowel into one of the holes until it protrudes at least 1/4 inch from the opposite side. Trim off the excess dowel with a Japanese-style flush-cutting hand saw, as shown. Peg the remaining hole, and trim the excess.



5

6. Make the decorative base

A. Bevel-rip the base. Clamp a 2- to 10-degree band to a sturdy surface with its long edge overhanging. Use a circular saw to rip a 45-degree bevel along that overhanging edge. If necessary, clamp a long straightedge to the band to guide you to absolutely straight cut.

B. Miter-cut the base. Fit the miter saw blade to a 45-degree bevel and adjust the miter angle to zero. Bevel-cut the 2x4 into four lengths that wrap around the base of the lamppost.

C. Attach the base to the post. Apply construction adhesive to the back of the first piece of base trim and press it to the lamppost's square end. Back with one end of the cladding. Use a pneumatic finishing nailer and 2 1/4-inch-long nails to attach it, then attach the remaining three base pieces in a similar fashion. Use construction adhesive against the post, but apply waterproofer carpenter's glue or polyurethane glue to each of the four mitered corner joints. And be sure to nail through the corners, as shown. Sand all surfaces smooth with a random orbit sander fitted with a 100-grit disc.



6

landscape
lighting
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outdoor lighting
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7

7. Set the lamppost

A. Sink the post. Hole a 2x4 block on top of the center post and lay a 3-pound weight on it. In a hole it's pointed end into the ground. If necessary, lower the soil until it's level with the top of the post. If you want the post to extend below ground, use all four level legs to the post. Treat it with wood oil if you want to preserve the color.

B. Hang the lantern. Twist all four screw hooks at the underside of the 2x4 arm and hang the lantern from them. If you wired the lamppost for low-voltage lighting, hang the lantern from the back. Then complete the electrical connection.

THE POWER OF COLOR

Spring brings renewal—and open windows—which makes it the perfect time to paint. Infusing rooms with color remains the easiest, least expensive way to give a home a whole new look, and this spring, color experts are forecasting bolder choices than ever, from burnt orange and Caribbean blue to high-noon yellow and grass green. To help readers separate fads from future favorites, T^{OH} sifted through hundreds of paint chips to find 15 shades that go beyond trends to perform beautifully in real rooms. Whether you want to lighten up dull walls, brighten bead-board, or showcase the beauty of built-ins, read on to see how these handpicked hues could work for you.

• BY DEBORAH BALDWIN •



ORANGE

For rooms in need of a dose of drama, rich purples, copper, and terra cotta are pushing aside classic neutrals the past few years. But once the influential color-counseling firm, made it official by naming a bright tangerine-orange this year's number one color. Today's homeowners can create a big welcome in a small foyer, pull together a sprawling living room, or give a kick to a walk-in closet. Our picks start with a soft version of "Languor," the color of T^{OH}'s 2015 Palette. Turn the page.



CLEMENTINE

CALIFORNIA WHITE

Despite its name, this shade has a richness that sets it apart from the rest of the citrus crowd. It makes the profile of a flower-petal white with its gray undertones echo the stone-colored floor tile, a rich, rubbed bronze sconce, and nickel-finished knobs and pulls. The outside, with its sunny citrus and complementary blue stripes, provides reinforcement.



BLUE

Typically tagged as "cool" and "soothe like," blue has busted out of its stereotype to become one of the most popular, versatile colors anywhere in the home. Today's blues can be as cool as an ice pick or as warm as a sunset. TCM's picks are made over a range that runs from misty to midgo.



ACQUA DI GIÒ

Winds of gray give this shade depth and drama. In this kitchen, it updates the traditional styling of the cabinets while tying them to the updated stainless steel appliances.



SEA TICKLE

This upbeat shade has a fresh, summery feel. Here, it gives an accent wall of cottage-style painting a breezy finish, contrasted by light-reflecting white trim.



ORANGE/COOPER GLORY

This warm, saturated color offers a bold alternative to dining room red. Here, it enlivens everything around it. Balanced by creamy white reupholstering and paired with a ribbon of black, it emphasizes the room's neo-traditional style.

INDIANA CLAY

This bold term catches on enough white to let red character without overwhelming anyone. Not ready to saturate four walls? Try it as a cheerful accent. Here, set against pale gray walls, it turns an everyday armchair into a statement piece, grounded by complementary blues in the other furnishings.

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paint like a pro
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PICKING A WHITE THAT'S RIGHT

White is the most popular color in the home, but it's not all the same. White comes in many shades, from cool to warm, and each has its own personality. When you're picking a white, consider the room's lighting, the colors of the walls and trim, and the overall style of the home. A cool white will look best in a room with cool lighting and cool colors, while a warm white will look best in a room with warm lighting and warm colors.

White is the most popular of whites—and so it's not surprising that they are frequently misapplied to the ceiling.

Color experts generally suggest reinforcing a warm wall color like peach or marigold with a warm or cool white. When walls are a cool or color like steel gray, turquoise or blue green, a cooler white usually feels right. Exceptions work too, of course. Picture the dramatic contrast of cool white trim with walls painted clean, bright turquoise.

Like all colors, whites change with their surroundings, which explains why paint shops can often be misleading. Rather than compare two whites on the same shop, compare each with the color you wish to see for the walls—first in the store and then by painting a section of wall and adjacent trim.

Keep in mind that light plays an important part too. In a room with no sunlight, for example, even a warm white can look a little gray.

TIDEWATER

SWOON WILLIAMS

Pale blues have universal appeal. Here, this cloud-like gray-blue tames a narrow, angular space into an airy focal point with darker-blue trends.



GREEN

Part yellow, part blue—or part warm and part cool—green is said by some to evoke Mother Earth and by others, the color of money. These three represent fresh takes, think of them as less stately than dark forest green and more formal than bright apple. Use one of TON's new greens to add a lively accent piece, envelop a small space, or stretch a variety more.

CHOOSING A FINISH

Back when matte walls were plaster, paint with flat or matte finish was the obvious choice because it hid imperfections.

Paints with more sheen—eggshell and satin—were a good bet for the bath or kitchen because they cleaned up easily. That left semigloss and high-gloss finishes with the job of protecting wear-and-tear doors and trim from dirt and hand knocks. Today's finishes, however, are better performers all around, so there's no reason not to experiment. If you're painting foyer walls in an intense color, like dramatic blue, consider intensifying the effect with a glossy finish. If you're softening up the living room, try unifying walls and trim by giving them the same medium sheen. As far flat, it's not over yet. It's still a great choice for walls because it has a light absorbing quality that enhances deep, rich colors.

LUCKY GREEN

SWOON WILLIAMS

This happy shade strikes a vintage hutch look now. It's a green with enough yellow to tie it to the color inside the hutch and enough blue to tie it to the walls.



SAISON GREEN

PATRICIA SELL

This warm, medium green offers a spirited alternative to more subdued sage. Here, it draws down the walls and across the floor, giving the space a lively feel.



GREEN GODDESS

VAL SPAT

Just a hint of this lively green adds punch to an all-white bath while bringing out the details in a traditional painted door.

GRAY

For years, warm beige and hazy white were the default choices of many a homeowner. But gray is taking ground as the go-to neutral. Part of its appeal may lie in its ability to showcase other colors—picture permeation screen pillows on gray upholstery. Gray also complements Carrara marble, stainless steel, and nickel as otherwise white, but chic and bold. Gray can be rusty, moody, stately, or warm. Witness these *TOW* picks.



< SUMMER TOWN BY THE

This warm gray with hints of brown allows other colors to leap. In this ever-popular dining room, it brings out the caramel color of the wood built-in while partnering nicely with the cool white built-in and ocean blue bench.

< MONTEPELLIER BY NANCY O'NEILL

This saturated gray has the undertones but does not feel cold. In this formal room, with its broad bands of white trim, the gray creates a sense of intimacy, boosted by heavy tufted hanging artwork, heavy wood flooring, and curly patterned upholstery in sage green and taupe.



< SILVER QUAIL GLENN

This clean gray has lots of light to it, so it doesn't feel dull or muddy. It sits nicely next to white fixtures and stainless steel, providing a great foil for crisp green and black.

YELLOW

Off to work the best of optimism, olive yellow reflects light and adds cheer. The newest yellows are more rustic, and than the former hues of years past, with enough reference to make a statement without calling to mind rainboos. *TOW*'s favored hues range from relatively pale to a bright shade of off-white that recalls colonial-era color tones.

< LITTLE ANGEL BY NANCY O'NEILL

This yellow can lighten the mood of a formal public space without seeming lightweight. Here, its summer shades up to the distinctive trim and dark stained flooring, bar stools, and chair backs.



< MIDDAY BY NANCY O'NEILL

With its creamy undertones, this golden yellow can have a softening effect. Here, it warms up chilly white surfaces and cool-black countertops.



< DAFFODIL BY NANCY O'NEILL

Neither too sunny nor too dark, this yellow brings together many tones, which gives it some depth and luminosity. Here, it offers a high ceiling, an arched window, and large scale paneling.

Hostas!

These leafy perennials are showy, shade tolerant, and a cinch to grow—and new varieties offer a wider-than-ever range of leaf color, size, and texture. Read on to learn how to pick and plant them to create a sensational landscape.

By Sai Vaglica

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALISON R. K.

RIVER OF FOLIAGE
Lining a curvy woodland path with varied hostas creates a leafy ribbon of color and texture with leaves that grow in green to blue and feature ribbed, smooth, fringed, and flat textures and patterns along the edges.



Go ahead, run your hands over the leaves—you wouldn't be the first. There is something about hosta foliage that begs to be touched. Large and luscious, generally with a velvety-matte finish, the leaves look like something best seen in a preserved forest. While many perennials have tender, delicate look-but-don't-touch flowers, hosta color comes on robust leaves that stand up to the attention. And for gardeners who struggle with a shady area of the yard, these colorful, durable plants are a heaven-sent, transforming a potentially drab space into a lush, soothing oasis.

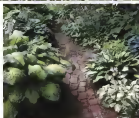
Native to China, Korea, and Japan, where they grow alongside oaks and in woodland areas, hostas really became of interest to American gardeners in the 1980s, when breeders found success in changing the variegation, something that previously occurred only through natural plant mutations. The variegation appears as a band, or margin, of contrasting color around the leaf's edge. It usually combines any of the two base colors—green, blue, or gold, which includes the chartreuse and yellow-tinted varieties—or a core color with white, though some newer varieties have three colors.

Hosta foliage is long-lasting, pecking up through the soil in late spring and remaining until fall, though hot climates will sap color before late September. In early or midsummer, tall spikes extend from the center of the plant and fill with white

or, if not cold, the plants are not delicate and will survive down to minus 40 degrees F, growing in the coldest part of Massachusetts (Zone 3) as well as in central Florida (Zone 9). They prefer moist, well-draining soil and a good amount of organic matter. It's hard to overwater hostas, but expect them to need about an inch of water each week during the hottest months. Generally easy to grow and disease resistant, they can be susceptible to damage from common garden pests, including deer, voles, rabbits, and slugs.

Today's breeders are tackling practical concerns, such as increased slug resistance (by developing varieties with thicker, more waxy leaves) and smaller plant size, as well as common imperfections, including better colorfastness, new leaf shapes, and variegated stems. A lot of effort is being put into developing miniature hostas because of the versatility that these smaller plants, most of which are less than 7 inches high, can provide. Placed under larger perennials in borders or mixed into containers, mini-work where larger hostas overshadow. Newer ones of note include "Alakazam," with ruffled, tapered leaves with green centers, yellow margins, and tiny lavender flowers, and the larger "Gambazon," up to 10 inches high, with wavy, rippled blue leaves and lavender flowers as 22-inch-high stems.

Jumbo hostas easily anchor a planting bed, though they do require fertiliser to reach maximum size. At



THOUGHT PHONIES
Two additional hosta varieties and garden photos of *BlueHostage* and *May2022*

BREAK COMBINATIONS

LEFT: Filtering in a hosta's mature canopy is mixed color for a bed that looks full but not overcrowded. Here the chartreuse leaves of *Moon Lily* (right) and *Pendula Gold* (left) are pulled up to the margin of *Bandana*. **THE LEFT, RIGHT:** Linking a walkway with *Lemon Lime* and *Hosta* creates a clean border and allows later varieties, such as *Golden Pinnapple* (left, upper right), to stand out. **BELOW LEFT:** By repeating colors, you draw the eye through a garden. Here, the yellow and green of large-leaved *Summer Snowdrift* (left) are echoed in smaller *T* (top right). **BELOW CENTER:** *Alakazam* has yellow margins that get brighter with more sunlight.



er lavender trumpet-shaped flowers that last through August. Some gardeners choose to pinch them off, redirecting energy and focus back to the showier foliage.

Try a little experiment: where you place hostas and you'll be awarded with bright color and good growth. Most do best with 5 to 6 hours of morning sun. The lighter chartreuse and gold cultivars tolerate more sun. Mostly white hostas usually don't

fare well in shade because they lack the chlorophyll required to make food. Afternoon sun, especially in the South, will scorch plants and fade leaves. Blue hostas are particularly susceptible to too much sun, which softens the naturally occurring protective wax that keeps them blue, reverting them back to their base green color.

While hosta leaves are tender, meaning they die back where water

THE COLOR SPECTRUM

The thousands of different named hostas are variations on three main colors: green, blue and gold. Variegation can be found in every combination of these colors as well as with white.



MAUI BUTTERFLY



DELTA BARN



LEMON LIME



SUNNY EDGE



ARMCHAIR

PROBLEM SOLVERS

ABOVE: Planted on a slope—here, saving a curved retaining wall—hostas are spreading roots half the soil so that it doesn't wash away when it rains.

LEFT: In sunny spots, hostas create natural-looking low-maintenance borders. An orange-red flower adds a vibrant touch to the garden.

Here, they divide the turf into different outdoor rooms, adding to the feeling of a green oasis.

6 feet wide by 4 feet tall, the dinner-plate-size foliage of 'Empress Wu' is striking for the ribbing on its dark green leaves, which can grow up to 16 inches across, and its pale purple flowers in early summer.

While we're years away from seeing a new core hosta color, some newer varieties with red stipes offer a surprise under the foliage. 'Rocker's Red Glaze' has dark red veins rippled with waxy, glossy green leaves that are under rippled in older flowers. New varieties with longer variegations distinguish themselves from the standard, two-color pattern. The aptly named 'Rain Forest' offers those colors a white center surrounded by a green margin with a pale green color in between. 'Autumn Frost' has heart-shaped foliage that starts blue, with bright yellow margins that mellow to creamy white in summer. Large and showy 'Broad Based,' with heart-shaped foliage featuring yellow-to-white margins around a dark green center, is an example of the trend toward chunkier margins.

Glossy leaves offer a nice contrast in texture when paired with the more common matte varieties. The 3-foot-wide 'Irish Luck' has deeply veined dark green leaves with

COMING IN FLAVOR

When a lone cane right up to the base of a hosta grows and strong brown stems can damage the trunk. Keeping the cane with chain-link fencing helps guard the bark and creates a focal point in the yard.

Here, the large variegated leaves of 'Tomoko' tower above smaller varieties.



a longer blue fringe below most-standing, lavender flowers.

In the past, it's been a struggle to find a blue hosta that kept its color through the summer, but the rounded, silvery-blue leaves on 'Silver Bay' stay true all season. Another new blue, 'Blue Mouse Ears,' has thick, rubbery blue-gray leaves that keep their color and are also long resistant.

New foliage shapes, like the dark, heavy, almost clay-like green-leaf

shape leaves on 'Spazale,' help distinguish some new varieties from older ones with similar variegation. 'Sister Cori' is a medium-green hosta that sets itself apart with waxy, ruffled edges. 'Tropesal Dancer' has fluted, peacock-shaped foliage with creamy-white margins and green centers.

In a garden design, better give a patch of color to a shady location and, planted in mass, can be a show-stopper. Start by using mostly solid-green and solid blue varieties and mixing in simply variegated hostas that repeat those colors. "Placing the variegation on two-toned foliage to the shade of a solid-color hosta nearby gives a garden bed consistency," says Minnesota-based landscape designer Pam Harley. Keep variegated hostas distinct from one another by varying the width of their leaf margins. Repeat similar variegations within a bed, but allow

EASY PROTECTION AGAINST VOLE DAMAGE

In most areas of the country, voles can be found tearing through tunnels with their sharp teeth as they look for grubs and plants to snack on. Hostas, with their thick, fleshy roots, are a favorite. Stylin' their plants modern with a plastic liner like the recycled 10-inch-diameter coarse-weave mesh waste paper basket shown below. An inexpensive basket like this one protects all but the largest hostas for which you can craft a custom basket from hardware cloth. With the rim sitting just above the soil, the mesh protects the root ball while giving the roots room to grow.

Once a vole jumps into the mesh, it will go around the basket, and it won't look in the soil. Here's how to modify a mesh basket like the one shown: (1) Make a line 20 inches down from the rim of the container. Make a crease along this line by pressing the wire out with one hand inside the basket while pressing the bottom of the basket with the other hand. (2) Grasp the crease together with the rim. (3) Using the heels of your hands, fold the rim edge over toward the center, flattening the bottom. (4) You should end up with a finished basket that is about 10 inches tall. It can be spray-painted brown or black to blend in. Fill the basket with heavy soil, planting the hosta in the center and packing down soil around the root ball to collapse air pockets. (5) Dig a hole and place the hosta in the ground so that about 1 inch of the rim rests above ground, as the plant matures, leaves will cover the basket. Or hide the rim now with a 1-inch layer of mulch.



COLORFUL COMBINATIONS

Here, blue-green hosta works in a subtle foil for the brighter foliage and flowers of a blue hosta. The background, variegated Japanese forest grass in the foreground pairs well with a smaller variegated hosta nearby, as well as a larger green one. The pink cherries vine bearing around the hosta leader pole complements the lavender and white flowers of the flowering hosta that stands to the right.



WHERE TO FIND UNUSUAL HOSTA VARIETIES

landed the plants at hosta farms.

Has a staggering 21,000 varieties, including 'Gentle Giant' with ruffled, twisted, deep blue-green leaves that reach 32 inches across. Grows to 42 inches high and 35 inches wide.

raylancreek.com

Features nearly 900 varieties including 'Barn Barn Blue' which has a deep blue color and puckered leaves that reach 9½ inches across. Grows to 30 inches high and 48 inches wide.

perennialalchemy.com

Offers more than 322 varieties, including 'Redstart Blue' a smaller hosta that has heart-shaped dark green leaves with chartreuse margins that turn yellow. Grows to 7 inches high and 12 inches wide.

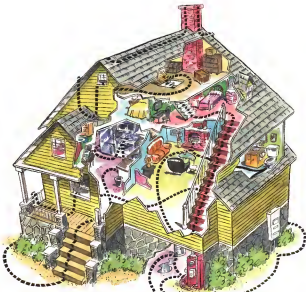
plantdelights.com

Has about 125 varieties, including 'Phantom' a flower with ruffled rounded blue leaves and green margins. Grows to 36 inches high and 36 inches wide.



OVIC PLANTS TO SHARE

Splitting hostas every two to three years is a great way to multiply your collection and prevent them as gifts to gardening friends and neighbors. (1) Dig a spade shovel dig along the plant's drip line and remove the root ball. (2) Shake off excess soil and place the plant on a work surface, separate the leaves to find the center of the crown, pulling the stems into groups of at least three. (3) Using a no-knife cut through the crown while gently pulling away in sections as you cut. (4) Pot up the divisions in a mix of compost and soil and keep moist until they can be replanted.



Is your home due for a **checkup?**

Having a top-to-bottom inspection done every five to seven years or after a string of improvements can alert you to red flags that could turn costly—or dangerous—if left undiscovered

By Joe D'Agnes

Illustrations by Gary Hovland

CONDUCTING AN INSPECTION before you buy a home is just common sense. But it's also a good idea after you've been living in a place for a while. Daily use takes its toll on appliances. Heating and cooling systems creep inexorably toward the end of their useful life span. Weather patterns siding. And, just as you can't watch yourself age by glancing in a mirror, you probably can't see the truth about your home. You make excuses for sticky closet doors and for toilets that run longer than they should. But what else is lurking that you don't see or don't have the expertise to assess?

To find out, hire an inspector; whose report will provide you with an action log that pinpoints hazardous or costly problems that may need immediate attention. The action list will also allow you to schedule and save for other jobs—on your timetable, rather than when major appliances or systems break down.

A thorough inspection should touch on all visible elements of a house, including roofing, plumbing, electrical, HVAC, insulation, and interior walls and floors. The cost varies, but the typical range is \$250 to \$500. Since only 33 states require home inspections, the only way to be sure you're hiring someone who's up to snuff is to choose a pro certified by the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI). "When you take your car to a mechanic, do you want one who'll do the bare minimum or do you want one who'll do the max?" asks Ralph Julian, whose ASHI-certified firm, Julian Home Inspections, has been checking out homes in North Carolina since 1995.



A convincing case study

To show what he means, Julian rented *This Old House* to stay along on an exclusive 48-hour inspection of a 1911 Craftsman in Asheville, North Carolina. Since buying the house in the 1960s, the owners had replaced its antiquated knob-and-tube wiring and have installed exterior walls. They installed a boiler in 2002 and a water heater in 2006, and renovated the kitchen and three bathrooms. But not once in all that time did they hire an inspector. "When we bought, it just wasn't something people pushed you to do."

Hungry-looking, with glasses and a graying beard, and wearing an undershirt, jeans, and his utility belt, Julian set to work, testing every window, door, on let, light, electrical outposts, and door in the house. He pried open the main breaker box and each of the three subpanels. He tested every kitchen appliance and opened every cabinet. In the bathrooms, he tested toilets, sinks, showers, and tubs in search of leaks and slow drainage. He opened and monitored the boiler, searched for leaks in the water heater, looked up and down the home's chimney flues, and walked the roof, back porch, and deck. He crept into the crawl space to see if it was properly insulated and probed the attic. Outside, he checked the house, checking for paint problems and on smooching the chimney flanges. He crawled into his voice recorder about knobbyknobs hanging dangerously over the front

porch and vines creeping onto the foundation. In the end, he concurred with the owners: "This is a good ol' house."

The homeowners had clearly stayed on top of many of the issues a mold house could bring this way. But Julian nevertheless spotted lots of easy DIY fixes that could be tackled on an afternoon: installing missing corner plates on electrical outlets or junction boxes, lowering the thermostat on the water heater from 137 degrees F to a safer 120, trimming those branches away from the front porch and gutters, and repairing minor basement leaks.

But when he climbed onto the 100-year-old attic, Julian stopped dead. Looking from front of him was a metal clothes-dryer cabinet that vented inside the attic instead of venting outside the house with a vent seal. "You see this?" he said, reaching for his voice recorder. "That has to be fixed. That's a fire hazard." The list and debris that would otherwise be tolerated safely outdoors were blowing around and collecting in the attic like highly combustible dust bunnies. Drying clothes indoors like this accounts for about 15,000 residential fires in the U.S. each year, according to FEMA.

Julian twiddled his fingers with a handkerchief and began poking around the attic joists. He lifted some fiberglass insulation, uncovering some old knob-and-tube wiring that had not been covered during electrical upgrades. So he removed his trusty "hot stick" from a pouch clipped to his utility belt, touched the voltage detector to the wire, and immediately started shaking his head. It was all low. While this can be safe, the wiring must be re-routed. And if that fiberglass insulation were to get damp, it could spark a fire. "What's going on, folks?" an exasperated Julian said into his recorder. "Gotta get that checked out."

In another spot in the attic, he found a bathroom sewer vent poking through the roof. The hard plastic boot that let the PVC pipe in place had cracked, allowing rainwater in. Nearby, a bathroom fan was not attached to its intended vent, which meant that steam would into the space every time someone took a shower.

In a matter of minutes, Julian had discovered four dangerous things that could, at a moment's pressure not and mold on the framing and, or worst, burn this otherwise well-maintained house to the ground.

Some of his other discoveries around the house were aberrant. Did you know, for example, that the breakers in your electrical box should be the same make as the box itself? Tolerances vary across manufacturers, and breakers that don't fit properly in their panels can cause electrical shorts or worse. "I once watched a homeowner pound one on with a hammer because it was too tight," said Julian, shaking his head. "Smashed it to bits." Pinned strikers on the doors of newer subpanels cause an "like fat like" installation, but electricians don't always comply. Julian found nonmatching breakers in two subpanels.



An improperly vented clothes dryer can be a fire hazard.

An action plan for peace of mind

Before leaving, Julian summarized his findings. "You've got a great house," he told the homeowners. "I should look this good when I'm this old!" But then, as he described the situation in the attic, their eyes widened. The pro they'd hired to install the dryer vent had merely pointed the exhaust toward a downspout grill already in place in the attic, rather than cutting into the roof for a dedicated exterior vent. Told about the remaining knob-and-tube wiring, the well-maintained, "Penny—we had a running dispute with our electrician about that. We wanted to take it out. He argued it was safe to leave. We just got a new lesson and forgot a lesson."

The two-faced the inspector professed. "We've got to get these taken care of," the husband said. Within a few days, Julian mailed a 25-page report of his findings, most notably the dangers regarding immediate actions. Julian also sent his bill for \$400—prudent, considering that the inspection saved the homeowners thousands in potential damage and, quite possibly, their lives.



DIY checklist

Before your next inspection, ask the inspector to check for these items. Or go to thisoldhouse.com/hw2012

Common trouble signs

IF YOU HEAR, SEE, OR SMELL something new and troubling in your home (your daughter's boyfriend aside), it may be a signal to call an inspector. Here are three types of telltale signs of a potential problem. While you can spot them yourself, determining the cause and how to remedy the situation is a job best left to a pro.

Crack in the wall

Big fissures near windows and doors could hint at major structural problems in your foundation. Finding tracks in recently painted or tiled surfaces could mean that you or your contractor didn't do enough prep.

Sag in the floor

The floors of most homes often slope in the vicinity of a chimney: it's normal, provided that foundations and walls are sound. But soft spots and sags, regardless of a home's age, can mean floor joist problems.

Stain on the ceiling

You never want to see this, but the underlying problem could range from a leaky roof, asbestos and expensive to repair problem to rotting, humidity caused by a faulty bathroom fan or a swampy last fl.



High winds or heavy snow could cause a leaning tree branch to cause crashing down.

ALL ABOUT

Exterior paint

Nothing freshens up the outside of a house faster or more cost-effectively than new paint. Here's our expert advice on choosing the best formulations for your siding type, selecting the most eye-catching colors, and getting long-lasting results *By Thomas Baker*

We ask a lot from house paint. It's not only expected to give our home a new look but also to withstand freezing winters, blistering summers, soaking rains, and a daily bombardment of UV radiation without cracking, fading, or peeling.

Such miracles don't come without expense and effort. For the best results, you need an exterior paint that's packed with high-quality resins, pigments, and additives, as well as a clean, smooth surface for the new finish to stick to. Making that investment in material and labor will virtually guarantee that you won't have to drag out the ladders again anytime soon.

Modern advances in paint technology—specifically the arrival of all-acrylic formulations—have made the task of finding a top-shelf product fairly simple. Just look for “100 percent acrylic latex” on the label. You'll be getting a paint that remains flexible, breathable, and colorfast far longer than paints made with vinyl resins or acrylic blends. And because it adheres tenaciously to most surfaces, you can use it with confidence on wood, vinyl, metal, and masonry.

But there's more to house paint than what's on the label. In this story, we explain how to dig deeper to find the best paint for the money. Plus, we guide you through the key decisions about color and sheen, show how to estimate your paint needs, and outline the steps that go into a good-looking, dependable paint job, whether you plan to hire a pro or do it yourself. With that advice, you can pull off a major miracle: Transform the appearance of your house—and make it look easy.

What's in the can?

Proportions vary, but the basic ingredients that go into most exterior paints are the same.

solvents
Quick to evaporate
liquids that binders and pigments suspend in



pigments
Powdered materials that help make exterior paint durable and colorful

additives
They contribute to the paint's durability, and some improve its appearance

binders These resins collect and hold the paint film after the solvents evaporate

Though not much thicker than a brown beer, the coats of paint you spread on the outside of a house from this can will last for 10 to 15 years. Shown: Farrow & Ball's No. 2000 Estate, about \$55 per gallon, farrowball.com

VITALS

What's it cost?

A gallon can range from \$17 to more than \$200. Higher-end paints have better-quality ingredients which help ensure long-term durability.

Like a pro or DIY?

Anyone can do it, but doing an entire house is a big job. If you can't have patience for prep or a year to climb ladders, hire it out.



How much area?

When doing a room, look only at walls with old paint. A scrub brush and a garden hose can restore a good job's good looks.

When to paint?

The best times are when temperatures remain between 50 and 90 degrees and the humidity is low. In these conditions, paint should finish out and dry properly.

How long will it last?

That depends on the paint and what it is applied to. Two coats of top-quality paint over primed wood might last 10 to 15 years. Two coats on stone can hold up significantly longer.

Comparing acrylics

Paints made with 100 percent acrylic resins rank as the best all-around, but—as these three Benjamin Moore products show, the proportions of ingredients, coverage rates, and dry-film thicknesses can vary significantly. This information is found on technical data sheets (TDS), which all manufacturers provide at no cost online.



<good> BE-N	<better> MOD-LIFE	<best> ALPIA
• Type: 100 percent acrylic	• Type: 100 percent acrylic	• Type: 100 percent acrylic
• Sheen: Flat	• Sheen: Flat	• Sheen: Flat
• Solids (by volume): 34.5 percent	• Solids (by volume): 42 percent	• Solids (by volume): 45 percent
• Dry-film thickness: 1.3mils	• Dry-film thickness: 1.9 mils	• Dry-film thickness: 2.1 to 2.5 mils
• Coverage per gallon: 350 to 475 square feet	• Coverage per gallon: 300 to 400 square feet	• Coverage per gallon: 250 to 350 square feet
• VOCs: 44 grams per liter	• VOCs: 47 grams per liter	• VOCs: 45 grams per liter
• Price: \$37 per gallon	• Price: \$40 per gallon	• Price: \$66 per gallon

When to use oil-based paint

With the advent of easy-to-use water-based paints in the 1990s and greater restrictions on high-VOC solvents, the use of oil-based paints in the U.S. has been drastically reduced. Even so, oils have a glow, softness, dirt resistance, and hardness that no latex can match. Be it old masonry or new trim in certain outdoor applications, doors, wrought iron, and trim, as well as details that will be touched, closely examined, or that deserve a standout sheen. Oil-toughness also makes it ideal for porch doors (left). Shows Brookly Blue in Porch and Place Roomer, \$60 per gallon, benjaminmoore.com.



Exterior-grade acrylic paints have outstanding durability, whether applied by sipping or brist. Shown to show: Quakerhatch (siding) and Oakleaf White (trim) in Olympic Premium Exterior with Self-Seal Technology. \$22 per gallon, olympic.com

DECODING THE LINGO

Solids: All the resins and pigments left behind after the solvents evaporate. A higher solids ratio may indicate a good paint. If too measured pigments are of high quality.

Dry-film thickness: Each paint is formulated to attain a certain thickness measured in mils, when brushed or rolled out. One mil is one-thousandth of an inch; about one-quarter the thickness of human hair.

Coverage: This number goes down the film thickness goes down. Use it to calculate how much paint you need to buy.

VOCs: The abbreviation stands for volatile organic compounds—solvents that adversely affect our lungs and air quality. Federal regulations limit the amount of VOCs to 250 grams per liter for exterior flat and 360 in glossier coatings.

Pick your sheen

A paint's gloss, or lack of it, is not just about aesthetics. It also affects how a paint performs and, therefore, where it's applied.



1 Satin/eggshell: Best for siding because it's a low-reflect, velvety, but good at hiding surface imperfections. It has a slight gloss, self-cleans better, is more easily washed and stands up to abrasion better than flat or matte paints.

2 Semigloss: This sheen sheen is easier to clean, more durable, and more moisture resistant than a satin or eggshell paint. Best for trim, particularly on windowsills, which take the brunt of the weather.

3 High gloss: This most rich formula is resistant and dirt-repellent, and adds richness and depth to colors. It also magnifies surface imperfections and requires skillful application. Used sparingly, best for shutters, doors, and surfaces you touch or convene close proximity to.

Similar to sheen, Series Grip (siding), Extra White (trim) and Wild Current (shutters) in Duration. \$66 to \$70 per gallon. sheenwilliams.com



pro advice

BOB OWEN, WEST WINDSOR PAINTING & RESTORATION

"If spray painting, always back-brush or roll the wet paint immediately after it's applied. By doing this, you'll ensure that the paint is the correct thickness and is worked into every corner, nook, and cranny."

NEW AND UNUSUAL

Here are some specialty coatings to consider, and a few that deserve some extra caution.

> NO-FADE PAINT: Neverfade (about \$50 per gallon, neverfadecoatings.com) contains Kryex Aquatex, a water-based resin guaranteed to resist UV degradation for 25 years. Must be applied by a company-certified contractor.

> NATURAL PAINT: Linseed Paint (\$80 per 0.85 gallon, solventfreepaint.com) has no solvents, petroleums, VOCs, or toxic ingredients. These coats should last 50 years. Made from an age-old recipe using only boiled linseed oil and ground-up minerals.

> WATERBORNE OIL: Krö (\$80 per liter [liter is one-tenth of a quart]) is an oil paint you clean up with soap and water. More flexible and faster reworkable than regular oils but not as malleable. Not for use on paper, floors.

> GILDED OIL: In the form, Trim-A-Door (\$30 per quart, gilded.com) has the consistency of masonry, so it's very thick, dry levels out to a beautiful, even sheen.

> SELF-PRIMING PAINT: It's self-priming, so it won't take more coats to get the right opacity and sheen. About \$26 per gallon from various manufacturers.

> LIQUID VINYL SIDING: This thick coating, sprayed on by a pro, is warranted for 25 years or more, depending on the finish she that applies it. At \$3.50 to \$5 per square foot, it's double the cost of a professional paint job.

> SOLID-COLOR STAIN: Sold widely as an easy-to-apply coating with a perfectly flat sheen. Forms a thin film that allows underlying textures to show through, but it's not as durable as paint. About \$30 per gallon from various manufacturers.



HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT COLOR

Use your house and its surroundings as your guide

HOUSE Pick complementary colors that already exist on your house, such as a honey-brown cedar-shingle roof, red on a birch foundation, or gray on a stone stoop.

NEIGHBORHOOD Survey your block. Painting your house a tropical turquoise among a sea of gray and beige will make it stand out—in a bad way. A muted blue or green would be a better fit but still distinguish it.

LANDSCAPE Play off nature. A light green, for instance, might be just the ticket for a property thick with trees and sun-dappled shade, while an auburn color would complement the sun-scorched desert of the southwest.

WEATHER The farther south you go, the more intense the sun. So use bright, saturated colors that won't appear washed out in the harsh light. In wintry northern climates, where the landscape is leafless and the sky is gray for much of the year, cooler hues prevail.



A three-color paint scheme highlights the details of this Italianate farmhouse. Shown: Jaded Lime (siding), Natural Sheepshead (trim), and Classic Red (shutters and accents). In Business Exterior, about \$40 per gallon; value-paint.com

Multihue schemes

Use a varied palette to call out your home's best assets or to help create interest on otherwise plain facades. Here's how:

Consider the components. Think of your home as the sum of three parts: the body (siding), the trim (window and door casings, fascias) and the movable elements (windows, doors and shutters). Give each part its own color. Siding does a complete accent color add interest to the facade.

Highlight levels and textures. A change in siding from shingles to the first four to shingles on the second or in the gables, for instance, is an invitation to introduce another body color. Accent colors can also play up banding, half-timbering and other decorative trim, such as the bargeboards or the eaves (if visible) seen above.

Make good use of eaves and lights. Dark colors are perceived as weighty, so they work well on a foundation or a lower story to anchor a house to the ground. Lighter hues on an upper story draw the eye upward and set off the roof and its shingled eaves.

Go online. Using paint-company color selectors, upload a shot of your house, then drag and drop swatches to create a desirable scheme. But before you invest in gallons, brush sample colors on primed 2-by-2-foot medium-density fiberboard panels and view them against each side of the house to make sure you're happy with the hues.

How to get a long-lasting paint job

It's this simple: Good paint, thorough prep work, and one eye on the weather

1> Prep

Paint adheres best to clean, dry, sound surfaces. First, wash siding and trim to remove dirt and mildew, then scrape and sand loose paint down to the substrate or a smooth-base layer. (Warning: If you suspect lead paint, see "Safe stripping" at right.) Fill holes or repair rotted or broken siding or trim. Fill holes or cracks and caulk open joints.



2> Prime

Priming grips the surface and gives it a uniform porosity. Use primer over unpainted wood siding or a chalky surface. It's not needed over sound paint. For best results, stick with primers labeled "exterior" or "interior/exterior." All oil-based primers and some water-based ones stop "bleeding" of red cedar and redwood. Cool levels with pigmented shellac, such as BIN.

3> Paint

Stay in the shade as much as possible. Start at the top and work down. Do the siding before tackling the trim. But if it will be mostly trim, as shown at right, paint that first. Keep a wet edge as you work to avoid leaving lap marks. Postpone painting if heavy rain is likely within 48 hours after paint is applied.



Safe stripping

Peeling or flaking paint must be removed. On houses built after 1978, you're off to a start with scrapers, scrapers, or chemicals, as well as with heat, using a device like the Stent Paint Remover (\$395, stentpaintremover.com), shown above.

But on a pre-1978 house, the paint could contain lead, and heedlessly assaulting it will be harmful to you, your family, and your property.

When in doubt, test the paint, either with a lead-check swab, available at home centers, or by sending a sample to a lab, such as

probing.com. If the results are positive, your safest option is to hire a contractor who is trained and EPA certified in proper paint-removal procedures. (To find a pro in your area, go to epa.gov/lead.)

Taking care of lead paint on a house is a pricey process, but there are no shortcuts when dealing with this toxin.

How much to buy

To calculate how many gallons you need for siding, measure and add up each wall's total square footage, including windows and doors, and divide by 90 percent of the coverage rate printed on the can. For trim paint, use the equation below.

$$\left(\frac{\text{TOTAL TRIM LENGTH}}{1} + 2 \right) \times \left(\frac{\text{COVERAGE PER GALLON (on square foot)}}{1} \times 0.9 \right) = \text{NUMBER OF GALLONS NEEDED}$$

▶ **prep like a pro** Watch a leading contractor tell Davey how to get ready for a paint job before the job even starts.



Paints for masonry

Any coating that goes over brick, stone, or stucco has to allow water vapor to pass through it. That's why oil-based finishes must be avoided: they trap moisture, wreak havoc on mortar, and quickly fail. Choose one of these three options instead.

1 Acrylic: High-end house paints (yellow, over brick) develop moisture to escape but need an alkali-resistant primer to protect them from cement's high pH. Similar to shown: Steller 240 in CS555, \$99 per gallon; color.com.

2 Lime: An ancient coating formula of slaked quicklime and mineral pigments gives masonry a rich, old-world look. Its solvent finish wears off easily and needs to be reapplied about every five years. Products such as Pitt Lime Paint (starting at \$49 per gallon, waterbasedpaints.com) can be ordered online.

3 Mineral: Instead of resins and solvents, mineral paints, such as Quatta Guard (\$95 per gallon; minerals.us), use silicates, which chemically bond to masonry to form a completely inbreathable, extremely durable skin. Two coats should last 50 years.

Historic color palettes

You don't have to have an old house to appreciate—and get inspiration from—classic color schemes employed by traditional homes.



↑ queen anne

This is a cute, late 19th-century style made full use of the earthy color choices newly available in mass-produced paints. Shown: Georgian Brick (beard them along), Wandering Willow (bird), Rose (sliding and porch hand), and Fairview House (outdoor and color trim) in Pure Waterborne. Exterior: about \$80 per gallon; benjaminmowys.com.



↑ colonial revival

Partial siding with light trim predominates in keeping with the serene demure of this restrained, classically influenced style. Similar to shown: Wandering Willows (sliding), Ultra Pure White (trim) and Pure Green (shutters) in Pure Premium Plus Ultra. \$33–\$36 per gallon; ben.com.



↑ shotgun cottage

This 4-story-by-6-footers is a behavioral style favoring heavy trim and colors such as tan, gray, and white, all off by the shutters. Shown: Spanglet to trim, Geneva Green (trim), Laffonde Green (shutters), and Sun Spray (arch coating) in Duranex. Exterior: about \$40 per gallon; tanpar.com.



↑ bungalow

This simple house style from the first third of the 20th century is characterized by bold trim and architectural details, such as mason's marks. All the time, body colors tended to be muted, natural shades of brown, green, and gray. Similar to shown: Thomas Paint (trim), Laffonde White (trim) and Peach Day (paints and trim) in Glidden Exterior. \$20–\$39 per gallon; glidden.com.



↑ cape cod

This offshoot of Colonial style is all about the 18th-century white (off-white) painted with black trim, in a light, a light yellow. Similar to shown: Reddish Canyon (sliding), Pearl Star White (trim) and Mineral Blue (shutters) in Fresh Coat Ultra. Exterior: \$43 per gallon; magnapaint.com.

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TOM SILVA
Senior ContractorNORM ABRAM
Master CarpenterRICHARD TEITELBAUM
Plumbing and Heating ExpertRIKER COOK
Landscape ContractorKEVIN O'CONNOR
Host

Q We'd like to build a new house using insulating concrete forms. How much will this add to construction costs? And do we need a specialized contractor?

—MELPOWNE WILMINGTON, N.C.



Tom Silva replies: I've used insulating concrete forms (ICFs) to build several foundations, and the more I use them, the more I like them. These hollow, interlocking blocks of rigid foam are lightweight and as fast and easy to snap together as Legos. Once assembled, they're filled with concrete.

You can make walls with them from the foundation to the roof, if you want. But unlike with traditional methods, there are no forms to take down or surfaces to demolish—two time-consuming steps. The exposed foam needs to be covered with some type of siding, such as wood, stucco, stone, or brick. If properly engineered, the insulating structure can survive hurricanes, earthquakes, even tornadoes.

Many manufacturers produce ICFs, so choosing which one to go with can be tough. The wide range of products also makes it tricky to calculate exactly how much the system may add to construction costs. According to RSIMeans, a construction-cost estimating firm, ICF foundations are slightly more

Tom Silva reveals: A surface of insulating concrete forms (ICFs) so that they can be killed. The forms stay open after the concrete cures, providing much-needed insulation.

expensive, but because the walls are so efficient—R-22 is typical—you might be able to get a tax credit for your energy-efficient building.

As for contractors, look for someone with experience using your chosen system; every product has quirks that you learn about only with practice. To find contractors in your area, check our forms app.

Finally, talk with your local building officials just to make sure the ICF system you're considering meets your town's code requirements.

WEED CONTROL

After I bought a small tractload of dirt for my planting beds last year, I discovered that it was infested with weed seeds. How'd weed come dirt, but not more weeds? Is there something I can do to kill them or should I look for a different kind of dirt?

—JOSEPH BELMONTARD, LOVELAND, N.C.

Riker Cook replies: First, let's clarify some terminology. Dirt is what's under your fingernails, topsoil is the dark stuff we use to grow plants.

Your question reminds me of when my old boss, Bill Bat, and I were taking air two piles of soil. One had lots of weeds growing in it and the other had none. I wanted to use the bare pile, but Bill warned me that the lack of weeds was probably a sign that the soil was of poor quality.

See, all topsoil contains weed seeds. The problem is how to prevent them from sprouting. Adding a 2- to 3-inch layer of mulch reduces weed germination. If the seeds have already sprouted, you can hit them with an herbicide, like Roundup, or cover them with black plastic and let the sun's heat cook them for a few weeks before you do any planting.



A - Magnetic water softener



B - Corner alignment tool



C - Handheld UV light for curing furniture finish

D - Go

FOR THE ULTIMATE SOLUTION



Before adding topsoil to planting beds, Riker Cook reduces the concentration of weed seeds by amending the soil with equal parts compost and sand.

To maximize weeds in the first place, mix compost and sand into the topsoil in a 1:1:1 ratio. Because compost and sand are typically weed-free, you'll instantly reduce the weed population by two-thirds.

GRILL & FLAT HOLE

I have to drill new holes for the cup hinges in a cabinet door. What tools do I need to make a smooth hole that's a 1/8 inch in diameter and about 1/8 inch deep?

—LUS FERNANDEZ, BIRMINGHAM, AL

Kevin O'Connor replies: If you have an electric drill, all you need is a Forstner bit, which is named for Benjamin Forstner, a gunsmith in Salem, Oregon, who patented the bit in 1874.

According to Jeff Avelar at MILCS Woodworking, the beauty of Forstner bits is that they create a hole with a flat bottom and very smooth sides, perfect for supporting the inner portion of a cup hinge. An added benefit of this bit is that it has a

shallow, unobstructed corner pocket that isn't likely to splinter through the face of your door at the corner joint on a square bit.

Ken Osberg, a product manager for wood bits at Bosch Power Tools, notes that when using a Forstner bit it's important to keep drill speed down. "We recommend working at a slower rpm than you would with twist bits in order to minimize heat buildup," he says. Excessive heat can drive the deeper out of the cutting edges and significantly reduce the bit's life. Another advantage of drilling at a slower speed is more control when using a handheld drill.

To keep from drifting too deeply into the door, use a 1/8-inch pin to make two marks 1/8 inch up the sides of the bit. You'll be able to use them easily as you're drilling. Stop when those lines reach the level of the door's surface.

By the way, the Forstner bit you need for cup hinges is 3/8 inch in diameter, a hair smaller than 1/2 inch.

Continued on page 106

A Renovation Project That Saves Money?

Looking for new ideas on how to save money?

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QUESTION OF THE MONTH



Roger Cook
demonstrates
the proper
method for
laying stepping
stones.

Q We want to lay a stepping-stone path in our yard. Can we do it ourselves?

—LORRAINE EDSON, JAMICA PLAIN, MASS.

Roger Cook replies: Absolutely. A pathway made of stone pavers is a great way to create your own oasis, being trampled and compacted by foot traffic. And it certainly is an easy, one-day project for most DIYers. The hardest parts of the project are the labor of moving the

wet stone dust that serves as the pavers' base and then lifting and moving the stones.

Go to your local stone yard and look for pavers at least 16 inches thick and about 24 inches wide. Pavers that are aren't likely to crack, and no cutting is required; you simply adjust their spacing to fit a natural stride and to make the path curved or straight.

Once you determine the spacing, the digging and the setting go quickly. Start in the morning, and invite guests over that evening for a stroll across your handiwork.

Cost: \$10 per square foot for stone, about \$30 per cubic yard for stone dust.

Time: One day.
Difficulty: Medium. Moving heavy stone is hard work.

STEP-BY-STEP

Lay a stepping-stone path

1. Establish the grade

Determine the start of the path's starting point and another a few feet beyond it. To measure the ground, the first stake where it intersects the cornering surface—a patio, in this case. Pull the string between the stakes and tie it at an angle 10 inches above grade. Now you have a fixed reference for the pavers' height.

2. Position the pavers

Measure the shade of the shortest person in the household, and lay out the pavers so that there is a stone underfoot for each step. Start with 3 to 4 inches between courses and adjust from there to fit the last paver without cutting it. To make a curve, lighten the space between inside corners and spend it on an outside corner.

3. Cut the sod

Set a half moon edge alongside the paver. Then dig down 4 to 6 inches completely through the turf's roots. Repeat along the perimeter of each course of pavers.



4. Excavate for the base

Flip each paver to the side of its outside. Then dig down the soil 4 to 6 inches deep to the stone's thickness, 1 to 2 inches. Use the Mason line to check the depth. Repeat this process for each remaining course.

5. Add the setting bed

Stone dust provides a stable base that won't shift or sink. In a wheelbarrow mix the dust with water to the consistency of cake batter. Add about 2 inches of the mix to each hole, enough to bring the paver up to the mason line.

6. Set the pavers

Wedge the stone into the setting bed and pound it with a rubber mallet to adjust any potholes. Use a level to set each stone even with its neighbor. Pound one side of the paver until it's pitched slightly so that water runs away from the house.

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TOH TESTED

The destroyers

There's no thrill quite like tearing down a wall. These cordless reciprocating saws, with lightweight 18-volt batteries, compact designs, and smart features, keep the debris—and the fun—flying. —DAVID L. KATZ

With a full set of blades and a pair of full capacity batteries, these saws can do a lot of damage. Just don't attempt to bring down the entire house without replying.

RIDGID R86-41

Aligning a reciprocating saw push and pull the blade in a straight line, which is best for cutting metal. But this one can also switch to an orbital setting, where the blade moves with an elliptical stroke, allowing it to blast through wood much more quickly. Given that it's a stop before demolition, we also appreciate the convenience of being able to lower the safety off. The adjustable shoe extends up to 1 inch, letting you cut down to depth, and also locks in at 90 degrees or at 22 degrees, a good angle for cutting pipe. Our only complaint: The battery gauge leaves forward, forcing you to open the blade at your face as you cut.

Price point: Up to 3,600 strokes per minute (3,000) at 1 inch stroke; 18 inches long; one 3-amp-hour (Ah) battery

what to look for

- 1. A battery gauge to show charge level because lithium-ion tools will have warning.
- 2. A dual-to-switch between a normal stroke and a more aggressive orbital setting.
- 3. A mechanism to make blade changes easy, like this chunky front collar or a cam lever.
- 4. An adjustable shoe to set cut depth.
- 5. A pivoting shoe that allows the blade to get a good bite on pipe.



Battery test: We filled each saw with a new 18-volt, 3-amp-hour (Ah) Li-ion demo blade and went to work on a pressure-treated 6x4 post spiked with 16d nails. Then we counted how many slices we got on a single charge.



BOSCH CRLS180K

\$360, 7.6 pounds, boschtools.com
This stellar performer has a unique two-speed setting: Low is ideal for softer materials like wood, while higher speeds are best for cutting harder stuff like steel pipe. This saw gives you a front-rear-rear finger to feed the motor a sweet spot, and stay there when you're cutting through the same material all day. The body is well balanced and has the most comfortable forward grip thanks to the wide grip and non-slip rubber on the back rubber foot.

Price point: Up to 2,700 apm, 19 1/2 inch stroke, 17 1/2 inches long, one 2.6-Ah battery

Which blade when: the tale of the teeth



WOOD
3 to 10 tpi. Large teeth and the deep gullets between them slice through wood efficiently. Shows: Ax from \$29 to five inches; axtool.com

METAL
10 to 24 tpi. Small teeth leave a smooth cut. The blades are wide to stop wobbling and five to twelve teeth cut deep. Shows: Skel from \$18 for five inches; axtool.com

ALL-PURPOSE
6 to 10 tpi. Similar to blades for wood with nails, they're extra thick for added durability. Shows: Skel from \$17 for five inches; axtool.com

NAIL-EMBE
6 to 10 tpi. Small teeth leave a clean cut when they hit metal, but the alternating deep gullets help them chew wood. Shows: GSG from \$20 for five inches; axtool.com

WOOD WITH NAILS
6 to 10 tpi. Small teeth leave a clean cut when they hit metal, but the alternating deep gullets help them chew wood. Shows: GSG from \$20 for five inches; axtool.com

WRECK
6 to 10 tpi. Small teeth leave a clean cut when they hit metal, but the alternating deep gullets help them chew wood. Shows: GSG from \$20 for five inches; axtool.com

TIP: "Keep fresh blades handy, especially when you're cutting through nails. I'll go through 12 blades a day during a major demo." —TOM SALA, TOH-GENERAL CONTRACTOR



HILTI WSR 18-A CPC

\$460, 8.2 pounds, us.hilti.com
Got a gut reno on your hands? This is the saw for you. Big, bushy, and with the longest battery life, this saw is built—and priced—the pros who need constant power where cords can't reach. The battery gauge is easy to spot, and the pivoting shoe has the fastest feed action of the bunch. While we prefer a lever to release the blade, at least this collar is rubber coated, so it's easy to grip with a gloved hand and won't burn your skin if the glove is off.

Price point: Up to 3,000 apm, 19 1/2 inch stroke, 20 inches long, two 3.3-Ah batteries



DEWALT DCS380LL

\$250, 7.35 pounds, dewalt.com
All saws hold the blade in two positions. This one's four positions make it more comfortable for users with which direction you're cutting. The tool includes an adjustable pivoting shoe, a side-mounted blade release lever, and a long running battery in one of the hardest tools tested, making this a solid all-around performer. The handle is covered in textured rubber for a comfortable grip, which you'll need because the saw likes to heat out of your hand when you start it.

Price point: 3,000 apm, 19 1/2 inch stroke, 20 inches long, one 3-Ah battery

Different strokes

• **Flash cut:** Trimming nails flush with the surrounding wood requires a fine flexible 10- to 12-inch-long metal cutting blade. Set the first one, then the second blade against the wall and press it flat against the surrounding wood by pushing down on the handle. Reciprocating up at full speed, keeping constant pressure and a forward grip, you can break the nail.

• **Plunge cut:** To keep from bending your blade, rise into the cut before going full speed. Press the shoe firmly against the material at the start, then the blade falls. Because the longer less than halfway into the cut, the shoe will be the blade's support. Gradually increase the speed and the angle until you cut all the way through.

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MILWAUKEE M18 FUEL

\$200, 8.6 pounds, milwaukee.com
This one-handed saw is just the first for work in tight or tough spots. Like between studs, under cabinets, or overhead. The unique orientation of the motor keeps the saw short, giving you greater access in exchange for slightly less running time than the larger tools. The motor's housing doubles as a forward grip when you need two-handed control. We appreciate the LED, but we'd like to see a blade brake and a pivoting shoe.

Price point: Up to 3,000 apm, 19 1/2 inch stroke, 12 inches long, one 3-Ah battery

directory [May 2012]

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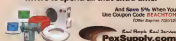
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save this old house

Price: \$95,000
Location: Lithonia, Georgia
Contact: Kala Ryan
404.353.1917

The history: This 1,300-square-foot farmhouse is one of the oldest residences in DeKalb County, Georgia. It was also home to the same family for more than 200 years. It was built as a simple half-entrance house in the 1840s by the Houseworth family, who had moved to this north-Georgia town just 19 miles east of Atlanta. In the 1820s, two additions were tacked on later. In the next century and a half, generations of Houseworths lived here, raising livestock, growing corn, smoking their own tobacco, and making cornmeal syrup.

Why save it? The house comes with 7.4 acres of land, where you'll still find the Houseworth family's corn crib, smokehouse, gristmill and live oak grove. It retains most of the original interior, including pine wallboards, two granite fireplaces and tongue-and-groove pine floors. The house is in the Kennesaw National Historic District, which comprises about 30 homes built between 1840 and 1930 and is just two miles from a 2,000-acre nature preserve that boasts miles of hiking and biking trails.

What it needs: Along with some stabilization work on its pinches roof and foundation, the house requires all new systems, as well as updates to its bathroom and kitchen. Due to its location at a historic district, all repairs must be done for financial incentives, including an \$11-year tax abatement, which will make bringing this old farmhouse up to date a bit easier on the wallet.

—KOTI PANDOLF



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1 The two-bedroom, one-bath farmhouse was originally built as a half-entrance house. Two additions were added in the late 18th century. 2 The original stone fireplace is made of granite quarried from nearby Arabia Mountain, as is the main chimney (3). 3 The house comes with several outbuildings, including the smokehouse, plus 7.4 acres of mature woods and a picturesque creek. 4 A hallway connecting the kitchen to the living area shows the house's thick pine walls and floorboards.

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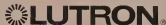
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