

This Old House

**FREE
BOOKLET!**

How to
protect
your home's
value

47 low-cost makeover ideas

5 porches, 9 patios, 6 decks,
12 easy outdoor upgrades,
and more


the secret
to three
generations
living under
one roof
happily

Grow a
fridge full of
veggies—in
flowerpots
p. 51

Get it for
pennies:

- ☒ more flowers
- ☒ prettier patio furniture
- ☒ a gas grill that lasts

JUNE 2012
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25

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SHOP
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Cover Photo: © J. B. B. / iStockphoto.com
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If you fancy fresh herbs, use our step-by-step to turn boards and deck posts into a leggy planter for outside your kitchen door.



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Can You Spot a Winner?



Flip through the thousands of before-and-afters in the 2012 Reader Remodel Contest and see if you can predict the ones that will take home the top prizes in next month's big reveal!



See which remodels took home the top prizes last year.

Use your Reader Remodel Contest knowledge to predict the winners! The Reader Remodel Contest is the only home improvement contest where you can win big prizes by predicting the winners!

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letter (from This Old House)

Pennies saved, C-notes squandered

It just sat down on the sofa after a long week to watch the game when my wife said, "Let's go to the auction." It was for the local historical society, one of those where jobs, and she was looking forward to scoring something for our underfurnished home while looking a lot less like the charity kitty. Not as pleasantly antiques as watching the Yankees from the couch, I thought, but a good cause. I grabbed my car, picked back on, and off we went.

Now, my wife and I tend to enjoy each other's company, and we can be regular partners in crime once we've had a cocktail or two, which, this being a social occasion, we had. And that's when she saw them: four hand-painted Spanish language anatomy posters, like you'd find in a mid-school lecture hall. In Spanish. "They're thinking anatomy," she said, and immediately put us a bid.

Well, I should explain. My wife was a graphic designer before entering the health-care profession and so has a less traditional sensibility when it comes to artwork and decorating, particularly when the two fields merge. Between the subject matter and what even I have to admit were beautifully rendered anatomical figures, she was in heaven.

For the rest of the auction she pretended to look interested in other things—the better to draw attention away—while I did my best to ensure potential competition. It was time worked on, obviously, the rest of the crowd was waning because to one else even bid. When the bell rang, they went ours for a grand total of eleven bucks.

We crowded about the deal the rest of the night and right into the next day, when we took them to the frame shop. In fact, we crowded so much that we never asked what the oversize frames—nearly 3 by 4 feet—would cost. Which is why we were so shocked when we picked them up and the frame presented a bill for \$2,080. I asked my wife if she could read the heart poster because it felt like my crown had slipped.

Anyway, we got smart after that, started cutting our own mats and buying less expensive frames, the ones in the picture above are from IKEA. Our case hasn't become any less offbeat, though. The art behind me: vintage Sears, Roebuck and Co. rifle targets bought on eBay for a buck apiece. We call it our shooting gallery. Got it? The guns and the target? Artwork and gallery? Yeah, no one else finds that as funny as I do, either.

Scott Ouellette
SCOTT OUELLETTE, EDITOR
scott@thisoldhouse.com



The aforementioned gallery
rifle target (TOP) and his
most expensive piece
(ABOVE) = \$2.75 poster
at a \$500 frame

PS—I almost forgot the point of this letter: Mindful of my own desire to keep a hold on a dollar, we've tried to pack this issue of TOWH without any saving info. In the spirit of the season you'll find the lion's share of ideas in two stories—"Spring Fix-ups" (page 57) and "39 Budget-Wise Ways to Create Outdoor Rooms" (page 71). And for the art on the walls at my place, I think the Atlanta office of the project that are showcased has nothing to do with how great they are. They might even be looking awesome. Let me know if you agree.

reader**mail**

We know you're getting to work on that long list of projects now that warm weather is here. So we're flattered that so many of you still took the time to write and tell us what you thought of our April issue. Whether praising the exquisite design of the small yard in our garden feature, pointing out a kitchen safety concern, or extolling the virtues of drying clothes the old-fashioned way, our readers always inspire us. One letter was so nice, we just had to express our gratitude with a gift.



Small-space garden design

This grandma always enjoys looking for tips about maintenance and repairs and how to use tools. But your April 2012 issue added more goodies than usual with the beautiful story "Stretching a Small Yard" [page 34]. I've been an avid reader of flower books and magazines for a long time, but I have never th-

article several times. Mr. Hagston has done a wonderfully imaginative job of using his small space. Thanks so much for including this.

—CARLOS VERNERUS, LE COUTURE TO DARE

Abstract: purpose and plan

As always, TOH never disappoints me. I loved the article "High Style on a Low Budget" (April 2012, page 27).

However, I couldn't help but notice the magnetic kindertrick occurred on the wall in the narrow walkways. "Wow! If someone mistakenly bumped into it or dashed it with a foisting hand, that white wall could quickly turn a shade of blood red. The owners may want to rethink the location of it—or increase their home liability insurance."

—QUANTITATIVELY EASTWARDWARD DOWN

In praise of the clothesline

Based your recent article on laundry rooms ("Raid Them Before You Remodel Your Laundry Room," April 2012, page 78), but I was and there was no mention of the outdoor clothesline. The clothesline is a very real extension of my laundry room. Besides the obvious energy savings, there is something relaxing about hanging clothes, watching my days, and listening to the birds. Nothing smells better than clothes and sheets tossed by the sun and wind. And nothing gets whiter where. A line full of flapping laundry, once or twice a week, always makes me smile.

—PRODUCT LINE CHANGES WITH



The editors reply: Ahn, your letter really made our month! And we're thrilled to hear from the readers of a issue we featured in *Save This Old House*. To express our thanks, we mailed our product sheet and will be sending you this free Craftsman 29 2-wolt drill/driver to help make those projects a little easier. Please send us photos of your results! (Find follow-ups of a letter named "Steen" at disorderliness.com/2012/1.)

how to reach us

The editors: E-mail TCM@world.com or write to *The 3rd House* magazine, 125 West 10th Street, New York, NY 10011 • Include your full name, address, and phone number. Published letters are edited for clarity and length.

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WE ARE PROFESSIONAL GRADE.



Keywords: child sexual abuse; disclosure; self-blame

[illegible]

checklist { June 2012 }

EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW

□ Hang a family gallery

Catali starts Family History Day, on June 14, with a photo-montage that shows all your heritage. Gather old images based on a theme—such as weddings or beach vacations, or take a vintage display by printing present-day photos in black and white or sepia tone. For a polished look, use matting frames and acid-free mats, and test out your arrangement on the floor before hanging.



✓ Reseal a worn deck

To see if you need a new coat, try this splash test: Pour water onto the dry decking. If it soaks into the wood instead of beading up, it's probably time to reseal. If you want the grain to show through, use an oil-based, semitransparent stain that provides UV protection; dark hues are even better at preventing sunlight from damaging the wood but tend to heat up underfoot. Water repellents should fully absorb the stain, so 30 minutes after applying, sop up shims, still-wet spots, especially under railings, with a clean, dry rag. Your aim: an even matte finish.

□ Keep a garden journal

Now that things are blooming, take stock of what's thriving and what isn't. Record dates and snap photos to document growth—particularly interesting data if your region has experienced unseasonably early or late spring. Report your findings to the USA National Phenology Network, which tracks how climate change affects plants and animals. Visit usmnp.org.

TOH TIP

□ Clean your fridge's coils

Save your fridge from working overtime to stay cold with a deep cleaning of its condenser. Pull the appliance away from the wall and unplug it. Remove the panel along the bottom (is the front or the rear) that covers the condenser's coils and fins. With your vacuum's crevice tool or

□ Silence a noisy faucet

Severe air expansion and contraction can cause pipes to loosen and vibrate when you turn on the tap—a major fear factor. If the noisy flow is under a sink, pad it tightly with foam insulation where it emerges from the wall. If exposed pipes cause the clamor, fill a wood shim or block between the wall and the pipe and pin the pipe to the wall with a U-clip.



a special refrigerator coil brush, suck or scrub out debris, taking care not to wrap the long, narrow fin.



□ What's on your checklist?

—My front yard

has poor drainage, so I'll be mowing around flower beds using heavy mulch and permeable landscape fabric."

—Matt Maynard

It will save your ideas at checklist@thisoldhouse.com

FROM THE EDITORS OF **Money + House**

Safe at Home

DISCOVER THE DANGER ZONES

REBUILD YOUR INSURANCE NET

PREPARE FOR EMERGENCIES



25 WAYS TO PROTECT YOUR BIGGEST INVESTMENT

INSIDE

DANGER ZONES

Find the common-but-hidden causes of fire and water damage
Page 4

INSURANCE NET

Making sure you're covered properly in a project net to put off
Page 6

EMERGENCIES

These essential tools will help you prevent and respond
Page 30

Give Your Home a Safety Upgrade

With some smart planning, you can avoid most common disasters—and insure against the ones you can't control.

AFTER A RECORD YEAR of damage (\$25 billion in insured losses) caused by tornadoes and thunderstorms, wildfires that spread like, well, wildfires in Arizona and Texas, and historic flooding in the South and Northwest, protecting your home is probably more top-of-mind than it was 12 months ago. With good reason: Your home, after all, is not only your largest financial investment, it also happens to shelter your most important asset—your family.

While a natural disaster like

Hurricane Irene grabs the headlines, the reality is that your home is far more vulnerable to run-of-the-mill threats, ranging from water damage in the laundry room or elsewhere to fires in the kitchen. These events may not seem nearly as scary as "acts of God," but there's a house fire in the U.S. every 83 seconds, and blazes often cause more financial damage than earthquakes and floods combined.

This isn't to say that if you live along the Florida coast you should forget about installing hurricane shutters. That's crazy.

The point is there are plenty of actions you should be taking no matter where you live to secure your home from home calamities as well as from the ones that get blanket coverage on cable news.

That's what this guide, produced by the editors of *The Old Money* and *Money*, will help you do. First, you'll discover the 10 most common hidden dangers that threaten your home—and what you can do to lessen or eliminate those everyday threats. Next, you'll walk through the five steps you must take to shore up your homeowners insurance safety net against the financial impact of mishaps both large and small—and to make certain you're not overpaying for protection.

Finally, you'll get the lowdown on the 10 essential emergency preparedness tools you should have inside your home. You can't always thwart the forces of chaos, but you can be ready when they strike.



How much is your insurance company saving you?



DISCOVER THE Danger Zones

Fires are one of the costliest disasters that can strike your home, and water damage caused by leaks or plumbing problems is among the most frequent triggers for insurance claims. Here are 10 common problem areas that could lead to catastrophe—along with a few simple precautions you can take to keep trouble at bay.

1 COOKTOP

THE HAZARD: About 40% of fires start in the kitchen, and the cooktop is the most common culprit. **HOW TO AVOID IT:** Never leave burners unattended when in use, and store combustibles such as paper towels or pet holders a safe distance away.



years old (see "Prepare for Emergencies" on page 30 for the kind to get).

2 ROOF

THE HAZARD: A roof that's too warm in winter time melts snow, creating runoff that freezes when it meets the gutter. There it forms an ice dam that forces water beneath the shingles. **HOW TO AVOID IT:** Add attic insulation and venting to keep the roof cool.

3 GUTTERS

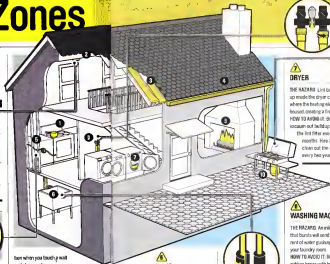
THE HAZARD: Clogged gutters overflow and allow water to pool around the foundation, leading to basement leaks. **HOW TO AVOID IT:** Remove leaves and debris from gutters every spring and fall.



4 WIRING

THE HAZARD: Bad wires can short out and start a fire. Signs of trouble: frequent blown fuses, flickering lights, and a tingling sense

burn when you touch a wall switch or appliance. **HOW TO AVOID IT:** Replace old circuit breakers with arc-fault circuit interrupters, which cut the electricity when they sense danger. Consider replacing wiring that's more than 40 years old.



5 DRYER

THE HAZARD: Lint builds up inside the dryer cabinet, where the heating element is housed, creating a fire hazard. **HOW TO AVOID IT:** Brush or vacuum out buildup around the lint filter every few months. Hire a pro to clean out the cabinet every two years.

6 FIREPLACE

THE HAZARD: Creosote buildup causes most chimney fires, and errant sparks can fly out of the hearth and ignite rugs or furniture. **HOW TO AVOID IT:** Get your chimney swept once a year. Keep the screen closed when the fireplace is in use.

7 GAS GRILL

THE HAZARD: A leaky gas-supply hose is a fire hazard, as is a grill that sits in an enclosed porch or too close to your house's siding. **HOW TO AVOID IT:** Check the hose for cracks regularly and replace it when worn. Place the grill at least 30 feet away from your house, making sure it's in an area with no overhead obstructions.

8 WASHING MACHINE

THE HAZARD: An inlet hose that bursts will send a torrent of water gushing into your laundry room. **HOW TO AVOID IT:** Replace rubber hoses with braided steel ones, and check them regularly for leaks and loose connections (see "Prepare for Emergencies" for leak-detection gear).

9 PIPES

THE HAZARD: A pipe that freezes and cracks can leak up to 250 gallons of water daily. **HOW TO AVOID IT:** Insulate exposed pipes with foam



sleeves. Before winter, turn off the water supply to outdoor spigots and leave the taps open to relieve external pressure.



REBUILD YOUR Insurance Net

Reviewing your homeowners policy may not rank high on your annual home-maintenance checklist. Yet following the five steps below will save you big bucks now and a lot of grief down the road. After the recent slew of natural disasters, average annual premiums are expected to surpass \$1,000, with some owners likely to see double-digit rate hikes. Haven't taken a close look at your policy lately? Then dust it off and make insurance your next project. *By Sarah Alax*

STEP NO. 1 MEASURE HOW MUCH COVERAGE YOU NEED.

Your No. 1 priority must be the home itself. "Protections, living expenses, and liability should all be secondary," says Amy Bach of United Policyholders, an insurance advocate group.

Don't base your coverage level, though, on the home's appraised value, which includes land costs. Instead, says Kevin McCarthy, president of the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, see the recent per-square-foot replacement costs in your area, available from your local homebuilders association. The difference can be sizable. In New York state,

land makes up 9% of the average home's value, according to the Lincoln Institute. In Hawaii, it represents more than half.

In your area prone to natural disasters? Price out extended or guaranteed replacement policies, which protect you from inflated labor and material costs following such catastrophes.

STEP NO. 2 INSPECT WHAT'S NOT COVERED.

Don't assume that all "perils" are covered. As homeowners learned the hard way after Hurricane Irene last August, standard policies exclude damage from flooding, not to

mention earthquakes and landslides. "Most people aren't aware of what their policy does and doesn't cover until they file a claim," says David Beck, executive director of the Office of Public Insurance Counsel, a state consumer agency in Texas.

If you live in a high-risk area for floods, you may be required to add supplemental coverage, which can cost \$1,700 to \$5,300 on a \$150,000 building and \$50,000 worth of contents.

Also, take note of common exclusions, such as those on mold and even broken pipes owing to lack of routine maintenance. You know which insurances your home is susceptible to. Use that knowledge to beef up coverage by adding so-called endorsements. Been a victim of sewage backups, which aren't covered by most standard policies? Insure against them for anywhere from about \$400 to \$100 a year.

STEP NO. 3 RECHECK THE DEDUCTIBLE.

It may not be the same as it was a year ago. Many insurers are



Is it enough for a hammer?



retrofitting deductibles from set-dollar amounts to percentages, which can often represent a substantial change.

In general, you want to go for the highest deductible you can afford to lower your premiums. Beware, though, that not all insurers that are making this switch from dollars to percentages are cutting premiums at the same time. Also, be mindful that these deductibles are a percentage of the insured value of your entire home, not of what needs to be fixed. So if you have a \$400,000 home, even a 5% deductible may be too steep a price to pay, and a reason to shop around.

STEP NO. 4 HAMMER AWAY AT YOUR PREMIUM

Insurers don't always spell out how much your rates shot up on renewal. So dig out last year's documents and compare for yourself. If your rates rose 5% or more, make sure to call the company for an explanation.

Knowing whether the increase resulted from changes in your risk profile or from broad-based increases in the marketplace will help you negotiate and comparison-shop—which you should do at every renewal or at

Rising Cost of Safety

Over the past 10 years, homeowners insurance premiums have risen nearly 70%, vs. the 28% rise for overall inflation.



SOURCE: 2013 and 2012 figures are estimates. SOURCE: Insurance Information Institute

least every couple of years.

To shop around, get quotes for free through Insure.com or InsWeb.com. Want extra guidance or have an unusual property? Then work with an independent broker. (You can find one at fiba.net.)

In addition to bumping up your deductible, you can lower your premium by bundling together your home and auto insurance, which can shave off from 5% to 15%. Also, installing security systems, storm shutters, or a new roof can chip away another 15%. Before you make that commitment, though, check with your insurer to see if your installation qualifies, says Joanne Salvatore of the Insurance Information Institute.



STEP NO. 5 CLEAN UP YOUR WORK AREA

Finish your project by getting all your documents in place. If you haven't already done so, conduct a home inventory (worksheets are available at uphelp.org). File that, with receipts, photos, or videos and then store all your paperwork—along with a complete copy of your insurance policy—in a fireproof box.

For extra protection, scan and store all of that information digitally on a flash drive, and remember to keep that off-site, says Back. If disaster strikes, you don't want this critical information to be at risk too.



*Or does it even make a dent?
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PREPARE FOR Emergencies

Sometimes disaster strikes, despite your best efforts to prevent it. And that means you should always be ready for the unexpected. The right emergency gear will help you protect your home and family, as well as deal with unpleasant realities like a post-storm power outage or broken windows. Here are the most critical tools and products to have on hand when things go wrong.



Opt for a five-pound fire extinguisher, which is light enough for most people to use easily.

Essential detection and safety devices

THROUGHOUT THE HOUSE

Place wireless water alarms under sinks, behind the fridge, anywhere that water would pool if there's a leak—they'll sound off at the slightest hint of moisture. *Zircan Leak Alert three-pack*, \$25, amazon.com

Keep a fire extinguisher on every floor of your home and an extra one in the kitchen, where the majority of fires start (some inau-

ance griddles will give you a discount on your premium for having them). Get multi-purpose A-B-C extinguishers that cover fires from three types of fuels: ordinary combustibles, flammable liquids, and electrical. Check the pressure gauges periodically and have the extinguishers recharged when the pressure drops. *Kidde Full Home fire extinguisher*, \$49, homedepot.com

Supplement hard-wired smoke detectors (if you have them) with at least one battery-powered model per floor, especially in the kitchen and near

bedrooms. Go with a model with a sealed-in, 10-year lithium battery to spare you frequent battery replacement. *Kidde Long-Life sealed battery smoke alarm*, \$25, walmart.com

For the best protection, opt for separate carbon monoxide alarms instead of combination smoke/CO detectors. Place one on every level of the home and outside each bedroom or sleeping area so that occupants will wake up if it goes off at night. Plug-in versions with battery back-ups are convenient and discreet. *First Alert plug-in carbon monoxide detector*, \$33, amazon.com

BASEMENT, LAUNDRY, AND MECHANICAL ROOM

A sump pump alarm has a sensor wire and probe that detect rapidly rising water levels, tipping you off to a potential flood. *Ballistic Controls sump pump alarm*, \$15, homedepot.com

Make sure to include first-aid supplies, three days' worth of bottled water and nonperishable food, and a lot of important phone numbers.

An automatic shut-off valve for your water heater cuts off the supply to the device as soon as it senses a leak of any kind. *FloodStop auto shut-off valve for water heaters*, \$15, sealexcess-products.com

If you forget to turn off the water supply to your washing machine when you're finished sudsing your duels, then this is the game for you: a switch that automatically opens the valve as soon as you turn the machine on, and then closes it when the time cycle is over. *Watts IntelliFlow automatic washing machine shut-off valve*, about \$259, amazon.com

UPSTAIRS BEDROOMS

Place sturdy escape ladders in each bedroom near a window. Practice getting them up in case you have to do it quickly. *First Alert three-story fire-escape ladder*, \$72, target.com

Must-have tools for your emergency kit

Collect all your gear in a waterproof plastic tub and stow it in an easy-to-access spot in your house.



LANTERN

A battery-operated model is safer than candles. *\$40, colman.com*

NYLON ROPE

Use it to secure heavy outdoor furniture or tie down a loading door. *\$30 per 100 feet of heavy-duty rope*

WORK GLOVES

Leather grips protect your wrists during post-storm cleanup. *\$48, ironclad.com*

RAVING/PHONE CHARGER

A hand crank will allow you to juke up the battery. *\$29, amazon.com*

DUCT TAPE

Use it for on-the-fly repairs and temporary fixes. *\$7.50 per roll of heavy-duty tape*

BLANKET

Nylon is warm and lightweight, and folds up small. *\$3.99, grilling.com*

MULTITOOL

Get one with a pair of pliers and a can opener. *\$19, leathertan.com*

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- **VINYL TABLECLOTH:** Lay it down to create a clean zone in any area.
- **BABY WIPES:** They'll remove grime from your hands and practically any surface.



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home solutions

Edited by Amy Roberts

inside

10 USES

PATIO UPGRADE

GARDENING

MORE



PHOTO: LISA JONES/SHUTTERSTOCK

Light up the night

It's warm, it's cozy, and it's the closest you'll get to experiencing a resort vacation in your own backyard: the mood you create by simply wrapping a pergola with warm string lights. For a novelty look, solar-powered grade M5 LED lights in warm white (about \$10 for 24 feet). "They won't get hot and burn, so they're like incandescents and can be left out year-round," says lighting pro Paul Gonzalez. To save yourself hours of labor—or to achieve a similar look beneath an overhang—stick up strings along beams in a zigzag pattern. Simply outfit your staple gun with a wire attachment, which has a groove that catches the wire, protecting it from being punctured. Estimate how many strings you'll need by multiplying a beam's length by twice its width, then by the total number of beams you plan to bedeck.

Another bright idea: Wrap novelty lights like these LED flowers (\$43 for a 10-foot strand, IKEA) around railings or posts. They're powered by a solar panel on a stake; place the panel in direct sun.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/DAVID J. PHILLIPS

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/DAVID J. PHILLIPS

Old flatware

Don't let mismatched forks, knives, and spoons clutter up precious drawer space. Instead, try these clever reuse ideas for your orphaned utensils.

1 Smooth grout.

The curved end of a spoon has just the right curve for shaping grout or scrubbing you press it into a seam. Coat the spoon with liquid dish soap first to prevent it from sticking.

2 Hold finishing nails straight.

Trap an nailhead between two lines of a fork to keep fingers out of them a way—especially helpful when hammering trim overhead.



4 Clean a paintbrush.

Can't find your special brush comb? Forks are just as good at getting between the bristles and whisking out every last drop.

5 Transplant seedlings.

Gently lift roots from starter soil with a fork when transplanting plants to the garden.

6 Use as cabinet pulls.

Small spoons and forks make attractive pulls for kitchen built-ins. Cut two short pieces from a dowel to use as spacers.

Place one behind each end of a dowel and bolt through the front.

7 Untangle rug tassels.

To remove tangles in the fringe of a carpet, slide through with a fork.

8 Fix splitting upholstery.

Use a butter knife to poke loose fabric and



thread back in before paving the room and sewing it closed.

9 Scrape away peeling paint.

After applying strips of or get paint stripper underlaid the surface, hold up, run a spoon along curved problem—or a butter knife— to remove layers of old paint.

10 Make plant markers.

Get a metal, unpainted set (Jalor Tools #6530 \$15, amazon.com) to emboss lightweight butter knives, stick deep into soil. —A.R.

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7 ways to get your grill on

Before the season really heats up, give your barbecue its annual checkup. Follow our how-to advice to get it up to snuff for summer.

1. Deep-clean inside and out

Achmed cooking on a grill doesn't add flavor: it's just dirt, says Larry "O B" Martin, Char-Broil's CEO—that's why grilling suffers. Any shiny black flakes on the under side of the hood are unlikely to be dropping paint: they're built-up residue, a fire risk. Here, Martin's step-by-step to junk removal:

➤ **the exterior** Dry scrubber from grates, burners and inside surfaces with a nonscratch sponge or a nylon brush. You can even use an emery cloth or a wire brush on unsalted steel or iron. Then wash surfaces with dish soap and water, rinse well, and dry thoroughly. Martin suggests reseasoning cast-iron or metal grates with oil. A pro tip: use a similar pan, but there's no need to coat seasoned steel or ceramic grates. Consider replacing these grates if they're rusty or chipping.

➤ **the interior** Sponge off both stainless steel and enameled surfaces with warm soapy water and wipe dry. (To prevent streaking on stainless steel, go in the direction of the finish.) Use a high-heat spray paint to touch up surfaces that don't continue contact with food.



2. Don't just "burn it off"

For cleaning after cooking, you shouldn't turn up the gas, close the top, and walk away. Instead, run the burners on low for only 5 minutes—just a burner—before turning them off. Then scrub the grates with a grill brush or a ball of foil polished between fingers. If you don't feel like cleaning right away, try this real-day trick: Fill a spray bottle with equal parts vinegar and water, coat the exterior of the grill, close it, and let it sit for an hour. This softens residue for your brush without the need for heat.



3. Prep the propane

Do a pre-check—it's essential for safe, efficient cooking, especially if a grill's been idle.

➤ **Inspect the tank.** Run a leak test. Coat the regulator, valves, and hoses with soapy water, then turn on the tank to pressurize the system. Look for bubbles, which indicate escaping gas. Tighten connections and try again. If there's still a leak, replace the hoses or the tank if needed. Next, if your grill lacks spider guards, use a bottle brush to clear out debris or nested nests from the vent tubes, which connect gas to burners. Finally, keep the burners without the grates in place and look for spots that aren't flaming evenly. Once cool, clear any blockages at the burners with a paper clip.

➤ **Check gas levels.** For grills without a built-in gauge, get a scale. Use the Grill Gauge (SIL, askhardware.com) or use a kitchen scale. Tanks let their true weight (TW) or weight when empty. Weigh the tank and subtract the TW to gauge the gas inside. A pound of propane produces 21,600 BTU per hour, divide this by your grill's max BTU output to see how many hours of cooking on low you'll have left per pound of gas. It's smart to keep an extra full tank on hand, store it upright and outdoors in the shade.



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES; SHOOT: JEFFREY MAYER/GETTY IMAGES; SHOOT: JEFFREY MAYER/GETTY IMAGES



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4. Find and fix your grill's hot spots

Even heat is the holy grail of grilling, but it's often not what your burners deliver. To identify the heat pitfalls, cover grates with slices of white bread and run burners on low for a few minutes. Cut the three and flip the slices to see which toasted most, indicating where the hot spots are. To even out the heat, add grates of hard-anodized aluminum, an excellent conductor, like GrillGrite (\$40 and up, grillgrite.com). Or place indirect-heat food on cooler areas and direct-heat food on the warm ones.

5. Touch, don't pierce

Meat needs regular food thermometer for gauging doneness. But to conserve juices in steak the way you're doing, try this touch test.

> **Bare:** The outside consistency of beef with a cool red center should be about that of the spot between the thumb and forefinger of a relaxed hand.



> **Medium:** To gauge if steak is just pink inside, compare how it feels with the clarity of the center of your palm when you hold your hand flat.



> **Well:** Meat that's cooked all the way through should be firm but with a slight give, similar to the texture of the tip of your nose.



6. Learn your burger basics

Achieving a juicy, distinctly charred burger requires a certain degree of skill. Grillmaster Martin provides some pointers.

> **Think this:** The best burgers are three-eighths to one-inch thick. Too plump and they'll tend to shrink outside and undercook on the inside.

> **Make an impression:** Use the back of a spoon to make a shallow, inch-wide dent in each patty (unless it's stuffed). That'll help them cook flat so they don't look like overzealous meatballs.

> **Pat your patties:** Dab each burger with a paper towel and sprinkle with salt. Both will wick moisture from the surface, allowing for better browning.

> **Start hot:** A temperature of 400 degrees is just right for cooking burgers. Place patties over direct heat.

> **Go easy on 'em:** Sift burgers with a fork when turning them.

drains that previous juices. Instead, use a spatula and flip when you see most of the top to the surface.

> **Know when to stop:** Grilling times vary, so getting a temperature reading is key. Medium rare burgers are ready at 130 degrees; medium at 140 degrees. For safety, Martin recommends the USDA guideline of 160 degrees—well done.

7. Stuff it, top it...enjoy!

Brie-Stuffed Burgers with Caramelized Onions

SERVES FOUR
PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES

- Caramelized Onions**
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
 - 2 cups yellow onions, very thinly sliced
 - 1/2 teaspoon sugar
 - 1 pinch salt

Brie-Stuffed Burgers

- 1 1/2 pounds ground chuck, 80 percent lean
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire
 - 1/2 teaspoon beef broth
 - 1 teaspoon kosher salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
 - 2 ounces Brie (not the triple-cream variety)
 - 4 round rolls
 - 1 cup whole-grain mustard



1. Melt butter in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions, sugar and salt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool for some time.
2. Preheat grill to high heat. In a bowl, grillify the burger ingredients, mix in cheese and shape into four patties.
3. Turn and add the onion sauce as well as enough burger meat to bury it 1/2 inch thick piece of cheese. Cover it without heat for 10 minutes.
4. Cook patties over direct high heat until browned, turning once until desired doneness. During final minutes or so of cooking, toast rolls over direct heat.
5. Top burgers with onions and whole-grain mustard.

Adapted from Weber's *How to Grill*.
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before+after:
kitchen

Craftsman details, modern flow

A bungalow gains a smartly laid-out space in a new spot sized just right for cooking and gathering. by ODDISSEI BALDWIN • Photographs by JOHN GRANER



A small, dated house often requires creative leg. Gary and Elise Hallford loved their 1912 bungalow, on a corner lot in their favorite Seattle neighborhood, but not the wimpy of dollhouse-size spaces beyond the front rooms. The words major surgery came to mind. "We wanted to open it up," Elise says, starting with what she politely recalls as "the pressure but one-person kitchen." J.A.S. Design-Build devised an open plan on the first floor anchored by a kitchen large enough for a family of four. "Our goal was to open it up while keeping the original character," says designer Kevin Price. Without changing the house's footprint, the team knocked down walls, moved the kitchen into adjacent bedroom space, and opened it to the dining room and an office that took the old kitchen's place. Columns and cabinets help define areas within the free-flowing plan, while period details maintain the bungalow's Craftsman soul. The kitchen's big enough for all to gather, without throwing off the scale of the house. "It's now the heart of our home," says Elise, "and that's what we really wanted."

before: The small, busy kitchen was meant for a single cook.
after: Walls came down and additional windows were added. The kitchen shifted to a new location, a dining nook and breakfast bar became part of the office.

• **Craftsman-inspired cabinets** rise to double-screen molding that matches the trim in adjacent rooms. The Oregon Fir & Maple Island panel cabinet is Tiger-Lily.

• **Perforated-metal panels** reinforce the period look and play off lattices with a finish in Burnished Antique Lattice. Perforation: Perforated steel panels, Motokote.



before

Just 108 square feet, the kitchen lacked a table and maneuvering space.



after

Reconfigured to an adjacent bedroom space, the new 170-square-foot kitchen opens to an 80-square-foot office where the old kitchen used to be.

1. Took down walls and added structural beams and columns to establish a three-part layout.

2. Created free-flowing pathways into and around the cooking, dining, and office areas.



3. Added a beaded-glass interior window to channel light from the kitchen into the hall.

4. Installed period-style windows over the new slab area and hid breakfast bar in the island.

5. Added an island, support one and by/other cabinet that holds appliances and serves as screen divider.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL O'NEILL

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before + after: kitchens

• the key details

• **An appliance garage** at one end of the island is off the cooking area, while the island's built-in wall behind it helps delineate the dining nook area.
Photo: Reproduction



• **Office that cooks:** The island's built-in wall behind it helps delineate the dining nook area.
Photo: Reproduction



• **The microwave** is tucked between drawers in the island, making it accessible without disrupting the room's vintage spirit.
Photo: Reproduction



• **Cabinet shelves** are just 12 inches deep, so the built-in 12-inch island behind the range. The island's built-in wall behind it helps delineate the dining nook area.
Photo: Reproduction

• **A new interior window** built with custom stained glass also shows a peek at the light switch.
Photo: Reproduction



homeowner tip
 ELIZABETH BENTLEY
 "Shallow storage keeps everything in plain sight. I have up to 100 supplies in 30-inch-deep shelves and same-size spice containers in a 3-inch-deep drawer."



• **The office** is steps from the island and kept cozy by a new built-in desk and chair, making it equally attractive for recipe searches and homework. The island's built-in wall behind it helps delineate the dining nook area.
Photo: Reproduction

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This weekend: update the bathroom

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before+after:
bath

Moved and improved

Taking the place of a bathroom window-lined closet, this period-inspired master bath has vintage and spa style to spare. BY DEBORAH LALOWITZ • Photography: LAURA FLOREN

Baths are often designed for efficiency, with amenities like a steam shower almost an afterthought. Architect Alack Wilson faced a different challenge when the owners of a century-old stately house in San Francisco asked him to reimagine their master bath. "They wanted a retreat," he says, "a real room with symmetry and presence and a sense of entrance." The existing bath was squeezed alongside a master closet that was three times larger and housed three windows. Wilson moved the bath into the closet, rebuilding walls in stone and installing divided-light casements that match the rest of the house; the old bath became a vestibule. He carved out space for a steam shower with a Japanese-inspired drying-off area and a closet for the toilet. The double vanity wraps around the tub, turns a corner, and extends to form a shallow crown molding alcove. The wall that holds the door was thickened to hold recessed cabinets and drawers, creating that sense of entrance. The paneled tub is the room's focal point as you enter, but it's not for looks only. These homeowners, Wilson says, "actually take baths."



before The small master bath had remained in the 1960s, was mostly tile, lay upside down, and offered no privacy. Now it's a larger light-filled space, the bath now holds an enclosed shower, a new freestanding tub, and features its own closet with the rest of the late 1800s house.



[before]

↑
Paving based on existing floor joists for access to plumbing.

before+after: bath

• the key details

• The sink is relatively simple, which allows the vanity top to extend over the tub toward to the right. Wall panel, the panel above is Dark Satin.



• Storage built-ins look like doors and reinforce the built-in cabinet panelwork.



pro tip
ALICE WILSON ARCHITECT
SAN FRANCISCO

"We placed the windows high over the tub for privacy, then emphasized their vertical lines by extending the trim to frame open shelves below."



• The glass enclosure brings more light into the bath and swings open to a Japanese-style wooden bench.

• Cross-handle faucets have the polished nickel finish of the market's best fittings. (Photo: J. Williams)



low-cost vintage looks find budget-friendly ideas for price tag bath at www.thespruce.com/jpr2012

• after

Relocated to a large dressing closet, the bath grew to 180 square feet and gained natural light.

1 Replaced the windows with casements, centering two over the tub and giving the third over to the shower area.

2 Thickened the entry wall to build built-ins and add privacy to the dressing.



3 Used custom-made glass to enclose the shower, which disperses natural light. A floating art area sits just outside.

4 Gave the toilet its own room.

PHOTO: J. WILLIAMS

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A living room lift for \$539

DIY built-ins, clean-lined furniture, and white paint bring out the original details in a 1917 room. BY DANIELLE BOVATSKY



Before Move walls and spruce up air conditioner: make the room feel uncluttered and clean. A built-in DIY built-in complement the original windows, and clean-lined furniture brightens the space.



the project tally

Removed air conditioner and remodeled original diamond-pane window found in the basement	\$0
Built-in wall of storage around the bank of windows	\$259
Scored average sofa and armchair at thrift store	\$89
Found a thrift-store coffee table and finished it with stripper stain and teak oil	\$36
Painted the walls and trim white for a clean, fresh look	\$62
Sprayed the original light fixtures in white called Cal Rubbed Bronze	\$7
Total	\$539

Even well-preserved period charm requires tweaking—and a little elbow grease—to bring it into the 21st century. Maryland's Katherine and Cosan Fager found a lot to like in the living room of their 1917 house, in Wichita, Kansas. But along with the original diamond-pane windows, ornate ceiling, floor, and hardwood floor came an uninspiring color scheme—muted walls with clashing golden oak trim—and eyesores, like a prominent window air conditioner and two hulking radiators that no longer worked.

Lucky, they were able to pull out that air conditioner and put the missing window back in its rightful place, as it had been stored in the basement. The couple removed the bulky radiators as well. (A forced-air system went in as part of a whole-house redo.)

They also drilled out the window wall with message-posted bookshelves, including open shelves to showcase Cosan's collection of yellow-bound National Geographic issues. They used their knack for finding good deals to land a vintage sofa in a rolled cream, green and a bench-style coffee table that needed stripping and took oil to give back its glow. They revived the ceiling fluting with spray paint, finished the walls in light-reflecting off-white with bright white trim, and let the floor bare to show off the oak's grain. Today the living room is bright and inviting, with an artful row of potted plants and framed photographs serving as a focal point. "For this project, we wanted to install functional green while still being respectful of the house and its roots," says the homeowner. "We're so proud of how it turned out."

PHOTOS: JENNIFER KELLY

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IMPORTANT FACTS



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LYRICA may cause drowsiness, even if first-aiding, allergic reactions may follow LYRICA and call your doctor right away if you have any signs of a serious allergic reaction.

BEFORE STARTING LYRICA, continued

• Alcohol? You should avoid alcohol while taking LYRICA. Alcohol may increase the effects of LYRICA and cause drowsiness. You may have a higher chance of weight gain or swelling of your hands or feet.

• Nausea? You may feel sick or have an upset stomach. Tell your doctor if you have a higher chance for drowsiness and dizziness. You may have a higher chance for drowsiness and dizziness.

• Any medicines that make you sleepy?

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF LYRICA

LYRICA may cause serious side effects, including:

- See "Important Safety Information About LYRICA."
- Muscle problems, pain, weakness or numbness along with feeling cold and tired
- Fainting problems including blurry vision
- Weight gain. Weight gain may affect control of diabetes and can be serious for people with heart problems.
- Feeling "foggy"

If you have any of these symptoms, tell your doctor right away. The most common side effects of LYRICA are:

- Drowsiness
- Trouble concentrating
- Heavy vision
- Swelling of hands and feet
- Weight gain
- Dry mouth
- Sleepiness

If you have dizziness, you should pay extra attention to your diet while taking LYRICA and tell your doctor if any more or side problems.

HOW TO TAKE LYRICA

Do:

- Take LYRICA exactly as your doctor tells you. Your doctor will tell you how much to take and when to take it.
- Take LYRICA at the same times each day.
- Take LYRICA with or without food.

Don't:

- Drive a car or use machinery if you feel dizzy or sleepy while taking LYRICA.
- Drink alcohol or use other medicines that make you sleepy while taking LYRICA.
- Change the dose or stop LYRICA suddenly.
- Use any other medicines, vitamins, or herbs while taking LYRICA. You may have bleeding, nausea, dizziness, or trouble sleeping if you stop taking LYRICA suddenly.
- Start any new medicines without first talking to your doctor.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Ask your doctor or pharmacist. This is only a brief summary of important information.

- Go to www.lyrica.com or call 1-866-699-7432 (1-866-4-LYRICA).

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ALL THREE MODELS (LEFT) COMBINE FEATURES TO SERVE AS THE FLASHLIGHT, OR LANTERN.



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shopping

Metal candle lanterns

Vintage-inspired lanterns keep flames from flickering in the wind, while casting soft—and safe—candlelight in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

By BRICA CORBIN AND DANIELLE SWARTZ • Photographs by VONDELLE T. WISNER

Here at This Old House, we love lanterns with purpose. These decorative metal lanterns with fused glass panels look charming but also supply subtle illumination. Precursors to electric and gas light, lanterns guided the way along dirt paths and from carriage to front door. Modern versions still have handles for carrying or rings for hanging, as well as designs that echo centuries of use around the world, from Morocco to the English countryside. Some lanterns are meant for indoors or to be taken outside just for the duration of dinner a l'italienne, but others are built of weather-resistant materials to be left in the elements long-term. Here are 13 glowing options.

BOX

— Galvanized steel
— 6 1/2" W x 12 1/4" H
— A boxy shape and rectangular cutouts for ventilation give this lantern an Arts and Crafts look. Can be left outdoors. \$8. See usa.oxon.com for more.

JAMUL GARDEN

— Available in antiqued finish
— 8 1/2" W x 12 1/4" H
— A golden gold finish and slight imperfections in the metalwork in this and the Box lamp on right lend handmade appearance. \$22. jgarden.com

ANTIQUE LANTERN

— 8 1/2" W x 12 1/4" H
— 8 1/2" W x 12 1/4" H
— Interlocking vintage product line gives and an embossed cupola top adds shape and height. \$250 for a set of three in graduated sizes (shown: medium). For vintageantiques.com for more.



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JANUARY GARDEN

Iron with a patina finish
24"W x 18"H

This Mooner style lantern has painted metal olive-jarred red-oxide finish. The cast glass allows light to glow. januargarden.com

FLOWER HEARTH
Iron with a green-patina finish
40"W x 26"H
A painted steel and wrought-iron style lantern with a green-patina finish. The cast glass allows light to glow. flowerhearth.com

FRONTGATE

Powder-coated brass with a green-patina finish
12"W x 28"H

This Gothic style lantern is made of brass with a green-patina finish. The cast glass allows light to glow. frontgate.com

JANUARY GARDEN

Iron with a patina finish
7"W x 17"H

This slender style lantern has a painted metal olive-jarred red-oxide finish. The cast glass allows light to glow. januargarden.com

FRONTGATE

Powder-coated brass with a green-patina finish
12"W x 28"H

This Gothic style lantern is made of brass with a green-patina finish. The cast glass allows light to glow. frontgate.com

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This large lantern
holds one white pillar
candle or a group of
candlemas. Placed
on a table or on the
floor, it's a great
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JAMAL GARDEN
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8" W x 12" H
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a weathered glass and
metal frame. \$23 |
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around | **stryker**

Things can go wrong in a kitchen. That's why it's important to have a good backup plan. A good backup plan is a plan that allows you to continue to cook even if something goes wrong. A good backup plan is a plan that allows you to continue to cook even if something goes wrong.

As with any new piece, there's a learning curve. But once you get the hang of it, you'll be able to cook like a pro. The turntable is a great addition to any kitchen. It's a great way to keep your kitchen organized and looking great. It's a great way to keep your kitchen organized and looking great.

The information provided is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be a substitute for professional advice. Please consult your doctor or other healthcare provider for more information.

Turntable is your device. It's a great way to keep your kitchen organized and looking great. It's a great way to keep your kitchen organized and looking great. It's a great way to keep your kitchen organized and looking great.

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Stylish porch

Elbed-wearing materials in weathered finishes lend this outdoor room a pleasantly lived-in look. Here's how to assemble a similar space in your home.

By KIMICA DODDILL-FINDER • Photographs by LAUREA MOORE

Because it stabilizes the line between the house and the great outdoors, a front porch often requires furnishings that fuse functionality with elegance. But that doesn't mean the space can't look great. Consider the Butler County, Pennsylvania, porch shown here. Vintage metal cake chairs pop in bright orange, while an all-weather bench looks polished in a glossy black finish. A faded Oriental rug, which serves as an indoor runner during the winter, anchors the seating, a glass-topped table, which serves extra Macchinos and seasonal delectables, acts as a coffee table. "Everything here has a purpose," says designer and homeowner Danny Siro. "But it also represents my eclectic taste." To further personalize the space, Siro added porch flowers and custom wall art that he made by hanging fish-market pie tins like a metal wall sculpture. For ways to incorporate equally crisp yet outdoorsy touches into your own outdoor room, read on.



corner plant stand

Highlight a retailing arrangement of herbs and flowers with these tiered shelves (Stard \$45, and a set of three steel trays (not shown) \$35. www.garden.com



evangelic motto

Mix and fry glazed
cinnamon sandwiches
with chocolate chips
on a hot display.
Caramels, \$17, and
fudge, \$12.
www.fox.com



metal trunk

Takes a cue from designer Soe and let a personalized storage container—this one has a bright orange interior—double as a coffee table. \$149. cbl.com



bold print colors

Royal blue siding with green green trim makes a statement without looking precious. Valparaiso Summer Exterior Paint by Sherwin-Williams and Lip Pond, from \$17 per gallon, www.sherwin-williams.com



natural brightness

This model, made from a dried gourd, is designed to attract bluebirds, swallows, hairy woodpeckers, and certain types of wrens. \$20; www.birdhouse.com



DIY wall art

So if you're looking for a stack of vinyl like he got at an estate market, to replicate it, pick up old vinyl at a yard sale for less than \$5 or new ones on eBay (www.ebay.com) for \$5 (50 and up) and award with pride.



coloured bench

Build from sturdy hardwood with
rust-resistant steel hardware.
This traditional staffboard can
withstand the elements. \$350
baywindows.com



cheerful pillows

Fade resistant multi-color
cushions in light green
celine reading and add a
playful punch of color. E20
linen@hollisterand.com



outdoor lighting

Turns porch into an open air room by softening floors with an area rug. This one is made of oil weather polypropylene but has the look of natural fibers. 3-by-5-foot rug, \$499, [woolworth.com](http://www.woolworth.com)



vintage-look chairs

Manufactured in the U.S.A. with care, this aluminum seat is light, sturdy and stackable. 170 pounds capacity. Call

Pot up edibles now, feast all summer

No garden? No problem. Try growing your food in containers. Just follow our tips for a plentiful harvest. BY JESSICA HEDDER

Even where outdoor space is severely limited—just a small deck or patio, a bright front stoop, or a patch of concrete along the drive—you can grow your own fruit and veggies. Just choose wisely and plant them in pots. Growing in containers makes some crops, such as strawberries and squash, less vulnerable to snails and other ground-crawling pot-daners. Others, including peppers, seem to relish confinement and produce more abundantly. Blueberries like more acidic soil than other edibles, so they are easier to accommodate in pots. And container crops have fewer problems with weeds because they're raised off the ground and grown in weed-free potting mix.

There's the beauty bonus, too, of course. A gathering of rustic troughs and wood half-barrels filled with rainbow chard and jeweled tomatoes add life to paved places—not to mention convenient harvests for your table. Even if you have a garden, a pot of herbs outside the kitchen makes there a reach to snap for dinner.

Most edibles want lots of light, so choose a sunny spot and well-draining containers that are deep enough for what you grow. Long-rooted



beautiful bounty

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

Gentian-blue tomatoes, mustard greens, and fuchsia tub shoulders with petals of flowering plants. Purple-wined cabbage grows with chive-leaved parsley. Little fuchsia bellows is as pretty as it is tasty. Colorful chard, peppers, and strawberry plants in terra-cotta pots.

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Can you scrub it with bleach?

You need outdoor fabric that can weather your lifestyle. Here are five key things—from how it's dyed to its care instructions—to consider before you buy.

By DEBORAH BALDWIN • Photograph by WENDIE LY WICKER

Textile science has come a long way since cotton ruled the roost. And while soft, breathable cotton still has many fans, the latest man-made fibers do a better job of standing up to sun and rain—and lint. The softest and sturdiest are desired for awnings and patio umbrellas, while those with more drape are best for pillows, cushions, and curtains. Along with the plasticity feel once associated with man-made fibers, a number of outdoor fabrics have shed their sober, functional color patterns in favor of exuberant stripes, patterns, and hues. None are 100 percent sun-, water-, and kid-proof, but many come close. Before stacking up or purchasing pillows, cushions, or curtains, check out these five essential differences. ■

1

Read the fabric label

Acrylics hold many water. Thus, acetate, mold or mildew and fight off oily stains more effectively than most polyesters. Over the long run, a well-made acrylic is also more durable than other synthetics.

2

Consider the weave

Acrylic, for example, like weaves will hold water longer. Check for collect dirt (but the best ones also hide small snags caused by pets).



3

Look at both sides of the material

Long-lasting, fade-resistant outdoor fabrics are solution-dyed (the same fibers are dyed before being woven). As a result, the fabric is a color or pattern that's almost equally vivid front and back.

4

Check the care instructions

To get a sense of the quality of the pigment, consult the manufacturer's website to see if the fabric can be cleaned with a strong bleach solution—a nice option, should outdoor life take a turn for the worse.

5

Study the warranty

Look for two years, currently the gold standard. That often means the fabric will hold up much longer, even if you choose to leave it outside.

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Fabric. Available at eldoradostone.com*

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*Based on 2005 U.S. Census ARII data

†Using with occasional pumping

money savers

Spring fix-ups

It's time to prep your house and yard for warmer weather. Target these 12 trouble spots and DIY upgrade opportunities to slash utility bills, boost curb appeal, and up your comfort all year long! BY LARA JEFFREY KAZDIN • ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOE MCKENNEY

1 Stain the fence

WHY NOW Sunlight degrades the lignin that binds wood fibers, allowing water to penetrate and causing the surface to gray. A semitransparent stain fortified with UV blockers can halt damage while giving pressure-treated pine a warm tone that mimics pricey hardwood.

HOW TO DO IT Knock debris and flakes off the wood with a broom. Brush on a nontoxic deck cleaner, then rinse and let dry. Use a landscape pump sprayer to evenly apply a penetrating stain, such as Penetrol Woods (55¢ per gallon; deckstainercor.com). This high-tech finish, made from Brazilian rosewood oil, comes in 18 colors, offers 99 percent UV protection, and has zero VOCs, so it's safe for you and the environment. **THE PAYOFF**—Prolong the life of your fence, and get the look of cedar for about half the price.



2 Hook up a handsome rain barrel

WHY NOW Harvesting spring rains means you'll be ready to water the garden come summer's first dry spell. Now, less anti-corn barrels, such as the 65-gallon Cascade with a built-in planter and brass spout (\$199; harvestrainbarrel.com), are also an attractive addition to the yard.

HOW TO DO IT Select a downspout that's close to where you'll need extra water, like near a planned bed. Level the ground where the barrel will sit, and set a double-block foundation to elevate it about 5 to 13 inches so that gully can help drain it. Use a hacksaw to cut the downspout 6 to

9 inches above the top of the barrel, and install the bottom elbow. If the barrel has a screened cap, orient the elbow so that water flows into the center of the lid. If the barrel has a downspout, use a flex tube to extend the downspout into the downspout. **THE PAYOFF**—About 1,300 gallons of water during peak summer months.

3 Add window awnings

WHY NOW Awnings reduce solar heat gain, glare, and UV damage to your furniture without blocking airflow or views. They come in designs to

1

FENCE STAINING HOW-TO

- Knock off loose dirt and debris with a broom.
- Brush the surface with deck cleaner (you may need to rinse twice). Rinse off and let dry.
- Apply the stain with a pump sprayer, making a broad, sweeping motion from top to bottom to ensure even coverage.
- Wait 30 minutes, then wipe the surface with a soft-bristled deckbrush to remove excess stain.

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2011 Winner: "Cooked-Up Kitchen"
by Nora F., Virginia Beach, VA

Nora used FrogTape® to paint the intricate
backsplash that looked like ceramic tile!

Build a raised herb-garden planter

Four deck posts and a few boards are all you need to create this practical, compact planting bed. — *by JESSIE B. TSCHE* — Photograph by LAUREA MOORE

home center
project



Cost: \$120 to \$150
Time: 2 to 4 hours
Difficulty: Easy. Simply
crosscut the parts to length,
then screw them together.

For complete
instructions, turn
the page.

Growing herbs in pots indoors can be a tricky task, but an outdoor garden bed requires yard space that not all of us have. So what's an herb lover to do? If you've got a few afternoon and basic carpentry skills, The Old House general contractor Tom Silva has the perfect solution: Build an all-weather raised planter that can live on your porch or patio. This compact unit takes up less than 6 square feet and has a few handy hooks to hold pots, gardening tools. Best of all, it'll let you enjoy fresh herbs all season long without back-breaking labor.

PHOTO: JESSIE B. TSCHE FOR THE OLD HOUSE



Old House general contractor Tom Silva has the perfect solution: Build an all-weather raised planter that can live on your porch or patio. This compact unit takes up less than 6 square feet and has a few handy hooks to hold pots, gardening tools. Best of all, it'll let you enjoy fresh herbs all season long without back-breaking labor.

HOW IT'S DONE

Make a raised herb-garden planter

Herbs should be grown in soil that is at least 4 to 5 inches deep, says the National Gardening Association. We built our planter from pressure-treated lumber: four deck posts and some 1x6s and 2x2s. Torn out the parts on a miter saw, but you can use a portable circular saw or even a hand saw instead. The bottom of the planter consists of a couple of floorboards to support a sturdy liner that holds the soil. We used a utility tub for this purpose and simply slotted the planter to enclose it.



Project photographs by JAMITCHY TOSHI

1. Cut the legs to length. Trim sections off both ends of a deck post to the planter's height, leaving one end's square section long enough to attach the planter's sides. We made our first cut so that the longer square section measured 14 1/2 inches, then marked 36 inches from that end and made the second cut. Use the first leg to mark and cut the others as shown.



5. Assemble the planter. Drill three evenly spaced 1/4-inch pilot holes through each corner block. Align one side's corner block with the inside corner at one of the legs. Drive 2 1/2-inch screws through the corner block and into the leg. Repeat for the remaining sides and legs as shown.

2. Attach the cleats. Cut the 1x6s and 2x2 balusters for the planter's sides and cleats. (Measure out list at thisoldhouse.com/jan2012.) Screw a 2x2 cleat to the inside surface of one of the longer 1x6s. Position each cleat 1/4 inch from the board's bottom edge and center it lengthwise. Drill 1/4-inch pilot holes through the cleats, then secure them with 2-inch deck screws.



6. Install the floorboards. Cut two 1x6 floorboards to span the width of the planter. Set the floorboards onto the cleats roughly equidistant along the planter's length. Fasten each end of both floorboards to the cleats with a 2-inch deck screw. Drilling pilot holes first to reduce the chance of splitting the boards.

3. Build the sides. The planter's sides are made from two 2x6 boards butted edge to edge. Hold them together by fastening 2x2s across the joints with 2-inch deck screws as shown. For each short side, fasten a 2x2 in the center and 2 inches below the top edge to leave room for the liner's lip. For each long side, use two evenly spaced 2x2s placed against the bottom board's cleat.



7. Drill drainage holes in the liner. Turn the utility tub upside down, and use a drill/driver to bore six or more evenly spaced 1/4-inch diameter holes through the bottom. These holes are necessary to allow excess water to drain from the soil.

4. Screw on the corner blocks. Fasten a 2x2 corner block to each end of all four sides of the planter using 2-inch deck screws. Position the blocks 1/4 inch from the ends and 1/4 inch up from the bottom edges of the sides. These eight corner blocks provide a solid surface for attaching the legs to the planter and also help hold the sides together.



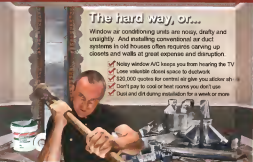
8. Finish the planter and attach the hooks. Apply deck stain to the planter. Once dry, screw hooks to each end of the planter for hanging gardening tools. Set the utility tub in place, add some clean gravel, and fill the planter with soil and your favorite herbs.

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weekend
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Build a classic Westport chair

Take some stock cedar, make a few tricky cuts, and puzzle it all together to create an instant heirloom by JOSEPH TRUANT • Photographs by WENDY T. WOODS

Cost: \$320 to \$350

Time: 10 to 12 hours

Difficulty: Somewhat hard
Carving slots the impact and bevels it requires considerable carpentry skill—no pun intended



For complete instructions, turn the page

The secret to a beautiful chair is in the details. It's not just the overall shape, but the intricate carvings and joinery that make it a masterpiece. The Westport chair is a classic example of this, with its elegant lines and sturdy construction.

To build the chair, you'll need a good understanding of carpentry and a willingness to take your time. The process involves several steps, from selecting the wood to the final assembly. Each step is crucial to the overall quality of the piece.

The Old House magazine has a detailed version of plans for the chair. You can find them in the archives or on the website. The plans are easy to follow and include all the necessary measurements and instructions.



2x4 legs and a heavy-duty baseboard are what you'll need

Photo: iStockphoto.com

Day-to-day timeline

SATURDAY Cut the cedar boards to size (Steps 1-6).

SUNDAY Assemble the chair and apply finish (Steps 6-7).



tools

riding compound miter saw to crosscut the boards to length

clamps to hold the parts together during assembly

circle saw to cut the parts to width

framing squares and combination square for marking cutlines

gripes for notches and curves

drill/driver

level plane to straighten backrests

120-grit sandpaper

sanding block

compass

torpedo level

3-inch paintbrush to apply look oil

materials

1/2 x 12 cedar boards
Get four 8-foot lengths.

2 1/2-inch stainless-steel brin-head screws

look oil to finish the chair

dimension details

For full rail lathe parts plan including angles and measurements go to diyweekendremodel.com/jun2012

1. Cut the front legs

A. Rip a board to width. To make the blank for the front legs, use a riding compound miter saw to cut a 1/2-inch cedar board to length (see the cut list at diyweekendremodel.com/jun2012). Switch to a circular saw, attach a fence, and rip the board down to 2 1/2 inches wide.

B. Bevel-rip the legs. Clamp the blank to saw horses or a workbench with its long edge overhanging. Adjust the bevel angle on the circular saw to 12 degrees and attach a fence. Bevel-rip the blank down the middle, as shown, to create two identical front legs. The easiest way to do this is to match the cedar angle and set the bevel outline up the angled blade to brood it when starting the cut.

Next, following the primer cut list, use a riding compound miter saw and a circular saw to cut blanks for the remaining parts.

2. Notch the front legs

A. Mark a notch. Adjust a combination square so that its short rule protrudes past the head by 14 inches (just under 1/4 board). Use the square to mark a 3-inch long notch on the innermost edge of the leg, as shown. The notch will later accept the horizontal rail.

B. Cut the notches. Use a rip saw to cut the short lines straight into the board, as shown, but don't saw past the inner outline parallel to the board's edge. Use a drill/driver to bore a 1/4-inch hole through the board's face in a corner of the notch a week's time. Tilt the piece's shoe to 12 degrees, and insert the blade into the hole with its angle matching that of the beveled edge. Complete the notching by cutting along the long line. Mark and notch the other front leg to mirror the first.



3. Make the seat and backrest

A. Attach the bottoms. Clamp together the two boards for the seat blank. If the edges don't mate evenly, flatten them with a hand plane. Center two battens across the boards, inset seven inches from the boards' ends. Drill 1/4-inch pilot holes through the battens and attach them with 2 1/2-inch stainless-steel brin-head screws, as shown. Do not use glue between the boards or under the battens.

B. Mark the outlines on the seat blank. Use a straightedge to mark the outlines on the seat blank per the parts plan at diyweekendremodel.com/jun2012. These odd-shaped cuts allow the seat to fit snugly into the tapered space between the front and back legs.

C. Cut out the seat and backrest. Trim the seat blank using a square. Cut the four long lines with the blade at 90 degrees, but bevel-cut the two short connecting lines with the saw set to 12 degrees, angled toward the back legs. Make the backrest the same way. Join the two boards with battens, mark the outlines, and cut the piece to shape. Note that the long edge of each blank must be beveled at 12 degrees, angled in toward the rear of the chair, for the back legs to sit flat against the backrest.



4



5. Make the arms

4. Trace the arc curves. Each of these is curved to follow along its inner edge to provide generous seating area. To trace the curves, start by driving a screw halfway into an inner flange, about 1/4 inch from the edge. Place one screw 2 1/2 inches from the center and the other 1/2 inch from the front edge. Find the center point between the screws, measure it 2 inches, and make a mark. Press a thin woodeny against the two screws, bending it until it meets the 2-inch mark. Hold it in place as you draw a line along the strip's outer edge, as shown.

B. Cut the curve. Use a saw to cut the bogenbit curve into the arm. Then smooth the edges with 120- and sandpaper.

C. Round the arm end: Take a pencil compass and strike a 4th with radius into the front end of the chair arm. Use a pencil to cut along the half circle line and hand sand the out edge smooth. Then mark, cut and sand the second arm blank.



5



4. Cut the back legs

A. Mark the outlines. Following the online parts plan, mark the angled outlines on each leg/bank. The wheelchair shape produces a legs that support the seat at a 21° slight angle to the ground. The limit of sitting comfort, with absolute safety, according to the W.C. Leonard & Co. furniture catalog, circa 1932:

B. Cut the back legs to shape. Use a jig saw with the blade set at 90 degrees to cut along the three long lines. Trim the shoe to 12 degrees across the short line at the front edge of each leg. Cut the bevel so that the legs mirror each other and you can orient them correctly during assembly. Flush with the beveled edges of the front legs.



6. Assemble the frame parts

A. Attach the legs. Set the front rail inside the notches of the front legs, taping in the legs to make their beveled edges flush with the face of the rail. Drill pilot holes to prevent the screws from splitting the wood, and fasten the rail with the inch screws. Working on a level surface, clamp and screw the rear legs to the inside of the front legs, as shown.

8. Install the seat. Slip the completed seat down onto the backlegs. Do not screw it in place yet. The completed backrest between the back legs, and clamp. Check that the seat, backrest, and back legs are sure they do drill pilot holes and use screws to fit the backlegs and attach the back legs to the



Tip: Before fastening the horizontal front rail to the front-leg stretchers, set the seat between the legs to act as a perfect-size spacer.

7. Attach the arms

A. Mount the armbrackets. I held one triangular arm bracket in position, as shown centered on the front leg's width and flush at the top. Drill pilot holes and screw the bracket to the leg. Repeat for all of the other armbracket.

F. Mark the arm's positions. Place an arm on top of the front leg, set a torpedo level on the arm. Then raise or lower the arm until it's level. Mark the arm's position on the edge of the backrest, as shown. Repeat for the other arm.

C. **Fasten the rear brace.** Run up the tape edge of the horizontal rear brace at 25 degrees, and clamp it to the backrest so that it holds the arm level. Screw the rear brace to the backrest, nail down, then drill pilot holes and screw the armrests to the rear brace and front supports. Smooth all surfaces with 120-grit sandpaper. Wipe off the dust, then brush teak oil onto the chair. Wait 30 minutes and apply a second coat. After 24 minutes, simply wipe dry another lot of. Wipe the hard part. Wait at least 30 hours before you sit down, load back, and remove the brads of your labor. ■



see how it's done
to watch a video for the project
scan the QR code with your
smartphone. Or go to
ibmcloud.com/ibm/ibm2012

39

Budget-wise Ways to create Outdoor Rooms



HAVE A HUMDRUM PORCH? A basic patio or a neglected deck? Some simple additions—a hanging swing, mood lighting, a vintage find or two—are all it takes to transform an ordinary outdoor space into an open-air living room that adds value and comfort to your home year-round.

By Amanda Lecky



Create an inviting porch

1. Rustic swing Encourage family and friends to relax on a styled wood porch swing. This one is hung with sturdy ropes rather than chains. For a natural look, make sure the rope is natural and at least 600 pounds, and check regularly for wear. For setup by, visit on fairly handy a porch swing using rope go to woodhouse.com/jun7042. Similar to shown: Great American Woodcoats Cypress Classic 5-foot porch swing, \$200, logcabin.com.

2. Mood lighting Candle lanterns hung from a hook in the ceiling or placed in table-top railings lend a subtle nighttime glow. They're also easy to move when you need them and require no wiring. Similar to shown: 20th & Hudson's Warehouse Quality Woodford Zinc Lantern (pendant), \$99, bigcat.com.

3. Outdoor appeal If your porch is covered, bring living-room furnishings, such as this wool rug and modern outdoor set back from the porch's open edge. They'll be safe from the weather. Similar to shown: Lattice Dharma 3-by-5-foot rug in Rust, \$129, westelm.com.

Patios

To turn a basic concrete or stone pad into an inviting outdoor room, start by creating a sense of enclosure—your home's exterior walls or even a row of potted plants will do the trick—and, ideally, some overhead protection. Then use colorful accents to add personality.

Inject vintage character

- 4. Duvetille entrance** Hang an old garden gate between two elmwood posts to define your patio entry. Ornate wrought-iron gates like this one are \$75 to \$200 at select patios. A fraction of the cost of a new hand-forged gate.
- 5. Dual-purpose planter** Perch a metal fern trough atop chunky balusters to create a raised planter or filled with ice, a party-perfect bar. Vintage troughs like this one have can be pricey, so pick up a new trough that will develop a patina over time. Collecto Galvanized Metal Planter Box, \$50; gardenofeden.com
- 6. Mirror, mirror** Reflect light and create the illusion of a window into another room with a wall-hung mirror. Make your own by fitting a cast-iron divided light window with mirror glass. Custom cut mirror, about \$5 to \$8 per square foot; glass-supply shops.
- 7. Green canopy** Grass-ribbing vines, such as grape, over an existing pergola provide extra protection from the sun and rain. Concord Grape, shops like Home Depot, \$10; stankbros.com



Add a lush look

- 8. Bold backdrop** Turn a plain wall into a focal point. Red stone masonry features the concrete garden enclosure a Southwest feel similar to stone. Inset concrete solid color stone in the Red, \$20 per gallon; houstoncolor.com
- 9. Container planter** A small planter becomes a vibrant oasis with perfect plants. Low water options include succulents and flowering perennials. Under \$14 for one plant; whiteflowerfarm.com
- 10. Green grid** Give a little pep your patio a style boost and create a little greenery by edging a patio with plants. About \$5 per square foot; arborvitae.com

Build a backyard retreat

- 11. Living arch** Create an arbor with plants trained up the side and out onto the overhanging eaves of a shed or outbuilding. Anchor plants and contain aggressive species by growing them in pots. Similar to shown, crested autumn clematis in a 2-inch pot. Sub spring \$150; nursery.com
- 12. Flagstone floor** A dozen slabs arranged in a fun, low-pattern can easily form a small patch of grass into an elevated dining area. Grow grass between the stones (shown) or choose a traffic-resistant groundcover. Flagstone prices vary by type, but expect to pay \$3 to \$8 per square foot at stone yards.
- 13. Impassable table top** A terracotta table is a great way to add a touch of rustic charm to your patio. Similar to shown, Venice Outdoor Café/Bar Set, \$67; wayfair.com



Colonize the front

- 14. Front-porch courtyard** Create a seating area in the front yard by enclosing a walkway with a DIY sitting wall made from reclaimed bricks. About \$100 per foot, enough for 60 square feet.
- 15. Brickhouse brick floor** This eye-catching design helps lock bricks in place and is more dynamic than the typical running bond. Make the pattern with any rectangular brick or paver. Similar to shown, 4 by 8 inch Red-Chemical Holland pavers, 60 cents each; lowes.com
- 16. Wains with dissonance** Add texture to siding with a mix of colors and draw attention to windows with boxes filled with bright blooms. Similar to shown, Quax Tree Camellias 6-foot May/June Tree, \$70; American Landscape Hardware Selects a Window Box in white, \$10; foyrwoods.com

Decks

Taking your deck from dull to dramatic can be as simple as integrating colors, materials, furnishings, and plantings that smooth the transition from indoors to out.



Craft a cozy feel

17. Deck border If your deck isn't large enough to compare to a dining room, build a border around the perimeter to separate seating and a sense of enclosure. This deck's simple railing and white-painted deck boards are a simple solution on just one side of the deck. (See also 18.)

18. Stained wood If you're not into the dark color of the deck, stain the deck with a gray stain to give it a more modern look. (See also 19.)

19. Wall art Add a bar with a hanging lamp or a small table with a lamp. (See also 20.)



Light up with color and movement

20. Bright and cheery Make a big impact with a small space with a bright color. Here, a turquoise painted table and chairs add a splash of color. (See also 21.)

21. Lateral move Create the illusion of a larger space by using the eye-movements of a striped deck design like this as a way to

draw the eye. (See also 22.)

22. Spilling water Turn an eye for a fountain or a simple pump into a garden fountain. All you need is a water pump to fit inside (Orbit 16 GPH Submersible Fountain Pump, \$28; homedepot.com), a GFCI outlet to plug the pump into, and a basin below where the water can collect and be recirculated.



Build-in comfort

23. Lattice panels Screen and a built-in privacy fence with lattice panels. (See also 24.)

24. Soft surroundings Top an existing built-in bench, such as this corner unit, with a storage box with cushions and throw pillows for a cozy and relaxing place to sit. (See also 25.)

Create an instant dining area

25. Easy canopy Erect a "roof" by draping a canvas drop cloth between four ball-bale poles anchored in heavy planters. (See also 26.)

26. Repurposed table For an instant dining table, use a repurposed table. (See also 27.)

27. Mobile seats They're not just for the party. (See also 28.)



Porches

The key to comfort on the porch, whether it's off the entry or an upstairs master, is outfitting it to take advantage of the shade, views, and privacy it can offer. Just pick colors and furnishings to suit the style of your house so that the porch feels like an organic extension.



Add country charm

26. Surface with palette. Preserve a weathered painted finish rather than strip it. Here, the distressed-curtains floor and ceiling add unmistakable vintage appeal. Saw-toe paint under a water-based clear coat is appropriate for the material. \$20 to \$30 per gallon, at home centers.

29. Flooring opposite. If your backdrop is rough or rustic, add a hint of formal elegance, such as this manicured bamboo in a classical urn, for a balanced and purposefully eclectic look. Similar to shown. Concrete tile, 25 inches high by 17 inches wide, \$60. Jones counter shows.

30. Hanging baskets. Pretty up secluded privacy on the porch by strategically hanging planned baskets from the eaves. For maximum impact, choose lush and trailing plants. Similar to shown. Trailing resident here, about \$20 for one bushy hanging basket, at garden centers.

Invite relaxation

31. Shutter divider. Use salvaged shutters to form a nicely tapered partition. This one sections off a large outdoor porch. Find lower-cost pairs at the markets for about \$20.

32. Air supply. Install a ceiling fan to cool your porch and keep bugs at bay. This fan, with its built-in light, also adds an ambient outdoor glow at night. Similar to shown. Hunter Fan Co. Astoria/White Fan with Light, \$129. sears.com

33. Soothing palette. Cool tones, like the watery blues on the porch-floor and cast-iron cushions, create a serene effect. Similar to shown. Vagabond's Little Porch & Loft Park in Liberty, about \$27 per gallon. vagabondinews.com



Go for crisp and classic

34. Evergreen screen. If privacy to neighbors is an issue, plant a row of evergreens along the exposed side of the porch. Top Spout box pines, which can grow as much as 2 feet a year, \$30 each. Fast-growing trees.com

35. Coordinated colors. Get a monochromatic, tooth-and-nail color scheme. Here, all the furniture is the same shade of canterbury. And the upholstery, pillows, and rug echo the canterbury, as does the home's muted green shutters and shake-body color.

36. Stylish synthetics. For low-maintenance furniture that looks new longer, choose materials that stand up to the elements. Raschel looks and feels like its traditional cousin but beats its cost: less, and you can simply hose it down when it gets dirty. Similar to shown. Oakland Living/Oakland Living Corp./Reun Wicker Loveland, \$229. sears.com

Plan a perfect snooze spot

Warm weather practically begs you to find a breezy place to doze. Here are three fun ways to create a cozy place to curl up.

37. Edge hammock. Straddle up and rock yourself to sleep. Use polyester-filled supports to secure it to wall studs, and leave more to sway. Similar to shown. Cotton Hammock, \$499. ibeams.com



38. Hanging bed. It's like a porch swing, only cleaner and easier to stretch out on. Rather than buy a bed swing, avoid one with or without a backrest. Make a second platform for a firm mattress and suspend it with chains. About \$40 for lumber.

39. Easy-back lounge

Prop pillows against the arms and a cushion on the seat to turn a deckless bench into a lounge. Similar to shown. Generous 4-Piece Backless York Garden Bench with Sorrell Arms, \$499. plowandhedge.com





As the proprietor of what is called the half-acre herbfect farm, with Rob Proctor's 1000+ herbs, he replaced much of the garden with edible perennial herbs overflowing with food, but only once plants.

Got Gardening Questions?



He's Got Answers!

A popular TV expert **shares the wisdom** he's acquired from a lifetime of digging, planting, caring for, and feeding his own garden

by jessie huber photographs by mark lahman styling by sundy hendrickson

Some gardeners do everything by the books. Others wing it and watch. Rob Proctor is in the latter group, which may explain why his gardening segment on Denver's NBC local morning news has been running for 10 years now. Twice a week, the former horticulture director of the Denver Botanic Gardens delivers tips that viewers trust because the proof is right where to see: Proctor's half-acre garden, a true paradise.

By using his garden and its needs as a backdrop, Proctor frequently devotes time to answering viewers' questions. He avoids queries like "How do I keep deer out of my garden?" because saying "Don't move into deer country" doesn't really help anyone. Instead, he favors questions for which he can offer useful, time-tested advice. It sometimes runs counter to conventional wisdom. But his philosophy is that truth is in results, not instructions on a package. Read on for his real-world, learned-by-doing insights.



Containers filled with purple perennials, pink geraniums, anchorage saffron, daisies, and various Proctor's daisies make the 15-foot-square space a serene and functional whole offering ideas into the garden beyond.

On planning a garden

Q: How do I come up with a good design?

A: Go on garden tours and study the gardens you gravitate toward, whether formal or more relaxed. In general, I think a garden with wide, curving borders works best. Just don't try to own too much drama like a 2-foot-wide strip of ball and chain border at least 8, 10, or 20 feet deep.

If you're torn between wanting order and not having time to stay on top of every garden chair, I suggest starting beds with topiary trees and then letting the rest of the garden be more free-flowing. Surrounding each part of the garden with a low hedge makes a real frame. For anyone's house, which is another formal, I would suggest a garden with structure. So use narrow strips of lawn and brick columns to frame perennial beds that are pure chaos. I situated out the garden so that people would have corners and be surprised. I didn't want them to see all of one time. But everybody's style of house and garden is different.

Over time, I feel doing fruiting plants is a lot of fun and one of that. You need groups of hundreds of plants. But don't make the drifts too massive or you'll have a mass of nothing when the plants are out of bloom or without their leaves. Another thing to avoid: taking inspiration from landscaping in parking lots and office parks that's just about filling blank space.

Q: How can I ensure a garden will really be used?

A: To work as an outdoor room, a patio needs some sense of enclosure. My most patronized area is around the back of my house, so it's L-shaped—about 30 feet long and 25 feet wide. I also have a dining patio in the shade that's 15 by 25. In both places, I put out lots of containers to create that sense of enclosure. It's important to provide comfortable seats and plenty of places to set down a cup.

Q: What's the best tree to plant?

A: This, of course, depends on your climate and the size of your yard. But, in general, you're likely to get the most enjoyment from trees that naturally stay either small. Because we're a mobile society, most people don't get a chance to watch a tree grow to maturity. But if you plant a small tree, maybe you can watch it grow up. Some of the best trees are really rewarding. So are small flowering trees, like a small and golden-yellow tree. These trees give you more than just shade.

On caring for plants

Q: How often do I need to water?

A: This is the most frequent question ever. The answer when your garden needs it. Stick a finger in the soil and see if it's dry. People want a schedule, but nature doesn't work on a schedule. It either rains or it was hot. Plan your garden so that a lot of it can survive in a landscape if it is established. You will need to water new plants and perennial plants, though.



It's a little bit of a trick to fill with flowers, but containers create a focal point in a garden of flowers near the house. The small pots are planted with ferns and white flowers. The large ones are filled with a mix of flowers and foliage plants.



Proctor delights in being able to create a lush, tropical look even in dry, high-altitude Denver. Here, he uses a mix of plants, including various types of ferns and other shade plants in pots. Cornus (the bush on the left), he Proctor says, is the most reliable in his basement.

Q: How often do you recommend fertilizing?

A: I don't fertilize my perennial beds because I don't want them to get tall and floppy. For container plants, though, I feed constantly because I want plants to stay by at a magazine cover. Labels often say to feed every seven to 10 days. That's not enough. I feed this soil when I was working on a book and needed to



Frederick likes using brilliant
 contrasting colors to give his garden
 and bright life! TOP LEFT: The
 Pinks and purples are back so he chose
 pink gladioli as a central blue and liked
 them with geraniums and other flowers
 in pink and magenta. TOP RIGHT: The
 back reappears as garden colorists
 ABOVE: Blue flowered succulents and
 ornamental kale mix with flowering
 pelonias and other plants (including
 a rose) on the back stage.

photograph my containers. A hail storm washed everything, but by watering more often than suggested the plants miraculously came back within three weeks.

So I recommend feeding carnation plants every four or five days. Early in the season, switch back and forth between a nitrogen fertilizer and one that is lower in nitrogen but higher in phosphorus and potassium to boost blooms—except for plants you're growing for their foliage. Once the plants are in flower, discontinue feeds by mid-July. Use just the flower boost, or, assuming the plants are the nice variety, *Never* fertilize when the soil is dry. It kills some plants.

Q: Why does ray (bill in the blink) keep dying?

A: It depends on what's going on with your teeth. You might want to replace a crown just to make sure the first place isn't damaged in some way. But if the replacement also does that place, clearly it's not suited to that location. Move an old crown somewhere else.

On lawns

Q: How big should a lawn be?
A: It really varies. There is a placebo effect—for working on, for pets. But it seems that all are going toward windows.

to make them look exactly the same. That's boring. A good strategy for gradually shifting away from too-much-similarity is to edge your beds, making them finished with each year. If flowers are still in abundance, use paths and frames for the garden beds. One way to make a lawn more interesting is to plant crocus in some areas. Instead of making your lawn too beautiful, build a path, build a drainage ditch, use some living wood, inter-

Q: How should I care for my lawn?

A: Mow when the grass needs it, at the highest setting on the mower. Grass that still shades itself and the soil, so you do it need at mid-render. Don't fertilize just use a mulching mower and leave the clippings on the grass. Dig up dandelions by hand.

Q: What do you suggest for edging?

AcGreenline is slowly bringing over its under any owner. But it can't grow out. So edge pens into the field in a way with an 18-inch deep ditch. Every year, set up a line in the field along a ditch. On the inner side of the ditch, chop straight down with a sharp spade and make a little ditch. Then slope the soil gradually back up toward the post-hole. If grass grows over the ditch, you can spot it immediately and deal with it.

On annuals and perennials

Q: How should I work annuals into my garden?

A. Mix the self-sowing kind, like *thlaspi*, *calceolages* and *basella* for butternut, with your perennials/beds. These annuals pair well with perennials because both need little care. Put the fuzzy annuals like *impatiens*, *begonias*, and *geraniums* in pots. That makes it easier to get them the fertilizer and frequent watering they need.

Q. Is it better to buy small perennials or larger ones that have blossoms?

A: That depends on your budget. The smaller size saves money. The bigger size gives instant gratification. But remember if you plant a big perennial, the soil around the roots will be lighter than the garden soil, so the plant will dry out more quickly. Give it extra water until the roots grow into the surrounding soil. I usually top up soil problems, creating a moist bed (even fill with water).

Q: Any ideas for spending less money on plants?

A: Besides saving seeds and dividing perennials in late spring, take cuttings of annuals and tender perennials in the fall and root them in water over the winter. Take cuttings of geraniums, high-quality impatiens, dianthus, wing begonia, sweet potato vine, coleus, bloodleaf (freesia), and a new kind of earthy subtropical Lave, with one to two leaves.

Q: Should I cut back perennials in spring or fall?

A: Fates all school. We tried to appreciate plants at every stage of their lifecycle, whether they are looking wonderful, five-or-dried. If you lose the tops on through the winter, they help protect the crown from freezing, and they provide habitat for birds. The more we follow nature, the better. Nature doesn't lose everything back either tail. So I do a little water or early spring, it gives you something useful to do while you are eager to garden, but the soil is still too cold to dig.

Q: What is the best way to make a permanent bed?

A: Don't use bark nuggets. They look ugly and plants in a heavily bark mulched garden don't grow well. They just sit there because the microorganisms that are breaking down the bark are using all the available nitrogen.

The point is, much is to be made of the soil, which preserves moisture and keeps weed seeds from sprouting. So if you make plants self-sufficient, placing them close enough together that they cover the ground, but out down the recommended spacing by 25 percent. But this probably depends on your region. In a very moist climate, you might need to follow the recommended spacing. In any other climate, with its short growing season, plants after 1.00 ft (or the ones that the ladybug 50% keep the soil covered.) I need higher spacing.

On containers

Q. What plants work in pots?

X: Everything. People define it when they say "Garden grows like bananas or palm or lily of the Nile." I say, "Gave you can. Anything you ever wanted to try just grow it in a pot. Put your pots outside in the summer and if the plants aren't healthy enough for your climate, bring them inside for the winter. You don't need a greenhouse—I don't have one—because the plants don't have to look good all winter. They are basically in a period of stress—just on hold. My solution is to put them in front of a sheer window in the house. Also have a little background and a big glimmer in front porch inside period plants that go dormant such as cactus and dahlias and clematis like I said."

dark room in the basement. Around March, I start paying attention to my container plants. Hydroponics water and fertilizer. Then when the weather warms, I put them outside. By summer, they're in their glory again.

Q: What kind of soil should I use in containers?

As Ben is getting up, we read out probably has too much clay. Use more lightweight potting mix. To cut down on how much soil you need, some people suggest filling the bottom of big containers with rocks. There's a better solution: Fill the bottom third of the pot with expanded clay or perlite. This lightweight material allows the stuffy to drain out of gutters, or other garden debris. Add potting soil on top. Over the summer, the stuff in the bottom decomposes and reduces the soil.

Q: Do I need to replace container soil every year?

At 30 in. your garden is thousands of years old! Soil is still a living thing because it's peat-enriched. That's container soil the same way. Some of mine is 20 years old, but every year I add some peat. And every year, my container plants grow so fast, creating a little tropical paradise around my house.



A bright display for a long time, "Real Design" has now been replaced by a new, more colorful and vibrant display. The new design is a bright, colorful, and vibrant display.

family affair

Repairing and updating a century-old house brings three generations under one new and improved roofline

by Deborah Baldwin photographs by Keller + Keller produced by Colette Scanlon styling by Beth Welton



front-porch meet-up

Arnold and Joanna Kahn (left) daughter Dana, son-in-law David (dog Ruby) and grandson Nate. 7 months into front porch. Kate's baby brother, Theo, and his uncle, Andrew (left) (not shown) moved into the household

If there's one way to test family dynamics, it's a whole-house redo—the kind that involves dozens of decisions, from the size of the master bedroom to who gets to sleep there. Now imagine not two but six household members, crisscrossing an age and disposition from preschool to adulthood. Make one an architect and another an interior designer, and you've got some serious discussions in store. Then layer on pressure from the neighbors to keep a sweet little bungalow from perching on its own, and it's a wonder that the Fowers-Kahn house in Jamestown, Rhode Island, got renovated at all, much less in 14 months.

Actually, “it could have been done in eight months,” says the resident architect, Donald Powers, “except we gave ourselves the luxury of taking a more casual, organic approach, without figuring it all out on paper. Though it was a fantastic learning experience, I wouldn’t want to do that again.”

But take a look at the result, a restoration not only to the penmanship but also to a high-functioning art of homeowners, comprising Donald and his wife, Dana, parents of 7-year-old Nate and 6-month-old Theo, Dana's brother,

stepped up

The graceful, newly-brass transition between the living and dining rooms with a sense of spaciousness while giving the separate areas distinct identities.





group-house kitchen

ABOVE: The 10-foot island is an open invitation to gather. With a prep sink at one end and seating at the other, it can comfortably seat one or two chefs and a help crew. RIGHT: The dining room is open to the kitchen and the living room, allowing conversation and foot traffic to flow.



Andrew Kahn and grandparents Arnold and Joanne Kahn. During the summer they all pile into the house, gravitating to the common areas while scurrying to satellite rooms when someone has the crazy desire to be alone.

"We fell in love with Jamestown after spending several summers there and wanted a house we could share," says Dana. "Not by dividing up the summer and using it separately but by being there and using it together."

Savvy investing, but not many extended families would act on the impulse by creating a family corporation with three shareholders holding the deed for a house that would ultimately have only one master suite. Then answering on a budget. "That's always good for family tensions," Donald jokes. At the same time, he points out, "when you're only in it for a third, everyone's game."

There was no way to move into the wood-frame, century-old bungalow as it was. With 1,345 square feet, thin walls, and a second floor almost completely under the eaves, "it needed everything," recalls Dana, who's also the operations manager at Donald's architecture firm.



a room for all seasons

The living room opens up to deck in summer months and offers a sweet, sunny breakfast nook in winter. To give the room a sense of spaciousness, resident architect Donald Powers strung white rope down from the dining room, in effect raising the ceiling. "I'm a sucker for rope," he says. "I've used it on the boat to reinforce the cabin's casual feel without detracting from a view framed by French doors."

"Knocking it down would have been easier and less expensive," Donald says. "But I didn't want to do that. The challenge was to respect the original bones and style, especially upstairs, while expanding it."

Knocking it down would have also rubbed the neighbors the wrong way. The town had just asked Donald's firm, in nearby Providence, Rhode Island, to help rewrite its zoning rules to protect Jameson's scale and historic character—i.e., to control the size of McMansions. Choosing to repair, not replace, was a way "to walk the walk so prove it could be done," Donald says.

It was also a chance for him to put his firm's New Urbanist beliefs to work within the walls of his own house. In a New Urban village, private buildings are compact while walkable paths draw people out of their homes (and cars) into any civic space. In Donald's plan for the house, bedrooms would be small and the living spaces open, with well-defined spots for people to gather in.

With Donald in charge of design and construction, Dana and her mom, Joanne, the resident interior designer, held veto power over fixtures and furnishings. Andrew, Arnold, and Nate were asked to weigh in. "It was Anne's great idea to build a brick chimney," says Donald, who worried about the expense but can only his father-in-law made a brilliant move.

Donald's plan called for new roofs and dormers front and back, allowing a two-story addition with a master suite to slide up under a new roofline as if both had always been there. A reimagining of the existing second floor would create a hub-like stair landing, three bedrooms, two baths, and a "flex" room for guests, the baby's crib, or answering e-mail. Downstairs, Donald balanced open living space with an "lazy" room for household members seeking quality time with the TV.

The permanent band building, Larry Haley, and he and Donald set out to see what they could save. The process required "taking the house apart brick by brick



floor plans

The plans included rebuilding and reimagining rooms, altering the roofline, and putting on a two-story addition, which together enlarged the house from 1,545 square feet to 2,340, not including the decks and the porch. On the second floor, three bedrooms and one bath became a master bedroom, three smaller bedrooms, three baths, a small "flex" room, and a hub-like stair landing.





serio suite

ABOVE Sleeping without ceilings follows the lines of the roof. To enhance the suite's generosity, the beautiful interior design team, Dana Peters and Joanne Kahn, banked the bed with matching nightstands, lamps, and vintage chairs and kept it a breezy palette. **RIGHT** The generous stair landing, finished with chunky built-in, serves as a hub for the restaurant shared floor above and the second floor.

and putting it together sick by sick, and doing some of the construction myself," Donald recalls, along with knocking up the second-floor ceiling over the stairway—repeatedly—as he got several sloping lines to meet.

Ceiling-wrangling aside, the process contained no confusion, with everyone agreeing that the larger expenses worked and, of course, that Arnold and Joanne should take the master suite. Today, dozens of new footprints, civic spaces, and rambling pathways, the house still has the scale of an old-world cottage, along with a simplicity and sensory richness by Joanne and Dana's decor.

At this time of year, the place is bustling. Andrew comes up from New York City, Arnold and Joanne come down from Buffalo, New York, and Dana and Donald (and their kids) hop over from Providence. "When we're making dinner, it's constant conversation," says Dana.

"We feel very fortunate that we got through the whole project and still really like one another," she says with a laugh. "Actually, it was really fun." ■



9 little ways to make spaces feel bigger

The goal of the redo was to expand the house to fit an extended family-plus houseguests—without throwing off its cozy scale and proportions. Here are some of the tricks resident architect Donald Powers, his wife, Dana, and resident interior designer Joanne Kahn used to give the cottage its spacious feel.

1. SACRIFICE CLOSETS in favor of dressers, pegs, and armchairs that help you carve out larger rooms.

2. USE COLUMNS AND BUILT-INS to define separate spaces within an open plan, give stairs and room dividers a fresh look, and add seamless storage and display space.

3. PATCH THE CEILING uppers. In the process of rebuilding the top floor and the roof, Donald kept rooms just big enough for beds while capping them with gabled ceilings.

4. STEP DOWN THE LIVING ROOM, in effect raising its ceiling and giving it extra presence and volume.

5. USE AREA RUGS, LIGHTING, AND

CEILING FANS to "zone" separate gathering spots within open living spaces. Joanne points out that while there are fewer walls, rugs also add coziness. She and Dana used a whimsical floor lamp to give one spot its own personality and added adjustable arm lights to turn seating into private reading nooks.

6. CHOOSE A SIMPLE PALETTE and let it flow through the living spaces. Dana and Joanne experimented to find the right ocean blue and sandy beige. They painted all the trim white to unify different areas and help them add up to one large space.

7. TREAT DECKS AND PORCHES like rooms. Painted floorboards make their screened-in porch feel like an extension of the house.

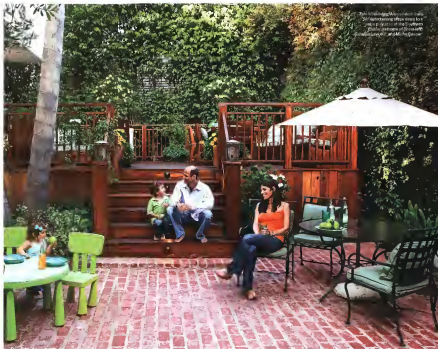
8. CREATE A "FLEX" ROOM that can be used for guests or as an extra spot for answering e-mail.

9. KEEP THE DECOR SIMPLE and orderly. Fewer things in artwork, mean more distance for the eye to roam.

the FULLY BUILT *backyard*

Forget grass. For this young family, a handsome wood deck that steps down to a brick patio comprises the ideal chilling, cooking, playing, and entertaining space. Read on to learn why.

BY ILL CONNORS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MIKE LORRAN
PRODUCED BY COLETTE SCANLON
STYLING BY SUNDAY HENDERSON



This handsome, multi-level deck and brick patio is a perfect place for a family to relax and enjoy the outdoors. Photo: Mike Lorrans. Styling: Sunday Henderson.



COMFORTABLE SEATING

The 12 by 20-foot deck, treated with a first-floor guest room, is arranged like an outdoor room, featuring a mix of two sets of cushioned chairs and an ottoman that doubles as a serving table. Flanking the French doors are carriage-style lanterns on pedestals for adjustable deck lighting.

When house hunter Mike and Kim Cooper went to look at a white-painted 1950s house in Pacific Palisades, California, they were faced with a scenario they hadn't expected. The backyard wasn't, well, a yard. While the lower end of the lot was large enough to lock around a soccer ball, the back of the house had no grass at all, two-thirds of the space was paved with brick, and the rest was occupied by a terracotta-colored, zoning wood deck. On the plus side, the entire perimeter was lined with mature ficus trees that gave the area a lush look and screened out noise of close-by neighbors.

For a couple who love to entertain and spend an snack time as they can outdoors, a fully redesigned back yard would mean forgoing any place for backyard baseball with the kids

"But we loved the neighborhood, and there was a lovely front yard, so we decided to make the best of the back of the house," says Mike.

They liked the look of the brick patio, which came with a log-cabin playhouse for the kids already in place. But the existing wood deck clearly needed an overhaul. Rather than try to rework an flop, they would instead build a new one in the same place.

Working with builder Robyn Wesen, the Coopers had to decide on several key elements at the outset. For material, they wanted something weather-resistant and attractive, and although friends suggested composite decking, the Coopers preferred real wood. After researching various hardwoods with a nice dark look, they ultimately decided to go with

and balau. A plantation-grown Indonesian hardwood, it has a rich brown color they could maintain by staining it regularly—every six months, as it turned out—with a clear sealer.

Mike wanted a clean, contemporary design and asked Wesen to build both the deck and deck furniture for a uniform look. She also wanted to raise the deck so that it was on the same level as the French doors that access it. "The old deck had a steep step down," says Mike.

Using the footprint of the existing deck but starting from scratch, Wesen set concrete footings, added a subframe of pressure-treated lumber, and then installed the deck boards perpendicular to the house, with a hidden fastener system.

Flanking the deck furniture, lanterns put in one would illuminate for



THE PLAN

The backyard of Mike's stayed the same, but it was almost entirely removed. A step-down deck built on stone, now fits a seamless transition from French doors off the guest room to a dining area. There are two large planters. A set of 8-inch-wide steps makes a generous connection between the deck and the patio below. A built-in grill, several steps up from the patio and accessible from either side of the living room, makes heading outdoors dinner a breeze.



a room, the Coopers wanted a living area just outside the French doors and an eating area at the far end of the deck. Wooden built two pairs of overhanging chairs—styled along minimalist lines, without a run—and an ottoman for the living area, all with thick outdoor cushions. He built a 10-foot-long table with a built-in banquette to span the back of the deck for the dining area. The shared banquette has an ergonomic design: curved seat-to-back transition and all-weather fabric cushions for extra comfort. A set of dining chairs finishes off the dining area. “We can fit six or seven people on the bench alone,” says Maiba. “We use the deck as an extension of the house, for outdoor dinner parties or Sunday brunches.”

Linking the deck to the existing brick patio, Wooden built a set of steps wide enough to make a comfortable path for someone who wants to watch the action on the patio. To make that area more functional for entertaining, a grill with

a brick surround went in near the living room door.

With two dining tables on the 20-by-30-foot patio (one adult-sized, one child-sized), the grill, and the playhouse, nobody needs the conventional grassy yard. “We have every play item on the patio, it seems,” says Maiba, adding that the brick surface is great for her young children’s wet play—splashing around in a water activity table or a small plastic pool—because muddy puddles will never be a problem. Soaking around using ride-on toys and drawing with sidewalk chalk are other favorite patio pastimes.

And for entertaining, the built backyard has proved to be a host’s best friend, making it easy to set up tables and chairs without worrying about their legs sinking into grass. Now, with the Southern California climate making these outdoor spaces year-round favorites, there’s still the added bonus of less time spent mowing and more time spent lounging. Says Maiba, “We’re out here all the time.” ■

DECK DETAILS DONE RIGHT

The thoughtful features of this deck give it a handsome, cohesive look and make it usable day and night.

1. Post lamps

Painted metal carriage lights on the posts at the foot of the steps leading to the brick patio provide both an attractive accent and welcome nighttime illumination. Wiring runs from the house, under the deck and up the hollow posts.

2. Stair lights

On the well-traveled accessway from deck to patio, each stair riser has a discreet of-rubbed-bronze domed light. Each light is configured to shine on the step below it, not in the climber’s eyes.

3. Custom gate

Many homeowners choose to add a gate at the top of deck stairs to contain small children or pets. This gate sports a little bit of style as well: The design echoes the stair railings with the same rounded balusters all on top for comfort and safety.

4. Built-in storage

Utilizing some of the under-deck space alongside the patio, custom built outdoor cabinets almost disappear behind solid wood doors. Discreet metal pull opens to reveal 2-foot-deep shelves used to store lawn, grilling supplies, and outdoor furniture cushions.

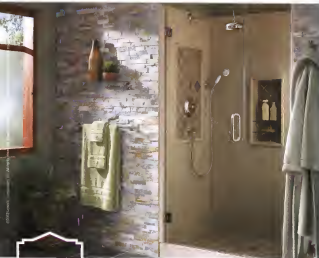


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inside

REDO A WALKWAY

CLEAN A POND

HANG GUTTERS

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46

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

I'd like to plant
a vegetable
garden. What do I
need to get started?

—KIMBERLY MAZUR
MIDDLETOWN, CT

A If you're the sort who likes to do things the old-fashioned way, something like this hand-punch cast-iron seed planter from the early 2000s powered manual tillage and frost wheels could come in handy. But it was really designed for sowing plots that had to be put into a field—and every-where else. For slightly demarcated seedlings, a spade box garden fork, broad seed sower will serve you well. With good soil and at least 6 hours of sun a day, a well-tended patch will produce veggies in greater abundance than most families could hope to devour. —THE EDITORS

PHOTOGRAPH BY
VICTOR SCHWARTZ



Our cast of veteran experts

TOM SILVA
Senior ContributorNORM MAHOOD
Model ContributorRICH HILD, THE HOME DEPOT
Plumbing and Heating Dept.ROGER COOK
Landscape ContributorALEXIS CONDON
Host

I built a walkway on a slope and braced one side with a retaining wall. But the pavers shift every winter, so I redo them every spring. What's going on?

—RON BROUSE, EAST PETERSBURG, VA



Roger Cook replies: If you didn't remove any existing loosey gravel before laying the pavers, that's part of the problem. Loose gravel settles. It also happens when it freezes, shifting whatever you put on top of it. But I think the bigger problem is your "retaining wall," which looks like half more than edging set above grade. I can see from your photo that the boards are bowing outward, lifting the pavers aside. I'm sorry to say that you'll have to rebuild the walk entirely. But if you do it right, you won't have to fix it again.

First, call 811 to have the area surveyed for buried wires and pipes. This is a free service. When you know it's okay to excavate, remove and save the pavers, then dig down another 6 inches or so below the original grade to remove all the loosey soil.

On that base, install a level row of treated-lumber timbers on the side where your wall used to be. Drill several holes vertically through each timber, and use a sledge to drive 18-inch lengths of rebar through the timbers and into the soil to keep

To keep pavers from shifting (see inset photo), Roger Cook makes sure the pathway has solid support along the edges before laying the pavers.

them from shifting. Once the first row is in place, top it with two more rows of the ties. Offset the ends by at least 2 feet, then fasten each row to the one below using heavy-duty timber screws, such as TimberLoks (timberlok.com). These screws don't require pilot holes and hold better than timber spikes. Sink the screws with a high-torque drill/driver or, even better, an impact driver.

Now backfill the pathway with gravel-and-coarse-sand paver base, 3 inches at a time, and compact each layer. Then set the pavers. Finally, take the excavated soil and backfill the trench alongside the new wall. Start halfway up the timber and taper down to the original grade. This will make a nice planting area for a perennial garden or more lawn.

MOVE AN AG COMPRESSOR

The outdoor unit for our central AC is located behind the house, but we'd like to move it to the side, about 30 feet away. Will that affect its performance?

—JOE TENNENSH
ROCHESTER, N.Y.

Richard Trethewey replies: It's all the distance from the current location that's the issue, it's the compressor's distance from the evaporator coils inside your house. When the indoor and outdoor components are too far apart, they won't perform as well or last as long.

The requirements vary depending on the manufacturer, but, to generalize, a straight run of 80 feet is about the maximum. Any bend in the line will reduce that length. A vertical difference greater than 20 feet will also lower performance. I suggest consulting an experienced HVAC installer before finalizing your plans.

WHAT IS IT?



A—String-on
level indicator

B—Power-
insulation
thickness tester

C—Reel gauge
holder

D—De-

for the camera,
vertical use



An overgrown algae-infested pond should be drained and cleaned to its bottom.

CLEAN A POND

Our 6-foot-diameter pond contains two fish, two turtles, several frogs, and too many water lilies. How do we clean it without killing the animals?

—CHRONOJANIS
MELTON SPRING, OHIO

Roger Cook replies: First, get some 5-gallon buckets. Fill one with pond water, then net your fish and put them in the bucket. Use a small, inexpensive aerator from an aquarium supply store to pump air into the water. In another bucket, add enough pond water to cover your largest turtle, and put in a rock or a piece of wood so that the turtle can get out of the water. Prepare a frog bucket in the same way. To keep the fish and frogs from jumping out, cover their buckets with hardware cloth. Place all the buckets and their covers in a shady area.

Next, pump or bail out all the pond water. Divide the lilies, keep two or three specimens in a separate bucket, and give the rest to another pond enthusiast. Get rid of all the other vegetation.

Remove any loose rocks from the bottom of the pond, then carefully scoop out any muck and add it to your compost pile. Be extra cautious at this stage not to damage the pond liner. If you have to step on it, bare feet are best. Finally, wash all the liner and the loose rocks using a garden hose with a nozzle (a pressure washer can puncture the liner), and drain the pond again.

Replace the rocks, refill the pond with a hose, and reintroduce the lilies. Add a dechlorinator if you want any water. A dose of bacteria, such as Clear Pond's beneficial bacteria treatment (clearpond.com), will help break down the fish waste.

For the buckets with the criters in the pond and drive them there: do several hours to that everybody can

get acclimated to the temperature of the new water. After a few hours, gradually empty each bucket into the pond, including the old pond water.

Give the fish a couple of days to get used to things before feeding them. Check the water's pH in a week and balance it as needed.

ATTACH TRIM TO CONCRETE

We want to install a poplar baseboard along the concrete walls in our basement. Is that possible?

—SUE THIPLE, BOWLING GREEN, OHIO

Tom Silva replies: Certainly. Just use a panel construction adhesive, which develops grip-strength quickly. You'll probably need to hold the baseboard against the wall until the adhesive sets, particularly if the wall isn't smooth and flat. For walls less than 12 feet apart, you can brace both against the opposite wall. Or hold them in place with something heavy, like concrete blocks.

My trick is to apply dabs of heavy-duty glue alongside the panel adhesive. It sets up within 20 seconds and holds the baseboard in place—no boards or blocks needed—until the panel adhesive cures. You have to move really quickly, though!

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QUESTION OF THE MONTH



Kevin Lyons fits a downspout elbow to a copper gutter. He shims the hole, but this durable metal will last a lifetime.

I got rid of the rusty old gutters on my 1830s farmhouse. Now I need new ones. What should I replace them with?

—SUSAN HOYCE, STOW, MASS

Kevin Lyons, Hayden Lyons: Roofs of Distinction, replies: I'd recommend that you install traditional half-round gutters in copper. The style is appropriate to your house, and you'll never have

to worry about the copper rusting. Hanging them is not hard, as long as you have a helper to lift and set the sections in place. But first, you need to size up your situation so that you can order the parts. Ask yourself: What lengths do I need? Will each gutter get one downspout or two? And what about the fascia, where the gutters attach? Is it angled or planed? Is it even or canted? (If it isn't, repair it.)

When the parts arrive, locate the high point of the gutter's run—the farthest point from a single downspout or the midpoint between two. Then you can set the pitch, and the rest is all downhill.

Costs: 6-inch gutter, \$8.50 per foot; 4-inch downspout, \$5.00 per foot; 4-inch elbow, \$2.00; 2-inch downspout, stamped bar bracket, \$0.75.

Notes: Approximately 30 feet of gutter per day.

Difficulty: Fairly easy. A helper is advised, along with the willingness to climb ladders and/or use a ladder.

STEP-BY-STEP

Install half-round gutters

1. Set the pitch

At the high point of the gutter run, hold a bracket and a section of gutter against the fascia with the gutter's outer flange under the planned line roof. Make a mark with a pencil for the bracket's screw hole. Use a level to make a matching mark at the downspout end. Measure down to that mark, 1 inch for every 30 feet of run, and mark the line. Scribe a chalk line between the high and low marks. Now you have your pitch.

2. Attach the brackets

For best support, screw the brackets to the rafter tails, with an edge on the fascia just away from the roofline. To determine which rafters get brackets, figure that they should be laid out evenly across the span, more than 32 inches apart. Drill pilot holes where the chalk line crosses the selected rafters; then screw them in place to fasten. On angled fascia, wedges (shown) make the brackets plumb.

3. Cut the downspout holes

Measure from the end of the roof to the point directly above where you plan to attach each downspout. Typically, they run inboard of corner trim, how far depends on the bracket's size. Transfer these measurements to the gutter, and cut the downspout holes with a hole saw or with metal shears, as shown.



4. Hang the gutter

With a helper or lift, set the gutter into place on the brackets, taking care not to scratch the soft metal. Hook the back edge to the bracket. Then hold down the front edge using spring hooks, screws, or stainless-steel pop rivets (shown).

5. Solder the seams

On all end caps (shown) and seams, polish the metal with 300-grit emery cloth and brush on flux. Heat each seam with this torch and the flux brush. Then feed a bar of 50/50 solder onto the hot metal. Once cast, wipe the solder clean.

6. Install the downspouts

Assemble the downspouts and elbows so that each upper piece fits snugly over one. Slip the top elbow over the outlet fitting, check that the downspout is vertical, and attach brackets, as shown near the elbows at the top and bottom.



Norm's tricks of the trade

Q

How do I cut the holes in drywall to fit around outlet boxes when the receptacles are already in?

—WHAETTA/SPIN NORTH/STONINGTON.COM

A Typically, drywall goes up after the boxes go in but before switches and receptacles get installed. But because your receptacles are already in place, the trick I'd normally suggest for locating drywall cuts—like using lipstick to outline the box—won't work. You shouldn't have to remove them, though, if you follow these steps. Just be sure to cut the power before you start working.

1 Start by hanging the first sheet at the top of the wall. Place a level against one side of the box, overlapping the bottom edge of the drywall. Plumb the level and mark the drywall on the side that's against the box, as shown. Do the same for the opposite side of the box.



2 Measure from the top and bottom of the receptacle to the bottom edge of the drywall. Pencil those dimensions on the upper sheet for the next step. Now pop the bottom sheet of drywall in position against the studs, securing the bottom edge of the first sheet.



3 Measure down from the panel and mark the location of both horizontal cuts. Then use your level as shown to mark the side cuts. Pull the drywall away so that you can safely cut out the hole with a keyhole saw. When you put the sheet back against the studs, the outlet box should slip neatly through the hole. ■



WHAT IS IT?



Q-1
SPRAY PAINT SHAKER
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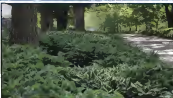
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save this old house

Price: \$249,900
Location: Newport, N.Y.
Contact: Kay Delano
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The history: After purchasing this once 1850 farmhouse in 2005, John Sikka made an interesting discovery in the attic: a box of journals belonging to former occupant named Emily Higgins. A letter entry from the winter of 1887 went like this: "The amount of snow for good sleighing I have been making a variety of" (all) "times today." Not the most inviting stuff—just an account of this simple thing that brought joy 150 years later. Well, even central New York long before PlayStations and iPods. Around 1900, this house was sold to Frank Fitch, who ran Newport's limestone quarry. And in 1946, it became home to the Shennels family, who remained there for 57 years.

Why save it? The three bedrooms house sits on a hill overlooking the beautiful West Canada Creek, which is part of a river that runs north to south. The house has a sturdy limestone foundation and retains warm coloring in the upstairs bedrooms, rustic yellow pine plank flooring and hazy blue over two windows, which flood the interior with light.

What it needs: Exterior restoration, starting with a new front sill to replace the old one. The house also requires alone systems as well as updates to its kitchen and only bathroom. The asphalt single roof is in good shape, and the house's water comes from a nearby spring. Once your work is done, you can start cherishing the charm of your own small town winters and even bake a cake or two—with ingredients



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2. The 2,394-square-foot Greek Revival house comes with acres of land, but for an additional \$34,900 you can get an adjoining 22 acres. 3. Also included with this house is the charming nearby pond. 4. The two windows are covered with classically styled shutters. 5. An original stone wall leads to a second-floor landing and three bedrooms. 6. Nearly floor-to-ceiling windows make the front porch bright and cheery.

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