

This Old House

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GARDEN
IDEAS

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8 secrets
to an
updated
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look p. 72

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LOOK
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MAKE IT SPECIAL

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Cover Photography: THERESA
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HOUSE

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1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2000; 283: 2669-2675.

—MICHAEL MILLER, JR. & E. J. MARRAS



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Dozens of ideas to upgrade your curb appeal

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- The best foundation plants to liven up your front yard
- Fresh ideas from readers' exterior makeovers

thisoldhouse.com/bonus



EXCLUSIVE VIDEO

How to build a fire pit

TGH landscape contractor Roger Cook builds a cozy outdoor fireplace. See how he does it at thisoldhouse.com/bonus.



EXCLUSIVE

Bonus images

See more photos from the romantic garden featured on page 18—along with other tablet exclusives—only in the digital edition of *This Old House* magazine. To get your copy, go to thisoldhouse.com/tablet.



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CRAFTSMAN TOOL OF THE MONTH

Digital Plunge Base Router



When it comes to decorative wood-working projects such as cabinetry and mortise work, a plunge base router can become a woodworker's closest friend. If you're looking to add this agile tool to your collection, consider the Craftsman Digital Plunge Base Router.

The motor provides all the power you need to work with hardwoods like oak or maple, but the soft-start feature builds up to the top speed of 23,000 RPM. Factor in comfortable handles and a bright work light, and the result is a feeling of total control every time you turn on the tool. The plunge mechanism glides smoothly and a micro-depth adjuster lets you fine-tune the depth in increments as small as 1/64th of an inch. For cuts that are repeatable and precise every time.

After using the digital controls to select the material you're working with, the tool adjusts its speed automatically, so whether you're laminating a groove in pine or cutting half-blind dovetails in oak, you get a perfect result, without any tear-out.



craftsman.com/wood

letter {from This Old House}

Here's to watching it grow

I want to plant a seed. No, not like in the garden, though it's certainly that case of you and there's plenty of tilting to be done at home—and plenty of planning and other gardening stories in this issue of TOWH to help you get started.

See, the seed I am looking to plant is of the idea type. I want to remind you about the digital edition of TOWH to encourage those of you who own a tablet—a Nook or a Kindle Fire or an iPad or a Galaxy—to tip over to your online newsstand or app store and download this month's copy. It's no harder than tugging up the newest version of Angry Birds, and if you're already a subscriber, it's free, and it contains plenty of extra content and exclusives. And, if I may be so bold, I think you'll find the ad-free party great. After all, where else these days do you get more for free? I mean besides, you know, most anything from your spouse so get this or that chortle done around the house.

Since TOWH first debuted a tablet edition, we've added lots of functionality designed to give our readers a better experience: slide-out tips, tappable extra photos, bonus stories, and even videos.

In this issue's tablet edition is particular, you'll find extra garden photos, and there are also additional items from our TOWH TV project finale. To top it all off, we're promoting a very special video, produced by online editor Alexandra Barden. It's the first in a series called Stories of Home, this one about New Jersey family's recovery from Superstorm Sandy, and it's available.

I hope you'll like it—and everything else in the TOWH tablet edition. If you do, please drop me a note to let me know. And if you don't, definitely drop me a note. As always, we want to give you the best home-improvement content we can, whether that's on TV, in a print magazine, in a digital magazine, or on the Web, and we can't do it without knowing what you think.

Sam Orlowski
SENIOR EDITOR, EDITOR
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checklist (May 2013)

EASY WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR HOME RIGHT NOW

☐ Plant tomatoes

Get this summertime staple in the ground even if nighttime temps in your area still haven't reached the consistent 50 degrees-plus F that's desirable. Heat up your soil with this trick: Cover beds for two weeks with a plastic tarp to absorb the sun's rays and warm the ground beneath it. Remove and plant as directed. If a cold snap is predicted, place cardboard boxes over the plants at night to shield the leaves from frost.



✓ Gear up your grill

Before Memorial Day kicks off barbecue season, give your gas grill a once-over to get it in prime cookout shape. Check for even cooking by lighting up and taking a look at the color of the flames; they should burn mostly hot blue, not cooler yellow. Wicker, mostly yellow flames can mean the burner holes are clogged. Remove the grates and clear away debris by sweeping across the burners with a grill brush, and use a paperclip to free stubborn debris in the holes. Wipe clean with a damp cloth. Find more grill tips at theoldhouse.com/season.

☐ Prune around your AC

Planting trees and shrubs around your house can keep it cooler and save you money on air-conditioning costs. But if they're close enough for leaves to fall and clog the AC's coils, they can make the unit work overtime. Help out this hot weather MVP by pruning shrubs so that branches aren't less than 2 feet away. That's also enough room for your AC specialist to make a service call.

TOH TIP

☐ Store extra seeds

With proper storage, spring gardening leftovers can last until next year's planting. Seal seed packets in a water-resistant plastic container with a silica-gel packet to absorb excess moisture and combat mold growth; keep the container in a cool, dry spot to prevent the seeds from germinating early. The fridge is a great spot, but avoid the crispier, which is apt to retain humidity.



☐ Test GFCIs

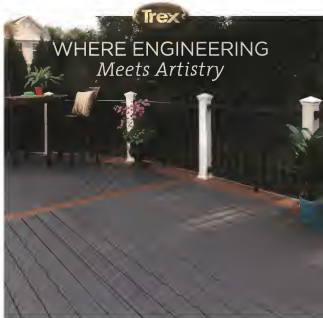
Spring's electrical storms can knock fixtures out of whack, so take time now to make sure all your outlets' shock-minimizing GFCIs (ground-fault circuit interrupters) are working properly. To check them, plug a power tester in and hit the test button, watching for the light to turn off. When you throw the light switch back on, the light should turn back on. Problems? Call a pro—the GFCI might need replacing.



☐ What's on your checklist?

"We're representing our front door and trees while humidity is still low to prevent pest buildup from forming on the finish."

—Robert and Lori Perry, Lake Charles, La.
E-mail us your ideas at checklist@theoldhouse.com.



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home solutions

Edited by Amy Roberts

inside

10 USES

EASY UPGRADE

INSTANT STYLE

MORE



Rescued- rake rack

Got a rusty old steel rake that's seen better days? Don't just toss it. When mounted nose-out on a shed wall or a door, the rake's head becomes a vintage look rack for your gardening tools that's as charming as it is convenient. If the holes in your tool handles don't fit over the tines, try nesting handles between tines or tying a loop of twine or leather in the hole. Don't have an old rake on hand? Bone-head rakes like this one are all over etsy.com, starting at \$10.



Make your bed neater

You can retire that lumpy bedsheet with this tidy technique for "upholstering" a box spring or slatted foundation. Just gather up your supplies: a few yards of fabric, upholstery tape, scissors, a staple gun and if your box spring doesn't have a wood frame on top, upholstery feet/pins (available at fabric stores). Then follow our how-to below.

STEP-BY-STEP

1. Cut four pieces of fabric that are about 1 foot square, and seal them to the corners of the box as shown below. 2. Staple or pin the fabric to the box top and bottom. 3. Cut four pieces of fabric to cover the sides of the box, adding 2 inches to the length of each side and finishing to the width. Lay one long panel up/down on top of the box so that there's about 1 foot of fabric overhanging the box on a side by about 1 inch. Place a strip of upholstery tape about 1 inch in from the box along edge, and roll tape through the tape and fabric onto the wood frame every few inches (if there's no wood frame, pin the tape and fabric in place inside of 1). Flip the fabric down against the tape so that it's right-side-up and hang over the side edge of the box. Repeat Steps 2 and 3 for the remaining sides of the box. 4. Turn the box upside down, and staple all four panels to the underside, taking care to keep the corners tidy.



Warning signs of bad wiring

A poorly installed or worn-out electrical system can come as a serious shock—in more ways than one. So in honor of National Electrical Safety Month, we tapped the Electrical Safety Foundation International for potential dangers to look out for. Notice any of the following? Hire a pro to inspect your system—stat.

1. **Dim or flickering light.** Check the bulb first. If it's working fine, the fixture it's screwed into may have been connected improperly. It could also reveal that the jacketing on the main wiring has been compromised by extreme weather or insect—yikes!—rodents.
2. **Overheating.** A switch plate that feels hot or an outlet that has charred-looking discoloration can be a sign of a loose connection. Enough heat buildup could lead to a fire.
3. **Power outages.** If you have blowing fuses or have circuit breakers that trip, it may be time to have your system upgraded with new wiring and additional outlets.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF RINNAI

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BELGARD
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Portable patio lights

For win-free outdoor illumination, try these DIY solar lanterns, which give off a warm glow well after the sun sets. This easy project uses wide-mouth Mason jars, with each lid's metal insert replaced by a piece of plexiglass to allow the sun's rays to power the solar cell through the lid. We coated the exterior of the jars with Rust-Oleum's Frosted Glass Spray (\$8, runabout.com) to give the lanterns a hazy, aged-patina look, and glued the solar-cell assembly of a mini pathway light from the home center (about \$4 each) to the underside of each lid. Once assembled, leave the lights in a spot where they'll get direct sun, and you'll never be left in the dark again. Visit thehousecarpenter.com for the full step-by-step instructions. —J.R.



PHOTO BY GUY LAWRENCE FOR ARTISTBYNIGHT.COM; ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES H. HARRIS



exp. advice **POWER BOOK** THIS ELS HOUSELANDSCAPE CONTRIBUTOR
back-saving way to nip weeds in the bud

"When weeds sprout right after a spring shower, you can use a long-handled loop hoe to get rid of them. Just rake the shrimp-shaped head across the top of still-damp soil to pull them up, roots and all."



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settling of urethane latex

PAINT SMART.



before + after:
kitchen

Same space, big improvement

Mixing down stairs and a nesting area extra square feet allow for relocating appliances and holding an eat-in kitchen in an open kitchen. By LUCY LACROIX • Photographs by KIM BETHUNE



With this
new design,
the island
helps
draw guests
into the
kitchen

It's a smart design that opens the way to a much smarter kitchen. Witness Kelly McGinnis and Dan Sorell's Victorian-era home, in San Francisco, where the busy cook space needed more function as well as guest-worthy style. Relocating the basement door elsewhere in the house, centering the foyer passageway, and grabbing about 2 feet from the dining room allowed architect Andy Rothblatt to create separate zones for cooking, cleaning up, and—Dan's pet passion—fashioning with the expensive machine. The fridge now racks into the corner vacated by the basement door, the range claims a spot nearby, an elongated peninsula accommodates the sink and dishwasher, and a new microwave-equipped island leaves prep space. Designer Amanda Warner's choice of light-reflecting finishes, quarter-round oak flooring, and a pot filler gives the room, which also serves two young kids, a sophisticated flavor. "It's very much a working kitchen," says Dan, "but it's also perfect for entertaining."



Before The old kitchen was built up by a fire escape doorway. **AFTER** In the updated and streamlined room, however, Dan Sorell pulls up to the extra-long, marble-topped breakfast bar. (Stairs: Design Within Reach)

4 The addition of an island provides prep and landing space just steps from the fridge, range and sink. *By: Studiohaus Range and range hood that*

4 The coffee bar features a commercial-style espresso maker with dedicated wiring. A bar sink to the right and an undercounter wine fridge to the left expand the area's usefulness. *Espresso machine: La Marzocco Coffee products; Mixer: The Health Careers*



after

The almost same-size kitchen gained more function after reworking the former nook and range walls, lengthening the peninsula, and adding a prep island.

before

The 250-square-foot space felt cramped and minimal—and couldn't fit the needed battery of five bar.



1 Extended the peninsula 2 feet, making room for the sink and dishwasher. Moved the range to where the sink had stood.

2 Relocated the basement door, substituting the layer opening, allowing the nook to tuck into the range wall subunit.



3 Added a prep island with a microwave and storage while easy reach of the range and range.

4 Added 2 feet of baseboard along nook, rebuilding the shared wall as a plumb line for bar and eliminating the door swing.

AMERICA

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WHAT'S INSIDE MATTERS

*Based on independent lab tests conducted by independent testing organizations. ©2011 Maytag. All rights reserved.

before + after: kitchen

the key details

▲ A spice-cabinet pullout makes use of a little off-space. The boxed marble countertop was faced to make the look better. Cabinet Design Studios, Fullerton, Hills



family friendly

Find more tips on how to turn any kitchen into a high-functioning gathering spot at thisoldhouse.com/kitchen



▼ Industrial-style pendant lights lend to the light, allowing glass over the sink and peninsula. Portland Restoration Kitchen



▲ The island top is durable and grain without butcher block and echoes new oak flooring stained to match. Butcherblock Top, John Box

◀ The coffee-bar sink has a second faucet that dispenses filtered water. Sink, Sinks Filter, Mount, Plumbing



pro advice

AMANDA WARNER, DESIGNER
SAN FRANCISCO

"If you have kids, locate the sink a safe distance from the range and find a spot for a step stool so they can wash hands—and veggies—while you do the cooking."

► An informal eating area on the other side of the peninsula is out of the reach-grasp but within reach of breakfast provisions

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before+after:
bath

Current look, classic feel

A master bedroom addition makes room for a graceful bath that feels both new and old.

By MEGAN BAKER • Photos by Pat PATRICIA LYNCH

Interpreting contemporary sensibilities into a period home can be tricky. Patricia Lynch lives the vintage charm of her 1930s house, in Alexandria, Virginia, but when she decided to add a master bedroom—a renovation that included a new master bedroom addition—she hoped for something more modern. Taking the place of the former master bedroom, the bath features a blended style inspired by an early find: the clean-lined sink, an update of the classic console. Patricia chose a tub to match, settling on a rectangular freestanding tub composed with Victorian-style fittings. A bright and airy shower enclosure sits adjacent to the tub. On the walls, she added vintage-inspired tiles and white tile, keeping it current in a blown-out rose. Marble tile underfoot and period perfect molding throughout ensure the room fits with the rest of the house.

The fancy is just what Patricia was looking for. “It was created for me, with everything I like,” she says. “It’s peaceful haven I lacked before.”

Before: The master bedroom occupied this space. **After:** The new bath is contemporary look in a period setting. **Paint:** Sherwin Williams. **Decor:** Pottery Barn. **Shower enclosure:** Restoration Hardware. **Basket:** West Elm.



[before]



Circle a
new and
arrived here
to see the look
of the original
and new look

1 The modern, boxy tub has a brood deck for toiletries and a separate head/shower. In a doorway, the wall-mount shower is a sleek faucet. Towels hang within reach from a shirazi-style brass rack. Tub: Aquatic Bath Tubs Inc./Piedmont Hardware; Faucet: Wolf; Head/shower: Brax

4 Subway tile gets a whole up with brass 3-by-5-inch diamond and diamond studs. A classic tile shell rail with bullnose corners caps it off. Tub: Mr. Conscience Brass



after

Subbed, plumbed, and rebuilt, the room became a bath with a 6-foot tub and a separate shower enclosure.

before

The 120-square-foot space held the master bedroom.



1 Built in the full right at the room's entry to maximize an open bath in the room.

2 Chose a shower enclosure with frameless glass doors to channel light from the window.



3 Created an entry with a space-saving pocket door for the dressing room, which connects the bath to the hallway and new master bedroom.

4 Installed a linen closet that blends with an exposed chimney chase. This formal exterior wall becomes an interior wall, with the addition beyond it.

6,000 KILN ANTIMONY

Photo: Alamy Images



Best window!

TRANSFORMATIONS

Queen Anne meets Scandinavian Modern

THE CHALLENGE "Scandinavian Modern" is not a request that architects remodeling Victorian-era houses hear often. But that's exactly what Sally and John Peterson, the homeowners of the latest Tiny Old House Tif project house, were looking for. Inspired by Sally's Swedish heritage, they've earned a beautifully proven exterior and simple, streamlined interior.

Enter Marcus Glysson, owner of Marcus Glysson Architects, in Boston, Massachusetts, and winner of the 2016 Marvin® Windows and Doors Architects' Challenge. Marcus had renovated a nearby home that the couple admired and they knew he could help them build a balance, beauty, and historical accuracy they were looking for.

THE STRATEGY Preservation exterior typically darts approval of replacement and new construction windows, but Marvin offers an impressive array of period-appropriate options with authentic detail that make it possible.

Marcus created a modern, open floor plan that maximized natural light by adding new glass patio doors and a custom, "sunroom wall" of glass in the renovated living room. Elsewhere, in the front of the house, he used wood replacement windows with period-appropriate detailing to be sure that the house fit in with its historic neighbors. These windows and doors are designed to engage the environment outside by creating and living in a view, while still providing a sense of separation and shelter.

THE TRANSFORMATION The abundance of natural light highlights the minimalist design and new open floor plan, creating the welcoming space the Petersons were hoping to achieve. As Marcus explains, "The light coming through these windows not only energizes the space of the house but also energizes the people within them."

Marcus Glysson, AA
Marcus Glysson Architects
Cambridge, Massachusetts
mgarcus@mgarcus.com



TO WATCH THE CAMBRIDGE PROJECT UNFOLD
and hear more about how Marvin Windows and Doors helped
transform this house, visit marvin.com/TinyOldHouse

the key details



PATRICIA JACHTEN ALEXANDER VA.
"To update the look of classic subway tile, I ordered it in a larger size and in a soft blue."



Find the editors
top 20 picks at:
WashPost.com
more. Thanks.



+ Furnish glass double door with weight from the adjacent window. A recessed rib-and-flute corner shall hold necessities. *Don't stretch it. Don't*

Wish Granted.



Let's
Go
Places

© 2004 Blackwell Publishing Ltd *Journal of Internal Medicine* 255: 111–118

Nautical home office

Ocean-blue accents and vintage ship gear evoke a captain's command center. Here's how to create a similar space in your home. **by CLEMAN KARTIS • Photography by TRISA DEWMAN**

Bold colors and adventurous finishes don't have to undermine the tranquility of a hard-at-work space. This home office, put together by interior designer Steven Gambel, gets its colorful character and relaxed feel from a bevy of nautical-themed accents inspired by the home's near-the-shore location. To give the room personality, Gambel devised a display spot for a collection of floats by assembling a bracket-supported shelf from rock lumber parts. Two cool blue paint colors run the buildings and window sashes into focal points, and a single vintage signal flag from a sailing vessel adds some intriguing highlights. Using marine navigation charts to cover a drafting table creates a unique custom desk, while the folding canvas weather vane adds a hint of well-traveled British Colonial style.

Read on for ideas to help you come up with the kind of office that will inspire you to chart a smart course—even if it's just to pay the bills.

stately chair
A sturdy square frame, bamboo-finish details, and a warm cane seat give this perch classically shapely lines in the simplest of ways. \$452; byglaze.com



painted cedar bridge
The vibrant patterns on these weathered rope-reinforced floats once represented different boats for different lobster canners. \$22 each; nauticalropes.com

trash bracket
An oversized swish-line decker-style pull makes a simple, shady wastebasket. \$25; westelm.com



KARTIS: KATY; PHOTO: TRISA DEWMAN; CHAIR: BYGLAZE.COM; BRIDGE: NAUTICALROPES.COM; TRASH: WESTELM.COM



get this look
for less



signal flags

All sea: The graphic designs on these cotton road flags stand for letters of the alphabet. Hang a series on the wall for a nifty shelving idea. \$20 each; handcraftedmadeinusa.com



smart storage

Metalsmiths label frames and corners give these carboard boxes a lasting look. One-size fits all is a slight variation for organizing loose papers. \$12 and \$28; amazon.com



chart-topped drafting desk

For an inexpensive one-of-a-kind worktable, add a plywood top to these adjustable metal legs. Add paper nautical charts with an acrylic glue, then rest with a water-based glue varnish for a durable finish. Twelve legs, \$30 each; amazon.com. Charts, \$25 each; mapsofusa.com. Glue's ProBond Advanced glue, \$12; homedepot.com. Paint Ocean Soft Touch varnish, \$3; lowes.com



vintage desk fan

A retro style table-top breeze maker keeps the office space from feeling stuffy. \$46; lumen.com





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Refinish a floor with six-pointed stars

Warm wood flooring gets a warm-up from a colorful hand-painted pattern.

By DEBORAH BALLENGER | Photographs by MARIK SAMI

Old flooring often benefits from a smooth new finish. Lucienne Sams, a decorative painter in Saratoga Springs, New York, created this starbedecked pattern with leftover latex paint in five colors. "It's fun to mix colors, because you finish with polyurethane," she says. After lightly sanding and cleaning the floorboards and putting down two base coats of flat latex, Sams cut two 20-inch equilateral triangles out of paper. She placed one upside down on the other to create a six-sided, six-pointed star, which she outlined on poster board. (Print out a template for this design and find the full step-by-step at theoldhouse.com/blogs.)

Moving to the floor, Sams marked the stars' corner points at random 4-foot intervals, outlined each star with a pencil, and used a ruler and a fine-point permanent black marker to outline each diamond. Her palette included four colors with a similar value, plus a pale blue, making them give the pattern a little pop. She advises doing the stars over time and finishing with three coats of polyurethane. "It should look hand-painted, not perfect," Sams says, to counter any nervousness. "Blemishes, later you'll be seeing it from 3 feet away." ■

Cost: About \$250
Time: Three days
Difficulty: Moderate
Get expert advice here



To add texture, use the wet paint with a sponge rag to let a bit of the base coat show through.



color inside the lines After drawing the diamonds, FARLEFT, use three brushes to fill them in. LEFT, a dry artist's brush for the points, a stiff inch one for the edges, and a regular paintbrush for the finish. To avoid stringing wet paint, complete a star and let it dry before tackling the next one.

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The old-time favorite is better than ever, with more varieties to engage shady beds, potted plantings, and even sunny borders. **BY SUSAN HEDDER • Photographs by MATTHEW HEDDER**

Who would resist a plant with put-outside foliage in baldachioed form, one made for shade but fine with sun, a plant that's so easy to grow, it almost begs itself? Welcome to the world of colera, that hot-blooded tropical one characterized by Victorians and subsequently grows for its ability to cheer up depleted spots. Lastly, bevels have gone to town with it, developing varieties that have this vibrant coloration high heat, hard light, and practically every setting. From gunga gone to flower beds there's been growth from stuff and plenty to several showy inches wide, spiky are rounded, lobed, or ruffled edges, and come sprung in splatters in a rainbow of shades, including charcoal, red, and sleeky black—sometimes all in one plant.

"There are probably thousands of cultivars," says Barbara Peterson, nursery manager at White Flower Farm, in Litchfield, Connecticut, which sells many of the latest introductions along with vintage favorites. "Some varieties actually brighten in sun, which can fade the older hybrids. But pure shade is perfect for every cultivar I've ever met." So to rich reds interred with expensive compost and used for drainage, the rays, along with a monthly dose of seaweed-based fertilizer. If you may off flower heads, plants will go on hardy until, sometimes developing odd branches called "upens," with a color or pattern different from the rest—proof that new cultivars are never-ending.

This surprise variability was what first drew landscape architect Joseph Marik, of Santa Monica,



sunbathers Colocassia: Just for shade anytime. These new sun tolerant hybrids sport an array of hues that won't fade, in bright conditions, like older types do. The colors here include the following ones, were photographed at White Flower Farm, which sells both new and old flower varieties.

California, to colorful child. Even now, he says, "I especially love the luscious green ones edged with black, like 'Isky Fingers,' that brighten dark places in my garden."

Thanks to the constant color it offers while ephemeral blossoms come and go, coleus has long been one of summer's most useful garden staples. But, as Fernon explains, the diverse varieties have expanded the spectrum of colors, textures, and growing habits even further, making coleus all the more versatile. Colorful mums are often a jolly tip-off to a plant's talents. Upright, 3-foot-tall 'Big Blonkie,' for example, features burgundy stems and vibrant, bushy, yellow leaves. 'Gamb Rumble' is a pucker, pink-and-purple trailing variety, while 'Alligator Tail' has tufts of narrow, yellow-bladed green leaves. Even more intricate in the eye are the fringed, near-black 'Midnight Rambler' and the exotically frilled red-and-lavender 'Wine Fish.'

Given the plethora of coleus options—and the cost-consciousness of new ones—March suggests some guidelines for selecting and collaging them: "Don't just buy one or two plants," he says. "Use them in masses, tucked between perennials to fill space, and choose colors that complement other leaves or blossoms you have." Around seating areas, he especially likes solid-leaved varieties, which create color blocks that he contrasts dramatically with bright seat cushions or glassed pots. In beds and containers, he mixes beg-like coleus (such as the so-called Kang by hybrid) with fine-textured boxwood, rosemary, or cypressus and small-leaved coleus, such as 'Garnet Robe,' with taller *Clivia* or *Artemisia* foliage.

Fernon, too, pops coleus into pots, clippings up the same burgundy-colored 'Garnet Robe' with the pretty leaves of 'Spreading Salinas' and *Impatiens* and 'Kandis Summer' hydrangeas. She also uses a curly, frosted one with stems of magenta and coleus that pick up one another's color cues, one favorite combination often used and given 'Beetroot Pout' as the transition between speckled yellow-green 'Dappled Apple' and very dark 'Pink Chaos.'

Just be sure to carefully evaluate your light conditions and available planting space before making any plant purchases. "A large coleus, like 'Big Blonkie,' for instance, will overtake other plant fluff," Fernon says, "while smaller ones, like 'Lion Fish,' can go swamped and buried just as quickly in a pot." She advises gardeners to give new plants flower room and place them freely when they sprout flower stalks or grow leggy. Water when soil feels dry to the touch, but don't overwater, which makes plants "tender to insects," Fernon warns. Should pests, such as spider mites, show up, she suggests spraying a natural horticultural oil on the undersides of foliage.



color medley

A container planting of upright 'Dappled Apple' coleus shows a bottom round 'Pink Chaos' and 'Beetroot Pout' (1). Interspersing easy-to-move potted plantings of yellow-green 'Jelly Zucchini' and deep magenta 'Green Rambler' in a border gives those varieties extra height—and allows for changing up the look as the season wears on (2).



Coleus is technically a tender perennial and not cold hardy in much of the country, so many gardeners simply grow it as an annual. But even in sunny climates, you can keep favorite plants going by taking cuttings in early fall to propagate outdoors. (See "Multiplying Your Riches," at right, for the how-to.) When the weather warms, they'll be ready to hit the garden once more, dressed in their summer best.

see loads more!
For additional ideas visit us at www.thespruce.com/coleus



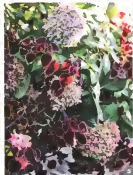
balancing act

Placing the deep-fused 'Midnight Rambler' front and center shows the variegated foliage around it to really shine (3). The soft lavender tones and delicately arching habit of the surrounding 'Beetroot Pout' have a softening effect on masses of 'Beetroot Pout' and 'Trinity Rusty' (4).



Multiplying your riches

Perhaps the most surefire of all ways to find variety in your coleus is to propagate plants yourself. Either way you're getting colors and textures in your garden like never before. Here's how: (1) Take stems or leaves from a mature plant, 2 to 3 inch shoot from the center of the plant and above a leaf node. First cut at top and second cut at bottom, leaving the top of the cutting 4 to 6 inches long. Fill with water. (2) Place the cut stems in a glass container filled with room-temperature water so that the leaves remain dry and exposed to the air. (3) Put the container in bright light where you get a splash of indirect sunlight. Top with the water periodically, replacing it if it grows cloudy. (4) When roots have grown several inches long, after roughly two weeks, plant the cutting in potting soil. ■



varied looks: Green edged 'Garnet Robe' picks up the outlook shown in a late-season 'East Coast Summer' hydrangea (5). Red Coral is one of many in the Under the Sea Series that boasts fanciful coral-like foliage (6). Spiking to tall, 'Alligator Tail' makes a dramatic counterpart to a long-blossoming 'Isky Fingers' perennials (7).



The ins and outs of doggie doors

Here's how to choose a pet door that's just the right fit for your four-legged companion

By HEATHER LYNNSTON • Illustration by EDGAR FOTTERBERG MAM

You adore your dog, of course, but sometimes all that coming and going—accompanied by scratching, whining, and barking—drives you nuts. Or maybe you work long hours and there's nobody around to let Lulu out or in. If these scenarios sound familiar, consider adding a pet door to let your pooch leave or return without your help. Here's the inside scoop from a few pros on how to find and install the right model.

➔ **Save for the job.** A good door for a small- or medium-size dog will run \$100 to \$150; specialty doors or doors for large breeds cost more.

➔ **Go for sturdy construction.** The best doors are built with an aluminum frame, rather than a plastic one, because it holds its shape well and resists cracking. Avoid vinyl or plastic doors that have magnets in the flap, says Carl H. Albrecht, owner of Gun Dog Home Door Company, in Salem, Minnesota, and the proud owner of six dogs. "The vinyl or plastic wears, and dogs like to chew on it," he says. And they can swallow the magnets or plastic, which could cause an injury or even require surgery.

➔ **Size it right.** Measure your dog's width, belly height, and shoulder height. The door you get should be wider than your dog and tall enough so that her's nose is above her shoulder and below her belly when she walks through. "Don't make it too big or you might get intruders—critters or humans," says Tina Old House general contractor Ross Silva, whose tip o' the hat: His 70-year-old mother once crawled through a dog door at his brother's house after she was accidentally locked out.



➔ **Don't skimp on safety.** Most dog doors come with a safety closure that will keep your pooch inside—and outsiders out—at night or when you're away. But the biggest safety concern with pet doors involves toddlers using them to get outside unsupervised, where they can easily get into harm's way. If you've got a backyard pool, for example, you'll need to install a fence that surrounds the pool to prevent an accidental drowning.

➔ **Put it in the right spot.** Pet doors can be installed in walls and fire doors and even in glass and/or paneled doors, just check the product's specifications. If you're putting a door on an outside wall, make sure the exterior area doesn't collect backdrafts from the roof that might leak through the door, Twiss says. Also avoid areas where gaslines, electrical boxes, and other obstructions would hamper installation, says Eric Prosser, owner of Tucson Dog Doors, of Tucson, Arizona. Finally, if you're DIYing it, installation takes about half a day and requires the use of a Sawzall or other power saw. If the thought of cutting into your house freaks you out, call in a pro to do the job. ■



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shopping

Entryway benches

Whether you have a full-on mudroom or want to dedicate a section of wall to act as one, a seat with storage is a by-the-door essential. By AMY ROBERTS • Photographs by ANDREW McCAIG

How to bring order to the drop zone just inside the door? Obviously you need hooks for hang-ups (jackets, slickers, hoodies, and the like), but just as key is a landing upon a place to put down backpacks, set and shed footwear, and, ideally, stash keys, spare gear, dog-walking accessories, and more. A unit with storage can provide that, whether it has a big accessories space beneath a longed bench top, or open shelves or cubbies that can hold bins and baskets to contain and conceal all manner of clutter-crafting bins and pieces.

Chosen wisely, a storage bench is also a stylish addition to your entry. The seven versions on this page and the following one all boast clean-lined, compact profiles and handsome painted- or stained-wood finishes. So take a look at this infectious setting, where you can take a load off—and move it away.



classic highway

YELLOW

Size: 36"W x 20"D x 25"H

Made of pine with a distressed painted finish in Old Sage

Highlights: Glitter disappears inside this elevated trunk-style seat, which has painting detail for a handcrafted look. \$229, americancountry.com



STYLING: JESSIE HARRIS FOR JESSIE HARRIS

shelf help

VINYL

Size: 48 1/2" W x 14 1/2" D x 32 1/2" H

Made of heavy, 100% vinyl with an antique natural white and a lustrous finish. Highlights: A four-drawer shelf holds shoes; a larger one, everything else. \$130; artpark.com



graduated to last

L.L. BEAN

Size: 36 1/2" W x 14 1/2" D x 29 1/2" H

Made of ash with a lacquered finish. Highlights: This one is sturdy to be the details, visible wood grain, a sturdy square top, and a solid shelf. Several containers. \$289; llbean.com



cubby compartments

MILITARY

Size: 48 1/2" W x 14 1/2" D x 32 1/2" H

Made of 100% solid pine (the painted is Brilliance's Modern Blue Navy). Highlights: You can add baskets to the top and assign each to a different family member. The top cushion mat is ready for decorative padding. \$60; milhouse.com

Includes
cushion
mat, 100%
solid pine
with 100%
solid pine
cushion



worn-in perch

BELLINI DESIGN

Size: 32 1/2" W x 12 1/2" D x 18 1/2" H

Made of painted rubber wood, and eucalyptus. Highlights: With a distressed white sides and a worn top, give this bench comfy, cozy appeal. \$180; bellinidesign.com



open and airy

LINDSAY STREET

Size: 36 1/2" W x 14 1/2" D x 18 1/2" H

Made of pine with a polyurethane finish. Highlights: Simply played legs create a graceful shape. Widely spaced slats hold bags and casual footwear. \$60; jay.com



chick and sturdy

WILK

Size: 32 1/2" W x 14 1/2" D x 20 1/2" H

Made of pine with a distressed and lacquered finish. Highlights: Square legs give it a traditional but substantial appearance. The chair's wide slats help dampen winter dry factor. \$80; wilk.com



From the Editors of Health and This Old House

Your Healthy Gardening Guide

Leave these alone!

Poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac can be tricky to spot. Generally, poison ivy climbs or creeps. It leaves come in threes and can be shiny green or reddish, with smooth or jagged edges. Poison oak also grows in clusters of threes, with leaves that resemble oak tree leaves. Poison sumac is a rangy shrub, with oppositely-edged green leaves and red stems. If you brush up against these plants, immediately wash with cool water to remove the oils from your skin, and wash clothes in hot water.



AVOID TICKS

To stay clear of Lyme disease, wear long pants tucked into socks. Check yourself and pets when coming inside. Find a center? Use tweezers to pull it up and out, wash with soap and water. See an MD if you get a rash or fever within a few weeks, when the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

BEAT A BEE STING

Bees seek nectar-filled flowers, so don't resemble one. Avoid bright floral clothes and scented lotions. And always wear shoes—many stings happen while items are stopped on. If you get stung, wash with soap and water, remove the stinger by wiping with gauze, says the CDC.

MANAGE MOSQUITOES

They mostly just cause itchy welts, but mosquitoes can carry disease. To keep them out of your park, remove breeding grounds like buckets, empty pots, and anywhere else water collects. They tend to bite at dawn and dusk, so if you're out, wear a repellent with DEET.

PROTECT YOUR BODY

Are you a weekend warrior in your garden? Unless you're super fit, start slow and build up gradually, says Dr. Colman. It's easy to throw your back out. "These moves will help prevent muscle and joint pain."

GET LOOSE: Walk around for a few minutes, then warm up the big muscles in your upper back, arms and knees with these three moves. **1.** Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Lift your head and shoulders off the ground. Hold for 10 seconds. **2.** Lie on your side with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Lift your head and shoulders off the ground. Hold for 10 seconds. **3.** Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Lift your head and shoulders off the ground. Hold for 10 seconds.

STRETCH: Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Lift your head and shoulders off the ground. Hold for 10 seconds. **2.** Lie on your side with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Lift your head and shoulders off the ground. Hold for 10 seconds. **3.** Lie on your back with knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Lift your head and shoulders off the ground. Hold for 10 seconds.

Stay sun-safe

Whenever you're outdoors, the sun can damage your skin, so slather on a broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30. Don a wide-brimmed hat, as well as long sleeves and pants, all in lightweight materials—you don't want to get overheated! Head outdoors midday, when the sun is strongest. And don't neglect hydration: Sip from a water bottle every 15 minutes.



A. UNIL-SAYER

Kneel on the pad when working low to the ground or fix the frame and sit or kneel on the pad. **Stanley's Supply Company** garden kneeler \$39. stanleys.com

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2. COMPACT KNEE

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STYLING: PHOTOGRAPHY BY LISA BROWN



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Please see Important Risk Information for Lyrice on the following page.

To learn more visit www.lyrica.com or call toll free 1-800-5-LYRICA (1-800-559-7422).

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IMPORTANT FACTS



(LEE-ri-kaht)

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION ABOUT LYRICA

LYRICA may cause serious, even life threatening, allergic reactions. Stop taking LYRICA and call your doctor right away if you have any signs of a serious allergic reaction:

- Swelling of your face, mouth, lips, gums, tongue, throat or neck
- Have any trouble breathing
- Sores, blisters, cracked lips or blisters

Like other antiepileptic drugs, LYRICA may cause suicidal thoughts or actions in a very small number of people, about 1 in 100.

Call your doctor right away if you have any symptoms, especially if they are new, worse or worry you, including:

- suicidal thoughts or actions
- severe or worse depression
- new or worse anxiety
- feeling agitated or restless
- panic attacks
- trouble sleeping
- new or worse irritability
- acting aggressive, being angry or violent
- acting on dangerous impulses
- an extreme increase in activity and talking
- other unusual changes in behavior or mood

If you have suicidal thoughts or actions, do not stop LYRICA without first talking to your doctor.

LYRICA may cause swelling of your hands, legs and feet. This swelling can be a serious problem with people with heart problems.

LYRICA may cause dizziness or sleepiness.

Do not drive a car, work with machinery, or do other dangerous things until you know how LYRICA affects you. Ask your doctor when it is okay to do these things.

ABOUT LYRICA

LYRICA is a prescription medicine used in adults 18 years and older to treat:

- Pain from damaged nerves that happens with diabetes or that follows healing of fractures, or spinal cord injury
- Facial spasms when taken together with other seizure medicines
- Fibrositis/algia (pain all over your body)

Who should NOT take LYRICA:

- Anyone who is allergic to anything in LYRICA

BEFORE STARTING LYRICA

Tell your doctor about all your medical conditions, including if you have:

- liver, lung, depression, mood problems or mental health problems
- Have or had kidney problems or dialysis
- Have heart problems, including heart failure
- Have a bleeding problem or a low blood platelet count
- Have chronic prescription medicines, street drugs or alcohol in the past
- Have ever had swelling of your face, mouth, tongue, lips, neck, back, or throat (angioedema)
- Plan to father a child. It is not known if problems seen in animal studies can happen in humans
- Are pregnant, plan to become pregnant or are breastfeeding. It is not known if LYRICA will harm your unborn baby

You and your doctor should decide whether you should take LYRICA, at least first, but you should not do both.

Tell your doctor about all your medicines. Include over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements.

LYRICA and other medicines may affect each other causing side effects. Especially tell your doctor if you take:

BEFORE STARTING LYRICA, continued

• Angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors. You may have a higher chance for swelling and hoarseness.

• Amlodipine (Nifedipine), Amlodipine (Nifedipine) and nifedipine (Nifedipine) or Amlodipine (Nifedipine). You may have a higher chance of swelling, gas or swelling of your hands or feet.

• Nonsteroid pain medications (such as aspirin), ibuprofen, or medicines for anxiety (such as benzodiazepines). You may have a higher chance for dizziness and drowsiness.

• 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 weakness along with feeling numb and tingling
- Eye pain problems including blurry vision
- Weight gain. Weight gain may affect control of diabetes and can be serious for people with heart problems.
- Feeling "high"

If you have any of these symptoms, tell your doctor right away.

The most common side effects of LYRICA are:

- Dizziness • Weight gain • Trouble concentrating
- Blurred vision • Sleepiness • Swelling of hands and feet
- Dry mouth

If you have diabetes, you should pay extra attention to your blood sugar while taking LYRICA.

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 time each day.
- Take LYRICA with or without food.

Don't:

- Drink a cup or use machines 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.

If you stop taking LYRICA suddenly, you may have headaches, nausea, dizziness, trouble sleeping, increased sweating, or you may feel anxious. If you have surgery, you may have serious side effects.

Start your new medicines without first talking to your doctor.

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

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home center
project

Build a three-tiered side table

It holds much more than a reading lamp—and takes less time to make than shopping for a look-alike. By CODY CALAMAZO Photograph by WICKELLY WEBER

Cost: \$80

Time: 2 to 3 hours
Difficulty: Easy. Projects needn't always be a lot of cutting and assembly time.

Any savvy potato knows that a handy side table is an essential ally for a busy Sunday morning. You won't even have to get off your duff for very long to make the one shown here, thanks to a clever design by Tim Old House general contractor Tim Silva. He salvaged wood panels from an antiques store as table surfaces, with two flipped upside down and the top end right-side up for a tray-like appearance, and connected them with turned legs to create the sturdy, sturdy piece. With three easy-access surfaces for snacking, odds and ends, you'll have no excuse for losing the remote in the sofa cushions ever again.



For complete instructions, turn the page



Parts: 2 1/2 x 6-inch boards, 8 feet
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Parts: 2 1/2 x 6-inch boards, 8 feet

HOW IT'S DONE

Build a three-tiered side table

We designed our 22-inch-tall table to be roughly the same height as the arms of the sofa next to it. The table legs are chiseled down short enough to give us this height with minimal cutting and then enough to fit within the corners of the game's frames. Like many great table legs, they came with tanger bolts that screw into metal furniture plates—we simply removed the bolts with locking pliers. You can find the wood-to-wood dovetail screws that hold the lower tiers of the table together at larger home centers and lumberyards.



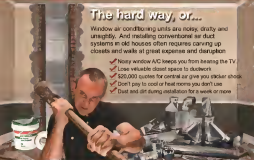
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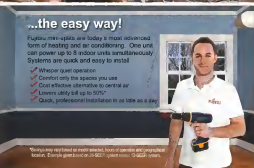
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weekend
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How to build a fold-down bar

Use cedar lumber and a doweling jig to create an outdoor piece that can handle its share of liquor. By JOHN GARDY Photographs by LUCYRA MOORE

Call it a *blowup bar*. When the guests start arriving, fold down the cabinet door to create a neat and sturdy work surface. Made of naturally rot-resistant cedar, this happens to be safe for food handling. You'll need to use a router and doweling jig to build the door, with an inset slab, but don't sweat. This Old House contributor Christopher Bittelmeier of Forest, a handmade-furniture company in Brooklyn, New York, shows you how on the following pages. Give it a try—you'll avoid the practice of returning each month's project: a matching grill table.



Summer
Special
UP-NEXT MONTH
Build a matching
cedar grill table



Cedar boards can be ordered from Home Depot or local lumber yards. Hardware and tools are available at most home centers.

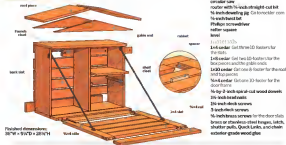
PHOTOGRAPH BY LUCYRA MOORE

Cost: \$250 for the cedar, not including the hardware.
Time: 8 hours over two days.
Difficulty: Moderate. The top joints and door work requires careful routing and drilling.

Day-to-day timeline

SATURDAY Build the box with its roof (Steps 1-4)

SUNDAY Construct and install the door, mount the bar (Steps 5-7)



TOOLS
cider saw
bar clamps
drill/driver
1/4-inch countersink bit
brad nailer
level
pneum. straightener
circular saw
router with 1/4-inch straight cut bit
1/4-inch doweling jig (a router can
1/4-inch hand bit)
Phillips screwdriver
nailer square
level

1x12 (1x10s)
1x6 cedar: Get three 10' boards for the rails.

1x6 cedar: Get two 10' boards for the box pieces and the guide rails.

1x30 cedar: Get one 8' board for the roof and top piece.

1x4 cedar: Get one 10' board for the door frame.

1x4x2 1/2-inch spruce or cut wood dowels: 21x 1/2-inch for rails.

1/4-inch black screws: 5 1/2-inch black screws.

1/4-inch brass screws for the door rails: brass or stainless-steel hinges, latches, shackle pulls, Quick Links, and chain exterior-grade wood glue.

1

1. Build the box

A. Assemble the box. On a miter saw, chop all the pieces for the door rails, according to the cut list at the top of the page. Use a circular saw to cut the 1x4 boards into 1x6 boards with 45-degree angles to help clamp the corners. Arrange the cedar pieces with the sides and vertical boards captured by the top and bottom. They're all 1x6 except for the top, which is made of 1x30. Use a circular saw to cut the back rails and the closed door. Apply glue to the bottom ends of the vertical pieces, and clamp the bottom pieces in place with your 1x4 boards. Reinstall the assembly on 1/4-inch spacers to locate the overhang for the top. Then glue and clamp the top piece, as shown.

B. Screw it together. Use a drill/driver and a countersink bit to make two pilot holes in each of the six butt joints, as shown. Then secure the joints with 1/4-inch black screws. To make the shelf, apply glue to the shelf boards and use a track nailer and 2x4-inch brads to nail them in place. Fasten up the right-hand compartment. Tack the shackle to the door.

ILLUSTRATION: ANDREW BROWN

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*Compared to plain salt pellets and assuming an average softener life of five years.
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2. Make the gable

A. Lay out the gable ends. To lay out the triangular gable ends for the roof, set a bevel gauge to 12 degrees and mark the angle at the bottom corners of the rafters, as shown. Use a straightedge to extend the angle lines until they cross. Saw up the peak of the gable.

B. Cut the gable ends. Stack the material board on top of the other board to get identical pieces from one cut. To set up the straightedge, first measure the distance from the circular saw blade to the closed edge of the shoe. On the board, draw a parallel line at that distance outside the cutline and clamp the straightedge along the guide line. Adjust the blade depth to reach through both boards, and run the shoe along the straightedge to make the cut. Hang an extra raft piece for now.



3. Assemble the roof

A. Cut the roof pieces. The roof consists of two pieces cut at 12-degree angles where they meet at the peak. It is easiest to use a dual compound miter saw. But to make the cuts with a circular saw, first set a bevel gauge to 12 degrees and mark that angle on the short edge of the board. By eye, edge of the blade angle to the mark and lock the shoe in place. Clamp one end blank, hanging off your work surface and extend the end, as shown. Repeat the process for the other roof board.

B. Attach the gable ends. Apply glue to the bottom edge of a gable end and install it on top of the deck. Flush with the outer edge of the top piece. Press the V-shaped raft piece from Step 2B at the peak to help clamp the gable end in place, as pictured. Countersink pilot holes up through the top piece and into the gable end of the gable end. Then use 1 1/2-inch deck screws to secure the pieces, as shown. Remove the clamps, and install the other gable end.

C. Install the roof. Apply glue to the sloping edges of the rafter ends. Set the roof pieces in place so that the bevel ends meet neatly at the peak. Secure them with 24-inch long nails, as shown.



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4



4. Install the back

A. Lay out the back. The back studs give the box lateral strength, and the topmost piece doubles as half of the front. It also will allow the box to mount on the wall. Place the first stud flush with the bottom edge of the box, then use spacers (ours are large-pipe stems) to create even gaps between each stud. Use a brad nailer and 1 1/2-inch boards to back all but the topmost wood members of the box.

B. Make the French cleat. Mark its outline on the top cut face 1 1/2 inches from an edge. Using the band saw, cut your work face to your regular workface to 45 degrees, and mount the saw with the blade angled toward the center of the board. Rip along the outline. Position each of it as the top stud, with the bevel facing in and pointing down. Countersink pilot holes in the studs, and secure each with two 1 1/4-inch deck screws at each end.

5. Build the door frame

A. Root the rabbets. The door frame is made from 1/2 x 4 boards, with the two sides milled to create a sturdy half-lap joint with the thicker 2 x 4 end studs. First, clamp one of the sides to your work surface, as shown. Chuck a 1/4-inch depth, cut bit in your router, and set the fence to keep the cut at the desired width. For the depth, start at 1/4 inch and make several passes, adjusting the bit cut if the channel is 1/4 inch deep.

B. Drill the shroud holes. Clamp one side into a 1/2-inch doweling jig to your work surface, as shown. Use a 1/4-inch twist bit, drill two holes 3 inch deep to accept the wood dowels. Repeat the process on the other end and on the other side, making sure to keep the jig flush with the outside edge. Then make matching holes on the ends by clamping the jig flush to each end of a rail and drilling a pair of holes into the inside edge.

C. Assemble the frame. Apply glue to one end of all the dowels and insert them into the holes in the rails. Then apply glue to the exposed ends of the dowels. Fit the rails and sides together with a long bar into a frame, as shown. Before tightening the clamps, use a square to make sure each corner is 90 degrees.



5



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6. Make the door

A. Rout the inset slots. The ends of the inset slots must be routed to complete a half-lap joint with the slats. First, measure and cut the slots to fit between the routed edges of the slats. Then clamp the four slats together edge to edge and clamp the assembly to your work surface.

B. Attach the slats to the frame. Lay the slats into the frame, rabbet to rabbet, and use spacers to keep them a uniform distance apart. At the end of each slot, countersink two pilot holes through the face and into the half-lap joint. Then use 1/8-inch brass screws and a screwdriver to secure the slats.

C. Install the hardware. You'll need to install hinges on the door, as well as latch hardware to keep the door closed when not in use. In order to support the lid and any heavy items that might be placed on it when open, we installed shutter pulls and used Quick Links to attach it across the chest. Use a square to set the door at right angle. Then measure how many links you need and attach. (To do this, the chain clamp the link that needs to be removed in place and cut the hardware.)

Tip Remember to use brass or stainless-steel fasteners with cedar, teak or galvanized steel will discolor the surrounding wood.

6

7

7. Install the bar

A. Mount the French cleat. Mount the top of the French cleat against the wall, with the level facing in and pointing up. Use a level to position it; then drive a 3-inch-deep screw halfway into a stud. (For brick or concrete block walls, use an masonry drill bit and masonry anchors.) If your house has clapboards, as shown, drive them in from the top of the cleat to hold the face plumb—snack the cleat from trapping moisture against the siding—before sinking 3-inch-deep screws every 16 inches.

B. Slide the bar in place. Simply slide the bar onto the bracket, as shown, and you're ready to enjoy it.

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by **deborah baldwin** photographs by **tricia glavin**
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*h*ouses aren't built to be museum pieces. Times change, new materials come along, and each owner gets to decide whether the place needs an extra bath—or a helpail. So it's best not to approach a newly acquired house with kid gloves and a fear of change, right?

Well, that depends, suggests Lynn Lillian, who played a leading role in the renovation of her family's farmhouse, in Warwick, New York. No way she'd move the kitchen back to the basement, where, somewhat oddly, it was gathering smoke around the time George Washington passed through town. And she wasn't going to erect up the dining room's original hand-lacked beams, which a previous owner had exposed to great effect. At the same time, "we didn't want the very ray of the house to be compromised," she says. "We didn't want to move walls or take them down or put in a cathedral ceiling." In designing her 21st-century kitchen, she asked her architect, Jeff DuCane, "What would the original farmers have done?"

An interesting question, as it turns out.

Rooted in a grove known for apple trees and onion fields, the five-bedroom, three-bath house had clearly withstood repeated assaults before Lynn and her husband, Mitch, bought it on impulse 25 years ago, when they were young filmmakers up from Atlantic City, New Jersey, for the day. The local historical society pegged the house to the late 18th or early 19th century, but no one knew when the original fireplace and chimney had disappeared, the main stair and front windows had acquired their post-Colonial proportions, and a porch had wrapped itself around the front. Or why the 3,900-square-foot house had three front doors.

Which leads to a related question: If authenticity is your goal, which of a home's history rides do you aim to preserve?

One thing seemed clear: After years in the dusty old place, the latest homeowners were ready to put their own stamp on it. "The kitchen was so tiny, you couldn't unload the dishwasher without blocking the door," Lynn recalls. "There was no place to put your boots. Life got lived in only one part of the house because there was no fire." On the second floor, the layout was so awkward that you had to walk from one bedroom through another to get to the main stairs.

cottage hatch, commercial range

By adding an on-track, five-burner commercial range and another bathroom—were able to create a generous gathering space with features that celebrate both pre-fabrication and traditional unfitted kitchen style.



front-door catchall

The new mudroom, with its built-in friendly blastproof floor and hooks and shelf for coats, keeps hats, scarves, coats, boots, and pet leashes (and even shoes) in one place.

No longer dainty 28-somethings who had bought the place before checking out the dirt-floor basement or the local schools, the couple now had three kids, a posse of pets, and a busy social life, much of it revolving around the move. They loved the original plaster walls, the atmospheric cracks and seeps, the feel of well-used French that they owned an 18th-century "birthright room." But, to paraphrase the name of a movie Mitch was working on at the time, something had to give.

"One of those awful snowstorms spurred us to go west [Jeff], Lynn says. "It caused the ponds to start separating from the house." What's more, they needed upgrades to the roof, the insulation, and the heating and cooling systems, plus new baths, possibly a mudroom, definitely a bigger kitchen, emergency upstairs, maybe even a master suite. "It started out as an addition our back," says Mitch, "and just grew."

Ignoring an important rule—friends don't let friends tear friends—the couple brought in not only a so-called neighbor DeGraw but also their longtime buddy in construction, general contractor David Barnowski.

DeGraw drew up plans for the addition and for fixes aimed at ignoring up traffic lines upstairs and down—and immediately began to tear out walls. "It was such a wonderful old house," he says truthfully. "I wanted to get the right fit and scale and not overkill it."

Barnowski felt the same way, sort of. But he saw no



point in reimagining what he found while peeling off the shrouded siding and gazing around the dry-laid stone foundation. "When we started the renovation, we had a meeting and I said there were major structural problems," he recalls. "The windows were canted. One whole post was gone. The previous owners hadn't taken good care of the house. That was no history." Maybe, he suggested, it was time for a tasteful banal.

Silence

A few days later, Lynn called back. She and Mitch had given it a lot of thought—and voted for renovation instead.

So Barnowski and his crew began outside, tracing their way around to expose the framing and its failures. They used oak wedges to expose and repair the rot and stabilized 8- and 10-foot sections with crossbeams before tying the sections together. "We couldn't level the house, so we straightened it," he says.

It was frustrating work. "We could had a D8" (as in a Caterpillar bulldozer) went the crew's running joke. Work turned into sprints. Insulation went up along with new framing and cedar siding, old windows were

added on to over time

The addition that built the family room went up in the 19th century and the original addition with three levels for jobs. The swimming in early 1900s and the original beams were added during a mid-20th-century "update." But, says architect Jeff DeGraw "we can't figure out when or why they put in their door." It was a good idea and the quality



a blend of new and old

The dining room has centuries-old timbers and hand-hewn beams, a new hutch made from salvaged pine, and a table built by homeowner Mitch Lillian.



FLOOR PLANS

The house lost steam from a former dairy barn, gained two fireplaces and 1,600 square feet with a main-floor powder room bumpout and a rear kitchen addition that runs a master suite upstairs. The porch is also new, as is a glider in the living room serving a 19th-century addition that now houses the family room. Along with new baths, the refigured second floor gained better flow.



scale
1/8"=1'



refreshed front parlor
Soft colors and textures bring out the warm wood tones of the vintage furniture and original pine flooring.

repaired, and the new address was wiggled into place. To create a subtle dividing line between the oldest part of the house and a portion believed to date to the mid-1800s, DeGraw added a plaque in the front facade. "We tried to respect the choice," he says.

The wrap-around porch did depict this earth. It was making the house dark, and Lynn and DeGraw figured that, as only 100 or so years old, it was relatively new and not right for what was originally a corner-hill Colonial.

And so began a back-and-forth effort to reflect what felt right for the house and for its newest owners, from a smaller, more authentically appropriate porch cut front to a splendid copper-roofed mudroom bumpout on the side.

In terms of finishes, the right-knit team found itself walking a wavy line between all new and re-usable. Take the kitchen, which occupies the addition's first floor. With its gleaming range, its cooling subway tile, and nearly 650 square feet, it's hardly *Calico di-quaint*. At the same time, it has a fireplace, along with a traditional low-coking, country-style tin pull, and wide floor-

boards with visible squares and holes. Local carpenters built the cabinets and painted them on-site, the old-fashioned way, so "it didn't look like a cardboard box opened up and cabinets came out," as DeGraw puts it.

That said, he was startled when Lynn, thinking like a farmer with no thought of fixed upper cabinets, announced she was going to build up two rows of base cabinets with a unique corner hatch.

DeGraw balked. So did Barnowski—and his normally can-do carpenter, Ray Knapp. "Noted as wanted it," declares Mitch.

Lynn simply ignored them all and personally assisted in the hatch's installation. "I'm very happy with it," she says. And guess what? None, so is everyone else.

Together Lynn and DeGraw decided the new porches didn't look quite right and jangled in the car to tour the area before knocking on a stranger's door, taking measurements of her entry porch, and returning home to have crew members yank off, cut down, and reattach the porch they'd purchased. Lynn did another 17 runs after driving around the countryside for five days, her mission



nothing master bath
TOP: The vintage-style tub turns their pet-friendly room. ABOVE: Curves and mirrors: a freestanding table and soap dish reflects the mix of period style and contemporary function.



brighter bedroom
The new dormer master suite brings in light through windows matched to existing double-hung.

in tow, identifying the right type of stone for the new fireplace. When it was halfway up, the and DeGraw realized it looked... wrong, and they persuaded the crew master to take it down and switch to brick. "I like to say architecture is an awful lot like cooking," DeGraw says. "You start with a recipe but you tweak it."

Nearly two years of this—never mind living in a construction site to which Mitch would return after exhausting sites-in locations—might try the sex that had been friends. But the team remains tight. "Today even Barnowski sees the monster in preserving what's there, when you can. "With every measure, there are crafts and craftsmen that are lost, that you're really not going to see again," he says. "So it's good that there are people who place a value on history and the uniqueness of a house and are willing to do what it takes to keep that alive."

As for Mitch, he confesses that he still has days when he wonders if they could have saved money by building a more energy-efficient house from scratch. "But the feel of the house," he says, referring to the aura of a long life, will last. "That's what I feel good about." ■

rustic and refined
Two ancient, renovated, farmhouse details.


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A resourceful couple with a "more is more" philosophy and a talent for thrift curves a hardscrabble lot into a series of exuberantly romantic, roisterous



MAY 2013 THORNTON/ROBERTS ET AL. 77

High "Eden" roses climb the cast-iron trellis that frames a back garden of four centuries old. In central Britain, roses, hedges, with sword-shaped foliage surrounding a central urn, and a brick-paved path (left) create a garden of roses in the

High "Eden" roses climb the cast-iron trellis that frames a back garden of four centuries old. In central (Paris, Italy's) hedger, with sword-shaped foliage surrounding a central one, and a long, airy plant (Gleditsia argentea) of each corner.

High "Eden" roses climb the cast-iron trellis that frames a back garden of four centuries old. In central (Paris, Italy's) hedger, with sword-shaped foliage surrounding a central one, and a long, airy plant (Gleditsia argentea) of each corner.



High "Eden" roses climb the cast-iron trellis that frames a back garden of four centuries old. In central Britain, roses, hedges, with sword-shaped foliage surrounding a central urn, and a hot-pink plant (Glaucium angustifolium) at each corner

the
PLAN

The Christensen made the most of their wedge-shaped quarter-acre lot with pocket gardens and seating areas placed throughout. The steep slope in back puts the whole hillside landscape on display when viewed from the flat lawn below.

1. Just one day!

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the
PLAN

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from neighbors eating yards and driveways, and some from the "free" section in a local newspaper. Brigitte bought pots, too, a few at a rare antique center, driving there home in her car. To build up the soil, she used lawn clippings, loaded in composted horse manure and hay, and took advantage of free mulch available from their homeowners' association.

The Christensons also saved money by starting many plants from seed and buying others used, rarely in containers larger than 1 gallon. Brigitte spread the word that she was interested in swapping plants, too. Soon, friends who'd divided perennials were calling to share with her. She signed up for online gardening groups—discussions.com is a favorite—and began swapping plants with people she never met. A Northern California woman mailed her banyan trees, one of the noble plants the Christensons enjoy most.

Another specialty, the "Idiot" rose, grows in an iron pergola bought at a thrift store for \$300. Some of the supports were rusted out, so Brigitte and Charles wired on the legs of an inexpensive canvas shade structure, creating the look of a pergola that would sell for \$1,500 to \$3,000. Brigitte also hired home a few metal arbors she found at a Big Lots discount store for \$15 each. "I painted them black, added rebar stakes, and tied wire around them," she says. "When they're covered with vines, you can't tell."

Outfitting the garden with art pieces on a budget was easy. Brigitte simply spread the word among family and friends about what she wanted for gifts. On her 50th birthday, she was walking through a nursery with her mother



The newly planted vegetable garden is nestled into the hillside with a Hosta screen that towers over it and Italian cypresses planted like sentinels at the back (B). Homeowner Charles Christensen built the fence to mimic another length. His wife had seen it in a magazine. Brigitte's father made the nearby iron trellis, as well as the round arched arbors (D). This hub is a favorite for easy sharing: clippings get recycled to fertilize the roses.



Flower-sharing: The Christensons use the dining area as their power patio, just steps from the kitchen and overlooking the gardens (K). The lawn is just inconspicuously behind the house; this area dominates. The couple kept lawn in search of that area for stretching out on lounge chairs. Areas of garden vegetables, such as cauliflower, are not shared. Borders the dining area (L).



when they spotted a copy of Michelangelo's David. He now stands outside Brigitte's office window, with a modern-looking granite base standing in her big leaves.

But perhaps the biggest money-saving strategy in the garden was having handy folks on the family. Charles took a head-on view for the vegetable garden that someone Brigitte spotted in an article about a Victorian garden. The couple's grown son, Kaito, paints the fence, and college student daughter Jade helps care for the flowers. Brigitte's late father designed and built several arched-iron trellises in the garden, including the rubber fence and a rope post on which Brigitte stores cucumbers, lemons, and other items.

Tending her patch of earth has led Brigitte to lose weight, as well. After a career in the hotel industry, she decided to go back to school to become a professional garden designer. "It's fun to maintain something, especially when there's nothing there to start," she says. "And it's really fun if the homeowners are generous."

But on her own turf, Brigitte doesn't have to guess at how much follow-up care the plants she puts in will actually receive. "Here, gardening brings me peace and passion, as well as exercise. And it's the best psychiatric cure!" ■

11 Ways TO GIVE YOUR HOME A PERSONAL STAMP

Big design ideas have their place, but often it's the small touches that make a home feel extra special. Consider the 11 creative upgrades we've gathered here, from mix-matched transom windows to wainscot with a unique diamond motif. Inspired by everything from the sublime to the mundane—picture a pile of leftover fiberboard—they are bound to inspire a tweak or two at your own place.

By Deborah Baldwin



MISMATCHED TRANSOMS

THE INSPIRATION: Period
homes nearby

THE PROJECT Designer Jane Schwartz and her husband, Karl, own a 1900s house in Bay Harbor, New York, and wanted their new sunroom addition to blend into the neighborhood. So Jane tucked patterned transoms under adjacent panes—one with a Colonial style sunburst, the other with Tudor style diamonds—and matched the doors and windows below them to existing windows. “We’re here day and night,” Jane says, “and the windows totally make the room.”

THE FINISH A blend of tradition that takes full advantage of garden views

CRAFTSMAN-STYLE DIVIDER

THE INSPIRATION A large railing detail again!

THE PROJECT After removing most of a wall in the Seattle bungalow, designer Ken Clements wanted to maintain an open feeling while setting off a breakfast room on the other.

The answer was right on the wall: an original railing on the second floor. "We like to use a decorative element that plays off what is already there," Clements says of her design build team. They used the railing as a guide to template for their carpenter. "It was pretty easy," she says. "He drilled four holes—the center of the diamond—then hand-cut the spacing with a scroll saw."

THE PRICING Concrete spacers that allow a sideboard to pivot and tilt of light.



2

BRANCH TOWEL BAR

THE INSPIRATION The leggy wallpaper

THE PROJECT After homeowner Jane Ackerman finished the powder room in her Norwich, Vermont, house with tree-themed wallpaper and a secondhand sink, her husband, Renda Kent, took salvaging a step further by scooping up old branches, cutting them down with a Japanese pull saw, sanding the edges, and finishing with a power sander and a matching handle for the plungers. "The look is to find the right branch," he says. "It's a good piece of wood, that's the only way."

THE PRICING A cottage look that fits truly here.



3



4

WALLPAPERED BACKSPLASH

THE INSPIRATION Artful graphic design

THE PROJECT "We wanted colors, simple backsplash, but it was also unique," says contractor Jeff Kuryluk, who redid his Fairfield, Connecticut, kitchen with help from his wife, Jennifer. They used glass-covered wallpaper, making a template from scraps of luan plywood for the glass and then installing it with silicone caulk.

THE PRICING Pattern, color, and texture—minus the great stains.



5

PAINTED STAIR RUNNER

THE INSPIRATION High-maintenance rug

THE PROJECT Homeowner Lynn Douglas has a love of high-end, current-buffery interior design. So she finished the stairs that lead down to the master's suite in her Roseville, Michigan, home with a rug to sweep paint. After putting down a wood-colored base coat, she made a 2-foot-wide runner edge with bright red stripes. Tools included a small roller and level and painter's tape in two widths. "I put down workable 2-foot lengths as I went along," she says. "Then I poured on the red to get it a fuzzy carpet look."

THE PRICING A rug that cleans up with vacuuming and broom.



6 ARCHED SINK WINDOW

THE INSPIRATION *English cottages*

THE PROJECT This perfectly arched casement window held its own, says designer Jane Schwartz, who craved more light, had a better view of her garden from the kitchen. To reinforce its old-world flavor, she kept the white stain of upper cabinets and finished the sink with a porcelain lever-handle bridge faucet.

THE PAYOFF A downstairs cleanup zone with updates style

PHOTO: JAMES WHITE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; PHOTO: STEVE GRANITZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



7 STAINED-GLASS "SKYLIGHT"

THE INSPIRATION *Craftsman era decor* or the past

THE PROJECT The owners of this one-story house in West Lake Hills, Texas, asked architect to Stewart Davis and Marsha Todd to incorporate Craftsman-style details and modernize into their new master suite. To bring light and character to a windowless existing area with a drop ceiling, the team designed a 4-foot-high light box that takes Tiffany-style lamps you never lived. Built with a forged stained-glass panel by California glassmaker Jeff Baker, the box rises into the attic and is lit by a simple LED bulb. "You need the bulb to be back far enough to not have a hot spot," says Topfman. "Distance also allows the light to fill the space and evenly illuminate what amounts to an art object."

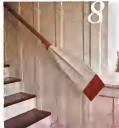
THE PAYOFF Form function and artwork, together at last

8 OAR STAIR RAIL

THE INSPIRATION *A love of old things and a lot*

THE PROJECT White paint is mixed under their newly acquired bungalow in Newport Beach, California. Sue and Burr McKean found a cache of boat supplies, including an oar so old that it had a leather binding. Burr painted the black mahogany and white and hired carpenter to join the oar along a set of steep stairs. The project prompted other security improvements around the house. Oars now also adorn a guest-room ceiling.

THE PAYOFF A piece of history you'll be hold onto



DIY/DO-IT-YOURSELF

BUILT-UP CABINET TRIM

THE INSPIRATION: Vintage
drawers and woodwork

THE PROJECT: After gutting
her kitchen and opening it
to the dining room, designer
Jane Schwartz wanted
cabinets with traditional
woodworking details. She
designed cabinets with fluted
columns, bull's-eye trim,
panel molding—and drawers
only. Along with mimicking
freestanding dressers, "This
inspired for easy pull-out
drawers," she points out.

THE PAYOFF: A vintage look
plus full-extension hardware



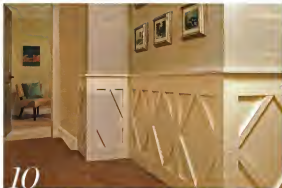
9

DIAMOND WAINSCOT

THE INSPIRATION: Lower-MDF acrylics

THE PROJECT: Determined DYer Ray Shere
glazed through a redwood family's house
in Merrick, Georgia, only to be stymied
by a hall where he had ripped out wainscot
exposing a wall wrapped around a cast-
concrete stove. Then he eyes below a pile of
leftover 1-inch-medium-density fiberboard
and a diamond wainscot spring to mind.
"I went upstairs with a roller saw and cut
the MDF out on the wall, and it started taking
on its own little shape," he says.

THE PAYOFF: An elegant solution with
bonus points for ingenuity



10

11

TWO-TONE PANELING

THE INSPIRATION: New
England homes

THE PROJECT: Working with
the quarrying family
at a home in Western
Massachusetts, architect
Chris Adams built a two-
part room with locally
harvested eastern white
pine, painted by a nearby
mill that distressed, stained,
and painted the wood in
two shades of green. "The
harvested pine looks like
water lily," and the wainscot
incorporates a local detail
from "Colonial houses,"
he says. Doors and posts
made from salvaged
beams to frame the
wainscot, adding to the
layered look.

THE PAYOFF: The beauty
of old buildings with
a sense of craftsmanship



PHOTO: JANE SCHWARTZ; PHOTO: CHRIS ADAMS; PHOTO: JANE SCHWARTZ; PHOTO: JANE SCHWARTZ; PHOTO: JANE SCHWARTZ

ALL ABOUT

Stone veneer

It used to be hard—rock hard—to add authentic-looking stone to your home. Not any more. Thanks to lightweight veneers, it gets easier by the day to dress up a room or the whole darn house. Here's all you need to know **By John Micelli**

Mother Nature has been producing granite and river rock for millions of years, of course. And mankind has been experimenting with stone veneers since the Romans built the Colosseum. If you're not an emperor, though, adding such geological wonders to your home's decor has always been a challenge. It once cost a small fortune to truck a few tons of rock to your front door. Installing it was labor-intensive. And, well, the DOE-friendly faux stone just didn't measure up to the real thing.

That's all changing, however. Natural stone can now be carved into thin slices that are light enough to transport almost anywhere. And cast, or faux, stone has received a major infusion of authenticity. Today, it's made from a concrete mixture that features a dozen or more pigments seamlessly blended together to create products from the contours of real stones. And by releasing those molds during the manufacturing process, the final product is surfaced with color that runs throughout.

As a result, stone veneers are rapidly making their way into virtually every room in the house, in an ever-widening range of styles. You'll find them popping up on sofas, too. From backyard benches to bathroom walls, rustic fireplaces to stylish dining rooms, lightweight veneers are remarkably versatile. Just take a look. You're bound to find something that suits your taste.

Beneath the stone

To protect your home from water damage—inside and out—a veneer installation requires a few layers of prep work.

waterfall felt or grade D building paper
Acts as primary barrier against water and vapor

self-healing polyurethane
fills gaps, seals the mortar

mortar
Acrylics seal joints, support the stone

veneer setting bed
Serves the stone with a scratch coat

primer
Locks the felt into stone and helps seal joints



stone veneer applied in a thick, uniform layer. If the felt, where it thickens, acts as a barrier, it's a self-healing polyurethane that can be applied in a thick layer. To prevent cracking, the stone veneer should be applied in a thick layer. To prevent cracking, the stone veneer should be applied in a thick layer.

VITALS

What's it made of?
Mother Nature claims I made it. In stone is a mixture of sand and cement, lightweight aggregate (such as perlite) and air-entraining agents. It's a mold.
What's it cost?
Real stone can range from \$7 to \$15 per square foot. Cast stone will cost you \$1.25 to \$1.50. Expect to pay about \$40 or more per square foot for a professional installation.



DIY or hire a pro?
If you've had the experience of most projects, installing veneer on the exterior of a house is best left to a professional expert.

How much does it cost?
A light-colored stone veneer is often enough. It may be more expensive than a darker stone veneer. To prevent cracking, the stone veneer should be applied in a thick layer. To prevent cracking, the stone veneer should be applied in a thick layer.



Man-made versus the real thing

At first glance, it's not easy to spot the copious use in the pictures above. (Hint: Look at the one on top.) But there are a few key differences between cast stone and its natural-born relative. Artificial stone is less expensive, significantly lighter, and quicker to install, but one good bump can reveal its weakness and spoil the facade. To be safe, keep a few extra pieces of veneer handy in the basement. Natural stone is simply that—rock that has been cut into a veneer 1½ to 2½ inches thick and has all the shading, color, and flaws that come with eons of geologic processes. It's more durable and more versatile, but it also costs more to purchase and takes longer to install. Show us. Boston Mixed Ashlar (top), \$20 per square foot; stoneyard.com. Santa Cruz Coastal Lodge (bottom), \$6–\$8 per square foot; eldoradostone.com

Take your pick

Whether you're hoping to create the look of a French country villa or the rugged canyons of Arizona, you don't have to go far to find what you need. These days, veneer styles match stone from all over the world.

Natural

1> classic

It's the classic European wall of stone. This quarried, full-size veneer comes in traditional shapes and sizes. Heartland MasterCut, \$6.80 per sq. ft.; heartlandcut.com

2> cobble

The process works in the multi-colored full-size stone allow for lots of improvisation throughout the installation process. Chestnut Grove MasterCut, \$12 per sq. ft.; eldorado.com

3> stacked

Twice made for a snug fit, this ledgerstone is a cinch to layer. It's so easy to tile the stacked walls and the verticals in color, you'll barely notice the joints. Bristol Drystack, \$8–\$9 per sq. ft.; east.com

4> mosaic

Only 1 inch thick, this veneer can be cut and shaped to create a solid dry stacked pattern. Coastal Tan Mosaic, \$14 per sq. ft.; stoneyard.com

5> earthy

Traces of moss and lichen add to the natural beauty of these well-weathered stones. Natural Aspen, \$11–\$12 per sq. ft.; sand.com

6> mineral-rich

The smooth surface complements with accents of gold and silver and more organic give this stone a rustic charm. Coastal Tan Mosaic, \$14 per sq. ft.; stoneyard.com

7> etched

The green and white etched mineral on full-size of character to these bricks of blue-gray stone. Greenish Gray Ledgerstone, \$18 per sq. ft.; stoneyard.com



Cast

8> rounded

The warm edges and subtle color variations of this stone give it an inviting texture. Almost makes you want to run your hands along the wall. Nottingham Turned Ledger, \$18.90–\$25.90 per sq. ft.; eldorado.com

9> rugged

The roughly shaped, rough-faced stones are infused with rich vibrant colors of clay, a sandy cliff. Country Rubble, \$1–\$7 per sq. ft.; eldorado.com

10> stone rock

These speckled stones are so realistic, you can almost hear the rocking motion that would have polished them—if they were, indeed, real. Sierra Granite River Rock, \$3.50–\$5.50 per sq. ft.; eldorado.com

11> ashlar

Made for quick and easy DIY, these straight veneers come in a package of 10 pieces, each 18 square feet in size. Ashlar can be finished with a halos. No great testimony. Ashlar Mountain Ashlar, \$10 per sq. ft.; eldorado.com

12> chiseled

There's a little more to the chiseled profile. This cast stone is a rock-solid imitation of the real thing. Baccarat Country Ledgerstone, \$6–\$8 per sq. ft.; eldorado.com

13> rough-cut

The golden glow and angular edges of this stone give it unique depth, adding art's dimension to your project. Sunburst. Boulder Rock, \$1–\$7 per sq. ft.; eldorado.com

14> impressionistic

The dynamic colors quickly catch the eye, but the irregularities in these also lend a sense of realism. Grand Gray Stackstone, \$6–\$8 per sq. ft.; stoneyard.com

Choose your grout style

Besides sealing out moisture and insects, grout helps set the tone for a project. It all depends on how much, if any, you use. Consider these options:



Standard. The stones are placed roughly a finger's width apart, leaving space for the grout to be applied between them. When the grout begins to dry, the joint is "raked" to create a concave look with consistent depth. Shown: Bayton Blend Mosaic. \$14 per sq. ft.; stoneyard.com



Overgrout. For a more rustic look, the grout is piped until it inches above the face of the stone. All joints are wider and less uniform. Shown: Aspen Fieldstone. \$8–\$12 per sq. ft.; rml.com



Dry-stack joint. Layering the veneer like puzzle pieces eliminates the need for grout. Keep in mind, though, that this also takes away a line of defense against the elements. Shown: Virginia Ledgestone. \$9–\$10 per sq. ft.; navi.com



HOW TO PICK THE RIGHT MORTAR

Unless you're going for a modern, it's a wise bet to choose a mortar with a reputation for supporting its purpose. In general, type N mortar is the sticker-babe of grout: It gives you the flexibility to pick and adjust the water, but various additives can influence the setting time, the water resistance, and the bond strength between the mortar, the stone, and the substrate. While considering the options, inquire about color options, too. Many suppliers offer pigments that help you shade the mix to match the stone.



Cost calculator

Veneer comes in corner pieces and flat pieces. The corner pieces are sold by the linear foot, the flat ones by the square foot. Using the dimensions of the project space, figure out how much of each stone you'll need. Be sure to subtract the areas filled by doors, windows, fireplaces, etc.

$$\left(\left(\frac{\text{LINEAR FOOTAGE OF CORNER STONE}}{\text{CORNER STONE}} \right) + \left(\frac{\text{25% OF LINEAR FOOTAGE}}{\text{CORNER STONE}} \right) \times \left(\frac{\text{PRICE PER LINEAR FOOT}}{\text{CORNER STONE}} \right) \right) + \left(\left(\frac{\text{SQUARE FOOTAGE OF FLAT STONE}}{\text{FLAT STONE}} \right) + \left(\frac{\text{25% OF SQUARE FOOTAGE}}{\text{FLAT STONE}} \right) \times \left(\frac{\text{PRICE PER SQUARE FOOT}}{\text{FLAT STONE}} \right) \right) = \text{COST}$$

Project gallery

Yes, it's true that nothing warms a house like a stone fireplace, but why stop there? Here are a few ideas to kindle your imagination.

1. the Zen look

To mix it all up another way to give your bathroom the spa treatment: The stone is brought in like a piece of art. Shown: French Country. Vibe: \$3.50–\$5.50 per sq. ft.; yorstoned.com

2. the grand entrance

With that gold Southwestern veneer, even make your humble home look more like a castle. A large stone chimney and porch stone walls are sure to draw a dining room. Similar to shown: Backs County Country. Edge: \$5–\$7 per sq. ft.; bonfire.com

3. the sweet spot

A well-placed corner of stone with a window or fireplace brings the great outdoors into your living space. Similar to shown: Rocky Mountain Ledgestone. \$3.50–\$5.50 per sq. ft.; corralcove.com

4. picture this

If the artwork is a bit bold enough to command the spotlight, let the wall do the talking. Shown: Mountain Standard Stone. \$5–\$5 per sq. ft.; placeadventure.com

5. high drama

Is a space that's nondescript or it's defined, especially one with high ceilings, a wall of stone gives a room welcome focal-point. Shown to shown: Pine Lodge Black Forest. \$3.50–\$5.50 per sq. ft.; corralcove.com

how-to help

For more installation advice, go to beststone.com/home



INSTALLATION TIPS FOR DIYERS

- > **BEFORE YOU BEGIN,** check with a building inspector about local code requirements.
- > **PRIOR TO INSTALLING THE STONE,** map out a design on the ground. Be sure to choose veneer from different boxes to vary the shapes and colors.
- > **INSTALL THE CORNER PIECES FIRST,** then work your way down from the top. This will prevent mortar from staining the stones below.
- > **IF YOU DISCOVER A MORTAR CRACK** on one of the stones, wait for it to dry before breaking it off with a chisel. Better to remove the stone than stain the stone.
- > **WHEN POSSIBLE, HIDE EDGES** that you'll naturally be pointing them up, down, above or below eye level. ■



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ask this old house

inside

GARDEN PLANS

VENT-HOOD SAFETY

DRIVEWAY UPGRADE

MORE



Q Should I be doing anything to maintain my garden tools?

—KODENETION, SILVERDALE, MD

67
tips, tricks, and
answers to
your home
improvement
questions

A The big enemy of metal gardening implements, like the shovels over at left, is rust. So after each use, wash off any dirt with clean water, dry the metal, then spray it with WD-40. There's even a free special care with 3-in-1 made of galvanized metal. Use this old watering can. It won't rust, and even if you're painting garden beds, the shovels just stay off.

—BOB DE COOK,
HOLLYLANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY M. SCHWARTZ

PHOTOGRAPH BY
JEFFREY M. SCHWARTZ

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Our cast of veteran experts

TOMMY LA
General ContractorNORM ABRAM
Master CarpenterRICHARD TRETHEWEY
Plumbing and Heating ExpertROGER COOK
Landscaping ContractorKEVIN G. CONNER
Tool

After living for 24 years in the shade, I have moved to a home where—finally!—I can grow sun-loving flowers. Any recommendation about how to start?

—DEBRA MOUNCE, BOWLING GREEN, OHIO



Roger Cook's flower garden strategy: Stock up on perennials and fill in any gaps with annuals.

Roger Cook replies: Yes, but I'd recommend going with perennials because you don't have to replace them every year. But before you rush out to the nursery, take time to make a plan so that you get the most for your money.

First, visit the nurseries in your area to get familiar with the perennials that are adapted to your planting area. Make a list of the ones you like. Note when each one blooms, what color the flowers are, and how tall and wide the plant will be when it's mature. That list will probably have more plants than your garden or your budget can accommodate. To pace it down, choose specimens that fit in a color scheme—a few colors, not a riot of hues—and then select for blooming time. Ideally, as soon as one plant drops its petals, others have buds ready to pop. That ensures that you'll have blooms to enjoy all season long.

Next comes placement. The rules of thumb here are to put the low-growing species near the edges and the taller ones toward the back, and to plant multiples of the same type. That will give your garden a more pleasing and cohesive look than if you plant just one specimen of each.

The downside of sunny gardens

is that the sun dries them out fast, so use a mulch or two in a compost to improve the soil's ability to hold water, add sand if your soil has lots of clay. A 3-inch covering of mulch will also reduce evaporation and discourage weeds. Get a soil test, too, from your local cooperative extension service. The test will tell you whether the soil needs amendments and, if so, how much.

Once you have a plan and a properly prepared bed, head back to the nursery and start picking out your plants. You don't have to fill the entire bed right away; you'll need space for the ones that you will start digging in there to five years. Besides, half the fun of gardening is discovering and adding new plants that fit into your overall scheme. Just pick up some annuals to fill in the gaps between your new perennials. They'll flower steadily until the frost.

VENT-WOOD ADVICE

I'm installing a vent hood over my kitchen island. Do I use flexible ducting or the sheet-metal kind?

—BENJAMIN W.2 PLANO, TEXAS

Richard Trethewey replies: Flex duct would be easier to work with, but you can't use it in this application. According to the 2012 International Residential Code (IRC), exhaust systems for range hoods must have smooth interiors and be made of galvanized steel, stainless steel, or copper. The duct joints have to be wrapped in foil tape or duct mastic—not plain old duct tape—to make the run airtight. And the exhaust vent must have a damper to block outside air from coming in.

The code also addresses another issue: If your vent hood removes air at a rate of more than 400 cubic

WHAT IS IT?



A-1 Staplehook for rubber seal

B-1 Magnetic hold-down for table saw

C-1 Corner clamp

D-1 Guide for scoring tile

FOR THE ANSWERS, SEE PAGE 104



Crack along the bottom of this window (INSET) trapped water against the wood trim and rotted the rail that completely decayed it.



Q ROTTEN WINDOW TRIM
When the windows in my 1863 house were replaced 25 years ago, the old wood trim was sagged shape. Now it's rotting. Why?

—KELLY RUSSELL, COLUMBIA, OHIO

Norm Abram replies: Judging by your photos (above), a number of factors could be causing the rot. For one thing, the trim is touching the brick and stone, which hold moisture like a sponge. And the storm window doesn't appear to have any weep holes to drain away condensation.

But I suspect the chief culprit is the caulk along the bottom of the windows. It's blocking the escape of any water that goes behind the trim, a sure recipe for rot. If that caulk was added when the new windows were installed, it could explain why the trim decayed so quickly.

Clearly, any rotten trim needs to be replaced or repaired, but first ask a contractor to determine whether the windows can be used. If not, you'll have to replace them, too.

Continued on page 104

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QUESTION
OF THE
MONTH

Q We'd like to have a gravel driveway, but we also need to be able to plow it in the winter. Is that possible?

—ROLAND BOUCHER, WESTON MASS.

Roger Cook replies: Sure, if you use a paving technique called chip sealing. Basically, it's just a layer of washed stone embedded in a tar-like substance you put over asphalt. (It won't work on concrete.) But when the paving work is finished, usually in a couple of hours, you have what looks like

an aggregate, all-gravel driveway without gravel's maintenance headaches. There's no raking snow out of the yard or adding new ones every year. And when it snows, the surface can be cleared with care using a plow or a snowblower, just like regular pavement.

That job must be done in dry weather—after the ground gets above 50 degrees F and before the leaves fall—by a paving pro with experience handling the hot tar, heavy machinery, and tons of stone that chip sealing requires. Here's what to expect when a crew shows up at your house.

Cost: \$12 per square yard
Time: 2 hours
Difficulty: Not a DIY project! Requires paving crew of eight, heavy machinery and specialized equipment for heating and applying bitumen

Roger Cook
works at
Home Depot
in a nearby
chip-sealing
driveway

ask **oldhouse**

STEP-BY-STEP Chip seal a driveway

1. Apply the bitumen

Before the crew arrives, remove any weeds or moss and sweep the driveway clean with a broom. Hot tar can't stick to wet pavement, so the paving contractor will schedule the work for a dry day. The crew starts the process by using a slotting wheel to apply an even 1/4-inch coat of MC8000 bitumen heated to 180 degrees F.



3. Spread the stone

Following right behind the wheel barrows, crew members with wooden flats spread the stone over the tar, making an even layer about 1 1/2 inches thick. This also must be done quickly before the tar cools. Stones that fall outside the driveway's edge should be rolled or swept back.

2. Dump the stone

As soon as the bitumen is down, the wheelbarrow crew hauls dry stone from a dump truck and unloads it onto the flat bar. The material used for this project—fast positions—is a popular choice. Other colors and types, including crushed stone, can also be used, as long as the stone is washed and screened to 1/4-inch less.



4. Roll the surface

Once the stones are spread, a multi-ton pneumatic roller machine is driven back and forth over the stones to press them firmly into the bitumen. (A pavement roller with a steel wheel would crush the stones.) When the rolling is done, the driveway is nearly finished.

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WHAT IS IT?



D CORNER CLAMP

The *Clamp* grips boards up to 1/2 inch thick and holds them perfectly square to each other, speeding the assembly of cabinets and beadboards. \$37 per pair. www.pexsupply.com

PVC BEADBOARD

We'd like to install a backdrop of tongue-and-groove cellular-PVC beadboard over water-resistant drywall. How should we go about it?

—TRACY GIBBS, WESTWOOD BARS

Tom Silva replies: As a backdrop, cellular PVC is better than wood because it isn't affected by moisture and doesn't need a finish or any of the maintenance that a finish requires. But PVC is sensitive to heat, so I'd avoid using this material near a stove or fireplace, because it might melt.

Installing beadboard on drywall shouldn't be a problem, as long as you leave a small gap, about 1/8 inch, between the countertop and the drywall's bottom edge. Seal that gap with caulk to prevent water from wicking up into the drywall. Stick the beadboard in place with construction adhesive. Check the first plank with a level to make sure it's correct, then tack it down with brads toward the middle.

as range. Glue and nail each successive plank the same way, checking for vertical every few pieces to make sure they stay properly aligned.

Leave a gap of 1/8 inch or so at the end of the run to allow for expansion in the PVC boards. Cover that gap with trim, and your backdrop will look great.

GROW GRASS UNDER A TREE

No grass will grow under our large, dense elm tree. Is there any way to reclaim this muddy patch and turn it into a lawn?

—SPYLA LUNDGREN, BENSenville, IL

Roger Cook replies: There's no way grass can compete with a tree's roots or shade as it shades. To grow grass, you'll have to remove the tree. But think twice: Taking out a big tree and converting the area to lawn is a fairly expensive job. And if the tree shades your house or garage, it's actually reducing your cooling costs.

If you decide to keep the tree, you can at least eliminate the mud by planting tough, shade-tolerant groundcover among the tree roots. Good candidates include ferns, pachysandra, and helleborus.

To help these plants become established, make sure they get enough water during their first season. Then, next spring, sink a sharp, square-edged garden spade at deep as you can all the way around each plant. Doing this will sever the small tree roots that would otherwise choke out the new specimens before they have a chance to establish themselves.

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TV Spotlight

Latest Project Wraps



For the second half of the 2012-2013 season, *This Old House* TV traveled south to the rolling hills and swamps of Louisiana. Mastercrafters will turn a remote 1930s cottage into an elegant in-law quarters designed for aging in place. Tune in to catch all-new episodes airing now on thisoldhouse.com/watchTOH.



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Norm's tricks of the trade

Q

How do you get plastic screw anchors out of drywall? I tried pulling them out with needle-nose pliers, but they're not budging.

—STEVEN WILSON, BEND, OREGON

A Here's an easy way to pull anchors out—and to push them in. The choice is up to you. Either way, just speckle the hole that's left behind.



1. To pull out an anchor, drive a screw a turn or two into it, but no more. If the screw goes in too far, you'll spread the anchor's legs, making removal more difficult and possibly damaging the drywall. Now grip the screwhead with a pair of pliers and yank screw and anchor straight out.



2. To push an anchor in, drill a hole with a twist bit that's just a little smaller than the anchor's width. When you sever the collar, remove the bit, and use a small screwdriver to push the rest of the anchor through the drywall into the wall cavity.

We'd like to remove some old beadboard and reinstall it in a new addition. How can we do this without destroying it?

—ANDY PERCE, LOSPORT, LA.

A Beadboard is installed the wood flooring. Most strips are held in place with finish-nail heads that are driven at an angle—torqued—through the tongue (strips in the corners are nailed through the face.) If you just pried them up, you could seriously damage them. Here's a better way.



1. Get a new 16-inch-wide—it's less likely to slip than an old one. Then put on safety glasses. Start with the face-nailed strips at the corners, and use the nailset and hammer to drive the nails through so that you don't split the wood. Pry off each strip with an nail bar. One of these strips will expose the tongue of the adjacent strip.



2. On the strip with the exposed tongue, knock each nailhead parting through, as in Step 1. Pry off the strip drive the nails in, then do the same to the next tongue, and the next, until the strips have been removed. Note: If the old boards need to split as you'll install them, drill a pilot hole for each nail. Make the hole a hair smaller than the nail's shank.



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The history: This charming, 1850s cottage was originally home to local preservationist William Kirtage and his wife Alice. The couple raised three children here, back when Social Circle was an important railway hub. The house narrowly escaped destruction in 1864 during General Sherman's March to the Sea, which left a number of nearby buildings burned to the ground. After 70 years in the family, it became home to Calista Dupree, a local preservationist who restored over 100 historic properties in the area. After Dupree died, in 2005, a local Baptist church bought the property and now plans to develop the lot.

Why save it? The savvy 1,500-square-foot Greek Revival cottage boasts some floor-to-ceiling windows and four fireplaces. The exterior retains the original porch columns and trunk door to the main and side wings. **What it needs:** The three-bedroom two-bath house is structurally sound but requires new plumbing, heating and electrical systems. The church and the local historical society are each willing to contribute \$13,000 toward the cost of moving the house within Social Circle, a town of 4,262 that is 45 miles east of Atlanta. Settled on a new site, with updates to the systems and some TLC, the home will be ready for many more years of family living. —MELA KORN



1. The 1850s cottage, which has the pleasing symmetry typical of Greek Revival, needs a new home. Let's see how the save starts at about \$25,000.
2. The original front door and shutters.
3. A floor-to-ceiling window looking onto the porch. 4. French doors separate the living room and central hallway.
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