

This Old House

37
gorgeous,
grow-anywhere
container
plants

42 EASY UPGRADE IDEAS

5 PORCHES, 6 PATIOS, 5 DECKS,
4 BACKYARD MAKEOVERS,
AND MORE

JUNE 2014 | THISOLDHOUSE.COM

This Old House

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gorgeous,
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container
plants

42 EASY UPGRADE IDEAS

5 PORCHES, 6 PATIOS, 5 DECKS,
4 BACKYARD MAKEOVERS,
AND MORE



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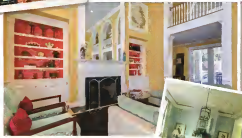
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THE OLD HOUSE GARDEN
PHOTOGRAPHY: JEFFREY M. SMITH
JUNE 2014

Easy upgrades

idea file

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Decor: Photographed by MICHELLE J. LEE
Styling by KATHALYN ROYCE



66
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RENOVATIONS



86
UNCOMMON
CONTAINER
GARDENS



32
BEFORE
+ AFTER
KITCHEN

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ask this old house

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Letter

FROM THIS OLD HOUSE

My advice? Listen up

Last month TCHH did it for the moms, running a story on the DIY lessons many of you learned from those who selflessly labored to birth you, tenderly made your boo-boo better with a kiss, and lovingly taught you how to really hear down and croak the ever-braggy daylights out of a selfish wench.

Given the response to that story, it seemed only fair to let dads have a turn. So for this week I asked articles editor Debby Baldwin to get a bunch of TCHH fathers, the men who work on our television shows and magazine and website, to tell us what advice they'd give to their children. And as the tided to make their thoughts into the story you'll find on page 82, I began to wonder what I'd say to Luca, my own son, who just turned 3.

What do you say when there's so much to know? How do you decide what's important? What should I tell you, my little man?

Truth be told, I'm not sure just yet, buddy, but you already seem to have the hands-on impulse, and that's been the case since you could first run around on your own.

When you were maybe a month or so shy of 2, I left you standing in the open doorway of the house and asked you to wait there for me while I walked to the car to get my bag in the back of the car. We were going to Nana and Poppy's to do a few little handyman things. It only took me a minute to make room for my stuff, but in that time you had slipped back inside on tiny bowed legs and returned to the same spot. When I looked up, there you were, all 29 inches and 23 pounds of you, holding your little blue teddy bear in its plastic sawed and laminated and screwed rivets, just waiting to help you dad.

One day later on, while I carried you the dew blocks to your preschool, we heard the whine of a saw from inside one of the houses we passed. You said, in your still-learning-to-talk way, "Daddy, what dat noise?" I explained that someone was sawing lumber, and then you asked, "A boy and his daddy working mybe?"

And there's now, when we get up on Saturdays at what you call "early good morning," which for me usually isn't so good, because your "early" means well before dawn. With us two at the kitchen table, me with my coffee and you with your apple juice, you knowing the who's school because Mom's still sleeping, you ask, "Is there a project today, Daddy?"

These men, Luca, well, it makes me realize that you may already know something valuable—that doing it yourself is always done better with someone else by your side, even, or maybe especially, when that someone's chubby little



The editor and his son, Luca, working together to assemble a toy car.



Help us
help you

Oh, one other little piece of advice: Don't forget to enter our **2014 Search for America's Best Remodel**. You could win cash and the chance to share the valuable lessons you've learned—along with your finest work—in our October reader-created issue. Skip this page or go to [thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH](http://thisoldhouse.com/) to enter.

Letter FROM THIS OLD HOUSE

Richard Tretheway is a carpenter, and Russ helps run the family plumbing and heating business.



Available editor Phil Wise and daughter Susan, prepped for a day of DIYing.

The editor is not looking for something to fix.



hands can't do much more than repeatedly drop the screw they're supposed to hold tight or direct the flashlight to not exactly where it's needed.

But look to the subject of advice, even though you're in a stage where you don't take much to all, be it how you should use the plastic hammer on the windows or hang a picture from your store and case—even if it does make Mom and Dad laugh. Let the new do the work.

Always keep one hand on the hilt.

A weekend project is easier done by Sunday night.

Good theory, screwdrivers are a necessity, but a Manhattan, made 2 to 3 with eye and wrench, is far more difficult to drink.

It seems that last year for when you're older. And I think it means maybe I should stop. Clearly, I don't have all the answers.

Nothing there, though, makes me realize that the more complicated the things around as become, the more ordinary life matters. Regular life. Simple life. Work is part of that—enjoyable work, whether it's the kind you do for yourself and the house or the kind that gives you a paycheck. And, of course, there's people. Above all, what matters is a connection to people.

Friends and family, actually, but also all the others you come in contact with. Those who are here with you now, those long gone. Imagine the men who, 145 years ago, built the house that you came home to after you were born what seems like just yesterday. Think about the guy driving the bus you always get stuck in, the police officers and firefighters whose faces you love to mimic, the pharmacist who never gets tired of you screaming at him, and the guy behind the counter at the Korean grocery who always asks for a smile.

The more they leave can fill in where your dad falls short. In fact, maybe don't be the best piece of advice I can pass along—that everyone around you has at least one value like thing to teach you. And if you can recognize that, seek it out, your life will be richer and more meaningful for it.

And I think you'll realize, too, that most people you meet are good people. They might live in another place, do different work, belong to a different religion, vote the other way, but it doesn't matter. That's something important I've learned in my years at *This Old House*. Talking to so many good folks who read this magazine or watch our TV shows or go to our website, I know they all want the same thing in the end. A place for home and family, a roof overhead and a solid floor underfoot, and maybe the opportunity to chase after a little one who is changing a plastic house where he or she should be.

Like I said, bud, I don't know if what I have to say makes a whole lot of sense, but I hope it helps you some. Maybe one day when you're older we can discuss it more over a drink. I'll have a Manhattan, and I'll order you an apple pie. Sorry, you might be old enough to drink by then, but you'll also always be my little boy.

Scott O'Connell, Editor
scott@thisoldhouse.com



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THE EDITOR: I, real TOH, believe! OldHouse@you.com or do to The Old House magazine, 130 West 30th Street, New York, NY 10020

•Include your full name, address, and phone number. Published letters are edited for clarity and length.

TOH READERS ARE NOT SHY. Lots of you reached out to tell us our April 2014 issue hit a home run, in your book. And one reader gave warning that even rainwater isn't always free, while another shared her version of a Paint Idleness dresser stuff-up.

Springkeeper

I always keep my previous issues of TOH where I can reach them for reference, but April 2014 will go in a special place. You touched on every aspect of homeownership. I can't thank you enough for all your insight and knowledge.

—GEORGIA DAVIS BYE MAIL

Wow! What an issue! I had been thinking of planting hydrangeas—there they were! I've been in a woodworking class for about a year, and there were three projects. LEDs explained, 64 important numbers for homeowners, veggie-growing problems solved, and so much more. Thanks for a sure-to-be saved issue! Keep up the good work.

—SPENCER ROBERTS MIDDLETOWN, N.J.

Room-by-room measures

I enjoy TOH magazine; it gives me a lot of information relevant to my work. In the April issue, I particularly liked "64 Important

Numbers..." concerning dimensions and clearances throughout the house. (Find it at theoldhouse.com/april2014.) As a landscape draftsman and designer, I look for guides like this to help. Thanks so much.

—MIKE BEARMAN EYE MAIL

Who'll cap the rain?

Re "Build a Rain Barrel" (Weekend Remodel, April 2014, and theoldhouse.com/april2014). Out West, rain barrels have the potential of leading folks in, well, bar water. In my state, the water that falls from the sky, even onto your own roof, is not your property (if you are served by a municipal water system). Putting a rain barrel inside a cedar box might look to the judge as if you were hiding it, not simply some resident who just don't know no better.

—JIM DILL, DENVER

Dangerous bathing?

I was "shocked" to see the cover of the March 2014 issue. The chandelier pendant light dangerously low, causing an electrocution hazard. A note to your readers may save a life.

—SCOTT JACOB FIDMARE, CALIF.

THE EDITORS REPLY: You bring up a great point about pendant lights over tubs, which by code must clear the top of the tub rim by a minimum of 6 feet. Unfortunately, the fixture in that bath is a candleholder, not a wood fixture.

Digital edition

Wow, getting the tablet edition was so easy! Terrific job, guys—love your show, love the tablet!

—SAR DRESSLER COLUMBIA HEIGHTS, MINN.



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LUTRON



READER
of the
MONTH

New look for old drawers

AMIN KHAUSHER, EDISON, N.J.

Thank you for giving me the inspiration to spruce up an old dresser. I renewed one (bottom right) after seeing yours in the March 2014 issue (top right) of The Old House. I enjoyed working on this project!

[Find this Paint Itex at theoldhouse.com/june2014.]





TOH TIPS

In the market for flooring?

Before you invest in a new floor, download our complete buyer's guide at thisoldhouse.com/flooring-guide



TABLET

Bonus features

Find extras in our tablet edition, including more container gardens and landscaping myths, additional products for creating a cottage living room, a video of building a waterily pond, and extra photos of the Save This Old House Queen Anne. PLUS, the 12 silliest DIY fixes ever seen! Download your copy at thisoldhouse.com/tablet

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Checklist

JUNE 2014

*Easy ways to
improve your home
right now*

6 FAST FIXES

Plant herbs: It's not too late to plant herb lovers like basil and oregano—just keep the seeds moist so they germinate.



Replace old weatherstripping: Check for worn-out weatherstripping and replace as needed. Keeping cool air inside helps save on AC costs.

Care for hedges: Leaving them out in the sun can cause damage, as heat expands the material and UV light weakens it. Pruning your hedge a little by straightening it out and winding it up after each use.

Declog showerheads: Before starting a session of post-pool showers, ensure that the heads are in top shape by removing them and soaking them overnight to dissolve any hard water deposits.

Back up on browned: Cutting up wood now will give it plenty of time to season before cool winter months.

Refresh mulch: If you haven't already, check that you have 1 to 2 inches of mulch in your flower beds to help plants conserve moisture throughout summer months.

Plant roses

When you see these landscape beauties in bloom this month, you might just want to plant one of your own. Choose from among modern hybrids which tend to be more disease resistant and more cold hardy than traditional varieties, and plant in a sunny spot (roses grow best with 6 to 8 hours of full sun). Water deeply once or twice a week, making sure to keep the leaves dry to discourage disease.



Keep up with project permits

Is building a pool? Installing a new air conditioner? Placing a toilet? You might need a permit for that. Before starting any summer remodeling projects—no exceptions—check with your municipal building department to see that you've got all the necessary documentation.



Check fences

To keep them standing strong, look for saggy posts, pooling paint and other signs of weakness, and schedule repairs as needed. You should also trim any plants that are too close to the fence to avoid long-term damage.

Clean out the garage

Before the heat sets in, go through the garage and toss unwanted toys and equipment, then give it a good sweep. You can keep dust clouds to a minimum while you work by sprinkling a sweeping compound, an oily powder that's available at hardware stores, over dust piles before you get out the broom. Can't get your hands on any? Try damp coffee grounds for an in-a-pinch fix.



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home solutions

Edited by Michelle Branner

INSIDE 30 USCS INSTANT STYLE HARDSCAPE HELP HEALTHY GARDEN MORE

Seating with a twist

An entry bench isn't just a landing spot or a place to pause for a footwear change. It can also be a major style statement. Case in point: this industrial-inspired beauty. We connected various rose iron pipes and tee fittings, with flange top and bottom, to form the base. A 2x12 attached with deck screws drives down through the top flanges makes for a sturdy seat. A coat of Minwax's Early American stain adds just the right amount of warmth. Total time: 3 hours. All that's left is to turn it over and take a load off.

To make
a generous
two-seater, use a
board at least
48 inches long.



10 Uses Gutters

They carry rainwater away from your house, but aluminum troughs have other uses, too. Need inspiration? Read on.

1. Make a windowsill planter.

Cut a length of aluminum gutter (ours is 12 inches long) with tin snips. Tap an end cap, securing them with an air-sealing tool (shown, top right) caulk with silicone. Add potting soil and plants.

2. Protect seedlings.

In colder weather, place a length of gutter along border garden plants at night to shield them from frost.

3. Store sundries in the shop.

Crimp end caps onto lengths of gutter. Screw through the gutters' backs into two walls to create a ladder-style storage unit. Hang on edge or across a stud bay.



4. Hide cord clutter.

Scrow lengths of gutter across the inside back legs of desks so that furniture can sit at flush with the wall. Use the gutter to keep excess cord off the floor and out of sight.

5. Hold trimmings.

Stand rolls of ribbon, string, or twine upright and side by side in a foot-long piece of gutter. It's a perfect dispenser for putting out and cutting short lengths.

6. Create a custom message board.

Flatten a length of galvanized steel gutter using a rubber mallet and leave the rolled lip along one side intact. Hook the lip onto a wall, hang metal kitchen utensil rail (find them starting at \$3 each only). Use magnets to post notes and daily reminders.

7. Make a bookshelf or a picture ledge.

Crimp end caps onto 3-foot sections of gutter. Paint as desired. Fasten to the wall by screwing through the backs of the gutters. Use them to display art or large picture books.

8. Secure a pipe.

Cut a 2-inch section of gutter with tin snips. Bend back the ends to form a horseshoe-shaped strap. Place over PVC or steel pipe and screw the bend ends into the wall or ceiling.

9. Use as a clutter deterrent.

To keep things from getting into a fenced garden, place a length of gutter open and down over the top of a garden fence. When they jump onto the fence, the rattling noise will spook them.

—KATHY HILL



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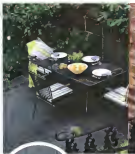
Bright idea!

A vintage wire wastebasket (this one is from the 1950s) gets a second lease on life as a stunning pendant light in a few easy steps. You'll need a lamp-cord kit—use like the metallic one below (\$49, western.com)—and an Edison-style bulb (\$3.30; 1000 bulbs.com). An opening drilled in the base of the can with a 1/4-inch hole-saw fitting is just big enough to slip the socket through and secure it. Screw in the bulb and you have the ultimate in trash-to-treasure creations.

Pick the perfect patio stone

Nothing completes a backyard like a pristine patio. But choosing a hardscape surface can be daunting. Rocks and blocks come in just about every size and style. How do you know which one is right for you? We talked to Chris Nordstrom of World Stone, Inc./Great Meadows, New Jersey, to find out what you need to know and what you can expect today.

—PAUL HOPE



BELGIAN BLOCK

These beautiful blocks are built from granite and have a grayish white color. They're about 4 by 6 inches, and their rough surface makes them ideal for driveway or accent trim. Plus, if you have big dogs, you look for them at home centers where 2-inch-thick versions are sold. Beware! They're laborious to install and difficult to get level, so you'll pay a premium for labor. **PRICE:** \$10–\$13 per square foot.



BRICK

Made from clay and fired at 2,000 degrees, red bricks cool, nearly as well as much as concrete bricks, but they're stronger and are historically accurate for older houses. The bricks' light weight and uniform shape make them DIY-friendly, as long as you keep the pattern simple. Score the Internet for providing them away. Learn how to install reds from brickbricksatthesouthhouse.com/jan2014. **PRICE:** \$1.75–\$3.25 per square foot.

BLUESTONE

Premium bluestone is a deep navy blue and is often used to add texture and make the stone less slippery. One badge? Opt for full-range bluestone, which has shades of pink, gray and brown left by mineral deposits, or buy irregular bluestone sold on 16-foot pallets—both are less expensive. Slabs 24 inches or thicker can be dry-laid. Thinner stones require mortar. **PRICE:** \$4–\$7.50 per square foot.

PHOTO TOP BY JEFF ANDERSON; PHOTO BOTTOM LEFT BY JEFF ANDERSON; PHOTO BOTTOM RIGHT BY JEFF ANDERSON; PHOTO BOTTOM RIGHT BY JEFF ANDERSON; PHOTO BOTTOM RIGHT BY JEFF ANDERSON



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Charcoal smokers

If you're truly passionate about BBQ, you may want to invest in your own smoker. Get yourself the right cooker with these five tips

Unlike traditional charcoal grills, which are mainly tasked with searing food over a hot flame, smokers work with indirect heat, flooding food with flavor while cooking it very slowly—often for upwards of 10 hours. Just as there are no shortcuts to tender ribs, there are no true bargains when it comes to smokers; cheap models have a hard time keeping the right temperature (225 to 250 degrees F) and leak like crazy. Invest in a model with tight fittings, well-designed vents, dependable heat control, and a built-in thermometer. Read on for all the meaty details.

—RODOLFO LOMON



TEST THE HANDLE

It should feel comfy and keep your knuckles well away from the heat. How fit is the grip and does it have a shock absorber? It should feel substantial, with no loose fittings.

CHUCK THE DESIGN

Proper heat and airflow are key. We like this model because it has a heavy metal vent system that allows you to regulate the heat and airflow. A double door helps maintain even heat and keeps food from drying out. Side doors make it easy to add water and the real

LOOK FOR MONITORS

A thermometer built into the top, where heat rises, allows people to keep an eye on the temp without tilting the lid. Eyes can be shielded with meat probes so that you know when dinner is ready.

SEE HOW IT FEELS

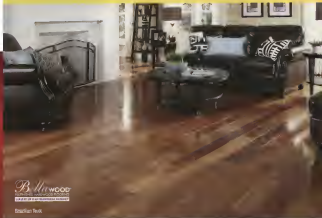
Look for sturdy handles down your front panel. A steel body may be relatively lightweight and could be suitable to rust. To extend your smoker's life expectancy, invest in a cover.

ADD POINTS FOR VERSATILITY

This model has two 18-inch grates plus hooks to hang whole fish or racks of ribs. The three-in-one design can convert to a single-grate smoker or a little grill. Being so flexible if you want to serve food just to a big crowd—or just want leftovers to keep yourself.

Photo: Newdon April 2012
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A farmhouse kitchen for \$468

A little paint and a few handmade touches take a space from dreary to charming



BEFORE

BEFORE Even after removing the dated wallpaper, paint, blue paint on the cabinets, and a built-in wooden bar, the island from the kitchen is a great canvas and ready for a new look. A red and white paint and a few handmade touches go a long way in creating a charming, budget-friendly kitchen.

THEY SAY THE KITCHEN IS WHAT HELDS A HOME. Not so for Brandi Milligan and her fiancé, Jeff Singer, who loved their early 2000s farmhouse in New Brunswick, Canada, but loathed the kitchen that came with it. While the space had great bones and a stunning original tile ceiling, it also had dingy wallpaper, dark cabinets, and a red-and-blue checkered floor. First to go was the wallpaper, replaced by crisp white paint. Next, Brandi removed the blue upper-cabinet doors to create open shelves, and Jeff helped move isolated corner cabinet units to the other side of the room. Brandi added crown molding to the tops of the cabinets, then refaced the lower doors with white beadboard wallpaper and then attached with wood glue. A spray paint treatment gave the counters the look of granite for minimal cost. Brown epoxy paint on the floor provides a neutral look short-term until the couple can afford a new floor. For the focal point, Jeff built a handsome island using stock pine. Brandi distressed it with a hammer and a chain before staining. The finishing touch? They built a mission-jar light, inspired by projects they saw online. The centerpiece is by far Brandi's favorite part. "It helped turn a plain kitchen into something really special," she says. —*Melissa Averis*

THE PROJECT TALLY

Striped the wallpaper, primed, sanded, collected the plaster walls before repainting.....\$40

Removed upper cabinet doors to create open shelves, then added crown molding.....\$20

Finished the lower doors with beadboard wallpaper and to add plywood, primed, sanded, and added new hardware.....\$152

Used stone-look spray paint as countertop, and used a thin white tile and polyurethane.....\$29

Covered the floor with brown epoxy primer, floor paint.....\$40

Built an island from pine planks, then applied dark walnut stain.....\$20

Made a mission-jar pendant with 4-to 6-inch rod extensions, and candle-like light sockets.....\$300

TOTAL.....\$468

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Ideas to get your porch, deck, patio, and yard in shape for the outdoor entertaining season ahead



Pergola Pointers



MORE PRIVACY PLEASE!
For a greater sense of enclosure, add lattice curtains that can be drawn closed. Or affix a lattice screen to one or more sides and soften the edges with colorful flowering climbers.



INVEST IN QUALITY WOOD
Construction-grade redwood or cedar can cost twice as much as pressure-treated pine, but they are lightweight, resist rot, are easy to cut and shape, and are less likely to warp, and hold paint beautifully.



FINISHING TOUCHES
Whether you use pine or redwood of cedar, you'll want to protect your pergola from the elements. For a natural look, try Olympic ELITE Woodland Oil. For a painted surface, try Olympic ICON Exterior.

Party-Ready Patio

Adding a pergola to your patio will smooth the transition from indoors to out, creating the perfect spot for entertaining. Here are some tips to get you started.

You'll need good carpentry skills and, ideally, a friend with a strong back to help you complete this weekend project.

Go for beefy posts (6x6s or 8x6s) to make sure they hold up over time.

Check with your local utility company to be sure you're not about to dig up a gas line.

Secure the posts to a concrete patio with strong brackets. Or if you are burying below the frost line, protect from rot with a sealant and anchor with cement.

Paint or stain beams before assembling to cover all surfaces and avoid having to work from atop a ladder.

Search the Internet for decorative rather than functional Victorian-era chandeliers—many highly ornate Victorian-era chandeliers outside the pergola's frame to styled with simpler lines for Craftsman homes.



See more projects from the 2014 2015 Reader's Digest. Click a tablet or smartphone to scan this page with the Reader app, or go to readersdigest.com/pergola



Deck-Revival Pointers



USE A DECK CLEANER
Even new wood needs to be cleaned to remove dirt and contaminants. Unlike bleach, a deck cleaner, such as Olympic Pressure Deck Cleaner, will penetrate wood and lift dirt to the surface to be rinsed away.



CONSULT THE FORECAST
Your deck must be entirely dry or it won't absorb the finish. Make sure there is no rain in the days ahead or after—three or four consecutive days of low weather should be enough time to wait a breather.



DO YOU NEED TO STRIP FIRST?
Use this water-absorption test to determine if your wood is ready to be stained. Pour a cup of water over a few areas of your deck. If it is absorbed in less than 10 minutes, you're set to go and don't need to strip.

Deck Refresher

Give your deck the care it needs to ensure you get the most out of it all summer long. Breathing new life into your weather-beaten deck is easy with our simple steps.

Remove dirt and debris with a broom.

Wet the entire deck and surrounding foliage with a garden hose.

Apply deck-cleaning solution to the wood surface, and scrub with a brush in the direction of the grain.

Rinse off all the solution with a garden hose after 15 minutes.

Allow the deck to dry thoroughly before staining.

Use a stain-and-sealant-in-one, such as Olympic ELITE Advanced Stain + Sealant, for maximum protection against sun and weather. Start at an inside corner and work your way out, applying the stain parallel to the deck boards.

Keep a wet edge while applying to maintain an even finish.

Let the deck dry for at least two days before walking on it or replacing the furniture.



For more instructional video & product advice, use a tablet or smartphone to scan this page with the Reader app, or go to olympiccolor.com/yourdeckrefresher



Porch-Swing Pointers

Screen-Porch Sanctuary

The best seat in the house may actually be on the front porch this summer. Outfitting your porch with a swing is easier and more affordable than you think. Here's how:

Search online for a porch swing kit in unfinished wood, and select one that complements the style of your home.

Dry-fit the pieces before assembling to make sure the kit has all of its parts.

Fasten the pieces of the chair together with a waterproof polyvinyl acetate glue, and secure with stainless-steel screws.

Assemble the back of the chair first, followed by the sides, seat, and arm rest, respectively.

Drill holes that line up into the side pieces, or insert bolts into the predrilled side pieces and tighten.

Hang your swing using eyebolts attached to a support beam or ceiling joists.

Connect the rope or chain to the eyebolts with S hooks to minimize squeaks and reduce wear.



To learn more about assembling and hanging your porch swing, visit houzz.com/porch-swing or click to scan this page with the Houzz app or go to houzz.com/porch-swing



HANG COMFORTABLY

Treat the swing like a chair so that a seated adult's feet will lightly touch the floor. For maximum comfort, tilt the swing slightly so that the back of the seat is about an inch lower than the front.



CHOOSE DURABLE PAINT

Give your swing a pop of summer color. It may be sheltered from the rain, but it is still exposed to the elements like a durable, weather-enduring paint, such as Olympic ICON exterior.



SMOOTH THE SURFACE

Sand the entire swing with 120-grit paper, paying particular attention to the arm rests and curved pieces. This will guarantee smooth surfaces and help prevent wood from splintering.



Picket-Fence Pointers

Picket-Fence Perfection

There's something magical and quintessentially American about a white picket fence. Picket fences are among the easiest to install. Follow our tips, and you'll get the job done in no time.

Start with a corner or an end post, and place the fence posts 4 to 8 feet apart.

Anchore the posts on a 6-inch base of 3/4-inch crushed stone to encourage drainage. Fill around the posts with soil from the holes, and pack down every 6 inches.

Nail or screw the horizontal rails between the posts, using a level to position them correctly.

Ensure that the pickets are evenly spaced by placing a loose one between the picket previously set and the next one to be nailed.

Keep the bottom rail 2 inches from the ground to avoid rot and make it easier to mow or weed around.



For more picket-fence ideas and how-tos, visit a tablet or smartphone to scan this page with the Houzz app, or go to houzz.com/picket-fence



ANATOMY OF A PICKET FENCE

Cap Protects posts from weather, ideally painted for water runoff.

Post Grounds fence.

Rail Ties to posts and supports pickets.

Pickets Mounts vertically on rails.



PROTECT YOUR PICKETS

Whether you use inexpensive pine or more costly rot-resistant cedar or redwood, you'll want to protect your fence with a mildew-resistant sealant like Olympic MAXIMUM Stain & Sealer in One.



GO FOR A PLAYFUL LOOK

Color your pickets in hues that complement your home's exterior. Left to right: Olympic MAXIMUM Solid Color stain in Avocado, Mystic White, Wedgewood, Shiplap, Blue Amsterdam, and Harvest Gold.

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Family-friendly

Creative tinkering and a spiffy new look deliver major style and function to an outdated cook space **BY DEBORAH BAUTIST • PHOTOGRAPHS BY MONICA BUCK**

ADDING ONE CAN BE VERY tempting. But Kevin B. Kelly and Rosanne Leffman were determined to keep the original footprint of their 1967 house, in Montclair, New Jersey, despite its dark, uninviting kitchen. To get a more free-flowing space where they and their two teenage daughters could easily gather, the couple gutted the kitchen and the adjoining powder room, working with architect William Fugère, interior designer Tracey Stephens, and general contractor Jerry Niekrawitz. With opened-up-for-improved-plumbing, wiring, and ventilation inside fresh thinking about the layout, including door and window placement. New energy-efficient windows now channel sunlight in winter and enough cross-ventilation in summer to keep air-conditioning. A redwood escape, Rosanne's find, inspired matching brass cabinets, balanced by white upper cabinets and open shelves. "Feeling life is just the right shade was a challenge," Rosanne says. "Then, and wrestling over whether to squeeze in an island." "We thought about creating an eating nook on the far wall," she says. "But all four of us prefer hanging around right at the center of this sunny new space."

BEFORE The sink was jammed into a corner, and the look was dated-drab. **AFTER** A new bay window brings in more natural light. Other draws include a gather round island and a mood-enhancing palette. Pendant fixtures soften the lighting.



BUTZ

• before + after:
kitchen

With its slatted-back base, curved top, and single leg, the island can seat up to four. Freestyle painted back splats provide an architectural accent and a hint of the 1950s house's past.

A breakfast-breaker of custom-cut marble, soap, and limestone ties together the color scheme. Tilework: Wayne Tile Design; Counter: Range Services



after

The 250-square-foot space was gutted and reorganized, with new spots for the powder room and back door, and new windows.

1) Coated for an oval window at the range wall so that the stove could charge position rightly

before
The space was cramped, the sink was cramped, and the fridge had drifted away from the range.



1) Shifted the sink from the corner to a roomy cleanup zone under a new bay window

2) Reoriented the powder room's back door opening up the kitchen and permitting a long run of cabinets and counter top



3) Removed the other window and moved the fridge into the new prep zone

4) Replaced the breakfast table with an island so that wedge shape opens traffic flow

5) Moved the powder room to a less obtrusive spot

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• before + after:
kitchen

Open shelves allow light coming through adjacent windows to flow through the space. Brackets: House of Antique Hardware



Backsplashes like this metal shade called Dijon, and others such as Lapis Azul, Seafoam, and others, are available in the same color and style as the cabinets and range. The Market Collection includes Pella Countertops, Crystal Marble



pro advice FRANCES STEPHENS, INTERIOR DESIGNER, MONTCLAIR, N.J.
"If you're not sure about an island, live with a table in its place for a while. If you do decide to go ahead, mock it up in cardboard first to get the shape and size just right."



This new island countertop adds daylight. Pella's new Lapis Azul cabinets have a wider-based finish. Watch for the range. Cabinets: Modern Cabinet Company, Inc. Pella: Window Master

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Pretty and practical

Bidding the basement good-bye, a wash-and-fold center moves to the second floor and gets old-fashioned finishes suited to the 1880s house. BY KAZELYN HELL • PHOTOGRAPHER BY ALEXANDRA ROWLEY

UTILITY ROOMS don't have to look utilitarian. Cassin Jones' Chuck and Claudia Jensen's hybridized laundry room on the second floor of their 1887 Queen Anne, in Stamford, Connecticut. The creaking basement laundry that came with the house wasn't particularly desirable, it was unusable. Plans to turn the space into a garage made relocating the washer and dryer a high priority.

Luckily, they had a quirky little space upstairs with an attached half bath near the bedrooms that proved to be an ideal location. Taking down the bathroom wall opened up the space for laundry machines between two windows and for a sink, folding counter, and cabinets on the wall opposite. Running glazing lines up from the kitchen below and into a half wall between the washer and dryer kept pipes off the exterior wall—important in a cold climate. Beadboard wainscoting and cabinet doors, original windows and moldings, and Claudia's collectibles help give the room period flare.

The result marries convenience and charm. "I like that when you walk in, it doesn't feel industrial," Chuck says. "It's so well integrated with the rest of the house."

BEFORE Peeling wallpaper and the tiny space kept the bathroom well separated from the two large double doors. **AFTER** Now a single room, it fits a washer and dryer, a sink, and storage cabinets, and it's filled with natural light. Photo: Stephanie Moore for Real Estate Photography LLC



BEFORE



STYLING: KAZELYN HELL FOR THERESABOOK.COM; PHOTOGRAPHY: ALEXANDRA ROWLEY



before + after: laundry
LEFT: Beadboard that owners held onto in laundry and linen. **BELOW**: An antique sewing machine base topped with marble serves as a sewing table; a modern machine design is an added Country Aesthetic.



before + after

Combining two small rooms put them to better use as a spacious laundry room close to the bedrooms upstairs.

1) Placed the washer and dryer between existing windows. Added a half wall between them to keep plumbing off the exterior wall and protect against freezing.

2) Removed the corner half bath and created a sewing nook in its place.



3) Installed a shaped piece of cabinet on the wall opposite the windows. Added counter space for folding and a sewing sink for quilt making.

4) Preserved the existing doorway wood floor and coveled wall. Added wainscoting throughout.

Cabinets required that the upstairs washer sit over a drain. Rather than go a standard plastic drain pan, the couple built one out of Carrera marble that matches the countertops. Painted countertops. Dutch Marble & Granite

Colorful cottage living room

Cheery paint and one-of-a-kind finds provide plenty of personality

BY MEGAN TARKER • PHOTOGRAPHY BY GREG GILLET • GROOMING

COTTAGE STYLE'S greatest colorfulness means there's plenty of room for idiosyncratic accessories and lively color. Take this room, assembled by Anne Westerman in her run-of-the-mill-century lake home in Georgia. "I like primitive pieces and Adirondack-style furnishings," she says, but not so much the woody cabin look. So she paired a whitewashed twig table and chair with a colorful chest and cottage classics, like a wicker rocker and a beaded rug. Yellow paneled walls, green stair railings, and a red floor provide a spirited setting for stained glass, antique frames, and dog figurines. Want a similarly sunny, lived-in look? Read on.

leather-topped stool

Westerman thinks every living room should have a place to put up your feet. This stool gets the job done with rich brown faux leather top and charming splayed legs. \$120 haywards.com



braided rug

A hefty weave gives this rug a cozy handmade feel while its array of bright colors helps to brighten the room's palette. \$100 theon.com



eclectic frames

Vintage Adirondack style frames like this one started about \$30 each here. Make it a wall of centerpieces by adding frames to either side. Gold and wood frames, \$28 to \$200 cbsa.com



candlestick lamp

A streamlined iron finish lamp with DIY leather whipflicking on the shade screens the style of the native find artist. \$53 wayfarer.com



elm chest

The homestead's a vintage folk piece made from riparian birch and pine, but this version features the same silhouette and warm colors. \$450 americancountryhomestead.com



wicker rocker

A high-backed design to this down-home rocker. Yellow spraypaint (Wynne's Sade's Marigold) gives it a sunny look. \$215 transwestern.com



twig table

This white-painted rustic white piece evokes the same style as the whitewashed table to left. \$99 whitewanderbydoyle.shop.com



cast-iron dogs

How garden ornaments have the look of old cast-iron animal figurines. Painted dog, \$25; antelope cow, unfinished iron dog, \$22 each gardenliving.com



DIY

faux stained glass

The farmhouse inhabitant reproduction in summer stained-glass paint to add some color around the fireplace. You can DIY the look using liquid staining and glass paint from the craft store. \$2 per color; plasticized glass.



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Gardening myths busted!

Learn the facts behind some common folk wisdom to better your odds of plant-growing success. BY JEFF GILMAN • ILLUSTRATIONS BY HANLEY KROPP

ASK GARDENERS where they learned about plants, and most will tell you about a parent, grandparent, or favorite aunt or uncle who passed along a love of digging in the dirt. Certainly those green-thumbed mentors did a lot right. It was, after all, their colorful perennial borders and beautiful veggie patches that inspired the next generation to pick up a trowel. And all their sound advice, though, they probably passed down some less-than-scientific lore, too. Many homegrown gardening tricks simply don't live up to their hype when researchers put them to the test. But old ways are slow to change. After all, most gardeners learn from one another rather than by breaking up on the latest university study. So we've done the research for you. The next time a well-meaning neighbor offers up one of these time-worn "tips," you'll be able to weed out fact from fiction.

1> Buried banana peels give roses a potassium boost. Bananas and their peels do contain high levels of potassium, an essential nutrient that roses—and all garden plants—need for everything from stimulating growth to producing flowers. But burying whole peels can backfire. As soil microorganisms work to break down the peels, they extract significant amounts of nitrogen from the soil, which results in less nitrogen for growing up plants. The best place for banana peels is in a compost pile, where they can break down alongside other nutrient-rich table scraps. To give plants the balanced nutrition they need, top-dress with compost instead.



2> Drought-tolerant plants don't need watering

Drought-tolerant plants may need less water than other plants, but that doesn't mean you'll never have to pull out your garden hose. If the garden or container soil around your plant is dry, water it. Young plants are especially susceptible to drought because their roots are getting established. Be vigilant about keeping soil slightly moist, but not soggy, throughout a plant's first year of life.

—*Barbara Roth*

3> Organic pesticides are safer than synthetic ones

Snake venoms, arsenic, poison ivy—they're all natural, but that doesn't make them safe. By the same token, there are many natural toxins used in

organic garden products that are potentially harmful. If misused, natural poisons, such as pyrethrin (an insecticide extracted from chrysanthemum flowers), can be hazardous to people, pets, and the beneficial inhabitants of our gardens, such as frogs and bees. If you must use a pesticide, base your selection on how dangerous the active ingredients are, and how effective. Safer choices include products that contain *Bacillus thuringiensis*, aka Bt, and insecticidal soap.

4>

For grounds around acid-loving shrubs lowers the soil's pH. Coffee grounds are acidic, and mixing them into the soil can offset pH—slowly but here's the catch: Fresh coffee grounds can inhibit plant growth because they're so up-nitrogen in the soil as they decompose (just like brown peels), especially if large quantities are added. To lower your soil's pH without causing a nitrogen deficiency, purchase a sulfur-based soil conditioner (available at garden centers) and amend soil following the package instructions. Many popular shrubs,



including azaleas, heather, rhododendrons, and blueberries, will appreciate soil with more acidity.

5>

It helps transplants establish faster.

Adding fertilizer, or any soil amendment, to a planting hole can actually discourage a vigorous root system. Nutrient-rich planting holes give roots less incentive to branch out to absorb nutrients and moisture from the surrounding area, and fertilizers, including the phosphorus-rich fertilizers frequently marketed for new transplants, contain salts, which can burn tender new roots. If you're concerned about soil fertility, give plants a nutrient boost by spreading a 1- to 2-inch layer of compost, then 1 to 2 inches of mulch over the planting

site. Just be sure to leave a few inches of breathing room around each plant's stem, especially when mulching trees. Mounding soil or mulch around a tree trunk causes girdling roots to form in the trunk and kill the tree.

6>

Adding sand to clay soil improves drainage.

Waterlogging is common in clay soil because clay particles are extremely fine and easily compacted. Sand is just the opposite: It drains quickly because its particles are coarse and less tightly spaced. So adding sand to clay soil must speed up drainage, right? Not quite.

The tiny clay particles simply fill in the gaps between the sand grains, resulting in a substance similar to concrete. If you want to improve clay, the next ingredient is compost, not sand. For immediate results, mix a 2-inch layer of compost over the entire planting area. Or, if the soil is already planted, you can reap similar benefits by top-dressing with compost. It will just take a year or two for the compost to infiltrate the clay.

7>

Newly planted trees require staking.

Unless your tree is literally at risk of falling over, it does not need staking. A little movement is actually good for young trees. Just as our muscles grow larger with exercise, tree trunks grow thicker and stronger when they're allowed to move. Shaded trees tend to grow taller, but their trunks are skinnier and weaker, so if you do decide to stake, be sure to stake as loosely as possible and as briefly as possible. It doesn't quickly because its particles are coarse and less tightly spaced. So adding sand to clay soil must speed up drainage, right? Not quite.

a length of garden hose, against the tree bark to keep from cutting into it. Staking a tree in only one side means some freedom of movement.

8>

Partering pruning cuts protects trees from disease and insects.

Pruned and arborists give up the practice of partering tree wounds and pruning cuts years ago. The fact is, there's little evidence that pruning cuts, or any other compound, prevent disease or insects from entering tree wounds. Research even suggests that this practice slows trees' natural healing process of sealing cuts with a tough layer of "woundwood." The best ways to avoid damage are to make clean cuts with sharp tools and prune during late winter, when diseases and insects are dormant.

9>

Gravel in the bottom of containers improves drainage.

This is one myth that never seems to die. But rather than preventing root rot, adding gravel makes it more likely to occur. Water is pulled down through the container by gravity and builds up near the drainage hole. A layer of gravel at the pot's base serves as the

drainage hole and collects water in the same way. So instead of preventing roots from sitting in water at the container's base, the gravel simply moves the pool of water higher up the pot, where it can do more damage. The best way to ensure adequate drainage is to use a potting soil made with coarse materials, such as pine bark. You can also use as several extra handfuls of perlite, which helps keep potting soil light and airy.

10> Baking soda cures black spot

Although it works fairly well for powdery mildew, baking soda is not effective on black spot. But here's a home remedy that does work: Mix 1 part milk with 2 parts water; spray affected foliage once every week or two, before black spot becomes a serious problem. This solution can also help control powdery mildew. But don't use it on edibles, since milk causes



Folding deck chairs

Punch up your outdoor style with these pretty, portable seats

BY MEGAN BARNES • PHOTOGRAPHS BY KUNCI AVIAN

● NOTHING SAYS SUMMER like looking back in a hammock-style length of fabric, your face angled toward the sun. These folding sling-back chairs have been a vacation mainstay ever since they were set up along the decks of steamers that plied the Atlantic in the 1880s. And thanks to their ultra-functional lightweight construction and space-saving stowability, they've stood the test of time. Available in a wider-than-ever array of fun fabrics today, they're an easy way to boost the style quotient of a porch, patio, deck, or swath of lawn. Here are new takes on the classic that will suit any outdoor space—and when you're ready to pack it in, they'll fit any storage space, too.

updated stripe

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Highlights: This herringbone print offers an added bonus: It resembles its neighbor's graphic pattern in red and white. \$350. blecherchairs.com



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Cottage-style makeover

Architectural details and an inviting half porch put a fresh face on a tired one-story. BY ANNE BOUTTON • ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID KATE INC.



THE OUTSIDE of Vicky Close's 1980s ranch, in Des Moines, Iowa, looks the same as the day she bought it—nearly 30 years ago. “I’d love a porch,” she says, “and my husband wants a different color.” But the couple got cold feet every time they try to make a change. So, no advice there, we called on Minneapolis-based architect Mark Larson.

“The house has the classic lines of a cottage, but some of the elements are out of proportion,” says Larson. Zeevoo, in on the entry, he proposes a roomy half porch in front with beaver columns. Removing the side light helps center the door, while doubling the dining windows on the adjacent bump-out and adding panels below the double windows suggest a traditional look. Fresh paint, window boxes, bead-and-bacon shutters, and vertical siding on the gable end top off the new cottage look. “We like it all,” Vicky says. “It’s gotten us geared up to make some changes.”

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finishing touches

Traditional accents and pleasing paint colors give the place some much-needed charm.

↑
A wide front walkway
extends a warm
welcome



sconce

A white downward-facing dome shade minimizes glare while providing ample light. Ward Imports, \$39



paint

Midwest's trim and Resinized Red accents warm up chevron-painted wood. Comfort Gray Sherwin Williams, \$43 per gallon



window box

Generous trim gives this self-watering polyethylene planter a stylish boost. Gardener's Supply Company, \$309



entry door

A large double light and raised panels bring a traditional look to all-weather fiberglass. GlassCraft, \$690

Garden-tool tote

Construct a carrier from oak boards and dowels or buy one premade and get busy cultivating

BY PAUL HOPPE

A WOOD TOTE is the perfect way to keep your garden tools organized and close at hand in the field. The sturdy example at right is fabricated from oak, but not resistant to color as a good choice too—especially if you leave tools out in the rain. Not that we've ever done that.

The bottom is formed from two boards separated by a gap that encourages dirt and grit to escape. The entire piece is finished with linseed oil, which provides a natural sheen and helps the wood keep its color.

If you'd rather spend your time planting, look to buy a tote that's comfortable to carry and the right size for your tools. You'll pay a premium for a box built from solid hardwood or one with a personal inscription. But whether you build or buy, when the growing season draws to a close, you can use your new vessel to collect the fruits (and veggies) of your labor.

Similar to shown. Photo: Tom Igoe
by MossDesigns.org.com



PHOTO: GREGG LINDSAY/SHUTTERSTOCK; PHOTO: JAMES DUNN/ISTOCK; PHOTO: GREGG LINDSAY/SHUTTERSTOCK

BUILD IT

Oak construction ensures that this carryall will last season after season

COST \$50 for oak lumber

TIME 3 hours

DETAILS 1/4" Easy-Cutting the sides requires some prep, but the rest is a cinch.

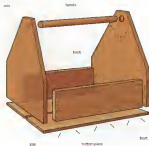
1) **Cut the sides.** Follow the cut list at thishouse.com/jun2004 to cut the parts. Lay the two blanks for the sides on your worktable (across its length) to find the center point along the top of each blank, and mark spots 4 inches to each side of that point. Then measure and mark spots along the sides. It's inches up from the bottom. Use a string bridge to

draw a line connecting each top mark to its corresponding side mark. Cut along each line with a string bridge and a circular saw or jigsaw to form the gable-shaped sides for the tote.

2) **Fit the handle.** Clamp the cut sides to your worktable and measure a spot 1 1/2 inches down from the center peak of each gable. Fit your drill with a 1/8-inch Forstner bit and use a spacer (a tape) to mark the bit's edge up from its tip. Drill into each side at the marked spots to form the holes for the handle, stopping when the tape meets the face of the board.

3) **Assemble the tote.** Sandwich the front, back, and handle between the two sides, applying wood glue to the notched edges but not the holes—you want to leave the handle free to spin. Clamp the assembly together, and use a pneumatic nailer with 24-inch brads to fasten the sides to the front and back. Flip the tote upside down and run a bead of glue around its bottom edge. Position the pieces for the bottom on the box so that they're flush with the front and back, which will leave a 1/2-inch gap between them. Clamp the bottom pieces in place and fasten them with brads, lined at a slight angle into the box to provide a better hold.

4) **Finish the box.** Fill the nail holes with wood filler and allow it to set. Sand the entire tote with 220-grit paper and wipe it down with a tack cloth. Finish the piece by rubbing it with a mix of equal parts mineral spirits and boiled linseed oil, applied with a lint-free rag.



BUY IT

Fine finishes and personal inscriptions come at a price

\$20 this basic model. This simple piece only requires assembly and finishing. homestead.com



\$80 the wild range model. A handsome box is your choice of all-wooden, with the option to add an inscription. sawtoothstyle.com



\$225 the history model. Cherry construction, dovetailed joints and the option for a personal inscription set this piece apart. guthrie-homedecor.com



build it
or buy it

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Roll on a graphic rug

Bold geometric squares go down quickly with an oversize stencil. BY CHRISTIAN HALEWYX

ENRICHING A FLOOR with color and pattern just got easier. This painted "rug" owes its charm to a 33½-inch-square Mylar stencil that carries a large, abstract geometric design. The most time-consuming part is the prep: lightly sand and thoroughly clean the floor before putting down two base coats of porch- and floor paint. Then map out rows of full squares, spacing them 2 inches apart. Painter's tape can help establish a solid border, and stencil adhesive and a dense foam roller will also make the job go quickly. Avoid overloading the roller, which can cause bleeding under the stencil; two thin coats are better than one thick coat.

To get the look shown here, choose a patterned stencil (Large Modernism, about \$39; benjaminmoore.com/stencils) and two-crisp contrasting colors, such as this clean white and ocean blue. Finish with two protective coats of water-based spar, polyurethane, and there you have it: one day later and a low-maintenance closer to a richly finished space. ■



WE LOVE PAINT IDEAS

Enter your favorite paint project in our America's Best Home color contest for a shot at \$10,000. Visit minwax.com/yourTOH



Rolling squares together makes a coordinated pattern. Spacing them out makes a piece of art.

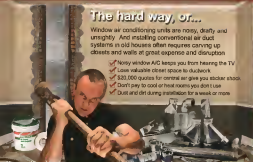
Heating and Cooling Your Old House

weekend remodel

The hard way, or...

Window air conditioning units are noisy, drafty and unsightly. And installing conventional air duct systems in old houses often requires carving up closets and walls at great expense and disruption.

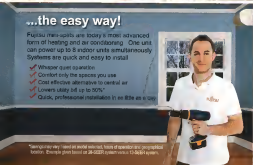
- ✓ Noisy window A/C keeps you from hearing the TV
- ✓ Lose valuable closet space to ductwork
- ✓ \$20,000 quotes for central air give you sticker shock
- ✓ Don't pay to cool or heat rooms you don't use
- ✓ Dust and dirt during installation for a week or more



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- ✓ Comfort only the spaces you use
- ✓ Cost-effective alternative to central air
- ✓ Lowers utility bill up to 50%*
- ✓ Quick, professional installation in as little as a day



*Temporary energy saved as model selected, based on operation and geographical location. Example given based on 24-SEER system versus 13-SEER system.

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Halcyon

Make a lily pond

Use treated lumber and a pond liner to create a soothing water feature in your backyard. BY JOHN CARRÉ PHOTOGRAPHY BY SCOTT SMITH



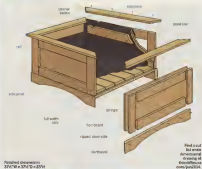
COST \$150
Time: 8 hours over two days
Particularly Easy: Working with the pond liner is the only slightly tricky part

IF YOU WANT TO ADD A TOUCH OF ZEN to your patio or garden, here's a pleasing solution as compact as it is easy to care for. The simple box construction is plenty sturdy; a thick pond liner contains the water, and a plug-in aerator provides the circulation and oxygen that plants and fish need to thrive in a small space. Lower in several hardy waterlilies, and the perennials will send up shoots that keep you in daily bloom of pink, red, white, and yellow from June through August. Come fall, just shear off the shoots and they'll come back bigger and bolder next spring. As long as the water doesn't freeze solid in winter, these fish will survive in place. Follow along as *The Old House* contributor Christopher Benoit, owner of Ferns, a handmade furniture store in Brooklyn, New York, walks you through the step-by-step of building this aqua-garden's water project.

Aerator: Water Feature Builders kit, \$20; boxes: saw; Lilies: \$12 plus shipping; hardy perennials: not

**DAY-TO-DAY
TIMELINE**

SATURDAY Assemble the box (Steps 1-4)
SUNDAY Install the liner and the skirting (Steps 5-7)



TOOLS

miter saw
bar clamps
drill/driver
hammer
straightedge
combination
square/slide, set
jigsaw
circular saw
caulk gun
staple gun
hand saw
utility knife
combination, set

MATERIALS

1x6-treated deck boards: Get four 8-footers for the floorboards and six 8-footers for the skirtboards.
1x4-treated boards: Get four 8-footers for the skirtboard cap.
3x4-treated boards: Get seven 8-footers for the side frames and skirting (cut into).
1/2-inch-thick plywood: Get one 4-by-8-foot sheet for the side panels.
7x6, 2x6, and 2-inch-deck screws:
3-inch stainless- or galvanized steel corner brackets: Use eight.
construction adhesive:
landscape fabric:
general liner:
submersible pond pump:
sewer-grade wood/iron pipe/pipe:
concrete:

Find a cut list and extra dimensions at diy.com/poolbox.

1 MAKE THE BASE

A) Cut the parts. On your miter saw, cut the 1x6 floorboards and skirting. 3x4 panel frames a rectangular bottom, and the plywood sides will according to the cut list.

B) Attach the floorboards to the stringers. Lay out the two stringers on your work surface and place the six floorboards across them. Use 1/4-inch spacers to keep an even distance between the floorboards, clamp them together, and adjust the assembly so that you have 1/4-inch space on the stringers. Use 1x4 skirting and 2x6-inch-deck screws to secure the floorboards to the stringers.



2 MAKE THE SKIRT

A) Level the pieces. On another saw, cut opposing 45-degree bevels into the ends of each of the four skirtboards.
B) Mark the arched. Clamp a skirtboard onto your work surface. Make a mark for the top of the arch along the center of the board 2 inches from the bottom edge. Then mark the bottom edge 3 inches in from each end and use a square to draw a finishing line at each mark, as close to the edge as possible. Now trace a straightedge between the marks to the top mark, as shown and trace a line for the arch. Cut out the arch with a jigsaw, use the pencil to trace the arch on the other boards, and cut them out.
C) Attach the skirtboards. Flip the base assembly upside down on your work surface. Set 1/4-inch spacers in the corners to even up the top edge of the skirtboards with the stringers. Arrange the skirtboards upside down, framed against the base. Use a combination square to set to drill pilot holes. Then drive two 2-inch-deck screws through the side boards and into the ends of the stringers, as shown. For the verticals, parallel with the stringers, drive screws every 5 inches into the stringers' edges.



SEE HOW IT'S DONE:
To watch videos of this project, go to diy.com/poolbox, June 2014.



3 MAKE THE SIDES

A) Cut the frames. Two of the panel frames need narrower sides to account for the overlap from the sides that sandwich them. So you'll need to rip four sides down from 3 1/2 inches (the actual width of a 4x10 to 2 1/4 inches). To do that, clamp a straightedge to a table blade, as shown, and rip it with a circular saw. Cut three more the same way. When the materials return together, all the sides will appear to be 3 1/2 inches wide.
B) Apply the frames. Align a 1/4-inch spacer along the short edge of a side panel to set the overhang for the plywood, as shown. Then press in all the rippled-down sides in place. Use your drill/driver to secure the sides with one evenly spaced 2x4-inch-deck screws. Make one more panel this way. To make the two panels that sandwich the first two, use a 1/4-inch spacer to set the sides' overhang. Glue and screw the rails between the sides.



4 ASSEMBLE THE BOX

A) Attach the panels. Fill space with full width boards on the notch at the base, parallel with the boards. To secure, drive 2½-inch deck screws through the panel and into the edge of the floorboard, as shown. Install the opposite panel, then install the panels with the ripped-down slats between the first two. At the corners, counterbore pilot holes and drive three evenly spaced ½-inch deck screws through the tops of the full width slats into the edges of the ripped-down slats. **B) Reinforce the corners.** Install two 3-inch stainless steel or galvanized corner brackets to each corner, center the screws that come with the brackets. **C) Protect the liner.** The pond liner is tough and slightly thick, but it's still advisable to protect it from contact with the wood. Use a staple gun to fix a layer of landscape fabric inside the box. Then use a hand saw to make a V-shaped notch, about 1 inch deep, in the top edge of one of the panels so that you'll be able to make the pump's cord enter the cap. You will need to make a matching V-shaped notch in one of the interior bottom boards (Step 6).



5 INSTALL THE LINER

A) Lay out the liner. Unfold the liner material, and gently roll it over the box. Work the liner into the bottom and corners. Then make a pin at each corner so that the liner is folded neatly, not bunched. **B) Cut to fit.** Use your staple gun to tack the liner at place every foot or so along the top edges of the panel frames. Then use a utility blade and utility knife to cut the excess liner at the outside edges of the side panels, as shown.



7 FINISH AND FILL

A) Install the pump. With the pond built, apply a good quality exterior-grade stain to the exposed surfaces. **B) Place the waterlilies.** Line a 12-inch plastic or terra-cotta pot with landscape fabric to keep the soil from escaping. Place a 12-inch plastic pot, fill the pot with wet topsoil, and cover the soil with a layer of gravel to hold the soil in place. (Don't use potting soil—it floats.) Place three or four pots at the bottom of the pond. Fill the pond with 18 inches of water. Then turn on the pump, and look back and enjoy your new water feature. ■

TIP For tight joints, miter one end, line up the miter's short point with the corner, and mark the short point at the other corner. Cut the line.



6 SECURE THE LINER

A) Reinforce the interior bottom. Use a hand saw to make a matching V-shaped notch in one interior bottom, which will be secured to the similarly notched side panel. Clamp the bottom in place, and use ½-inch brad nails to secure it, as shown. Clamp and secure the other bottom in place. **B) Cut the caps.** Use your miter saw to cut the first cap piece. Then place the miter in the center of the box, and make the power cord through the notch. **C) Attach the cap pieces.** Clamp a mitered cap piece in place on top of side panel. Counterbore pilot holes and secure it to the panel at top rail and exterior bottom with ½-inch deck screws every 12 inches. Miter and install all the other cap pieces as you work your way around the box.





STAYCATION DESTINATIONS

42 porch, patio, and deck upgrades that will make you glad you stayed at home

BY AMY R. HUGHES

PORCHES

If that covered space in front of the house is looking a little bare, try these tricks to make it fit for relaxation and conversation—over morning coffee, an evening meal, or a glass of lemonade on a lazy afternoon.

A pleasant place to perch

1» ADD A PORCH SEATING. Architect and homeowner Brian Stribling Smith, left, says that a light barbed stool met his house. A cushion and throw pillows encourage lingering. Similar to shown: International Canvas Regal Tulum Bar stool; Greater West/Porch Swing; \$150 with Sliding Handles/Patio Bar stool/Throw Cushion in Aqua Blue; \$50 and Cord Corded Throw Pillow Set by Pillow Perfect; \$35; www.pillowperfect.com

2» TRY A STONE FLOOR. Irregular flagstones created a grounded look that blends with the landscape. For this new porch, stones were mortared on top of concrete. Make sure you have drainage at the door and outside trough. Flagstones: \$4–\$7.50 per square foot of stone porch.

3» PUNCH UP WITH PAINT. A vibrant neon color on wood trim at the front door makes a porch feel cheery and inviting. The greenish-blue color is not white but echoes the nearby surroundings. Similar to shown: Rustic exterior semigloss in Kona Green; about \$68 per gallon; www.henrymiller.com for stains.

4» KEEP IT CASUAL. Rustic touches, such as this painted wooden furniture, brought a warm, rustic feel to the porch and added a sense of laid-back luxury. Similar to shown: Weathered Laid-back piece White Wicker Conversation Set; \$450; www.1stclass.com Columbia Street Pendant in black enamel; \$200; www.naturel.com Naturally sleek black settee; about \$100; www.naturel.com

PATIOS

Turn one into an outdoor room by suggesting walls and maybe a ceiling. Eclectic seating adds both comfort and charm.

Vine-covered loggia

SE-CAF IT WITH GREEN A lush canopy mangoelide shade and shelter from the sun. Here, designer Heather Chaudhry uses a custom metal pergola combined with whitebe to create a green roof. For a similar look at a wallet-friendly price, try the Hampton Bay pergola, \$499, homedepot.com. It comes with a removable fabric canopy to keep you covered until you're whitebe takes off. Potbed, fast-growing Blue Moon Wisteria also, \$20, loosecan.com.

26• PATTERN THE FLOOR Give a plain concrete pad a graphic upgrade. Snap chalk lines to map out a design, and cut stones up with a wet-cut saw. Fill them with wet concrete and embed river rocks, making them level with the pad. Similar to show: *White Forest Black Polished Pacific Pebble*. \$12 for a 25-pound bag. themedepot.com

20K-ADD NEW SMTH: A fireplace-like structure built from underblocks. Ideal with fireproof brick and coated with stone or another aesthetically pleasing finish. Cubes on either side serve as sitting walls. Similar to show: Outdoor Fireplaced, from \$3,200. alcorstone.com



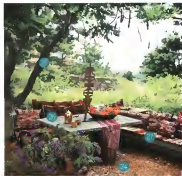
Leafy eating nook

24- PUT IN A STY FRIENDLY FLOOR: For a low-cost, natural-looking retreat like this one, start with pea gravel underlayment. For the base, use crushed stone and stone dust covered with landscape fabric. Similar to shown, 1-inch pea gravel from about \$45 per ton at stone yards

25- COZY UP TO A TREE The overhanging branches of an old specimen like this black beech provide a sense of intimacy and filter sunlight and rain—rather nice.

26+ SET UP A FLINTSTONES-INSPIRED TABLE
A thick bluestone slab provides the perfect base. Make sure the base is no more than 20 inches high and its diameter at least two-thirds the length of the slab. Similar to shown/Nature's left (14) rods. For stylized bluestone slab, starting at about \$4.50 per square foot at stone yards.

27- ESTABLISH A PERIMETER WITH BENCHES Like low walls, bench seats can define the borders of a gathering spot. Seats arranged in an L shape, they also provide banquet-style seating around a table. Buy patio or weather benches from the home center or take your own stylish under versions with a Backwell end built in storage for just \$230 each. Find the shop by shop at shop.houzz.com June 2004.



Warm, rustic getaway

25-FAVOR A FREE FISH DESIGN A plastic floor without recirculator lines complements the organic shapes found in nature for a relaxed, satisfying effect. says architect Erik Roberg Smith, who designed this space after his own house. Irregular blue tones in different shapes and sizes are set in stone-cut, ribbed soapstone the surrounding built-in ceiling required. BlueStone Capabilities, \$4-\$7.50 per sq. ft., at stone yards.

22+ PLANT A GREEN SCREEN: A hedgehog erica provides a natural backdrop for an outdoor room while also thickening an existing view and supplying privacy. **How:** Flowering shrubs in front of a taller hedge have a layered, looking-well that hides the difference and a neighbor's house. **2210+ to 2250+** Excellent Summer Hydrocorys. In a 2 gallon pot, \$30. **2250+ to 2300+** white flowered clematis. Bay Laurel in a 2 gallon pot, \$30. **2300+ to 2350+** Green ones.

23» SAVE WITH A STORE-BUGHT HEATER: Simpler and thriftier than a fireplace, a portable wood-burning stove can create a warm gathering spot. A sturdy metal one with large, round, safety screens, and easy-to-grate for grilling (think, yes, you can grill) burns 1 series marshmallows, too. Similar to above, CrestaLuminae Prairie Chimes, \$430, bedroommaven.com



Industrial-style hideaway

20 • CREAT A THRIFTY METAL WALL. Humble roofing panels become a chic wall when stood on end and bolted edge to edge. More steel panels sheath the top of this pergola, tying the space together. Curved steel roof panels, about \$30 each, at Home centers.

280—CARVE OUT A PORTAL A wistful Instagram wall—here, a sheet of acrylic laminated by burn-wood planks—invites a feeling of hazy memories and invites insight. Save by trading pricey burn wood for used sawnwood frame discarded shipping pallets. And let the frame center for precious acrylic. **Open 26 in.-40-inch Acrylic Sheet \$35;** homeexpert.com

30+ SAVE SPACE WITH SHARED SEATING Softees and benches allow more guests to squeeze around the table. Here, Shaker style benches have striking high backs and shapely seats. Make a similar bench with a 20" kit. Rejuvenate a Shaker style Windsor Bench Kit, \$420. www.shaker.com

DECKS

Incorporate a table and chairs, pipe in a little music—it can be like hanging out inside but with a breeze and a better view.

Shaded dining room

32+ TRY A STEP-UP A change in levels can help carve out a distinct, purpose-driven space. In this one, by Jaffer Dune Design, the dining area is 4 inches lower than the expansive surrounding deck.

33+ USE TREES AS A DESIGN ELEMENT Integrate mature specimens into the building plan. As an alternative to a hanging pergola, Dune Design's shifted ceiling by using the sturdy trunks as supports. Freestanding eaves provide for anchoring structures to trees at natureandnurturellc.com.

34+ SUSPENDING A PERGOLA Take advantage of an overhead structure, be it a pergola or real or fake, to create a new look. Looking right before Optional height over a dining table is 30 inches from the table surface. Find more than 100 outdoor products, including contemporary styles like this one, from about \$40 at james.com.



Open-air flex room

37+ MAKE IT MOBILE A kitchen on wheels allows the chef to move into the shade or out of the wind in an instant. On smaller decks, like this one at the home of architect John Margulies, it also allows the space itself to be mobile, as an outdoor kitchen one day and a place for potting plants or pouring coffee the next. See it at www.WaterGardenz.com. 3 Burner Liquid Propane Gas Grill: \$849; tows on deck.

38+ CREATE A STAGING AREA By parking a table near the grill, the chef can prep food and keep ingredients and serving patterns close at hand. This simple built-in table also provides an extra spot for clients to gather around for chips and salsa. See it at [HouseStyleTrends.com](http://www.HouseStyleTrends.com). 3 Burner Liquid Propane Gas Grill: \$849; tows on deck.

39+ ADD INTEREST AROUND Rolling planters filled with bright blooms and tall ferns or grasses offer touches of color while also increasing privacy. When it comes to the rolling they left, rather than the neighbors' enjoy their decorative boost. Choose from planters that mount right on top of the pergola or window box types that hang in front, starting at about \$10 each. [gardens.com](http://www.gardens.com).



Off-the-house haven

36+ BUILD IN ROOMS For an already existing deck, a built-in room can serve as a lounge, dining, or even a sleeping space. At this home, architect Eden Breiberg Smith, at home without husband Scott, designed one with enough for lying out on a beach towel.

38+ ADD SOME TUNES All-weather speakers help get the party started. Chosen between hardwired windows that connect to an indoor stereo system and back discreetly under the eaves of the house, as shown, or portable wireless speakers that sync via Bluetooth to a smartphone or tablet or tap stream or Internet-connected music. Similar to shown (from \$24.95). [EnvironmentalSpeakers.com](http://www.EnvironmentalSpeakers.com). \$280; per pair. best.com.

39+ GO FOR A DOUBLE-DUTY UMBRELLA A single umbrella always welcome for shade during the day. Some new versions also come with tiny LED bulbs built into the frame for illumination and ambient glow after dark. We like the 7-foot round umbrella with lights, which has a 12-watt power cord. \$229. www.melco.com.



Setup for socializing

40+ INSTALL A TONK-LIKE TOPPER A soft on fabric canopy is a pretty alternative to a solid roof. Here, metal poles anchored to the deck railings and brace from a frame with bar stools mounted to the deck railing, allows you to enjoy full sun or a shady night. We like the heavy-duty canopy with Sunbrella Gray/White Spig Spring fabric, about \$5,630 (for a 12-foot 12-foot deck like this one), including delivery and installation. shadehouses.com.

41+ MAKE A RUSTIC TABLE A second deck is the perfect setting for places like this coffee table with weathered slat top. You can assemble one for less than \$50. For the legs, use galvanized steel or bamboo brackets, about \$10 per pair. Seated with 3-inch Top train with bamboo back butcher block, from \$22. [wood.com](http://www.wood.com). Product for the wood components with a few coats of clear polyurethane.

42+ BORROW WOOD FURNITURE It's a little cash and a few pieces, such as this upcycled armchair, to up the style and comfort factor. Just be sure to move them back inside once the party's over. The only exception: a little ribbon grass. ■



THIS PAGE: The cast-iron outdoor seating, installed in the dining room, is part of the house's charm. When the color of the walls, the furniture and the floor is not enough, the homeowners have painted the walls and the floor. The floor is painted a light blue color, and the walls are painted a light green color. The floor is painted a light blue color, and the walls are painted a light green color. The floor is painted a light blue color, and the walls are painted a light green color.



UNBURIED TREASURE

TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF PAINT, WALLPAPER, AND LINOLEUM BARNACLED NEARLY EVERY SURFACE OF THIS SEASIDE COTTAGE, UNTIL TWO CRAFTY AND THRIFTY HOMEOWNERS EXPOSED THE BEAUTY BENEATH

BY SUSAN HEDDER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY KSN OUTMAKER
PRODUCED BY COLETTE SCANLON • STYLING BY CARDUNE WOODWARD





SPENDING ENOUGH TIME AROUND OLD HOUSES and you develop a sort of X-ray vision—the ability to look past accretions of paint, wallpaper, and varnish to the place's essential character. Scott didn't wait long for experienced renovators Philip Schell to spot the possibilities hiding in a fashion aside carriage that nobody else wanted. "It had a lot of its original bones, if you could see it through all the debris," Scott recalls.

The Federal-style house, built around 1800, stood half a block from the beach in Provincetown, Massachusetts. By 2009, when the pair found it, its prime location was just about the only thing the place had going for it. Thanks to a series of "misadventures," the original cedar shingles were riddled in rot, the old business-planer walls encrusted with paint and wallpaper, and the old floors encased under layers of linoleum. Moldy old doors leered in the corners of bedrooms overlooking with a boarder's jaule. Add in the natural dimension of a structure built on sand by the coast—every wall slightly tilted, the leaky porch pulling away from the facade, plaster falling from ceilings, seaweed spouting in the attic—and even cat-eat pricing couldn't sell it. That is, until Scott and Philip arrived on the scene.

To these two, who'd put their considerable life savings into work on a dozen previous projects, the 1,500-square-foot house, with its wide front porch and water views, was just about perfect. They especially appreciated the classic Federal lines and simple layout—three bedrooms up, one down, with a bath on each floor—and features like the decorative woodwork on the porch, the chunky



ABOVE: In the kitchen, Philip Schell crafted a series of cabinetry using vintage doors cast-iron wood, and check out the fun IKEA. The antique party table on wheels stands in for a fixed and pricey kitchen island. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT:** A vintage sign adds atmosphere. **TOP RIGHT:** Renovators Scott Powell (left) and Philip Schell. In some moments of repose, with dogs Cooper and Olive.

RIGHT: The "evolution" (actually gas-powered) puts out enough heat to warm the living room and kitchen kitchen, cutting energy costs. Scott painted the light blue depths of Cape Cod blues.

LEFT: Though it couldn't be salvaged, the 1850s-era wallpaper that the homeowners discovered in the kitchen inspired them to cover one corner in whimsical pattern.

cast-iron radiators that had been installed in the 1930s, even the living room's small backsets with shutters that would be thrown in with the package. Mature pivot hinges screened the house from the street, and the generous 1,100-square-foot lot offered plenty of outdoor space for gardening and lounging.

Once it was theirs, Scott and Philip approached the house with police restraint, as one might a damaged site who'd fallen on hard times. "We respected the house's original integrity, without imposing too much of ourselves," Scott says. Of course, "original" is open to debate. After that 1930s update, which also brought new wiring, windows, and indoor plumbing, the house became what he calls "Victorian meets a Federal shell."

And even those well-described preservationists had their limits. And needs and frequent hours, they needed an efficient kitchen, comfortable bedrooms, and a workshop that didn't pop out of drop-up plating at the slightest touch. Still, they never considered losing down with, adding rooms, or entirely erasing bits of former owners, which waited up like ghosts as work began.





ABOVE: Many of the furnishings and decorative items, like these birdhouses, are flea-market finds. RIGHT: Hanging light adds the living room was a challenge that the homeowners partially met by wiring the dimmers to the foyer. The paint job here also helps brighten the space. The sofa, new re-covered living-chairs cannot, came with the house.

(One such was the huge wall unit behind a door in the foyer. They had a locksmith crack it, only to find...nothing! Too big to move, it remains in place today.)

They attacked the worst things first, replacing non-working rotors and dripping faucets, and mending leaky cast-iron plumbing for more efficient PVC. They brought in pros to redo the porch roof and shingle the siding structure to the house. They coated the squirrels to depart through wire sniffs by using a flashing screw light, a humane fix Scott had read about on the Internet. And they eagerly joined all the vinyl siding to see what was hiding underneath. "We didn't know we were going to discover clayboard trim and fancy cedar shingles," Scott says. Now painted a soft yellow-gold, the shingles, with their decorative patterns, needed only minor repairs.

Inside, they divided jobs according to their skills. Scott, also a fine art painter, focused on finishes, going at walls with liquid wallpaper stripper and scraping off



LEFT: In the dining room, the refinished oak floor gleams, as does the new wallpaper in subtly metallic pattern. The chandelier is a roadside find.

old paint as Philip, the handy carpenter, demolished the kitchen. With its rusty sheet-metal cabinets, peeling linoleum floor, and 30-year-old electricity-rucking fridge, that was the worst room in the house, a swerving 13-by-13-foot cavern that held little worth saving.

Maddled by their tight budget (a sliver \$70,000, all-in) and a whim at repurposing old materials, Philip set about rebuilding the space, using vintage doors and cast-iron wood he'd stored in Scott's rented parking shed on down the street. He peeled linoleum down to the wide-board pine subfloor, which, despite yawning gaps, had what Scott calls "a certain original charm" and proved sturdy enough to keep. It was also sufficiently good-looking once Scott caulked the gaps and coated the surface with epoxy porch paint, aging them the expense of new flooring. Lumberyard beadboard paneling and IKEA appliances and butcher-block counters yielded further savings.

To restore the symmetry that is a Federal hallmark, Philip came out a flimsy closet to square up the downstairs bedroom and widened the two narrow living-room doorways to let in more light and expose the flow from room to room. Scott took on the walls, repairing holes in the original plaster—some made by the electrician



FLOOR PLAN

Without altering the footprint, the owners redesigned nearly the 1,100-square-foot house, adding just a second-floor kitchen that had been added to allow a separate and upstairs and removing wall-to-wall closets to square up the bedrooms.

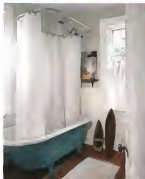


BEFORE



SHOP THIS STYLE
To keep a farmhouse spirit to these wood tables, house shops this page to get it right: com.thedesignhouse.com

RIGHT The cozy and less cluttered corner of the bedroom comes from the initial mix of mostly vintage items that the homeowners have been gathering for years. **BELOW** Arthur had had a red leather armchair replaced in silver metal, chosen to match the other items. The leathers are the only new flooring they installed in the house.



they'd tried to replace the antiquated knob-and-tube wiring—with lots of unlabeled or by-fairness patches with new left and screwing. "There's a lot of reuse in old places," he says, "so much subtle, organic texture in the slight bows and sags." Good thing he likes it, allowing for skin cutting, priming, and painting, each room took about 40 hours to complete.

When it came to the windows, saving the existing ones was a priority, not only for cost reasons but also because of Provincetown's historic-district rules. "Whenever you do must be approved by several boards," Scott explains. "You can't just pop in new thermal paneled windows." Wherever possible, he preserved the old wavy glass, using a heat gun to remove the glazing, then tacking the panes back into the frames with fresh glazing compound, securing them with metal points, and sealing them with rosin putty.

Once the downstairs was finished, they repeated the drill upstairs, where Philip pulled out more closets, as well as a small kitchen that dated to the house's origins into two apartments. He had a new bathroom floor and ditched the 1960s-era three-panel shower stall for a clear-foot tub. Scott finished off the space with more



ABOVE Instead of a door, one of the upstairs bedrooms sparks plantation-style shutters. Existing leatherwood, visible in the hallway, inspired Arthur as a trim theme throughout the house. **RIGHT** Project bridges mark the entrance to the outdoor dining room, a welcome respite from the summer heat. Scott found the people, now dressed in leathers, bused in the park's overgrowth.



painted beachwood wainscot, a unifying trim theme. Toward the end of the redo, they led the floors refinished and the insulated walls filled with blown-in cellulose. With the building thus bottomed up, they could finally ramshackle attention to the outdoors. Scott packed the backyard with old-fashioned perennials and places to lounge and eat. In the overgrowth, he discovered a wood pile. Now divided up and furnished with watters, it looks scintillatingly integrated with the nautical house. The same could be said of all their handwork. In an ironic twist, the couple's three-year act of rejuvenation isn't always apparent. "Most people would have done a tremendous renovation. They would have pored it and reconfigured rooms," Scott says. In this instance, though, "people who come to visit may not realize that we did all the work we did, because the house looks the way it should." And perhaps, to their eyes, the way it did all along. ■

SHARE YOUR REMODEL
Enter your whole-house remodel story in our August 3 Best Remodel Contest. It's a chance to win cash prizes. Stop the contest go to RemodelContest.com

Advice for My Kids

With Father's Day just around the corner, the **dads of This Old House** share some of their **hard-won wisdom** with the next generation

Figure It out

Paul Hays, TOH Associate Editor Father of Susan, 8 months. My dad wasn't a believer in play blocks. He liked to give me pulleys, hinges, even a car jack. I was only 4 when a workbench magically appeared on my birthday. He had built it, in secret, in the basement of our apartment building. It had a vise, and the block was pegboard, so I could string my tools. It was a great way to see them—and to understand which one was appropriate for given task. He knew it was important for me to experiment. So, we'd go to the hardware store and pick through the scrap pile, taking

New homeowner Katie taking this from her dad, Tom Ellis, in 2008.



Katie O'Donnell consults with 5-year-old twins Liam and Kaedon about a two-drawer cabinet at their home last year while Luke, 9, labors off-camera.

Kirk and Susan, with sons Evan and Owen in 2011, say they were born with a knack for understanding how things work, how they help run the family business.



Mark Powers, father to Evander (center), Brooklyn and Sophie, has been known to demonstrate "righty tighty, lefty loosey" with a jello-bottle cap.



Paul Hays and Katie prepare for a trip to the hardware store.



the best pieces here. Sometimes I just hammered a bunch of shingles together. But gradually I learned for myself. I learned what tools to use, when and how best to use them. That's what I like to pass on. I can't wait to tell my daughter, "My dad built this workbench for me, and now I'm giving it to you."

Follow your bliss

Egger Cook,
TDM Landscape Contractor
Father of Jason, 31, and Molly, 27
Telling kids that you can't grow good plants indoors is all about price, whether you're rolling out sod, painting a room, or anything else you might do. Oh, and I tell them not to go into landscaping—it's a too hard job. But I do say, find something you're passionate about. I've never had a day when I woke up and didn't want to go to work.

taught them to fix the small problems before they became big problems. I gave them a spring checklist to follow, and they do—weatherstripping, broken shingles, leaking gutters. The dryer vent, I encourage them to be methodical because it makes a difference. It has a lot to do with how you live your life. It's like people who hire a contractor without checking references. If you automatically do something without thinking about it, sure, once in a while you might lucky. But maybe not the next time.

Enjoy what's there

Thomas Baker,
TDM Building Technology Editor
Father of Kai, 25, and Emma, 21
I like to tell my kids how important it is to appreciate the original fabric of a vintage home—the windows, the trim, the plaster, the floors. Resist the urge to immediately "update" or "improve." Go slow, learn a place. Become aware of the details that make it special. Whenever you respect what's original it means you have to take care of it. But that's not abundant, it's a gift because that you experience the joy

of working with your hands, of acquiring new skills, of becoming confident in yourself.

Just dig in

Kevin O'Connor, TDM TV Host
Father of Luke, 9, and Liam and Kaitlin, 5
Here's what I know: Anything you do, it's an ongoing to-do list. The task is gonna keep feeding, the rat is gonna keep eating, and nothing is going to get better until you lay hands on it and do something. And so I'd encourage my kids to try to fix those things themselves first. You get a lot wrong! And if that screw is coming and doesn't work, well, then you can call me in.

Save yourself some trouble

Eric Hegmann,
TDM Special Projects Editor
Father of Sloke, 2
When my daughter gets old enough to be on her own, I'll tell her that the first step toward taking stain off a new home is painting. And then I'll

Tom Baker had Kai, left, and Emma, leaving the ropes on the family boat in 2005.



Recently tackled whitewashing the TV-room baseboards. Before (above) and Eric Hegmann love it. It's done.

spell out all the things I had to learn the hard way. Like rolling it with a cash brush, using a sander and producing better results than taping off the window corners in old houses. Or that you can't get a cap of paint with you when you pick up a new roller cover and the nice folks behind the counter will give it away if the roller for you—saves time and cleanup. Or that the curve of a roller will not fit there for a reason. To scrape paint out of that roller cover. Most things have a reason for being, you just need to figure out what it is.

Respect the tools

Mark Powers,
TDM Santer Technical Editor
Father of Sophia, 11, and Boden, 6
I tell my kids to think through so that they don't have to work so hard. That's a right way and a wrong way—well, or especially with tools. Something as simple as if something can be inefficient and dangerous if you don't know how to use your pry bar correctly. That goes for how you hold your hammer, too, or how you use an adjustable wrench. When you drop something down the sink and need to open the trap, remember that the small part of the jaw has to go in the right direction. And go easy, especially when you put it back together. A quarter turn of the wrench at all you need—don't over-tighten things. Most things in life should not be forced. You can damage a whole lot, including yourself, that way.

Break it down

Richard Trifunovic, TDM Plumbing and Heating Expert
Father of Ross, 29, and Emma, 27
My kids are now homeowners and they do much on their own. But I can't find I can't find that learning first. When the boys were babies, we

did a full-house renovation. Later on, we built a house down at the beach, and that's when they really rolled up their sleeves, working right alongside me. I had selected them with the mechanical stuff. And that's the thing: It's easier if you know how stuff works. When you do, remember what the problems are, you can always break it down and work backward to find a solution. If you're not sure, you can't figure out. I've always told them, "Just clear the decks and put some tape into it."

Spend on what you don't see

Doug Adams,
TDM Deputy Art Director
Father of Chris, 14, and Katelyn, 8



Doug Adams advises Chris and Katelyn to do the unseen stuff first.

I know exactly what I want to tell my kids when you buy your first house, the last thing you'll need to spend on is the stuff you can't see, touch or appreciate. But the important stuff is obvious. A few weeks after we bought our place, we had about 200 rats and 200 fleas, so I told them to look at the basement floor. The solution was an expensive French drain, buried below the concrete. That taught me an important lesson: Take care of the basics first, or the

rest of it. For example, it's a good idea to end up with a



Mark Powers and his son, Luke, spending time together, doing what they enjoy, back in 2003.

Skip the shortcuts

Mark Adams,
TDM Master Carpenter

Father of two
In my first book I wrote, "I dedicate this book to my father, who taught me patience, persistence and the skills necessary for carpentry and woodworking. Now I share these rewarding skills with others." I would want my children and grand children to learn that something from someone who is willing to share knowledge, start with the basics and allow you to make mistakes along the path to your goal. If you seek out that kind of mentor, they will surely succeed and have something they can enjoy forever. ■

DIY MOMS
Find tips that Marymichele founded down in TDM readers at householdhints.com/ June 2014

(uncommon) container gardens

Focus on
foliage plants
for sensational
season-long
displays

Ann E. Stratton
Photographs by
David E. Perry

edible accent

Leafy-based garden designer Kente Chapman is known for bringing leafy edibles to the garden and taking the primary role in her container garden designs. This flower-filled mix of edibles and ornamentals will look complete even after the season's harvest.

1. Bright Lights® Series chard (Ever
green; 18" tall) & 2. Tom Thumb
New Zealand flatworms
Tom Thumb (1/2" - 1/4" diameter)
(Thompson & Morgan)
3. Fire King coral bells (Perennial; 18"
tall) & 4. Blue Star Juniper (Juniperus
squarata Blue Star) (1/2" - 1/4" diameter)
5. Little Leaf® (Perennial; 18" tall)
6. Variegated English Ivy (Perennial;
18" tall)



F

LOWERS ARE THE obvious fix when a garden needs color. But, as designer Karen Chapman learned decades ago, foliage plants often deliver a better show. Growing up in England, she'd always admired free-flowering cottage gardens and tried replicating the look early on, only to discover that blooms were disappointingly fleeting and maintenance was heavy. So, as a young designer, she shifted her approach. "I realized that I could still create a romantic, chocolate-box look if I simply built a strong leafy framework first." Her designs are now decidedly foliage-driven, a style perfectly depicted in her own garden's container displays, shown throughout this story.

"I'm definitely not anti-flowers," says Chapman, coauthor of *Five Foliage* (St. Lynn's Press, 2013). "But I see them as accents rather than main features." She's known for putting up unexpected groupings, where conifers mingle with succulents, edible greens stand beside dwarf trees, and houseplants get staged outdoors with shade-loving perennials. With careful arrangement, no combination for garden beds, due to spacing and growing considerations, becomes possible in containers that need last only one growing season. To accommodate the diversity, Chapman selectively hand-waters, giving less to drought-tolerant plants, and she blends her own potting mix, using an 80/20 mix of bagged container soil (Garden of Eatin') or moisture-retention granules to nutrient-rich compost.

The pot itself often kicks off her color palette, while its style sets the theme. Then come the plants. Each design begins with one foliage plant. She scrolls the nursery's aisle and the spots a leaf with enough interest to inspire a design. And with this starting point in hand, she begins filling her cart with other leafy plants that share or nicely contrast with the initial pick's coloring, texture, or shape. Flowers don't come into play until she has a strong ensemble of overhanging leaves. "They're the last piece of the puzzle," she says. "The design should hold together without them."

The constraints on these pages showcase her technique. All are multisensory displays and carefree, but they're also big on texture and packed with plants, hinting at the designer's English roots—even in the absence of flowers.



power of one

Pick a varying shade, blend textures, mix together "wild" plants and a bit of texture, the color palette is already complete.

1. Purple fountain grass (*Pharbitis patens*)
2. Little Gem rose-hedge
3. Silver chrysanthemum (*Chrysanthemum*)
4. Red Dahlia (*Dahlia*)
5. Sweet pea (*Lathyrus*)
6. Sweet pea (*Lathyrus*)
7. Sweet pea (*Lathyrus*)
8. Sweet pea (*Lathyrus*)
9. Sweet pea (*Lathyrus*)
10. Sweet pea (*Lathyrus*)

leafy cornucopia

Mix up different leaf foliage gives the overall green a more complex display.

1. Sweet pea (*Lathyrus*)
2. Sweet pea (*Lathyrus*)
3. Sweet pea (*Lathyrus*)
4. Sweet pea (*Lathyrus*)
5. Sweet pea (*Lathyrus*)
6. Sweet pea (*Lathyrus*)



rule breaker

Overhanging on top leaves usually hide the top of the pot, since colors often flow past the edges.

1. Electric Pink candyvine (*Clematis*)
2. Electric Pink candyvine (*Clematis*)
3. Electric Pink candyvine (*Clematis*)
4. Electric Pink candyvine (*Clematis*)
5. Electric Pink candyvine (*Clematis*)
6. Electric Pink candyvine (*Clematis*)
7. Electric Pink candyvine (*Clematis*)
8. Electric Pink candyvine (*Clematis*)
9. Electric Pink candyvine (*Clematis*)
10. Electric Pink candyvine (*Clematis*)



starter garden

Clipping trees and shrubs is easier to do when you enjoy them while they're small and affordable. The woody plants starting in this peeked-up pot will put a spot in a hole once they're big enough to replace.

1. *Persea indica* (brown) 2. *Persea indica* 3. *Persea indica* 4. *Persea indica* 5. *Persea indica* 6. *Persea indica* 7. *Persea indica* 8. *Persea indica* 9. *Persea indica* 10. *Persea indica*



hot hues

Perches of luscious soft-blossoms make this fiery display pop while fiery blue confetti anchors the color-lust to the garden.

1. *Persea indica* (brown) 2. *Persea indica* (brown) 3. *Persea indica* (brown) 4. *Persea indica* (brown) 5. *Persea indica* (brown) 6. *Persea indica* (brown) 7. *Persea indica* (brown) 8. *Persea indica* (brown) 9. *Persea indica* (brown) 10. *Persea indica* (brown)



View more uncommon outdoor plants get your table set at thisishouse.com/boat

modern topiary

Staking several delicate leaves in contrasting shades demonstrates a formally dressed modern.

1. *Persea indica* (brown) 2. *Persea indica* (brown) 3. *Persea indica* (brown) 4. *Persea indica* (brown) 5. *Persea indica* (brown) 6. *Persea indica* (brown) 7. *Persea indica* (brown) 8. *Persea indica* (brown) 9. *Persea indica* (brown) 10. *Persea indica* (brown)



More is more

For an instantly full look, Karen Chapman fits a surprising number of plants into her designs right from the start. She prefers to use large, 20- to 30-inch-diameter containers which she fills using the following formula of standard-size nursery pots. You can easily scale this back, however, when planting smaller containers.



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width, height, and squareness of the rough opening, as defined by the framing lumber that surrounds every window. To get that information, the interior trim has to be removed so that the framing is exposed.

Of course, you can take all these measurements yourself, if you want to. Measure in three spots for width—at the top, middle, and bottom—and in three spots for height at each side and in the middle. Use the skewer of the three measurements when placing your order. But first, go back and double-check your work. You don't want any surprises on installation day.

Smoky smells

Our fireplace and flue are cleaned regularly, but the smell of soot in our family room is still strong, particularly in warm rainy weather. How can we stop the room from smelling like an old smokehouse?

—NEEDHAM COLUMBUS OHIO

MARK SCHUBB REPLIES: Cleaning your chimney every spring, at the end of the burning season, will reduce smoky smells emanating from your fireplace during the summer, but it won't necessarily stop them altogether. No chimney sweep can get rid of all the embedded soot in the firebrick and flue. So when the weather turns warm and moist, and all smells are magnified, you're likely to get a whiff of smoke.

You can keep the soot out of the house by blocking the soot that comes down the chimney every time you turn on a barbecue fan or a range hood. Start by making sure the fire-

place and chimney expert Mark Schubb has committed on *This Old House* TV show projects.



Paint lets go of fence wood sooner than it peels off quarter-sawn wood because quarter-sawn is more stable.

What is it?

- 1 Melon crate
- 2 Cricket trap
- 3 Drain strainer
- 4 Caulk-tube stand

FOR THE
LASTING
NEW FENCE



place damper is shut. But because most dampers are gassy leaky, you'll probably need another barrier. My surefire method is to jam a 4-inch-thick foam pad—the kind used for mattresses—up into the top of the firebox. It's cheaper than glass doors and effectively prevents any air, and the smell it carries, from getting into your house during the summer. Just be sure to remove the pad before starting the first fire of the season!

Peeling fence paint

Why does the paint on my wood fence held up so well on the quarter-sawn boards but not on the flat-sawn ones? I've consistently sanded and repainted them.

—CHAD BURCHETT
PORT COLOMBE, CALIF.

KEVIN O'CONNOR REPLIES: According to Mark Knecht, a forest products technologist at the USDA Forest Products Laboratory, the main reason paint peels at that wood grain expands and contracts, eventually breaking the bond between the wood and the more rigid paint film. Wood that is flat-sawn—with growth rings running nearly parallel to the board face—shrinks and

grows more with changes in humidity than quarter-sawn wood, where the growth rings are nearly perpendicular to the board face. Basically, the peeling film on flat-sawn boards loosens and peels away sooner than on the more stable quarter-sawn pieces.

Another factor, says Knecht, relates to wood density. Paint doesn't adhere as well to dense, dark species of woodgrain as it does to the lighter-colored wood between them. So the flat grain of flat-sawn boards shrinks sooner they tend to expose wider areas of dark woodgrain than quarter-sawn wood does. And quarter-sawn boards have less surface cracking, also known as checks, which makes it harder for water to get behind the paint film and pry it off.

So why don't we use quarter-sawn lumber everywhere? It's more costly to mill it in large quantities, which is why you pay a premium when ordering siding or flooring that's quarter-sawn. But even mills that turn out mostly flat-sawn lumber will produce the occasional quarter-sawn piece. If you happen to find one at a flat-sawn place, you'd be wise to snap it up. You can use it in a spot that's a pain to repaint.

Continued on page 18

QUESTION
OF THE
MONTH

Bobbie

I want to plant a tree in remembrance of my grandson. What can I do to make sure it survives?

—PEGGYOURIN, MILFORD, MD

ROGER COOK REPLIES: Planting a tree certainly is a wonderful way to remember a loved one. To make sure a new tree has a good future, choose a location at least 15 feet from the house and where there aren't any overhead utility lines. A local nursery can help you identify the most suitable trees for your spot. Next look for a nice specimen, one with attractive

foliage, undamaged bark, and a well-developed root ball. (Don't select trees that have started, pot-bound root systems, which makes them less resilient and harder to establish.)

Have the nursery deliver your tree as close to the planting site as is practical. Then follow these steps to give your living memorial its best chance to reach a healthy maturity

1) Mark the location. The hole should be at least two times the root ball's diameter. Drive a stake where you want the trunk and make a loop of string the same length as the hole's radius. Stretch the loop between the stake and a string edge as shown and use the edge to cut a circle to the lines. Pull the stake and slip the grass from the circle with a grub hoe.

2) Remove. Dig a flat-bottom hole, shearing the soil into a lip. Slope when the hole is slightly shallower than the depth of the root ball, measured from where the trunk is base-flared out. (3) The flange is buried. Unravel the ball and pull away soil and roots to expose it. (4) To check hole depth, measure down from a string stretched across it as shown.

5) Prep the roots. With a sharp, use the trunk to gently roll the ball into the hole, then set the tree using (6). Spin the ball until the tree is dead true to the vertical and the trunk is base-flared out. Now cut away the soil and wire and remove the burlap. Using a hand cultivator, loosen the soil around the root ball as shown to expose the dormant roots.



4) Amend the soil. For every inch of trunk diameter, mix into the excavated soil 3 pounds of 0-20-0 superphosphate, 10 pounds of 2-3-3 tree starter fertilizer and half a wheelbarrow of compost. Backfill around the tree ball, leaving no air pockets. Don't cover it or stomp on the backfill. Backfilling of amended soil around the tree about 4 inches high.

5) Water and stake. Fill the inside of the ring with water and thoroughly saturate the roots and backfill. Then I usually transplant newly planted trees. But this one is too big. Using 1/4-in.-diameter 5/8-in. long 1/4-in. foot stakes and chain lock ties (two-grip rings can't loosely looped around the trunk). Remove the stakes and ties after the tree's first winter.

6) Mulch. Level out the soil and spread a 3-inch layer of mulch, keeping it 3 inches from the trunk. Next, set a drip emitter (see "Drip Irrigation") to the trunk as shown. Water it daily for a week, then weekly—more often in hot weather—and the tree goes dormant. Next season, fill the ring only during dry spells. After that, the tree should be fine.



Roger Cook explains how to plant a tree in remembrance of a loved one.

COST \$300 for the tree. **TIME** Two people, 2 hours. **DIFFICULTY** Moderate. Digging the hole and moving the tree takes strength and stamina.

SEE IT DONE Toward the right, Roger shows the hole and moving the tree takes strength and stamina.

Photo: David W. Jones

By the time you finish reading this magazine, this crack could be patched, pruned, painted, and a distant memory.



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3M

Q Gutter advice

My 1664 Queen Anne needs some gutters, but I can't find anybody willing to install them on the house's exposed rafter tails. What can I do?

—MICHELE ECKO, SARASOTA SPRING, FL

TOM SILVA REPLIES: If you don't mind covering up the rafter tails, you can probably trim about an inch off their ends and screw a fascia board to them. Then any gutter installer can hang whatever style of gutter you want on the fascia in the usual way.

But if you don't want the rafter tails removed or hidden, you'll need to get special gutter brackets that attach to the tails' exposed ends. The ones made by the Copper Shoppe (coppershoppe.com) ought to be just the ticket. They work only with copper half-round gutters, but they would be a perfect match on a house the many of

years. As you might expect for anything made of copper, the brackets are pricey, about \$40 apiece, but you need them only where the house is more vulnerable to the splash of roof runoff, such as porches. Also, they're strong enough to be spaced up to 32 inches apart, so you won't need one for every rafter. You'll probably want to use brackets sized for a 6-inch gutter because half-rounds have less capacity than modern K-style gutters. For less expensive aluminum brackets, which work with square metal half-round or K-style gutters, check out Rotland Gutter Supply (rotlandguttersupply.com).

The installation steps for either type of bracket are similar to the way fascia-mounted gutters are hung. At the gutter's high end, you set the first bracket so that the gutter's outside edge is just below the extended line of the roof's slope, that keeps

What is it?

1 Melon cradle

This cradle keeps shrubby Melon and squash off the ground so that they will ripen evenly and won't rot. \$13 for six. gardenersupply.com



the gutter safe when snow and ice avalanche off the roof. Install the remaining brackets along a line that slopes 1/4 inch per 10 feet, then install the gutter and downspout. To see how it's done, go to thisoldhouse.com/jan2014.

Spots on siding

After replacing the crushed stone mulch in front of my house with shredded wood, I noticed small black spots on the siding and windows. These spots don't come off. What's causing them, and how do I get rid of them?

—EMILY COOPER, KENILWORTH, N.J.

ROGER DOOK REPLIES: Sounds like your mulch has an infestation of antillary fungus, which likes growing in moist, shaded wood mulch. These spots on your

house are actually the spore packets that the fungus shoots out from dry walks on the surface of the mulch, usually during cool, wet periods in the spring and fall. The packets can land as far as 20 feet away, and they stick tenaciously to whatever surface they land on, thanks to a natural adhesive that's similar to superglue. Removing them isn't easy, but I'll get to that in a minute.

First, get rid of the shredded wood mulch, which is the fungus's preferred home. Bake all of it out of the bag, bag it up, and haul it to the landfill.

In place of the wood mulch, consider planting a groundcover, such as pachysandra or vinca. Or use an inorganic mulch, such as rubber or stone, like you had before. If you want a wood look mulch, try one made of bark chips, the larger the better. Just make sure to add a fresh layer annually to discourage the fungus's return.

I haven't had as clean off these sticky little spots myself, but the Penn State Extension service lists several people who've had good luck with Mr. Clean's Magic Eraser. The trick to using the spots first and use several minutes for the packets to soften. That seems to make them easier to "erase." Let me know if it works for you.

Ask THIS OLD HOUSE

Or to: askthisoldhouse.com/asktoh
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Include a complete address and daytime phone number. Questions must also be related to clearly defined design and construction, or other matter. The magazine reserves the right to edit or omit any question or answer to fit space and editorial requirements.

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PROJECT OF THE WEEK

HOW TO BUILD A SPIGOT-HANDLE GARDEN TOOL RACK



Photo Courtesy: Home Depot

Organize your garden gear with this fun and functional tool rack made from old wood molding, brightly-colored outdoor spigot handles, your basic tool set, and a little bit of creativity.

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Ask THIS OLD HOUSE



Norm's tricks of the trade

I'm installing new baseboards, but in some places they don't touch the uneven floor. Is there some kind of filler I can use to hide the gaps?

—BOB TELLET, LOS ANGELES

A This isn't a job for fillers, which are messy to apply, difficult to disguise, and not very durable. The better solution is to cut the bottom edges of the baseboards so that they follow the contours of the floor, a process called scribbing. Some carpenters scribble with a compass, but my father just used a pencil and a scrap of wood. That's the way I learned it, too. Here are the steps to perfect fit.

1 Find the high spot of the floor. First, the baseboard is positioned on that spot, level it, and lock it in place. Leave the nailhead protruding so that it will be easy to remove later. Measure the gap along the edge between the floor and the bottom edge of the baseboard, then find a piece of scrap wood close to the same thickness as that gap.



2 Holding a pencil tight against the scribbler, run it along the floor and mark the baseboard's outline. Now remove the baseboard and cut along the scribble line with a jigsaw or trim saw. With either tool, angle the blade about 5 degrees into the baseboard's back side. This makes it easier to line (use the scribbler with a back plane). When the baseboard is tightly against the floor, nail it in place. ■



GOT ANSWERS?

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THE HISTORY Lumber merchant William Kernoban was owner of big house. In addition to owning an extremely successful lumberyard, he has been credited with drugging up the aptly-named quinine, which he patented just before the turn of the 20th century. But nowhere was his ambition more apparent than in his design for this lovely Queen Anne mansion, which he and his wife, Susan, built in 1887 on one of Warren's most affluent streets. Kernoban lived here for just over a decade, then sold the place to Alfred Hughes, the owner of a local banker company. Hughes and his wife, Jennie, raised two children here. They kept the house until the 1930s. Since then, it has had a half-dozen owners, many of whom have failed to maintain it properly. Various since 2006, the house was bought in 2012 by the Transhill County Land Bank, which is offering it for free to anyone with a plan—and the arena—to restore the house in accordance with its guidelines.

WHY SAVE IT? The detailed exterior retains its large bayed, slate roof and turned porch columns. The exterior is embellished with elaborate leaded glass, slate and marble fireplaces, and mahogany woodwork in the entryway. **WHAT IT NEEDS** The house is structurally sound but requires significant repairs and updates to all the systems as well as the roof. Many of the plaster walls need work. The city of Warren is about an hour east of Cleveland. Restoring the house is a costly job, but with a asking price of \$3, you'll have a good head start on that. —PAUL HOFF



FREE!
A Queen
Anne filled
with fancy
details

1) The 5,563-square-foot house has four bedrooms and two baths and sits on an acre less than an acre near the center of town. 2) Kernoban's lumberyard provided the elaborate mahogany columns, staircase, and crown molding found in the entryway. 3) The living room's bay windows are filled with leaded glass panes. 4) Columns are built into every of the house's walls.



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