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Picket fence
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Color this
house!

p. 30

JULY 2016 THISOLDHOUSE.COM

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How to reach us

E-mail the editors at TOH_letters@thefoxgroup.com or write to The Old House magazine, 130 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10020.

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

FOR MANY, HOME IMPROVEMENT IS A WAY OF LIFE. *At least that's what both longtime and brand-new fans told us in their letters this past month. One reader also offered some practical advice in response to Norm's Tricks of the Trade from our May 2016 issue, and we showcase a project guaranteed to stop guests at the door.*

Tip for wood decking

The advice in Norm's Tricks of the Trade in the May 2016 issue on how to tighten the outdoor deck framing is particularly helpful for people with new decks. I've found that the wood used in decking, especially pressure-treated materials, will dry out over time and shrink. When this happens it leaves the bolts and fasteners loose. So if you have new deck, make sure to retighten the fasteners per Norm's advice after the wood has dried.

—HEIDI DUTCH, ACCIDENT, MD

Newfound fan

Just wanted to say you a huge and quick thank you. I recently started receiving your magazine, and it has already moved to the top of my favorite sources of gorgeous inspiration. Thank you for the great work!

—STACY MCINTYRE, WASH. DC

Differ-in-training

She's cute, she's smart, she's 8, and she loves The Old House. She's my daughter Clara, and she'll make rather serious watch on episodes of The Old House than cartoons any day like she likes to read our TOH magazine that comes every month. Just the other day, she was pretending to be Tim Allen and telling me what to do because I'm in "the house." Playing The Old House has really helped to keep her entertained while we've had some pretty big days remodeling.

—LEIGH ANNE SOROK, MONROVIE, CALIF.

Lifelong woodworker

I've been a fan of The Old House for many, many years. I have built small projects for birthday and Christmas presents with reclaimed lumber for a long time, and they tend to get very favorable responses. I usually send my projects by hand, but recently I was forced to buy a built sander because my right shoulder just couldn't take any more swelling motions. Besides, the only way I'll quit doing reclaimed-lumber projects is when I run out of money to buy more lumber.

—DECK BRANAM, LOS ANGELES

Years of lessons

Thank you, The Old House, for years (I hate to say it, but I think decades, actually) of home-improvement instruction. You have given us the knowledge of how to do just about everything. And we have done just about everything!

—LINDA MCINTYRE, WASH. DC

Find May articles, how-tos, and more at thefoxgroup.com every July 2016.



Entryway mudroom

—HARVEY AND SUSAN SMITH, NEWBURN, NC

Reading "A Drop Zone by the Door" in the March 2016 issue inspired us to make our own little nook. The one we built (bottom) provides not only function but a unique artistic flair. I was able to salvage the door from an older home that was being razed and just washed it down and left the cracked paint. Thank you for the great idea!



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Pull Off a Better Paint Job

Checklist JULY 2016

Plan your perfect outdoor party

6 FAST FIXES

1. **Notify the neighbors.** Write a note letting them know you'll be expecting guests. Include your phone number for them to call in case the noise becomes a bother.



2. **Beat the heat.** Put out ice stars and fill a basket with ice cream or jello shots to help guests stay cool.

3. **Ward off bugs.** Get up two days before guests are a problem—they can't stand the breeze. Stack up on eucalyptus oil towels to help guests.

4. **Prep a cleanup kit.** Stash a small broom and dustpan nearby to pick up any broken glass, and some water and a scrub brush for spills.

5. **Put out speakers.** If you don't have an outdoor audio system, place indoor speakers in the back of the yard, facing the house, to direct music toward guests and not to the neighborhood.

6. **Make a plan for exits.** Be prepared to bring the party inside, but make guests feel the same—offer them a drink or a snack.

DIY backyard games

A party essential, outdoor entertainment can be easily achieved with little more than game scrap lumber. Use 4x4 posts and dowels to make a game of Kubb, shown here, or cut 2x4s down to uniform lengths to create a set of dominoes or to make an oversized Jenga set. To get how-to videos and instructions for Kubb and other outdoor games, visit thesaidhouse.com from Saturday.



TOH TIP

Grill with safety in mind

Keep your company safe by using a food thermometer to check the temperature of everything you're serving, that's particularly useful with your grill, which has hot and cold spots. Poultry and ground beef should be cooked to 160°F, and beef, pork, lamb, and veal should reach 145°F. Allow the items to rest at least 3 minutes before guests dig in.

Add ambient lighting

Aside from setting a mood, providing plenty of light sources in your yard will help guests navigate unfamiliar territory. If you're short on electrical outlets, use inexpensive solar-powered lights



to illuminate walkways and areas. If you do run extension cords, make sure they're used for outdoor use, and carefully secure them to the ground to eliminate tripping hazards.

Stabilize wobbly umbrellas

If your umbrella tends to sway with the breeze, it may need a sturdier base. To calculate the minimum weight in pounds your base should be, multiply the diameter of the umbrella canopy in feet by 10—as a 9-foot canopy should have a 90-pound base. You can find add-on weights at home centers if needed.



Add weight to prevent toppling.

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PRALUENT is different than a statin, and is for adults with uncontrolled LDL (bad) cholesterol who have heart problems due to plaque build-up in the arteries, or who have HeFH*

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- * So if diet, exercise, and statins haven't been enough to get your LDL cholesterol to where it needs to be, talk to your doctor about adding PRALUENT.

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What is PRALUENT (alirocumab)?

PRALUENT is an injectable prescription medicine called a PCSK9 inhibitor. PRALUENT is used along with diet and maximally tolerated statin therapy in adults with heterozygous familial hypercholesterolemia (an inherited condition that causes high levels of LDL) or atherosclerotic heart problems, who need additional lowering of LDL cholesterol.

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Talk to your healthcare provider about the right way to prepare and give yourself a PRALUENT injection and follow the "Instructions for Use" that comes with PRALUENT.

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home solutions

INSIDE | DIY DECOR | PROBLEM-SOLVERS | GRILLING TIPS | GARDEN IDEAS | MORE

Americana paint project

Sure, stars and stripes are a classic, but other motifs tap into our nation's history, too. Take the bandanna print. While the cotton squares had roots in India—and their paisley patterns were named for a manufacturing town in Scotland—after the kachnehs traveled to the Colonies they became a staple for cowboys and other outdoor laborers, who used them to mask their faces from dust. Here, we put a new spin on the bandanna print as a way to dress up a dresser front. All it takes is some paint and a few stamps to reinvent this Old West icon.

FROM PAINT BASE TO LINGER VIBES →



PHOTO: TONY GARDNER

Summary of information about PRALUENT (praluenb) (PRALUENT) Injection, for Subcutaneous Injection Rx Only
What is PRALUENT? PRALUENT is an injectable prescription medicine called a PCSK9 inhibitor. PRALUENT is used along with diet and maximally tolerated statin therapy in adults with heterozygous familial hypercholesterolemia (an inherited condition that causes high levels of LDL, a cholesterol-rich blood protein, who need additional lowering of LDL cholesterol). The effect of PRALUENT on heart problems such as heart attacks, stroke, or death is not known. It is not known if PRALUENT is safe and effective in children.
Who should not use PRALUENT? Do not use PRALUENT if you are allergic to aluminum or to any of the ingredients in PRALUENT. See the end of this Summary of Important Information for a complete list of ingredients in PRALUENT.
What should I tell my healthcare provider before using PRALUENT? Before you start using PRALUENT, tell your healthcare provider about all your medical conditions, including allergies, and if you: - are pregnant or plan to become pregnant; it is not known if PRALUENT will harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking PRALUENT. - are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. You and your healthcare provider should decide if you will take PRALUENT or breastfeed. You should not do both without talking to your healthcare provider first. Tell your healthcare provider a pharmacist about every prescription and over-the-counter medicines you are taking or plan to take, including natural or herbal remedies.
How should I use PRALUENT? - See the detailed "Instructions for Use" that comes with Praluent about the right way to prepare and give your PRALUENT injections. - Use PRALUENT exactly as your healthcare provider tells you to use it. - PRALUENT comes as a single-dose (1 time) pre-filled pen (autoinjector), or as a single-dose pre-filled syringe. Your healthcare provider will prescribe the type and dose that is best for you. - If your healthcare provider decides that you are a candidate, you give the injections of PRALUENT, you or your caregiver should receive training on the right way to prepare and administer PRALUENT. Do not try to inject PRALUENT until you have been shown the right way by your healthcare provider or nurse. - PRALUENT is given as an injection under the skin (subcutaneous) 1 time every 2 weeks. - Do not inject PRALUENT together with other injectable medicines at the same injection site. - Always check the label of your pen or syringe to make sure you have the correct medicine and the correct dose of PRALUENT before each injection. - If you forget to use PRALUENT or are not able to take the dose at your regular time, inject your missed dose as soon as you remember, within 7 days, or wait until the next 7 weeks from the day you missed your dose. This will put you back on your original schedule. If the missed dose is not given within 7 days, wait until your next scheduled dose to restart PRALUENT. This will keep you on your original schedule. If you are not sure when to restart PRALUENT, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist. - If you use more PRALUENT than you should, talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist. - Do not stop using PRALUENT without talking with your healthcare provider. If you stop using PRALUENT, your cholesterol levels can increase.
What are the possible side effects of PRALUENT? PRALUENT can cause serious side effects, including: allergic reactions: PRALUENT may cause allergic reactions that can be severe and require treatment in a hospital. Tell your healthcare provider as soon as you go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away if you have any symptoms of an allergic reaction including a severe rash, including severe itching, a positive skin, or localized swelling. The most common side effects of PRALUENT include: indigestion, itching, swelling, or pain/tenderness at the injection site, symptoms of the common cold, and flu-like symptoms. Tell your healthcare provider if you have any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away. There are not all of the possible side effects of PRALUENT. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for more information. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.
General information about the safe and effective use of PRALUENT Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information Leaflet. Do not use PRALUENT for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give PRALUENT to other people, even if they have the same symptoms that you have. It may harm them. This is a summary of the most important information about PRALUENT. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your doctor or healthcare provider for information about PRALUENT that is written for health professionals. For more information about PRALUENT, go to www.PRALUENT.com or call 1-844-PRALUENT (1-844-776-5838).
What are the ingredients in PRALUENT? - Active ingredient: alirocumab - Inactive ingredients: hydrochloride, polyoxyethyl 20, sorbitol, and water for injection. Manufactured by: sanofi-sintelabo U.S. LLC, Bridgewater, NJ 08807, A SANOFI COMPANY, U.S. License # 1752. Marketed by: sanofi-sintelabo U.S. LLC, (NJ 08807) and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. (NY 10881) / PRALUENT is a registered trademark of Sanofi / 02615 Regeneron Pharmaceuticals, Inc. / sanofi-sintelabo U.S. LLC. Revised: October 2015 AL-PPH-03-OC115

Americana paint projects (CONTINUED)

QUILT-STAR STENCILED SEAT

Reminiscent of the "Lone Star," a red legend about Texas through its star design with eight diamond-shaped points became popular in the mid-1800s. To replicate ours: 1 > Cut out a diamond on paper and use it to trace the shape on a chair of Mylar. 2 > Place a spacer in between, trace another diamond directly across from it. Place the template midway between the two points, and repeat until you have an eight-point star. Cut it out with a utility knife. 3 > Use spray adhesive to hold the stencil, and a foam brush to pressure on paint.



GRANITEWARE TABLETOP

Hand-working, map-to-the-moon enamel fire dishes has been around for over 100 years, but it's the outdied version—popularized in the 1970s by painted handless Pyrex racks and Willamette Warehouses—that most directly evokes our painter dogs. You can choose this example style on a metal tray table in just two steps: 1 > Spray a base coat of red on the entire table, making sure to use a paint that's specially formulated for enamel. 2 > Dogs still scratch brush on white paint, then tap the handle with a stick to flick specks of paint onto the tabletop.

STEP-BY-STEP

HOW TO BANDANNA-STAMP A DRESSER

The pattern is a combination of denim jeans—made with denim's top—and cowboy designs made with printed wooden stamps, which leave a soft, weathered print.

We used wood stamps made for bookbinding paper and fabric. Stamp designs from 10" x 10" and 10" x 10" are shown.



1 > CREATE THE BORDER
Tape off three to six lines around the dresser fronts with about 2 inches apart. Ideally, these form a square.



2 > PAINT BORDERS Use a small artist's brush to paint the borders in a crisp white. You may need multiple coats for coverage.



3 > STAMP ON THE DESIGN
Brush paint onto each stamp, then press firmly on the dresser fronts to fill in border lines and add as circular center design.



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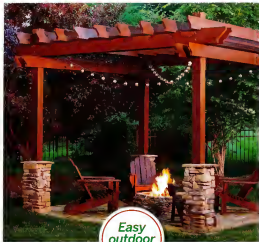
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DON'T MEND THE WET
There's no need for a damp, just-cleaned deck to dry when using Beamrums® stains with acrylic/urea resin.™ In fact, mixing the boards in a hot dry atmosphere brushmarks. (Not applicable to Beamrums solid-color stains.)



CURES FAST
Other duck storms typically need 24 hours of dry weather after application in order to cure properly. But Maximum[®] acrylic/foil sheetsSM cure almost totally in only 6 hours. (Maximum 100% acrylic solid color sheets need 12 hours to cure.)

One & done

Three easy steps to
a single-coat finish*



1. Clean

Using a garden sprayer filled with a deck wash like Olympic's® Premium Deck Cleaner, wet the wood to loosen dirt and decay and remove mildew and algae. Before the deck dries, hose off the residue.



2. Test & wait

Pour water on the boards in different spots around the deck that dries out. If the water is still in boards the wood is good for another season. But if the water sinks in the rot, it's time for a new deck.



3. Apply

You can use a brush roller sprayer or pad to stainwood Teased leg marks work on just two boards at a time.

Let's bring back...

Early old-house dwellers were an ingenious bunch—witness all the charmingly **quirky problem-solvers** showcased here. We revisit six built-in features that have nearly disappeared, and in today's streamlined world, may just deserve a revival. —**DEBORAH KALONIK**



▲ Dumbwaiter

Also known as a food lift, this elevator of things was especially useful in 19th-century houses with basement kitchens. (Thomas Jefferson's Monticello had one.) The dumbwaiter runs up and down a shaft, with the help of hand-operated pulleys, and counterweights. You can still buy dumbwaiters—powered by electricity, not levers.



▲ Wall niche

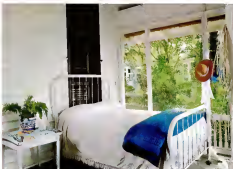
What better—or safer—way to display a favorite vase than in its own special case? Decoratively used recesses like this one, prominent during the Italian Renaissance, flourished in the Victorian era of the late 1800s, providing a place to rest one's eyes while climbing the stairs or waiting for dinner.



▲ In-the-wall milk box

In the early 1900s, as insulated, cast-iron wall inserts, with doors swinging open indoors and out, made it possible for milkmen to drop off dairy products even when a rainy washhouse. Once the milk was inside, it's been locked up so naturally, dairy kept safe. No hoses and disassembling carts that just pass through, and their suppliers, out of business.

PHOTOS: TOP: JEFFREY MAYER; BOTTOM LEFT: JEFFREY MAYER; BOTTOM RIGHT: JEFFREY MAYER; BOTTOM RIGHT: JEFFREY MAYER



▲ Sleeping porch

For the more pleasant time sleeping outdoors, especially when you've got a cold and shiver from bugs and rain. During the height of the early-1900s tubercular epidemic, upstairs acrossed porches were seen as health-promoting—and cooler—sleep spots. Over time, many of these breezy rooms were winterized. But wouldn't it be nice, as you doze off, to sleep the days of summer—made for the soothing sounds of rustling leaves?

▲ Farm bell

By the 1880s, factory-made bells set on posts to become fixtures outside farmhouses, where their far-reaching peals summoned farmhands in for meals or signaled an incoming bus. They later became a way to draw up children back doors and patios—and a useful addition for calling kids in to dinner. The one shown here is installed on a sculptural post that makes it right at home today.



▲ Laundry chute

It's hard to imagine why the early 20th-century convenience has all but disappeared. Although you can still find them in some new houses, fire and safety codes now govern their design and installation. But for the convenience, we think this one's worth the extra planning.

Fire-pit grilling

Roasting marshmallows is only the beginning. With a few simple tools and the right fuel, you can turn a store-bought fire bowl or a built-in fire pit into a camp-style cooker that will feed a crowd. Here, expert Paula Marcoux, author of *Cooking with Fire*, shares her **top tips on pit cooking**. —GILL TRIMBLE

Set up your workspace.

First, you need a grate to cook on. Remove the one from your grill if it fits snugly; if not, shop for a stand alone fire pit grate (IT), stainless steel. Fit the fire pit? You can DIY one. Choose a grate to the back of at least 10 feet from all structures, and dig a hole 6 inches deep to fire line it with rocks.

Light it right.

Like pine might be good fire starters, but they don't burn and tend to melt and splatter. Use the topcooker's charcoal for cooking. Instead, use seasoned, long-burning hardwoods such as oak, hickory, and maple to give foods wood-smoke flavor.

Cook slow and steady.

Let the fire burn down for at

least 40 minutes, or until you can see a coal bed form. Use a fire shovel (SH) to push coals to one side, but avoid vent to the other side—this is what you'll cook over, so you'll provide some even heat from the actual flames. Use the other side to keep the fire burning as you can replenish the coal bed as needed.

Over up.

Cast-iron Dutch ovens and griddles, earthenware, and stone are all fire-safe and can be used to cook everything from soups and stews to pizza. If you really want to go all out, consider a roasting spit (RS), stainless steel, to cook large cuts of meat, with a drip pan positioned below. Otherwise, a stainless steel grill rack is a solid choice—and you'll finally be able to put that extra-long handled spatula to use.



Your charcoal grill's grate can serve as cooking surface for a DIY fire pit.



Hang a tree swing—safely

Ready to swing into action? Hook them up by choosing a branch at least 6 inches around and drilling holes for two eyebolts. To attach rope with a double running bowline knot, follow below.



Q1 Thread the rope through the eyebolt, then make two loops. Q2 Thread the short end of the rope through the two loops from behind, then Q3 place it behind the long end. Q4 Thread the short end back up through the two loops. Q5 Pull both ends tight. Q6 Slip a thumb through the eyebolt to keep the rope from fraying. Insert the eyebolt into the branch and cap with a washer and two nuts.

Lawn weeds you can eat

In every lawn a few weeds must grow—or so it seems. But here's some good news: Many of these unwanted plants are actually tasty edible greens, sometimes sold at farmers' markets. Of course, before you pick, ensure your lawn has not been chemically treated for at least three years. If you're in the clear, give these greens a try. —GAIL WAGNER



Dandelion

Bright yellow spots of dandelions appear in most lawns in spring and fall—and as anyone who's tried to fight them knows, they often grow back as fast as you can pull them. But from flower to taproot, the entire plant is edible and packed with vitamins A, B, C, and D, along with essential minerals. Eat the leaves raw or cooked, or brew the flowers into a tea that also serves as a mild diuretic.



Plantain

No, not the banana-like fruit. This weedy, unimpressive European import adapts to grow everywhere from beds to wilderness. Plantain is a weed, but harvest in spring and summer when they're young and tender: have a spinach-like flavor and contain protein, iron, potassium, and vitamin C. The flower spike can be cooked like a green—or dried and ground into a flour.



Purslane

This fleshy succulent happens to be a great source of omega-3 fatty acids and antioxidants, including vitamins A, E, and C. Those antioxidants help fight cell-damaging free radicals and may help prevent wrinkles. Toss a bunch of purslane with some fish, leaf parsley, and tomatoes then dress with olive oil and lemon juice for a light summer salad.



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Next-gen cook space

A homeowner reworks her mother's kitchen, creating a cheery, hardworking hub that helps her cater to her own daughter's home life

BY NINA WALKER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREGG SEGAL

FOND MEMORIES of childhood often feature the family kitchen, but that doesn't mean we'd want to cook there today. For Mikaela Randoyle, who inherited the Los Angeles home she grew up in, the L-shaped kitchen, though a good size, didn't function well. A peninsula hampered the food prep area, effectively forming a galley with sink and freezer at opposite ends. And the expiration date had long since passed on her mom's 1987 ride.

To reimagine the room, Mikaela enlisted designer Kelly Finley, who removed the peninsula to allow for an island at the heart of a high-functioning U-shaped cooking zone. At the far end of the room, she tackled an existing nook with a breakfast nook out of the way of foot traffic. Sleek stainless-steel appliances and custom flat-panel cabinets—pale gray around the perimeter and bright blue for the island—give the room the timeless yet modern look Mikaela was after. “My mom was practical, not trendy, and believed in buying quality,” says Mikaela. “I can just imagine the smile on her face if she could see this kitchen now.”



BEFORE



BEFORE A 1987 remodel left the kitchen with dark oak cabinets, peeling laminate and appliances that had seen better days.

AFTER Homeowner Mikaela Randoyle and her daughter, Mya, enjoy the remodeled space along with the family dog, Huxley. Sleek stainless-steel appliances and custom flat-panel cabinets—pale gray around the perimeter and bright blue for the island—give the room the timeless yet modern look Mikaela was after. “I can just imagine the smile on her face if she could see this kitchen now.”



homeowner tip

SMALLA RANDOLPH
LOS ANGELES
"Open shelving
means you have
accountability—it
keeps you from
letting things get
cluttered."

Deep drawers in the island
allow back-stiff access
to large pots. A boardwalk
walk denotes the need
for a head, leaving room
for sleek floating shelves.
Gray stainless-steel
fronts are light enough
to complement the color
scheme and dark enough
to hide dirt. Cooktop,
dishwasher, Jenn Air
Fahrenheit Delta Floor Jager



before

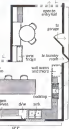
A peninsula turned
corner at the 336 square feet
into an awkward galley



after

The work zone is now centered
around an island in the wider
part of the L, while the narrower
section has the table

1. Carved out a wide
canted opening to the
living room to improve
flow between the rooms
2. Snipped the
peninsula for an island with a
U-shaped walk
come around it
3. Closed up
the dining room
doorway, added
a set of stairs to
the no-loadings



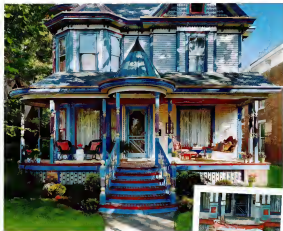
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Queen Anne revival

A 1902 house's long-neglected porch regains its turn-of-the-century charm BY CHARLOTTE BURRUM • PHOTOGRAPHS BY NATHAN KIRKMAN

ELABORATE POSTS, expressive flows, whimsical stencils, and intricate paint-color schemes make the porches on Queen Anne-style houses among America's most decorative. Of course, these prized features multiply the challenges when it comes to restoring them, as Amy and Doug Henslin found when buying a 1902 daisywood in the rough-in Franklin, Indiana. Because the house had been vacant for more than a year, they had to spend the first year repairing the falling state roof and rotting exterior before they could turn their

attention—and funds—to the front porch, whose deteriorating steps and peeling paint would require a major job to sort out.

Online searching led them to historically accurate posts, spindles, and skirting. New tongue-and-groove pine flooring replaced the rotting original, with new brick piers shoring up the pavilion as well as the sagging middle. A fresh paint scheme of six different colors puts a friendly, gracious face to the neighborhood. Says Amy of the once spooky space: "Now it's a fun, welcoming place to be."



BEFORE

BEFORE Rotting steps and peeling paint hid the exterior's under design.

AFTER The homeowners swapped in period-appropriate turned posts, then added matching vinyl railings for comfort and safety. New tongue-and-groove flooring, skirting, and paint colors breathe fresh life into the Victorian-era house. The central copper railing sets a bold, historic look.



The latest posts the homeowners chose for the porch—and for a balcony on the side of the house—are custom-crafted to the exact detail shown in a 2002 photograph that Amy found at the local historical society. Photo: Century Porch Post



Homeowners Amy and Doug Henslin spend far more time on the new tongue-and-groove pine floor to help it resist weathering. It echoes the original clear-coated hardwood ceiling, which was in great shape. The skirting, once a dark, stained material, is stained in and painted in blue and red paint job that ties in with the windows.



Amy researched historical paint colors. Then went with color scheme of blue, grey, purple, and cream, and gold-tinged trim. To sample the final look, she found and hired The Porch Contractor. The painting contractor helped her figure out which color to use where to make all the house details really pop. Photo: Peter Davis



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Terraced for entertaining

A homeowner turns a sloping backyard into a series of outdoor rooms designed with friends in mind

BY JAMIE HUBER • PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEBORAH WHITMAN LLEWELLYN

IT TAKES MORE THAN A SMILE to make guests feel at home—and no less so when you're headed outdoors. A backyard needs places for people to sit, sup, and converse. Buck Davis had precisely that goal in mind when he set about transforming the barren area behind his tiny Atlanta bungalow. The sloping yard, overlooking 80 feet from the house, offered only a few trees, weeds, grass, and a chain-link fence.

Buck began by yanking out the fence, leveling the lowest portion of the slope, and

adding a retaining wall to support the elevated middle section. Then he began creating his entertaining zones: a deck nearly as wide as the house, followed by an "all-roadside area" paved with flagstones just below it. The finale: a patio on the lower lawn with a granite fireplace to draw visitors. From the design (mostly his own) to the landscaping (mostly by his garden-pro cousin, Wayne Vasey), Buck couldn't be more pleased. "I wanted my yard to mirror the people I love," he says, "and it does."



BEFORE

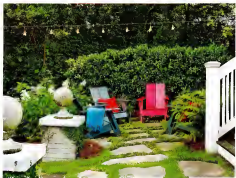
BEFORE The first round of work left the lowest area of the yard level but otherwise unimproved. A stone wall went in to define the higher middle section effort.

AFTER A massive granite fireplace on a stone patio makes this spot popular year-round. In summer guests love to gather here for stone-crisp games, sipped-in style after dinner on the deck.



BEFORE

The lower lawn was the first to be landscaped (BEFORE) with a stone wall delineating the middle tier of the yard. Stuccoing the new location brought shade from the fireplace patio to some steps, then onto the deck stairs connecting the three spaces. See *Room & Board*.



A pair of brick pillars with ball finials anchors the fireplace seating area between the deck and the stone wall. Matching brick posts support the corners of the deck and echo original columns on the front of the 1930s bungalow.

Outdoor red umbrellas brighten the outdoor kitchen area, some with smoky style chairs that slide back when open so guests can grab a plate and serve themselves. An ice chest fits under the island counter to save the need for an outdoor fridge.



homeowner tip

EUCYDAMS, ATLANTA

"To tie all the spaces together and add atmosphere at night, I ran commercial patio string lights all the way from the fireplace to the deck's brick pillars."

Seated guests can store drinks and even plates on cake-style side tables that back against the island. Red umbrellas provide shade. DIY shelves on the privacy fence behind the railing. To keep the candleholders in place, Eucy used a Forstner bit to drill recesses into the studs. A dining table and grill were set on the deck's upper side. Design ideas: Pottery Barn.

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ABOVE LEFT: The Promised Derby kit came about \$4, but these days the basic ingredients are not always enough. An entire outfit (including a variety of other market parts) has sprung up around creating scouted-up cars.

ABOVE RIGHT: An ad from the 1967 Cub Scout catalog depicts the thrill of the event.

How to push the limits

By Josh Gertner
1965, READING, PA.
One winter morning in 1965, late fourth grade, I boarded out of bed and stepped my foot on a rail from an unbuilt Raceweld Derby kit.

The day before, I'd gotten the kit from my Cub Scout pack containing the 13 parts I'd need to build the car for the upcoming race. Inside was a block of pine, which needed to be carved into a race-car body, four plastic wheels, and the four rails and two gears across they'd fit into as a primitive axle assembly. That night, I'd gotten as far as pushing the rails through the wheels before losing interest and going to sleep. I had directly spread them around the floor just as my bed like giant thumbtacks. Hence my impromptu.

My dad helped me get the end of my leg out, and punched my gear home from work, he took me down to his shop.

My father was a regular Leonardo da Vinci—he was the guy in the neighborhood who could fix anything. Every week, he would bring home some chairs with loose joints, tricky epoxy problems, clipped chisel. A chemical engineer and lawyer by training, he owned a factory that made fireproof tools, which he designed. His basement shop contained an enormous woodworking set, a forestry, and a laboratory in which we would, a few years later, almost kill ourselves when we accidentally made cyanide gas (fourth grade science project gone horribly awry).

My dad examined the slightly bloodied Derby parts and the rules, which promised a slight loss between his teeth—his “thinking sound.” He described our a shape on the wood block, and brought a belt sander to bear on it, turning the resultant black carbonaceous—well, so one it looked every like a

nicked woman. Of course, I was 8 and at the time almost everything looked like a naked lady to me. Regardless, the shape was sleek and aerodynamic as a car. Next, he had me paint it gold—two coats, which seemed cruel. After it dried, we fixed the axle to the body and pinned on the plastic wheels. My dad wrapped the car in his lab.

We went way under the 5-ounce weight limit. Physics, he explained, dictated that weight, along with aerodynamics, was our friend. So he, having constructed an axle, drilled six inch-wide hole in the car's underside. Then he attached a slat of lead in his laundry and pinned it into the hole, when it hardened into onyx blue. The car weighed 5 ounces, as the bonus.

The following week, we descended at the derby. Well, almost—we finished second. I think the winner's dad used gas paint on his rules. Cheater.

How to get things straight

By Scott Carson
2071, WILMINGTON, MA.
My dad had a workshop in the corner of the basement, and I remember going down there with him. We were dealing with these plastic wheels and basically finish nails for the axle. He told me, “Let's polish these up, get rid of all the burrs.” Basically, one of the big lessons I learned was how to hammer a nail. He gave me a box of nails and a Sears Craftsman finish hammer and said, “You're gonna nail these in straight.” I did that for a long time. He would show me something and then I would do it.

The hours that we spent making race cars were spent on a absolutely beautiful! Not to brag, but I think I got second place.

When to play it safe

By Ross Trewhary
1995, DEERHAM, MA.
The first year, I wanted to do it all on my own, and I finished on the bottom third. The second time around, I asked my dad for help, and of course he was all about it. I'm thinking we'd use his power tools to get the block more angled, instead he goes, “Let's put together some clamps, then call up Nemo to see if we can get into New Yankee Workshops.” I was like, “Wow, you can do that?” He said, “We can do that.”

We literally had the workshop to ourselves. There were vacuum hoses hanging down, tools were lying—I didn't even know where to start. I just remember it was so clean. We used a plane to cut out



the block and a lathe to get the rocket-ship nose. We chiseled the underside for the wheels to reduce drag. The wheels were with rails, but we got rid of them and put in an actual axle. We sanded it and painted it red.

I remember my dad was a huge racing nut. He'd always say, “Just think about when this piece of wood goes in the machine, what does it want to do?” That has always stuck with me.

We weighed that out in the shop

and we were a little under 5 ounces—I think we played it a little safe. We ended up finishing second, but building the car with my dad is something I'll never forget.

How to work together

By Ross Trewhary
1996, DEERHAM, MA.
I didn't get the wins with the New Yankee Workshops, but my dad and I went out to the barn and we got the tools going. I remember we cut out the bottom with a chisel so that the wheels fit right into the body. We made it aerodynamic with a sander and used a router to give it a spoiler. Then we went to the Oakdale School gym, where they air up the track from the stage.

This is one of the first things my dad and I did together that would have been considered a competition. Ross and I always felt like when we were doing something like that, because we had Dad, we were going to win. We came in second, but it was something we did together that built on the big picture of why we're all these best friends. ■

ABOVE: This Old House plumbing and heating expert Richard Trewhary taking a break during a 1996 resident building project with his sons: Ross (center) and Scott, and the family cat. Below: “The new things built stuff together,” says Scott.

LEFT: Scott Carson, member chairman for Ast Old House (predecessor to the New Yankee Workshops) on the example of an older boy (who was an Eagle Scout) and “could do all these amazing things” with his friends.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SCOTT CARSON; RACEWELD DERBY KIT COURTESY OF CUB SCOUTS; SCOTT CARSON

Pineapple crush

No matter how you slice it, this tropical fruit has had enduring appeal as a decorative motif and a symbol of welcome, from colonial days to the present

BY NICHELLE BRUNNER

1. IN EARLY 18TH-CENTURY

America, if you wanted to make a big impression on guests, you might have served them pineapple. Back then the sweet fruit with the prickly appearance was a rare treat, few specimens made the voyage along the West Indies trade route to the Colonies without spoiling. Preserving such an exotic delicacy signified wealth, worldliness, and good taste, and serving it made guests feel like VIPs. But early Americans weren't just fond of the fruit as a status symbol; they also loved to shape Creole houses with its likeness because a fashionable architectural element for garden walkways and doorways. Soon pineapples sprouted up on everything from cornices to moldings. By the mid-18th century, the fruit's image had become synonymous with hospitality and graciousness.

Today pineapples are enjoying a spike in popularity as a decorative element on all manner of home goods. Up next, six ways to welcome that friendly fruit into your own house.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Charming Georgian gardens adorns a white-plastered house in garden gate in pineapple-shaped frame with ornamental tile steps in brick house. modeling the entrance to a garden path in outline of the fruit adorns the lobby in a country house in a kitchen. pineapples with wire chrome-plated stylized look, captures the real happen. A brick back to the pineapple motifs commonly found on buildings in ancient Rome



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1. outdoor final

Model your house stone and wallpaper with this ornamental resemblance. Set this lantern on a shelf light in an entryway. With its metallic finish and black frame, it could stand as a flower bed or a pretty pink porch. \$79, bellelitten.com

2. shaggy silver lamp

Set this lantern on a shelf light in an entryway. With its metallic finish and black frame, it could stand as a flower bed or a pretty pink porch. \$79, bellelitten.com

3. rigid wallpaper

Decorate up a light with a playful pineapple print. This 12x12 inch paper is non-permanent, hand-applied. Available in four colors. \$24.95 per roll, hugobob.com

4. snug-style accent

Made of brass with a black frame, this pineapple-shaped accent is a great way to welcome the season. It's a great way to say "These are some of the best of the season." \$24.95 per roll, hugobob.com

5. whimsical doormat

Put some color on your doormat with a whimsical pineapple doormat. It's a great way to say "These are some of the best of the season." \$24.95 per roll, hugobob.com

6. graphic doormat

Put some color on your doormat with a graphic pineapple doormat. It's a great way to say "These are some of the best of the season." \$24.95 per roll, hugobob.com



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Checks, please

Plain walls take on the fresh look of a gingham print with three shades of blue on a field of white. **BY MEGAN BAKER • PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW MCCALL**

IT'S HARD TO THINK of a pattern that evokes a breezy summer feeling more readily than these cheery checks. That's a quintessentially American country charm to the paint, which tends to find a home among warm-weather staples like picnic baskets and outdoor table linens—and who could forget Dorothy's iconic blue-and-white pinpoints, straight out of Kansas?

We've replicated the look of the classic fabric here by starting with a base coat of white, then creating a grid of squares and applying three shades of blue. While the painting itself is straightforward, the process does require special attention to make sure each box ends up the right color. The trick: Start by measuring and marking off rows of same-size squares, then outline just one set of colored boxes as a rule with tape. When those squares are painted, move on to the next set. That way, you'll reuse the same measurements for each color block from start to finish.

The final result is a classic look especially at home in a kitchen or breakfast nook—but with a change to paler or more neutral colors, it could freshen up virtually any room in the house.



For clean lines, tape off and paint only one set of squares at a time.

FOR STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS, TURN THE PAGE →

STEP-BY-STEP



3) Measure and mark. Start with base coat of flat white. Then, using a pencil, tape measure, and level, mark off vertical and horizontal rows to create 7-inch squares, starting at the center of the wall and moving out. It's okay if the squares at the corners are slightly uneven.



20 Tape off the darkest squares. Starting along the top row, use a small piece of painter's tape to tag every other square in every other row; these will get the darkest blue paint. Run tape vertically along the outside lines of all the marked boxes then run tape along the outside of their horizontal lines.



2) Paint the dark squares. Using a small foam roller, fill in the marked boxes with your darkest color. Use a light touch and apply two coats for even coverage, allowing the first coat to dry completely before adding the second.



47 Remove tape, then outline the midline squares. While the second dark coat is still tacky, peel up the tape at an angle; then let paint dry completely. Starting along the second row, tug and tape off the squares above and below the ones you've already painted, making sure to tape along the outside of the squares that will receive the midline blue, as in *File 2*.



51 Paint the midline squares. Roll the midline blue onto the second set of squares. Let the first coat dry completely before putting down the second. Pull up the tape while the paint is tacky, then let paint dry completely before moving on.



6) Tape off, then paint, the lightest squares. The lightest blue will go on either side of the dark blue squares. Tape off these boxes along the outside of their outlines, as shown above, and paint them as per the previous steps. **Tip!** Once you get to the tape you'll be able to check out your graph's pattern. ■

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Must-see TV homes

They were the spaces your favorite sitcom characters called home. Get ready for a nostalgia-inducing trip through TV's most famous interiors

BY MICHELLE BRUNNER



REMEMBER "APPOINTMENT TV" when we gathered around the tube each week to tune in to our favorite shows? Together we watched the week's latest *Pink* and *Lucas* (Petrie log and shaming on their plaid living room carpet. We greeted the *Baywatch* as they laid aside their introductory sonar for the raucous contemporary coastal comedy series as *Andrew* followed *Lucy* (Kinsella as the bachelorette) making misadventures in the *Mad About You* apartment she and *Pinky* shared. Not only did these set spaces provide a place for the action to unfold, they also reflected the architectural and interior styles of the times. We, the house-obsessed, remember the set well—and so do nostalgia buffs. Artist and author Mark Bennett is a bit of both. Casual-lux homes spent matching vintage sitcom interiors inspired him to imagine layouts for these fictitious TV houses. We've highlighted a few of these rooms here—as well as ways to bring some of their retro style to your own home.



Mark Bennett's special project, *TV Sets*, features blueprints of classic TV homes.



ABOVE One room on the subject's list: the set of *The Petries*—here, showing off their upcoming divorce to a friend—always looked like they were having the time of their lives. **BELLOW** The family's sunken living room, as rendered by Bennett's elegant design for entertaining, without open plan and built-in seating for friends who drop by



The Petries' ranch house

Not every sitcom features a memorable mid-century modern abode, but not many TV houses were as stylish as *Pink* and *Lucas* Petrie from *The Dick Van Dyke Show* (1961–1966). With graceful wall coverings and a unique cornucopia of side in the living room, one thing's for sure: Comedy writer Bob and his homemaker wife sure did live well (and so, New York's New York, home—consider it a well-loved living room having a lot of fun doing so. With collaborations like the Petries, suburban life could not have seemed more attractive.

GET THE LOOK

1 Moroccan pendant
Persian metal details and a teardrop shape make this light fixture a cool addition to your home. *Arco lamp, \$125; moroccanpendant.com*



2 retro armchair
The wingback is a classic—and covered—furniture design. Here, it's given the same modern look as the chair at left. *Glenn Greenberg chair, \$275; blue.com*



3 grasscloth wallpaper
Popular in the 1960s and '70s, grasscloth is still a sophisticated way to add texture to walls. *Reverend floor grasscloth, \$251 per 36-square-foot roll; jared.com*





ABOVE: The Bradys' famous staircase was the scene of many family photos. The kitchen puts the vibrant orange, olive, and yellow into a grand central color scheme at the size: \$12.2K. See next's open concept floor plan features the combined living room and dining area, as well as a tiger-themed hydro-massaging stone columns.



The Bradys' split-level

Sure, *Architectural Digest* "More, More, More!" was a solve for anyone who knew the story of living really well living second best—so much so that it earned a permanent place in design nation's homes. But the Bradys' contemporary split-level house, with its extended ceiling, living streamers, and mix of brick and stone, is just as memorable. After all, it brought together one of network TV's first-headed families—considered a home subject in 1966, when *Design* magazine published a photo of the Bradys' split-level home. Three years later, the *Brady Bunch* pilot aired, followed by the season (1969–1974), and two seasons in the 1980s—with look-alike interiors.

GET THE LOOK

1 | faux tile cabinet

Architect Mike Brady probably stored his blueprints in the tile-like cabinet. The coffee table below offers similar proportions and storage. Kingsley table: \$450, reynoldsoutlet.com



2 | horse sculpture

Figure sculpture was popular in the 1970s. This hand-carved wooden horse sculpture is similar to the one on the fireplace cabinet. See next's open concept floor plan. Horse figure: \$200, Pier1Imports.com



3 | statement lamp

With a curvy shape like the lamp in the living room above, this light is a statement in a word. Give it a name, contemporary look. Acrylic mid-century lamp: \$150, lampglass.com



The Ricardos' brownstone apartment

A two-bedroom with pastel colors and floral wallpaper, the walls, located in Manhattan's East 64th Street, was the fictional setting for the comedy series *I Love Lucy* (1951–1957). The fictional Ricardos of the '50s provided an all-American backdrop for the comic actress and her husband, Ricky Ricardo, who was a Cuban-born bandleader. Lucy and Ricky were often seen in the show's living room, which was a small, cozy, and charming space. The show's success led to a film, *I Love Lucy*, and a TV special, *I Love Lucy: The Movie*.



ABOVE: The Ricardos' living room was inspired by New York standards and even featured a fireplace—unusual in city dwellings. \$12.2K. See next's floor plan also shows the adjoining door to the kitchen, which was the inspiration for *I Love Lucy*'s famous doorway.



GET THE LOOK

1 | brass andirons

Brass andirons are a classic touch that have a classic look, which was popular in the 1950s and '60s. Their design is sure to spice up any fireplace. Brass andirons: \$140, www.furniture.com



2 | retro phone

Landlines may be a thing of the past, but you can still take calls the old-fashioned way. This vintage-style phone looks a lot like Lucy's, with one exception: Push-button ones ruled in the 1950s. Old Desk phone: \$60, onebigred.com



3 | slipper chair

At times Lucy and Ricky perched on side-by-side slipper chairs, instead of a sofa. With a low profile and lovely floral prints, this chair offers comparable mid-century style. Acrylic tufted retro chair: \$250, myfifties.com



Reviving a faded Victorian

A high-contrast paint scheme and period-style accents help a Queen Anne cottage keep pace with its neighbors

BY MICHELL B. BURLINGER +
ILLUSTRATION BY DRAGUITS INC.

"OUR HOUSE looks to have compared with the others on our street," says Elizabeth Olson, who is remodeling this 1929 cottage in San Francisco for her family of five. So she turned to local architect Andre Rothblatt for ideas to inspire her.

"The facade is totally lacking in ornamentation," says Rothblatt of the stuccoed-down Queen Anne. He would add appropriate embellishments, such as a frieze board with a decorative swing railing and a carved sunburst in the gable end, which will really pop against a new deep-blue exterior color. Next, he suggests opening up the partially enclosed porch, and swapping in turned-wood balusters to make the street more inviting. Curvy brackets, one-light windows, and a carriage-style garage door boost the curb appeal even more.

Says Elizabeth, "I love this design so much, we're already hired a carpenter to start working on the accents!" ■



Restoring a windowed wall that enclosed the porch (left) with an open railing makes for a more welcoming entry.

finishing touches

Classic details and a rich color palette refresh a no-frills facade



window
Large single-light or double windows are true to the Queen Anne style. This clad-wood model can be custom ordered at the factory. Mending from \$300.



pendant
With its arched silhouette and clear seeded glass, this three-bulb lantern will cast an inviting glow over the front steps. Delivery \$225.



paint
Putty and red accents stand out against a deep blue body. Earth's Southern Evening Gothic Patch and Red Tundra. \$20 per gallon.



baluster
Turned wood spindles like this 6-inch-dia. cedar one are typical of the elaborate millwork on houses of this style. Vantage Woodworks, starting at \$40 each.

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Your own private prairie

Sidestep the rigid rules of traditional garden design and take a walk on the wild side. BY ANNE B. KEYS



TIRED OF TINY MEXICAN and perfectly edged flower beds? Consider loosening up with a prairie-style garden. This great American landscape, like an open canvas the meadow, plays to a love of wide-open spaces with an exuberant mix of forms that most formal plant combinations just can't match.

True prairies, found in the West, are largely populated by native warm-season grasses, like switch grass, that thrive in arid summer conditions. Meadows, more often found in the East, can be damp or dry, and often include a greater concentration of colorful native perennials, like black-eyed Susans and purple coneflowers, alongside cool-season grasses that grow in spring and fall. In both cases, plants that do well in

these environments prefer full sun and thrive on neglect—so they're harder and more drought-resistant than most other garden plants.

Prairies and meadows have in common a wild, monochromatic look that is in much about texture as it is about color. These spaces feel rugged yet inviting, begging you to take a stroll—*one reason they are often favored in urban settings these days.* Heavy on native plants, they naturally attract butterflies, birds, and bees that appreciate the cover grasses offer, as well as the nectar and seeds flowering perennials, like coneflowers, provide. But nonnative, noninvasive plants, like Russian sage, can also benefit wildlife and complement the prairie plant palette.

Whether a meadowed garden style you prefer, planting a broad swath or just a smaller border

A curving path of crushed shell invites guests to wander through this prairie-style planting of purple and white coneflowers, aptly be a grass, following switch grass, yellow coneflower and Queen Anne's Lace.

PHOTO: JEFFREY MORGAN/ARTIST

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does require a little know-how. The first factor to consider when it comes to plant selection is size. In traditional garden design, taller plants are placed behind shorter ones for easy viewing. But nature produces a lot more variety than we do, so, starting with grasses, pick a few species for your prairie, and plant each in eye-catching drifts, mixing various heights as you go.

Pay attention to bloom sequence, too. There's no sense in planting something only to have its flowers overshadowed as a larger plant gains its star. Choose smaller-scale plants—like hair grass or 'Weiber's Love' cranes—that bloom early in the season, after which they can give way to larger bloomers like Russian sage in mid- to late summer. Winter-season grasses work well for hiding the spent blossoms of earlier blooming perennials.

Last, consider plant form. Pine-textured grasses create the bones of the garden, giving meadows and prairies their atmospheric solemnity. They also bring subtle color and movement, ranging in life in the slightest breeze. Grasses can be low, mounding, or tall and upright, while most flowering perennial blossoms can be categorized as stars, spikes, or spheres. Fine stars, along with grasses, should be most prevalent in the garden, while spikes and spheres are dramatic accents.

Though the northern may appear casual, planting a prairie garden does entail a bit of maintenance. In a true prairie or meadow all available spaces are filled with plants, but that takes time. Many of the players follow the "clump, creep, leap" rule: In the first year, seedlings follow the second, followed by a leaper in the third. Weeds find a way to camouflage themselves in a prairie-style garden, making it easy to apply a judicious weeding response. A top dressing of compost is the only fertilizer new plants need.

Many prairie plants self-seed, developing into drifts that move in the wind. Once the growing season is over, pruning mowclippers young plants to fill in. The best time to cut plants back is late winter, promoting a flush of spring growth.

These rustic gardens have a casual feel, but would growers dread the mess near your spend looking in them. While your yard might not be as large as the wide-open West, even a small prairie-style planting can give it a dose of prairie-ness—and that's something any backyard gardener can embrace.

Grasses: the foundation

Plant these low-maintenance fibers in swaths of varying heights to form the garden's backbone.



LOW-GROWING

These grasses stay under 3 feet tall and set the garden floor arming out weekly. Some that grow in Zones 4-10

- *Blonde Ambition* blue grass
- *Quintess* hair grass (Zone 4)
- *Prickly-pear*



MOUNDING

Blousy and full, these grow 2 to 4 feet tall and make an eye-catching sight when perennials. They also play well against upright forms. Some that grow in Zones 2-9

- *Red hair* red grass
- *Red hair* red grass
- *Red hair* red grass
- *Red hair* red grass



UPRIGHT

Remembered for their pointed, upright stems, these grasses reach 4 to 6 feet, giving the eye up. Some that grow in Zones 5-9

- *Threat* (hair)
- *Threat* (hair)
- *Threat* (hair)
- *Threat* (hair)

Perennials: color and contrast

Break up grasses with these varied flower shapes to draw the eye around the landscape.



STARS

These playful petals or discs are made of small, delicate or colorful petals. The most striking have a pointed disc. Some perennials that grow in Zones 4-8

- *Threat* (hair)
- *Threat* (hair)
- *Threat* (hair)
- *Threat* (hair)



SPHERES

These playful petals or discs are made of small, delicate or colorful petals. The most striking have a pointed disc. Some perennials that grow in Zones 2-9

- *Threat* (hair)
- *Threat* (hair)
- *Threat* (hair)
- *Threat* (hair)



SPIKES

Vertical columns of blossoms rise in the garden, making an eye-catching sight when perennials. Some that grow in Zones 4-9

- *Threat* (hair)
- *Threat* (hair)
- *Threat* (hair)
- *Threat* (hair)

Prairie-style plantings

The naturalistic rhythm of these gardens shows off a range of grass and flower forms.



Colorful meadow

The bright colors of this meadow are made of grasses and flowers. They are surrounded by bright flowers. They also provide a natural backdrop for areas of more subtle, muted colors, on delicate stems. The shape and color of these wildflowers are chosen to complement the grasses in the foreground.

THERE'S MORE! Find 30 right now plants for your prairie garden in the book *Prairie Style* by the author of *Prairie Style*.



• **Grass-lined lane** This winding gravel walkway is bordered with drought-tolerant, low-growing plants on one side and more varied yellow, goldenrod on the other. Sunny yellow playbush adds color and height to the distance, while the dark leaves of the *Monarda* offer a layer of depth that can be glimpsed through the wispy grass.



Staggering beauty

The wild mix of blue and green plants along the border, green and gold variegated *Japanese* *Monarda* create the rich height found in nature's prairie. Clusters of yellow flowers fill the space between the grasses, adding color to the plants.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS. STYLING BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS. HAIR BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS. MAKEUP BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS. DRESS BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS. SHOES BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS. ACCESSORIES BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS.

2 Cut the corner posts

A) Adjust the saw. The 4x4 corner posts raise the coop off the ground and away from predators while supporting the walls. Use the gable-end raft to locate the saw's angle, so you can cut the tops of the posts to match the roof's pitch. Place the scrap against the saw, as shown, then select the blade until the kerf in the saw bed matches the angle of the scrap.

B) Mark the posts. Measure and mark the height of a post, then mark it for the cut angle down and away from that mark. Repeat for the remaining posts.



3 Build the frame

A) Join posts and sheathing. Align a gable end on top of two posts on the work surface. Use a rafter square to keep the top and sides at each post even with the edges of the gable. Then drive 2½-inch deck screws through the sheathing into the posts, as shown, evenly spaced along the length of the post. Repeat with the other gable end and posts.

B) Add supports. Cut four 2x4 supports to fit between the posts. Add a floor support flush with the bottom edge of the gable end and fasten it with deck screws, as shown. Secure the wall supports flat against the gable end and flush with the top of the rafters. Drive a pair of 2½-inch deck screws through the side of each end post and into the wall support and into the floor support for additional strength. Repeat on the second gable end.

C) Attach sidewall and roof structure. Working on the ground, use 1½-inch screws to secure a gable end to the sawn roof without a floor, making the bottom edges flush. Attach the other gables, forming a three-sided structure. Cut and attach a floor support between the side wall posts. Add a wall support between the post tops, parallel to the slope of the rafters, by screwing through the sheathing. Cut two 2x4s for joists, to fit between the gable ends. Finish an end with 1½-inch screws facing between the gable's peak and an end square with the roof's angle. Repeat on the other side of the peak, then cut and screw in a 2x4 ridge beam just below the gable peaks. Slide the coop upright and add the fourth side's floor and wall supports, but don't add the sheathing.



SEE HOW IT'S DONE
To watch the Ask The Oldhouse TV episode on this project, and to download the step-by-step instructions to build the chicken coop, visit thisoldhouse.com/chicken-coop.

4 Add the floor

A) Block the plywood. Cut and attach a pair of 2x4 floor joists parallel to the gable ends by driving 2½-inch screws through the sheathing and into the end gable. Measure the area for the floor and cut a piece of plywood to size. Then use a 4x4 scrap to mark notches to fit around the posts and cut the joists a ½-inch as shown.

B) Attach the floor. Drive 1½-inch screws through the floor and into the supports, as shown. Add more screws through the floor and into the joists.



5 Install the sliding door

A) Build the door. Glue a piece of plywood of the same size to the back of the sliding door. Glue 2x2 rails to the sides of the assembly. Nail with the door and attach them with 2½-inch stainless steel nails, as shown. Then, an eye hook into the center of the plywood's top edge.

B) Add the pulley system. Make a track for the door with 2x2s twice its height. Attach them to both sides of the opening with 2½-inch screws fastened through the outside of the gable wall. Center the door in the opening and add 3-inch wide plywood strips to the tracks with 2½-inch screws to conceal the door. Drill a 1½-inch diameter hole through the wall support above the eye hook. Then hang a pulley on a hook from the beam above. Fit the rollers around the pulley track through the hole, and tie it around the eye hook, as shown.

C) Tie the rope off. Add another pulley to the other end of the beam and thread the clothesline around it. Attach a rope cleat to the post inside the coop, outdoors. Pull the rope down until the door opens, and tie the loop on the rope that when pulled to the post will be up the door rope. The 1½-inch hinges and hardware to the doors and floor and support in place. Screw a 2x4 to the outside wall of the coop on the left side to act as a doorstop.



6 Build the nesting boxes

A) Make the frame. Build a frame with a plywood top bottom, and vertical walls, cut to fit under the angled roof. Nail on plywood strips across the bottom and halfway up the front of the frame, as shown, creating an upper and a lower row of nesting boxes.

B) Add the nesting boxes. Cut floors for the three upper nesting boxes out of plywood. Place each floor piece through the sides and the plywood strip. Cut these 2x2s 4 inches longer than the frame's depth to support the perch. Add one under the floor of each upper box and attach them with 1½-inch screws. Cut a 2x4 perch the width of the frame, then drive 2½-inch screws through it and into the 2x2s, as shown. For added support, glue plywood blocking under the upper nesting box floors.

C) Install the nesting boxes. Cut two 2x4s to support the bottom perch, screwing them to the coop floor with 2½-inch screws. Attach the 2x4 perch to the ends of the supports with more screws. Place the nesting boxes on top of the perch supports. Screw through the box sides and into the posts, as shown. Install the egg retrieval door, with its hardware, on the side wall, then bolting the side wall to the coop with 2½-inch screws.

TIP In colder climates, heat lamps can keep chickens comfortable when the temperature drops below freezing. Hire an electrician to run power to the coop, and secure the lamps so the chickens can't knock them over.



7 Finish the roof

A) Add the rafters. Nail the exterior PVC pipe boards to the 4x4 inch higher than the sheathing. Tap each rafter 8 with PVC pipe between the rafter boards and nail in place. Then measure, cut, and install the other board the same way. Cut two plywood triangles for the roof drive 1½-inch screws through them into the rafters, as shown.

B) Nail on the shingles. Shingle in a layer of roofing paper, starting at the bottom. Attach the asphalt shingles with roofing nails. From 2x2s back, nail four 4x6-inch square boards, leaving 1/8-inch clear water and four 1x4 inch long this to use as joists. Nail the boards to the ends of the posts, then slide a post under each board to prevent the coop from sliding. Use the remaining 2x2s to install a ramp to the sliding door.

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Apple parer

Patented: 1803

BY MOSES COATES, COVENTRY, R.I.
While mechanical parers had been in use since the late 1700s, Coates's improvements—a steel arm with springs to keep the blade in constant contact with the spinning fruit—earned him the first parer patent. Wood parers like his were superseded by all-metal devices similar to the one with the suction base shown at right. For more on home-related American inventions and the people who invented them, turn the page.

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KEVIN O'CONNOR
Host

Q

I know that Thomas Edison invented the lightbulb, but who are some other important American inventors, and what did they invent?

—NELLY HUSTAK, GENESEE, NY

A

KEVIN O'CONNOR REPLIES: Thomas Edison had nearly 1,100 U.S. patents to his name, so it's no surprise that he's America's best-known inventor. But there have been many Americans who shared Edison's problem-solving imagination, and the persistence to keep working until they found a solution. Here are a number of those achievements, many of which we still use regularly today.

Franklin stove

Invented: 1742

BY BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
PHILADELPHIA



Long before he drew letters in flourishes on his letters, Franklin created a half-log, cast-iron fireplace insert that used less wood and radiated more heat into the room than a standard masonry fireplace. He chose to patent his invention because he didn't want any burner to its widespread adoption. Franklin called it the New Pennsylvania Fireplace, but any metal stove that burned wood became known as a Franklin stove, making it the mother of today's cast-iron woodstove.

Electric doorbell

Invented: 1821

BY JOSEPH HENRY, ALBANY, NY

The first secretary of the Smithsonian was also a prominent scientist doing research into electromagnetism. His battery-powered device, like all modern electric doorbells, used an electromagnet to move the clapper that struck the bell. But it wasn't until 70 years later, when most houses had electricity, that his invention finally became commonplace.

**INVENTED
1924**



Power drills can lighten a load, but using a pair of Vice Grips offers its compound jaws can apply a force up to 3,500 pounds.

Ratcheting socket wrench

Invented: 1963

BY J. J. RICHARDSON, WOODSTOCK, VT
Wrenches had been tightening and loosening nuts since medieval times, but Richardson's invention was a huge leap forward in two ways. First, he created interchangeable sockets, so you didn't need a separate wrench for different-size nuts. Second, the handle had a ratcheting head, so it didn't need to be taken off and repositioned with each turn. Flammers and auto mechanics everywhere owe Richardson a debt of gratitude.

Forstner bit

Invented: 1874

BY BENJAMIN FORSTNER, SALON, OR
Forstner devised his eponymous bit to bore smooth holes in open burrsh, but today it's used for drilling flat-bottomed holes in wood. The bit was a prize at the Centennial Exposition in 1873, but it was the licensing agreements for the bit's mass production and distribution that made Forstner a wealthy man.

Electric thermostat

Invented: 1882

BY WALTER S. JOHNSON
WINTHROP, VT

Professor Johnson had grown tired of heating down the parlor in



Unlike twist bits, Forstner bits can drill overlapping holes—handy for roughing out mortises.

**INVENTED
1874**

By the 1850s, when this Hoosier oil operator's top-gill vacuum cleaners had become a mainstay among household appliances.

change of the school's boiler every year, his classrooms grew cold. So he took a barrel spring, which moves in response to temperature changes, and connected it to a mercury switch. If the room got too cold, Johnson's "tele-thermostat" rang a bell to alert the janitor. Automated control over the heating system followed a few years later. And the barrel spring and mercury switch remained essential thermostat components for the next hundred-plus years.

Dishwasher

Invented: 1856

BY JOSEPHINE DOUGLASS
SHELBYVILLE, IL



It all started with a chip on her mother's chin, caused by a carillon screen. Cookware, a washable soaker, eagerly vied to do all the dishes herself, then discovered the harsh reality of the scrubby. That prompted her to make a machine that washed dishes automatically, but by the time it was too

production, her husband had died and left her in debt. So their proper Victorian lady began selling her invention herself, which she managed to do quite successfully until her death nearly 30 years hence.

Electric ceiling fan

Invented: 1887

BY PHILIP DIEHL, ELIZABETH, NJ

Ceiling fans had been powered by muscle, water, and steam through the years, but when Diehl, a German immigrant, attached a set of blades to a sewing machine motor, his scrap trashed them all.

Electric vacuum cleaner

Invented: 1907

BY JAMES H. SPANGLER, CANTON, OH
In Spangler's day, vacuum sweepers were large machines with long hoses, corded to houses in wagons. But this allergy-afflicted department-store janitor had a better idea: a portable sweeper with a motor, brush to loosen the dirt, a motorized fan to suck it up, and a bag to collect it. William Hoover, a wealthy Custerite and the husband of Spangler's cousin,



**INVENTED
1907**

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES; FRANKLIN STOVE: COURTESY OF THE FRANKLIN STOVE MUSEUM; FORSTNER BIT: COURTESY OF THE FORSTNER BIT MUSEUM; DISHWASHER: COURTESY OF THE DISHWASHER MUSEUM; VACUUM CLEANER: COURTESY OF THE VACUUM CLEANER MUSEUM



This 1920 Overhead Door Co. brochure describes what was then the relatively new concept of a lift-up garage door.

helped finance the start-up, then bought Spangler's patent. Floorner then gave the company his own name, and it became one of the most recognized brands in America, not to mention a work.

Lift-up garage door Invented: 1921

BY CLARENCE G. JOHNSON

HARTFORD, CT
Lift-up garage doors are a problem when it snows, and doors that slide sideways need long tracks. Johnson figured out that a sectional door that rolled up had down on Linksped tracks was a better solution. Five years later, in 1926, the Overhead Door Co., he created the first electric garage door opener.

Electric circular saw Invented: 1923

BY EDWARD HOWELL
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ
Michael, a nonunion Finnishman, mounted a 6-inch circular saw blade on a worm-drive gearbox powered by a motor motor. It could cut 1-in.—literally—last Chicagoan Joseph W. Sullivan saw its potential and purchased with Michael in 1924 to mass-produce the first electric hand saw. Each cost \$1,000 to make and rarely ran more than a couple of days without breaking down. Nevertheless, the first power saw they improved the saw's mechanics and lowered its price to \$160, the equivalent of about \$1,100 today. When Michael returned for good to New Orleans, Sullivan took over and named

the company Soffine, a brand synonymous with rugged, powerful worm-drive saws.

Locking pliers Invented: 1924

BY WILLIAM PERREN
DEWITT, NY
Peterson was a Danish immigrant and blacksmith in need of an extra hand while he worked, so he designed and made the first locking pliers—Vise-Grips—and sold them to local farmers out of his car trunk. Then as now, his pliers' great gripping power made in the tool of last resort for countless stranded-over-nuts-or-headless-nails. And its locking-jaw principle has since become part of many other specialty tools, including clamps, wrenches, and multitools.

Masking tape Invented: 1925

BY HOWARD DREW
MINNEAPOLIS, MN
Drew, a 23-year-old sandpaper specialist with 3M, saw firsthand how auto-body painters struggled with the pressure-sensitive tape of the day, especially its bad habit of lifting off the previous coat of paint. He became determined to find a fix, even though his boss had said he was working on it. After struggling for two years on his own time, Drew created a less aggressive adhesive and the first crepe-paper masking tape—and surprisingly built the machine to make it. Five years later, Drew converted the first saw through adhesive for collagraphs to tape. We call it Scotch tape.



Like modern worm-drive ones, this 1928 Soffine had its motor built into the handle, which added today's safety features, such as a power brake guard.

Garbage disposal Invented: 1927

BY JOHN HAMMERS
BACON, WI
Hammers, a building contractor, built the first garbage grinding appliance in order to save his wife from having to wrap food in newspaper before throwing it away. His company, InSinkErator, is now the world's largest manufacturer of garbage disposals.

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Phillips screw & screwdriver

Invented 1932

BY JOHN THOMPSON, PORTLAND, OR
The ubiquitous screws that turn on drywall, our desks, and our hardware—and the screwdriver that turns them—were actually invented not by Henry Phillips, as is widely believed, but by John Thompson, a laborer with an eighth-grade education. Phillips bought the rights to Thompson's patent, refined both the screw and its driver, and gave them his name. He convinced Cadillac to adopt them for its assembly lines and then licensed them to be mass-produced. Within four years, 85 percent of screw makers were making the Phillips cross-head design.

Impact sprinkler

Invented 1832

BY OTTO ENGELHART, QUINCY, IL
The sprinkler heads of the day couldn't evenly irrigate Raytheon's citrus orchard, so he built one for himself using a spring-loaded iron bar fitted with a tin can. The swinging bar intermittently broke the surface of water and knocked the sprinkler head but by hit around in a circle. Engelhart augmented the head and began to manufacture it, but two years later sold the business to his neighbor, Glen LaFors, saying there was no profit in it. LaFors proceeded to build the company into the irrigation giant Rain Bird, which now generates about \$35 million in annual revenues.

Invented 1945



After buying the original patent, Henry Phillips patented these improvements to the screw and screwdriver that bear his name.

Microwave oven

Invented 1945

BY PERCY SPENCER, WALTHAM, MA
Although he quit school at age 13 to support his family, Spencer made up for his lack of formal education with a ferocious curiosity and the ability to teach himself difficult subjects, like electrical engineering. After seven years in the Navy, he went to Raytheon and became an expert in magnetrons, the microwave-generating vacuum tubes used for radar. One day, while standing next to a working magnetron, he noticed that a candy bar in his pocket had melted. Then, to confirm that magnetrons could cook food, he made and ate the first microwave popcorn. Raytheon's original microwave oven, the

Radi-Range, debuted in 1947. It weighed 710 pounds and cost \$5,000 (about \$60,000 in today's dollars). Spencer received no royalties for his invention, but he did collect a \$2 license—Raytheon's standard payment to my employee who also was a patent.

Spray paint

Invented 1949

BY DOSEYMOYR SEYMOUR, IL



Seymour was looking for a way to show customers his new aluminum valves in paint when he hit on the idea of putting paint samples in aerosol cans. The samples turned out to be so popular that the spray paint

soon became Seymour's chief product line. The cans were widely adopted by other paint companies, and now, thanks to hobbyists, graffiti artists, and redneck painters, among others, more than 400 million cans are sold each year in the United States alone.

WD-40

Invented 1953

NORMAN LARSEN, SAN DIEGO, CA

Larsen, an industrial chemist who founded the Rocket Chemical Co., had failed 18 times in his quest to create a penetrating, low-moisture lubricant as that could help corrosion on booster rockets. But his 49th worked like a charm. (WD-40 stands for water displacement formula number 40.) Five years later, when

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lenses packaged the stuff in several cases for consumers, sales skyrocketed. Over the years, the inventive WD-40 fans have seen the lubricant can be used, from freeing stuck keys to keeping uncoated metal skate plates.

Cable tie inventor 1958

MAURICE LOGAN, ELIZABETH, NJ
Logan's company, the electrical supplier Thomas & Bates, originally called the crisscrossing nylon strips Ty-Raps, though it is now commonly known as a zip tie. It has been a boon to electricians bundling cables, policemen arresting suspects, and travelers locking their luggage zippers.

Stringtrimmer

inventor 1973

WYOSHIE HALLIS, HOUSTON



Hallis, a successful dance instructor, had a big lawn in need of constant tending with bare shoulders. But after one of his landscaping crew was bitten by a copperhead, a damage claim began a looking for a better way. Inspired by the opening blades in a car wash, he joined some wires through an empty popcorn can and attached it to a lawn mower. The jury-rigged tool worked, but a spool of monofilament line proved less damaging to grass and shrubs. Hallis dubbed it the "Wood Master."

INVENTOR
1971



Roger Cook demonstrates how a string trimmer can be used to edge along a driveway.

PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

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Inside Out



Smart tweaks to the floor plan, a color palette inspired by nature, and **fluid connections between the house and garden** allow a tiny 1949 bungalow to live larger

by Deborah
Snoosman Glenn

photographs by
Mark Lohman

produced by
Tisha Leung

styling by
Sunday
Hendrickson

OPPOSITE: Clear green kitchen cabinets and doors, and windows that offer in light and views, bring the backyard garden inside. The custom birch cabinets were sprayed with a lacquer that wipes clean; their color is a brilliant fall hue classic. Custom marble countertops and a white subway tile backsplash.

ABOVE: Lush plantings, including creeping strawberries and dymalita between the flagstones, large spires of thistles, and a pair of purple-flowering jacarandas, lend a modern look to the house's simple facade.

A

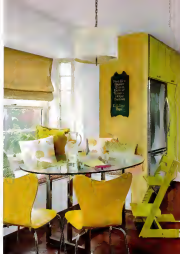
CUT RENOVATION always involves making a series of decisions—something a pro doesn't make them any less gut-wrenching, it turns out. For Elizabeth Low Cady, a design-world landscape contractor in Los Angeles who copiously jettisons clients through complexity and misadventure, the decision-making on her own remodel felt like a nonstop onslaught. "There was never a catch, you-headers-jointed-where-things-moved-as-planned," says Elizabeth, who bought this 1949 bungalow with her husband, David, and immediately did its makeover. "Every week, we were up against the wall. Did we have a laser head-were-picked-out? How deep should the dining area's window seat be? Did we want self-closing doors in the entry? I had to make decisions quickly, or risk blowing our schedule and budget."

And the pressure kept mounting, with good reason, as Elizabeth was pregnant with their first child at the time. Knowing that the completed house would hold just 900 square feet, she felt she had to get every detail right, including the vital indoor-outdoor connection that the couple wanted. "Even though we fired up the house first and the landscaping later, we thought constantly about how the interior and exterior spaces should work together."

Today, the house the couple shares with their young daughter, Violet, lives much larger than its footprint. Cady's a straightforward floor plan, strategic placement of doors, windows, and decks, and a nature-inspired color scheme that create a seamless flow between the house and the lush garden on all sides.

It took a keen knowledge of the neighborhood to recognize that gem in the rough. When Elizabeth first saw the four-bedroom, one-bath, 700-square-foot house with detached garage, "it basically hadn't been touched since it was completed," she says. The front yard was scrappy, the backyard was choked with overgrowth. Plus it had no insulation, and the original wiring and plumbing were a mess.

By then, she and David had been out on several



ABOVE: An original bay window with glass blocks along the sides offered a natural location for this space-saving breakfast bar in the kitchen. *Redesigner: Elizabeth Low Cady*

LEFT: Homeowner and designer Elizabeth Low Cady designed this deck launch and had it built from the same composite boards used for the deck. Pillows and seat cushions blend the indoor and outdoor color palettes.

houses in up-and-coming Mir Vista, where modest houses from the 1940s and 1950s—built for factory workers at what is now the Santa Monica Airport—sit shoulder to shoulder on narrow streets. This one had languished on the market. It was smaller than she would have liked, but Elizabeth was drawn to two purple-flowering jacaranda trees near the front walkway, and her real estate agent pointed out that the backyard was as large as the house, essentially doubling their living space in temperate Southern California. Finding a natural fish sculpture encased in the backyard's overgrowth sealed the deal. "I grew up fly-fishing with my father, so it seemed like a good omen," she explains. After some haggling on price, the house was theirs.

The couple decided to focus on fixing up the interior

BELOW: A simple fireplace surround (see windows) and minimalist built-ins help the small house feel larger and sleeker. The built-ins were built by homeowner David Cady's brother. *Double as an occasional seating in the area under the windows.*

first so it would be done—they hoped—by the time the baby was born. Undaunted, the soon-to-be began sketching floor plans. With no formal training in interior design, she started her knack for space planning and eye for color to her mother, who worked in the fashion business and decorated houses on the side, and to her aunt, an interior designer in New York. "They often took me to showrooms and fabric stores, and I learned so much by hearing them talk about home decor," she says. Ultimately she handled all of the design, drawings, and permitting.

The biggest priority was creating more breathing room, and one key change accomplished that: Snapping out the back of the house by 6 feet let them enlarge the kitchen, install a double vanity in the only bath, and add a walk-in closet in the master





LEFT: Above the bed a large sliding window with a screen outside replaced two original windows that looked onto a neighbor's house. On the back wall, a pair of French doors now open onto a new deck, offering unobstructed views of the back garden as well as good cross ventilation when open at the same time as the window.

RIGHT: A custom double vanity maximizes function in the only bath. Its punchy splendor echoes the Carrara marble counter-top and complements the floor. (Curtis, left; Kohler, right)

bedroom. The plan also eliminated an exterior wall and reconfigured the kitchen to open it up to the dining area and living room.

Throughout the house, half-ins would keep insects orderly by giving everyday items a landing spot. A bay window in the kitchen's dining area was a natural location for a window seat with storage. In the hallway near the bathroom, Elizabeth recessed a linen closet by sliding space behind the door swing as her daughter's bedroom. On its back side, in the bedroom, a built-in bookcase put this otherwise-dead wall space to use.

The lemon-yellow and lime-green palette was inspired by a set of vintage lock cansisters. These cheery colors tie the common spaces together and help bring nature inside. "We wanted to connect the house to the outdoors as much as possible," Elizabeth says.

That goal led her to decline a friend's suggestion to put the refrigerator on the kitchen's back wall (instead she added French doors there, and did the same in the master bedroom). Each set opens onto a small deck that extends the room outside and serves as a landing spot before descending a couple of steps to the backyard. "I often suggest decks like these to



ABOVE: Once just a "bad little concrete pad," this raised deck extends the master bedroom outdoors and provides a view-to-the approach to the backyard two steps down. Colorful vases and potted plants under the eaves help make a deck/bench the landscaping.

my clients," says Elizabeth. "They break up a yard and make it more functional."

Her business also gave her a leg up on sources and labor. At a more yard that she buys from frequently, she scored Carrara marble counter-top material and suspended floor tile at rock-bottom prices. And her usual crew finished the oak floors, replaced aging plumbing and wiring, and built custom built cabinets for the kitchen and bath. They also returned the original windows, except for one in the master bedroom that looked onto a neighbor's house a few yards away. Scragging them for a single evening window high on the wall improved privacy and enabled cross breezes.

The kitchen was the hardest space to nail down. "I drew countless variations of the floor plan," says Elizabeth. She's happy with the result, although one small annoyance remains: the cement window over the sink. She chose an inward-swinging version with a screen on the outside so as not to interfere with a creeping fig vine growing up the exterior of the house. Then she realized that the window, when open, blocked the adjacent wall cabinet. "As a designer, a client might have fired me for making this mistake," she says with a laugh. But she loves the window and how it echoes the open, bright look of the single-pane French doors next to it in the kitchen, adding, "The inconvenience is minor."

Three months after Violet was born, the couple, who had relocated from a rental to a friend's house for the last month, moved back into the longhouse. With the room more suiting to family, "Obed's neighbor's first bedroom was the living room," Elizabeth deadpans.

the plan

The owners added 6 feet to the back of the house to enlarge the kitchen and the only bath. Decks outside the kitchen and the master bedroom link indoor and outdoor living spaces to make the 900-square-foot cottage feel larger. The garage is now an office/guest room.





Once the house was complete, Elizabeth could turn her focus to the outdoors. "I wanted lots of room to filter sunlight," she says. In total, 38 were planted, including a fast-growing nycagion to anchor the outdoor dining area. The rest of her initial design consisted mostly of lawn with concrete pavers and *claytonia grandifolia*. But once Violet learned to walk—and that struggling dymondia got transplanted—"I realized I needed an easy-to-maintain yard," says Elizabeth. She also found breakthru to a less hard-edged look. So grass was replaced with easy-care artificial turf, and the rest of the yard morphed into a series of modern-styled spaces for dining, socializing, and relaxing, with a pineapple gasco hedge on the perimeter, and ferns, agave, and succulents like 'Sons of Bees' anemone further softening the landscape.

David found his DIY muscle for several outdoor projects with help from his brother, John. They painted the house's exterior, built the reclaimed-wood pergola and dining table, and constructed a flag pit from stacked stone. A gas line from the house feeds the flames so they agree with the flick of a switch.

It was also David who found the recycled denim insulation they used in the house and the detached garage, which they recently converted to a home office that functions as a guest room thanks to a fold-out sofa. David, a writer, works out of the office, while Elizabeth makes calls and does paperwork from a window in the living room. "Here, I am surrounded by things I love—bright colors, filtered sunlight, trees visible through the windows." All those shade trees, combined with coastal breezes, make an extraordinary combination.

She also uses her yard as a laboratory of sorts for her business. "I'm constantly testing the container plants around, to see which species tolerate low water or full shade," she says. She and David try with future projects, like reconfiguring the kitchen to put in a breakfast bar, or adding a small second entry for extra bedrooms, but nothing's in the works yet. As she says, "This house has proven to be all the space we really need." ■



OPPOSITE: Large-scale concrete pavers with 4-inch gravel joints define the dining area under the wood pergola. The pendant light was recycled for outdoor use. One hand, a topiary tree provides copper-leaf shade, while Australian ferns and agave plants grow at the perimeter. *Christy Loh*

TOP: The shed, which stores gardening tools and supplies, was assembled from salvaged materials. Elizabeth painted it green and white to match the house and coated the door with blackboard paint. A picnic table serves as seating bench when it's not providing play space for Violet. *Shel' Tuli Shalev*

ABOVE LEFT: Building made allowed only a half-bath for the guest room in the former garage, so Elizabeth added an outdoor shower to the wall shared by the house's bathroom, avoiding it with corrugated metal constructed wood.

ABOVE RIGHT: An elevated planter box sits in the dining area's bay window. Below is a small kitchen garden. The stainless steel sink leads to the driveway. *Plumber: Gardner's Supply Warehouse*

made in DETROIT

family hub

Robert Andre Sandifer, standing, and Abir Ali, far right, designed and built the weekend dining table in their 2014 American FourSquare (1906 model) which was empty and boarded up before being renovated about four years ago. The couple, with kids Ziggie (9), Ali (4) and Flame (3), were drawn to Detroit partly because it offered the chance to live and work among fellow artists and craftsmen.



A creative workforce is helping to renew some of the city's most historic neighborhoods, one house and one workplace at a time

BY DEBORAH BALZMIN
PRODUCED BY TISHA LEUNG

When Abir met Andre, owning a house in Detroit wasn't on either one's must-do list. But couples rarely know ahead of time how emotions will run, and that was the case here.

At the time, Abir Ali and Andre Sandifer were architecture students at the University of Michigan. She's from Detroit, once known for its lively skyline, more recently for being the largest U.S. city to declare bankruptcy. Sandifer grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan, also known as Furniture City. After he earned his master's in architecture at Michigan, and she hers at the University of Toronto, he fell in love with the idea of designing and making bespoke wood furniture. It was 2003; she joined him a year later,



vintage modern

ABOVE LEFT Ford finds plenty of space in a century-old brick room that still has its original leaded glass windows and built-up crown molding. His parents gave the house a contemporary twist by furnishing it with clean-lined furniture. The two tables are products of their studio. **ALL SEATINGS** in the Russell Industrial Center (RIC) is a cluster of buildings designed by Robert Kohn around the time the house was built. Each time, Detroit was growing fast.

and they would move to another place, Chicago.

Chicago was great, Ali says, but "five years in, it still didn't feel like home"—and never mind trying to buy one. "We placed a down offer and lost each one," she says of their exhausting two-year quest for a house for their two young boys. What's more, getting around required expensing amounts of driving.

Their studio, with clients mostly on the two coasts, could move easily, and in 2011, with another son on his way, the couple set about for a new place to live and work. Toronto was appealing but expensive. Ann Arbor was behind them. They began to think about Detroit: Ali's father, who settled there in the early 1970s, would be nearby. The problem would be finding a livable house. There were so many brand-new houses in Detroit five years ago that tearing them down and salvaging their parts was something of a cottage industry.

Ali, who had been waiting in Chicago for a decent piece of affordable housing as well as high-end

furniture, decided to test the water by applying for a two-year fellowship in Detroit, through a program aimed at engaging midcareer professionals in the city's revitalization—on par with education, as some were calling it. One of a number of efforts to help keep and attract creative thinkers (see box, page 14), the fellowship proved so rewarding it helped persuade the couple to stay.

Friends balked. "It was, 'Why would you go from Chicago to Detroit?'" Sandler says. "They imagined that our business would deteriorate in Chicago—but the opposite turned out to be true, because here we have a higher profile." Finding good schools was relatively straightforward too. Ziggy, now 14, attends a charter school led by Detroit's College for Creative Studies, and Ali, 14, just graduated from a charter middle school.

While the city is filled with empty buildings, workshop can be very new, and the couple's goal was to have a smooth path from home to school to work. Gradually the pieces fell into place. Studio



"There's this energy you see, whether philanthropic or grassroots. That's why it's such a magnet for creative people."

—ABRI ALI, FURNITURE DESIGNER



space was available in the Russell Industrial Center—home to an auto factory in 1914, now a hive of artisans and artists. The studio offers a handful of artisan spaces and also accepts commissions. The couple's design work involves a lot of back and forth between them, before Sandler crafts the furniture as walnut, maple, or white oak.

When they first saw their house, it was being squeezed under a federal program aimed at the foreclosure crisis: dilapidated houses being dragged down otherwise healthy areas were being fixed up and sold with the goal of making a neighborhood whole again. "Friends of friends said, 'Hey, you have a small business and a large family, and you may qualify,'" Ali recalls.

It's important to keep in mind that Detroit is spread out over 139 square miles and has more than half of its population between 1950 and 2011, leaving vast amounts of real estate unattended. The city's full-blooded effort to assess and build is easiest to see within Greater Densetown, an area

of about seven square miles that includes not only gleaming skyscrapers but easy access to historic neighborhood gems like Boston Edison—where the couple's house-to-be sat, on a tree-lined street.

Built in 1914, four years after Henry Ford opened his famed Highland Park assembly line, it's a sturdy Foursquare, not far from the boys' schools and even closer to the furniture road. In 2013, when they finally bit, it held not only three baths and five bedrooms but an upgraded infrastructure.

Not to mention home buyers in Brooklyn and Boston, but get a load of the price: \$180,000.

"So we're in this beautiful old house and, wow, we're these modern furniture designers," Ali recalls. "How are we going to make it our own?" She continues. "We're known for our handcrafted tables, and we're all about food and family. So we said, let's start with the dining room, here's where we can merge our most modern attributes with a hundred-year-old house."

You know the old joke about the cobbler's son

homegrown

ABOVE LEFT Ali and Sandler contribute art to their studio in the RIC, located among dozens of other creative workshops nearby. **DESIGNERS** and makers.

ABOVE RIGHT Artist Kasia Selomee finished one prominent wall at the RIC with painting a children's learning calendar for the city's major sports teams and its athletes—that move is helping with broken and obsolete.

PHOTO: MICHAEL HARRIS (LEFT); TONY HARRIS (RIGHT); COURTESY OF THE RUSSELL INDUSTRIAL CENTER

having no sheet? Let's put say that getting that table from the drawing board to the dining room took more than the customary 8 to 10 weeks.

About 8 feet long and 42 inches wide, it has elegantly angled legs, part of large U's that frame a top made by gluing together eight boards. Sander explains, adding, "It's all about structure."

When Ahn's busy at the studio, she directs Nilsson, which gives away \$500,000 a year in grants to creative businesses. "It's how I see the other half of my brain," she says.

Like other centers to "less urbscous," which across the role of small business, creative entrepreneurs, and community organizations at midsize plant, Ahn believes in a gradual upward spiral. "There's this energy you see, whether philanthropic or grassroots. That's why Detroit's such a magnet for creative people."

WINDOW WHISPERER

Through his calling in all about the details, James Turner—flair of wobbly chairs, loose panels, and wood trim—likes to keep an eye on the big picture. "I've always been interested in the history of this city and found it to be rich," he says, adding that today's new frontier spirit is similar to the one that fueled French settlers 300 years ago. "This opportunity is there to make your dreams, under the radar or in the limelight of it," he says.



ABOVE: James Turner, longtime old-house restoration



work in PROGRESS

Detroit emerged from bankruptcy with an impressive array of boosters and backers

When the city's big turnaround began three years ago, a major challenge was shaking off the past. Between 2000 and 2013, Detroit lost nearly 20 percent of its population, and median household income shrank \$24,000. So many houses stood empty and inventors' Detroiters sold at auction to be torn down. It would cost more to tear them down than they would ever be worth—assuming you could find people to do the work.

The exodus has slowed, generating hopes that Detroit is now a place to live to. Those hopes are pinned on new-economy jobs like those in tech

health and on the city's design. But for concentrated office of Greater Downtown dubbed the innovation district.

The most visible change is within the city government and its planning department, says Olga Biele, director of the nonprofit Detroit Creative Corridor Center, which offers assistance to entrepreneurs and agencies events like pop-up storefronts for aspiring shopkeepers. Today a plethora, more closely known as placemakers, are looking for how design can drive revitalization in a sprawling city where people in the community have been working for years

on these issues," she says. Help is pouring in from far away and building up locally. Foundations too numerous to name, such as Detroit's new, even philanthropic for small local contractors.

Those who are looking to buy property can start at MetroHousing.com, an online bank that tracks who owns what. The Detroit Land Bank, a public authority that salvages abandoned and foreclosed houses, holds auctions for qualified buyers; its website BuildingDetroit.org, even offers an online style option called Dan & New. Extreme low-income for an \$10,000.

To address a common problem—houses priced cheaply can't qualify for large mortgages—the Detroit Home

Mortgage program has set up an "true," not current appraised, value. Rehabbed & Ready, a city-Home Depot-Quicken Loans coalition has sold renovated houses and also helps with financing.

Programs for entrepreneurs are now more visible to start with BizGid, an online guide to the city's help companies. Established small businesses can compete for grants from New Economy Initiative 140,000 from Motor City Match—which recently gave \$300,000 to a family-owned plumbing business in need of a showroom.

Newbies can apply for fellowships from Opportunity Detroit, and GreenCorp Detroit offers "hackerspaces" in the 125-year-old Eastern Market building.

Workspace is generally plentiful, often in terrible shape. Options include the Pinnacle building, where space rents for \$200 per square foot.

"It's a challenging place," says a city official, adding that no other city offers such easy access. "As long as you're interested in becoming integrated into this community," she says, "every door will open."

ABOVE LEFT: Private investment is concentrated downtown, leaving many formerly robust neighborhoods still in need of new houses to replace ones that were torn down.

ABOVE RIGHT: Volunteers with Summer in the City, a nonprofit group, collaborate in one of the dozens of colorful outdoor murals that enliven old wall-space buildings across the city.

PHOTO: JAMES TURNER; DETROIT SKYLINE: JEFFREY M. HARRIS; MURALS: JEFFREY M. HARRIS

Snapshot of a city in the making

A big to-do list Detroit remains the poorest big city in America, with more than 200,000 residents still unemployed and underemployed.

Things are looking up downtown While many once-bustling commercial corridors are idle, a growing public push to revitalize is sparking the business district.

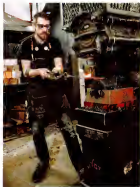
There are many great old houses

Thanks to its prewar past, every type of architectural style is here, from Georgian to Craftsman to contemporary.

Design is a Detroit tradition Creativity has been the guiding theme at some colleges since the early 1800s, via fashion at MCCO and the first U.S. City of Design.

Motor vehicles, meet mass transit A 2.3-mile-it's-better-to-be-in-the-middle-of-the-city transit line is set to open in 2015, with more lines in the Greater Downtown.

Locavores rule One upside of so-called "food miles" is the recent trend for urban farms. "Garden in Detroit" comes with bagging rights. Take that, Starbucks.



forging ahead

ABOVE: Greg Craig forms metal on his anvil to make tools for his wife, Amy. He is, in the tiny Crokhon neighborhood, trained as a jeweler. They bring a new look to their work, but a couple built on a new idea: gals. The couple, who are remodeling a house in a historic district, made their own custom jewelry, crochets, and in addition, they've begun to use their skills to help others in the neighborhood.

Tanner's own journey began 25 years ago when he bought a house in the Austin Park-East Boston historic district. Within a year he was an active preservationist, and in time he would become an expert in salvaging old windows and trim.

Though his business, Tanner Restoration, has grown since, he works mostly out of his pickup, reasoning that he did repair back in his shop clients on the go. For one, who was saving up to build a house in the whole neighborhood? And what if he never came back? "If we take a window out, it will be in by the end of the day," he vows.

Tanner finds time to teach apprentices in both Detroit and Louisville, Kentucky. He also operates on a little retro shop, key in his city of self-starters. "A young graduate from the University of Oregon showed me for a few days, then decided to move here," he says. "It was her talent and tenacity, but I felt honored to help her get on her feet where they live and work. Greg says they are community-minded of how uneven the recovery

old windows, Tanner has that big picture in mind: working with others to make what he calls "walkable, livable, enjoyable communities."

THE METALSMITHS

When the western Grog called to say Gwyneth wanted to feature his wife's business hand-forged kitchen utensils, co-owner Gabriel Craig said, "Gwyneth who?" Fugate him! He and his wife, Amy Wells, are absorbed by the challenge of running Smith Shop, in the rough and ready Forthright building in downtown Corktown, while also renovating a 1925 Italianate in the Boston-Belmont historic district.

Craig, a 19th-generation Detroit native, didn't see himself living there as an adult. Then Wells enrolled at the Cranbrook Academy of Art, just outside the city, and the two began to settle in.

While they enjoy the energy and creativity of the area where they live and work, Craig says they are community-minded of how uneven the recovery



has been so far. "Things are happening, but it's not reaching the entire population," he says. He's hoping to bring in others through the Center for Craft & Applied Arts, which he founded as a way to share skills. "We'd like to be a catalyst—to prove that with low overhead and a diversity of projects, you can make a living."

The couple live among "wonderful houses from the 1930s, some kept up, some in extreme disrepair," Craig says. There needed work—luckily Craig's dad and brother-in-law, Benji, were also renovating. So were a pair of friendly former makers living nearby, who crafted custom walnut nests for them. It was Alar Ak and Ander Sandles, of course.

CLAY TO TABLE

Kaitlyn and Ryan Lawless, makers of stylish porcelain pieces, spent nearly a year looking for a workplace they could afford to buy and call their own. "We were in the Russell Industrial Center,

but it was a third-floor walk-up," Kaitlyn says. "It was important to us to invest in our skills, creative business and have a stronger relationship with the community."

In February they moved their kilns and pottery wheels into a building they bought in a residential area of New Center. By April, they were veterans of neighborhood cleanup day.

Their company, Corbi, best known for its state-shaped serving dishes (shown), is the slow-food answer to tableware. "We make each thing to order," says Kaitlyn, "and customers take time—your own's make it."

The couple started out on Green Island, north of Seattle, before outgrowing their space and asking, "What city could receive us well?" says Kaitlyn, who grew up outside Detroit. Now they're looking to buy a house. If all goes as hoped, they will offer classes to others in the community, the adds, echoing a key Detroit theme: It's good to think creatively, and it's good to grow back. ■

"It was important to us to invest where we could have a stronger relationship with the community."

—KAITLYN LAWLESS, CERAMIST



home goods

ABOVE: Kaitlyn and Ryan Lawless make a table dishware in the 19th-century building that the New Center occupies. They chose New Center because of its community spirit and are choosing for a their upper mid-city "On almost every other block" Kaitlyn says, "there's someone doing something innovative."

PERENNIAL FAVORITE

Compact yet overflowing with blooms, this cottage garden gives its owners a spectacular show all summer long

BY RICHELLE GERVAIS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
DEBORAH WHITLAW LLENVELLYN

Gracious and welcoming, filled with old-fashioned flowers and billowing foliage, a cottage garden is what many homeowners' dreams are made of. Abundant, colorful blooms combine with lush hedges, crisp white picket fences, and graceful garden arches to create a compelling juxtaposition of structure and informality that inspires leisurely strolls and daydreaming.

When Michele and Marc Flaster moved into their home in Nantucket, Massachusetts, some years ago, the front of the house was wrapped by a charming, if basic, upsized version of a cottage garden. It was dominated by blue mophead hydrangeas, perennials such as Shasta daisies and roses, and lots of annuals, including



Azalea tree, with a picket arch frames this cottage-style entry garden in Nantucket, Massachusetts. The flower bed's undulating curves echo the billowing forms of the flowering hydrangeas and dogwoods.

snarldragons and sweet alyssum. Michele settled in happily and over time added plants she loved—petunias, dahlias, phlox, anise, yucca, lavender—caressing the soil to her own taste.

But maintaining the loose, laid-back look of a classic cottage garden actually requires quite a bit of care and attention. And on a high exposed elevation whipped by wind, cooled by hungry dews and subject to winters that are increasingly severe, that work was bound to multiply.

As time passed, she rigid lines of the rest against her back felt at odds with the undulating surrounding natural landscape. Narmesko. Michele found herself wanting to subvert the garden and direct its evolution. She started by jutting out boxes to introduce curves to the beds, aiming to keep the look of a cottage garden while respecting the free-flowing separation beyond it. She began to noice the plants that were straggling, those that required too much maintenance, and those whose bloom period seemed a little too fleeting. Rather than light to keep her vision of the garden, she decided to adjust to what the sun was willing to let.

Along the way, she taught the advice of local gardening expert Eva Pullenborg, and together they began to re-innovate the garden by simplifying the beds and adjusting the plant selection. Perennials that thrive, like the "Wason in White" astilbe and "David's glory," were divided and spread in mass. Some that formed a dense mass that crept relentlessly outward, like the iris, had to go. In their place came exuberant flowering salvias, daisies, and South African gladioli (Gloriosa superba), which provide a longer period of bloom and are treated as annuals here. Long-blooming "Jackman's" clematis joined climbing roses like 'New Dawn' and 'Blaze' that are hardy, disease resistant, and offer flowers all season.

While dryidids thrived in the gardens from the beginning, the selection was



ABOVE LEFT The brick path leads to the front door and also directs views to the water, where "New Dawn and Bliss" residents. On the other side of the fence, a view of Glenviewidge serves as a lovely wall.

ABOVE: Recent 'Venus Blue' hydrangeas were replaced with 'Endless Summer' which blooms all season. 'Hyperion' and 'Chicago Peck' daylilies lend sunny contrast.



A diagram of a house layout. The house is a grey T-shaped structure. To the left of the house is a green garden area with a path leading to a garage labeled 'Garage' with an arrow pointing right. To the right of the house is a green garden area with a path leading to a garage labeled 'Garage' with an arrow pointing right. The house has a central living area labeled 'House'.

100

longer period of bloom and are treated as annuals here. Long-blooming "Jacksnipe" climber (also climbing roses like "New Dawn" and "Blaze") that are hardy, disease-resistant, and offer flowers all season.

eventually narrowed down to two main varieties to be repeated throughout the beds: 'Chicago French,' for its waves of chewy apricot flowers, and 'Hyperion,' for its riotous sunny-yellow blooms.

The house had also come with a back garden, defined by stone walls and designed for dining, where the lovers had lived only a few years before succumbing to a particularly harsh winter. Walker's Love's cottage, which offers a similar look with a much tougher construction, took its place. Discreet plant choices were especially important in this garden, which is open on two sides and is also a former seedling ground for rubies; the family's Thomas ground helps keep them alive.

Though Michele spends time in the garden mainly from mid-June to mid-September, she will don't miss growing a few perennials. Flanking the arbors in the front garden, they are the first blooms to greet her in spring. She also plants a few hollyhocks over by the garage, treating them as annuals and putting in new ones

each year. In varying shades of cream and pink, they are a satisfying color indulgence. For pure flower power, and wonderful no matter that she can bring indoors to enjoy, 'Casa Blanca' and 'Star Gazer' Oriental lilies are dotted throughout the beds. But high-maintenance plants like foxgloves, which require staking, no longer have a place in the garden.

Careful pruning helps to orchestrate the succession of blooms and to maintain a neat appearance. When perennials like daylilies have finished flowering and are beginning to look untended, they are cut back to within 4 or 5 inches of the ground so that fresh, new foliage emerges. That rich foliage carries the plant through the rest of the season, allowing a serene green backdrop to late-blooming perennials like Japanese anemone and monkshood, as well as an occasional scented flowering. Late-season bloomers like phlox are pruned earlier in spring to control their height and bloom time—hungry daylilies help with this task—and spent flowers are deadheaded regularly to encourage more. As Polakberg says, "A healthy, established plant loves to be pruned."

While Michele is happy with the garden now, she continues to make minor adjustments. 'Nikko Blue' hydrangeas are being replaced with large-blooming, more ostentatious 'Endless Summer' varieties, for instance. And many of the zingy buckthorn hedges will make way for an informal mix of viburnums and hypericums that will ease the transition between the garden and the surrounding landscape.

Every garden evolves, after all, from year to year, as well as through the seasons. Change is the one constant, giving due owner maximum pleasure. "What's fun is watching the garden come alive in spring, then progress and unfold, peering back and forth in July, and reaching its peak in August," says Michele. "It's magical." ■



ABOVE RIGHT: A colorful display of lilies is shown here. Other plants include 'Cheery Pink' miller bells, white New Guinea impatiens, and blue lobelia.

BELOW RIGHT: Crushed shells cover the approach to the garage. Shoring project hedges will off the area behind the picket fence and arbor entrance.

OPPOSITE: Defining the corners of the stone walls defining the back garden are rock-enclosed shrubs: 'Strawberry Spinach', currant, 'Judy's smitten', and rosehead hydrangeas. Foxgloves define the dining area.



Picket Fences

LIKE SO MANY OLD HOUSE DETAILS, the picket fence has roots planted squarely in utility: Calverns built them to keep chickens in the yard and to protect the garden. Then, as they are wont to do, the carpenters came along and, armed with pattern books, started introducing new details to the wood parts.

What you and I know as the picket is actually a pickering-bird with a decorative or spangled top that gets faceted into horizontal ribs between points. So what's a picklet? That would be a 1½-inch squared stake with a pointed or round top that became popular during the Greek Revival period. Both were, and still are, homeowners' favorites, and for good reason: They come in enough different styles to suit any house, from formal to casual. Today, they're all called pickets.

When you start looking for a picket fence, you'll find that wood isn't the only choice. There are a growing number of low-maintenance options like vinyl, cellular PVC, metal, and composites. But if it's a custom look you're after, wood still offers the greatest number of picket shapes and styles, and it can be stained any color.

From shopping advice to design inspiration, here's what you need to land the perfect pickup truck.

Style is easy, but all pocket fences use the same basic parts to describe a yard.



WHAT DO THEY COST? Depending on style and spans, 36-ft. tall panels of wood perforated metal cost \$3-40 to \$50 per linear foot, not including installation. Vinyl-coated aluminum versions cost \$10 to \$12 per

ARE THEY DIFFERENTLY? A skilled handyman can install different shower liners, but here's pro to handle the job on sloped turf.



Two coats of a solid color stain should last 5 to 10 years. Seals should be checked annually and adjusted to keep them plumb in the opening.

A fence 3 to 4 feet tall makes the entire barrier from the street. For fences enclosing a pool, code requires a minimum height of 4 feet.

Arrows of white pickets mark the front yard's boundary while a lining of blue lines the street and the porch.

Pickets with style

The home behind the fence should influence the picket's shape

1 > FUNCTIONAL SPEAR Painted as E. Black in color, this picket is similar to those found at Colonial Williamsburg. In the early Virginia capital, the boards, made from rift-resistant woods like locust, cedar and white oak, were often left unpainted

2 > TURNED GREEK REVIVAL This round picket, sometimes called similar to those from the town of Tisbury, VA, would be right at home in front of a Greek Revival house.

3 > GEORGIAN POINT Made from spruce or locust, this picket resembles George Washington's break at Mount Vernon. A carpenter spent extra time cutting the head detail.

4 > CLASSIC PICKET Painted pickets like this were found all the way from Philadelphia to a South Carolina estate built in 1790. The safety appearance is similar to the balusters along the first- and second-floor porches.

5 > SHARPLY VICTORIAN The individual Revival-style picket homeowners are as much as machine-made of cutting intricate details. This elaborate picket, similar to what you'll encounter in Connecticut, looks like an interior baluster.



Need picket inspiration?
Fennell's Authentic
Details for Designer's
Restoration by Peter and
Hermine (Chicago) features
dozens of drawings of
historic fence styles



1920s white picket fence
inspired much of the
fence at Mount Vernon

WHY WHITE?

In early America, affluent colonists preserved their fences with creamy-white paint or whitewash, a mixture of lime and water, to match the home's trim color, which through the Greek Revival period usually meant white. Then, in the mid-1840s, Victorian homeowners, with access to a broader range of paint colors, began coating fences in park-bench green or brown to blend in with the landscape. When the Colonial Revival style arrived in the early 20th century, white came back into vogue on new suburban homes—and pickets became an icon.

Buying options

To DIY, find options at home centers or lumberyards—or hire a pro to install a fence for you

> Prefab Home centers stock pickets and prefabricated wood panels from 3 to 6 feet high and 8 feet long. The picket shapes are generally limited to versions of the traditional spear. Powder-coated metal panels tend to be closer to 6 feet high. Composite materials come in shorter, 4-foot-long panels, so keep weight down. Set the posts, then fit panels in place.

MATERIAL OPTIONS: wood, metal, and composite

> Ready to assemble With vinyl and some metal fence systems, the pickets and posts are hollow, and the posts come boxed in cartons. Bask click into sockets in the posts, and the pickets snap into place.

MATERIAL OPTIONS: vinyl and metal

> Pre-installed Skip the digging, setting, mixing, and measuring by buying a pre-cut fence. It costs about 20 percent more than buying the materials, but gives you the greatest number of picket styles and configurations.

MATERIAL OPTIONS: wood, cellular PVC, metal, vinyl, and composite



A quality wood picket fence, like this stained white cedar, will last for years. To make a fence even more attractive, stain the rails.

WHICH MATERIAL?

Wood is warm, but man-made is nearly maintenance-free

WOOD A favorite choice, wood pickets are available in everything from budget-friendly pressure-treated pine to redwood. They can be stained any color and need periodic re-staining, and come in a variety of shapes.

CELLULAR PVC This rigid, resistant plastic looks like painted wood from a distance and can be drilled to nearly any shape. The stock white color looks good in a yard, and can be coated with an extra coat of paint.

VINYL Hollow pickets attach to pre-go through rails for a lightweight fence that never needs painting. Vinyl is white, but can be made to look like wood, but the plastic feel is unmistakable.

METAL Square lengths of powder-coated aluminum or steel are capped by spear pickets. It's easy to clean with a hose and to repair scratches with a touch of spray paint.

COMPOSITE Similar to low-maintenance decking, these pickets have a wood-like texture and a usually come prefinished in a classic white.

Man-made materials like these cellular PVC pickets, are the ideal choice around plants they aren't affected by rot.



HOW TO MAINTAIN

STAINING VERSUS PAINTING

Stain and paint both protect wood from UV rays and moisture, but an exterior-grade stain works better for a fence. A coat of stain is about 2/3 millimeters thick when applied and dries to about half that. A coat of paint dries nearly twice as thick. Any moisture that gets beneath the coating will have an easier time escaping through stain, when wet water trapped under paint causes flaking. Expect about 5 to 10 years from two coats of a solid-color stain as a fence. And that'll be easier than paint to re-coat—no scraping away old layers.

A gallon of solid-color stain (left) is thin enough to be applied with an aerosol sprayer and worked into the nooks and crannies of a picket fence.



Proper post

The right topper makes posts as refined as the pickets



CAP

Water sheds off the shallow beveled cap while the bead-and-cove molding adds understated detail.

Similar to shown: Mason Outdoor/wooden.com; cedar: 332.4001.com



BALL

Topping gateposts, spheres define an entrance and suit a Victorian-era house.

Similar to shown: J.22 Tool and Mfg. Co. post: masonwhite.com; cedar: 332.4001.com



SPEAR

A chunky French Gothic-like spearhead on a field post marks the shape of the nearby pickets.

Similar to shown: Durston Antiques/white.com; cedar: 332.4001.com

Note: All prices are for 6-ft. posts.

Finishing touches

The gate is the part of the fence guests interact with most. These details set your yard's doorway apart.

1 > **LATCH** An aluminum alloy ball-latch is a simple, elegant look that fits the fence's style. Similar to shown: 332.4001.com



2 > **HINGE** An arched, ornate hinge is a simple, elegant look that fits the fence's style. Similar to shown: 332.4001.com



3 > **CLOSURE** A simple, elegant look that fits the fence's style. Similar to shown: 332.4001.com

PICKET PARTNERS

Plants that pop can turn a banner into a welcome sign for those passing by.



HYDRANGEA This mophead is a softball size pink to purple bloom is arch over the pickets in summer. Use them against shorter pickets to fill for added privacy.



MARIGOLD This drought-resistant annual flower is orange, yellow, white or red. Plant a string of marigolds along the outside of the fence in a vegetable garden for a touch of color.



ROSE Using a cottage garden style to the neighbor's back with pink climbing roses tumbling over the fence in an alternating pattern with purple clematis.

Design variations

How to twist uniform pickets

1 > **ARCHED** Making them point each picket gets slightly taller than the last. Before creating for the next post. The tallest point forms become a focal point in design that is as available to wood or vinyl.

Similar to shown: 4-foot tall cedarwood picket: masonwhite.com; cedar: 332.4001.com



2 > **STAGGERED** Arranging the pickets with alternating heights creates a sense of movement.

Similar to shown: 3-foot tall cedarwood picket: masonwhite.com; cedar: 332.4001.com



3 > **DUAL PICKETS** Squared-off boards set between pointed pickets create the formal design and preserve privacy.

Similar to shown: 3-foot tall cedarwood picket: masonwhite.com; cedar: 332.4001.com



4 > **IRREGULAR HEIGHTS** Alternating short and long pickets help set the formal design apart. The contrast, white finish makes a pleasing contrast with the stone wall.

Similar to shown: 4-foot tall wooden picket: masonwhite.com; cedar: 332.4001.com



5 > **SCALLOP** Pickets that gently curve point between posts create a sense of rhythm as guests approach and drive away.

Similar to shown: 5-foot tall cedarwood picket: masonwhite.com; cedar: 332.4001.com



6 > **CAPPED** Pickets that end with a cap have a clean look and a cottage feel. The diagonal bracing helps prevent the gate from wobbling but also makes it easier to foot.

Similar to shown: 3-foot tall cedarwood picket: masonwhite.com; cedar: 332.4001.com



Note: All prices are for 6-foot-tall panels.



PROJECT OF THE WEEK

directory

JULY 2016

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History In the Making

The TOH crew has been busy at the Beimont project house, taking care to preserve its rich history while updating it for modern living. Tune in to see the incredible transformation!

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This Old House

HOW TO BUILD A PVC WINDOW BOX



A window box bursting with blossoms will brighten any window, from inside or out. If you buy a stock one, you'll have your choice of designs, but you'll also be limited to standard lengths—typically 2 to 6 feet, in 6-inch increments.

Building the painted box shown here offers you the chance to tailor your planter to the width of your window, and select molding to match your home's style. PVC boards come in white but can be painted any color. Either way, they resist the logic of painted wood without being a target for rot and mold.

You'll find all the tools and supplies necessary for this—and any—home project at The Home Depot nearest you.

For step-by-step instructions, go to thisoldhouse.com/project





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save This Old House

PRICE \$69,900
LOCATION Todd, NC
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THE HISTORY Sarah Boone Wilcoxson and her husband, John, built this log cabin around 1790. It was likely for their retirement, after a lifetime of toiling on the Boone family farm, where John was hired hand. Growing up, young Sarah was not only tasked with farmwork, she also took care of her younger siblings, including two particularly mischievous brothers, Daniel

Sam later, while Sarah and John were raising their own family. Daniel was making a name for himself by leading his Wilderness Trail to Kentucky and escaping captivity from a Native American tribe allied with the British during the American Revolution. Later in life, Daniel is said to have visited his sister at the cabin during one of his legendary hunting trips. The house has since passed through many hands, and now Preservation North Carolina is seeking a preservation-minded new owner.

WHY SAVE IT? The cabin retains its original chinked logs, single floor, and fieldstone chimney. Built at an elevation of 2,450 feet in the mountains of western North Carolina.

WHAT IT NEEDS The 4,000-square-foot house has weathered the years well, though it will require some structural reinforcement. The house has electricity and indoor plumbing, but no central heating. Located just outside the town of Todd, it sits adjacent to Jefferson State Park. Set amid wilderness teeming with wild game, including deer and turkeys, as well as bears, it's easy to see why the site attracted the Boone siblings—and why a new owner will find it appealing, too. —PAUL HORE

Famed frontiersman Daniel Boone slept here!



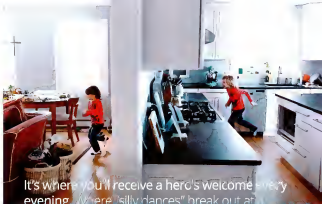
1. The house sits on three acres and features a proper plan on the first floor.
2. A small second story above the cabin, with a bedroom and full bath, as well as a first-floor entrance with a stacked-stone foundation and fieldstone chimney, were added around 1900.
3. An extensive 150 stands on the property. Though the house has long had no air conditioning, the original log cabin portion remains intact inside and out, but is in need of restoration.



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