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NO. 2

This Old House

IDEAS FOR OUTDOOR LIVING

SUMMER 2021

BACKYARD PATIOS / DIY HERB PLANTER / OUTDOOR SHOWERS / IDEA HOUSE PREVIEW

Reviving a Classic

Skillful restoration brings a Queen Anne's details back to life

And adding on builds in modern comfort and convenience. See page 24 for the full reveal!



TOH PROJECT #79
The Seaside Victorian Cottage
Narragansett, Rhode Island

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SCANDINAVIAN-INSPIRED COLOR SELECTIONS

At the **TOH 2021 Modern Barnhouse**, here's how builder/homeowner **Amy Matthews**'s thoughtful color selections from **Benjamin Moore** will help lend warmth to her Scandinavian-inspired dream home.



"My overall philosophy for this house is based on the Scandinavian principle of 'finding the light'—bringing in an abundance of natural light, embracing the outdoors, and combining modern lines with rustic, natural materials," says Matthews.

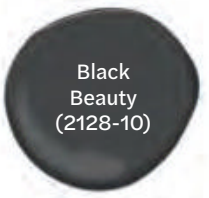
Evoking warmth can be a challenge in a modern, glass-filled home in Minnesota. "Here in the valley, natural light bouncing off the snow can cast a bluish tint, exacerbating that cold feeling," Matthews explains. "I'm curating a palette that will reflect that light as opposed to absorbing it."

Colors for Consideration

When choosing paint, Matthews says, "This home is designed for gathering, entertaining, and a whole lot of *living*. Benjamin Moore products offer the durability, washability, and depth of color that I'm looking for to bring these walls to life—and keep them looking beautiful for years to come." Here are a few of the current contenders:



The ground floor features a sleek concrete floor and light oak accents; Matthews has chosen **Super White** for that quintessential Scandinavian look.



In the main suite, Matthews plans to offset the all-white space with select accents in **Black Beauty**: "Here, I'll layer a variety of textures—natural wood, thick wool, faux fur—for a sumptuous, Nordic-inspired vibe."



In the guest room, Matthews wants to have a little fun. "I'm looking at either using a deep, saturated tone like **Iron Mountain** as a statement/accent wall, or a softer, all-over color in a rosy tone like **Georgetown Pink Beige**. I've been polling my friends—who will be staying here often—to help me decide."



For a few ocean-inspired bursts of color, Matthews is considering finishing several accent furniture pieces in **Aegean Teal**.



AS FEATURED IN This Old House Modern Barnhouse ST. PAUL, MN 2021

The Modern Barnhouse featuring Benjamin Moore paints will be unveiled this fall in *This Old House* magazine! In the meantime, follow its progress at thisoldhouse.com/modern-barnhouse



Wall — Soft Sky 807, AURA®, Eggshell
Trim — Chantilly Lace OC-65, ADVANCE®, Semi-Gloss

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ARCHITECT: Mattew Lechowick BUILDER: Kinetic Partners PHOTO: Kat Alves Photography

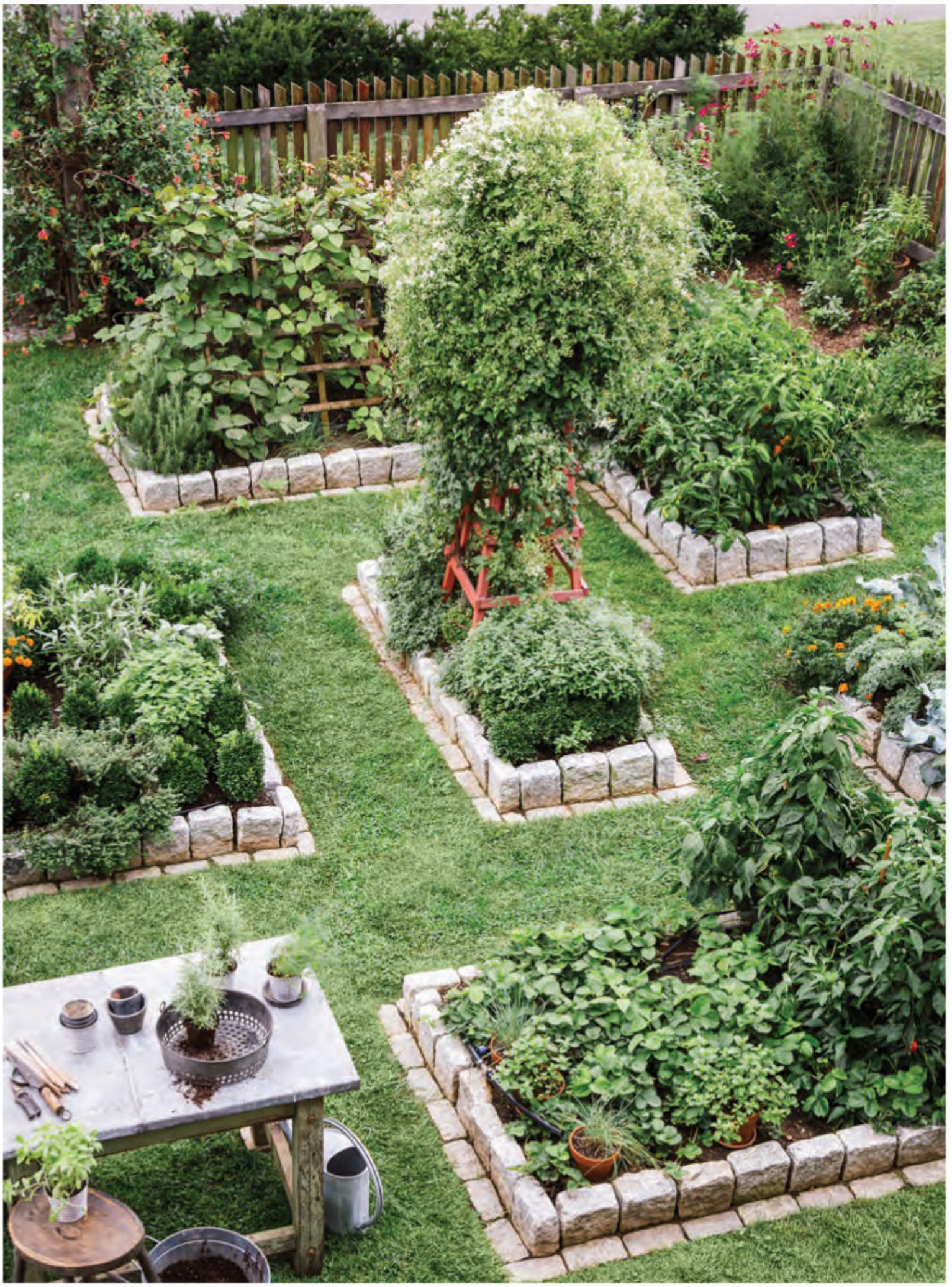
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LANDSCAPING: BUILDING A KITCHEN GARDEN

Raised beds formed with granite blocks and bordered with picket fencing create a lush, productive garden room



HELEN NORMAN



Now you can download the latest issue of *TOH* on your tablet before the print issue is available. Go to **thisoldhouse.com/tablet**

COVER Photograph by Nat Rea

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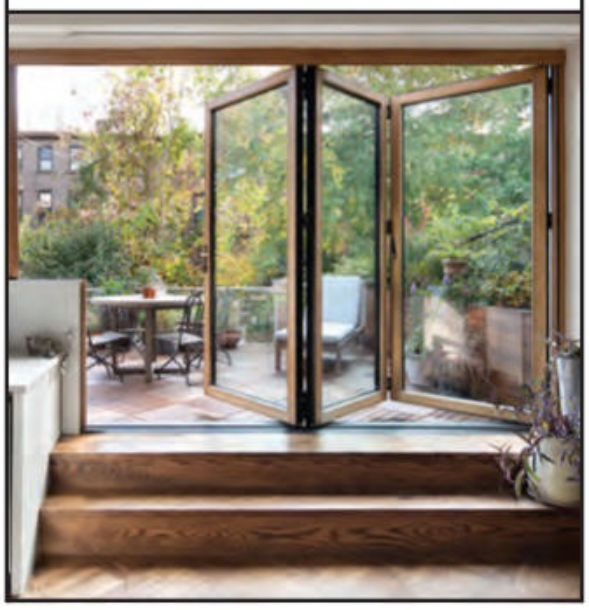
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KITCHEN: STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG; DOORS: YUZHU ZHENG PHOTOGRAPHY; SILVA: DOUG LEVY



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EDITOR'S LETTER

Back to nature in your own backyard

My old house came with many things we were quick to jettison—red poppy wallpaper in the kitchen (thank you, 1970s), wood paneling in the bath (the better to hide crumbling plaster), and dark curtains on pretty much every window (the neighbors are indeed very close). Outside, though, there wasn't much to undo: The landscaping was little more than some overgrown shrubs in front and a rectangle of lawn out back, accessed via a basement door. The aluminum folding chairs left behind appeared to have suited the previous owners just fine for years of backyard barbecues.

Boy, have times changed.

Even before the pandemic, we were all celebrating our outdoor spaces, often treating them to some of the same comforts that we were used to indoors. But as with so many things, we're appreciating our decks, patios, and lawns more than ever before. After all, for over a year they've been vital to our well-being, serving as full-fledged extra living space. Whatever we do inside, we now want to do outside: not just cook, eat, play games, and hang out but also listen to music, read past dusk, stream movies, and, thanks to remote work, conduct business, too.

To help you make your outdoor areas function for all of those activities and more, this issue is chock-full of inspiration, from striking backyard makeovers (page 38) to door systems that turn solid walls into light-filled expanses of glass (page 62) to smart-home tech that makes spending time outside more convenient and enjoyable (page 74).

While the official start of summer—June 20—is still a couple of months away as I'm writing, already there are hints of the sun-baked season to come, days when the weather is hot and bright. Then, there's a distinct feeling of pent-up energy in the air, like the thrum of cicadas on a hot summer night. We're all eager to reclaim this once-carefree time of year, despite the lingering uncertainty around us. One safe, productive way to channel that energy: Grow a backyard garden. Plant some quick-sprouting seeds, maybe herbs and lettuces, or colorful annuals like cosmos and zinnias. As a friend and seasoned gardener once said to me, planting seeds is one of the most hopeful things anyone can do—and it has lessons for us about patience, commitment, and luck. So cultivate those kernels of optimism, and watch them grow.



DAVID YELLEN. HAIR & MAKEUP BY ROBERT HUITRON/ART & STYLE NYC

KATHRYN KELLER,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
kathryn@thisoldhouse.com

Five cool things I learned from this issue:

1 > How a piece of building material can produce a tasty alfresco meal *(page 12)*.

2 > How paving a small yard makes it feel, and function, bigger *(page 32)*.

3 > How you can build a comfy sofa from concrete *(page 42)*.

4 > How one simple move can help indoor shower fixtures weather outdoor installation *(page 57)*.

5 > How sheets of cardboard make growing vegetables a breeze *(page 79)*.



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Around The House

What's happening in the world of **This Old House**



At the Dorchester project house, Bobbi Jones (top) and Yeren Rivera Cruz get tips from Tom Silva on how to tell if lumber is true.

BUILDING A FUTURE

Meet the apprentices

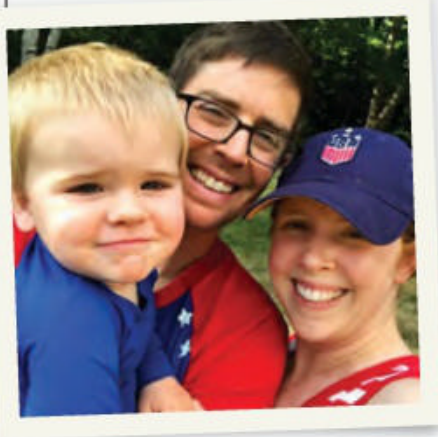
GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE some job site experience, and it just might inspire a career in the building trades. That's the thinking behind our Generation NEXT initiative, and why *TOH* recently partnered with YouthBuild USA, which helps young people pursue their education, prepare for careers, and grow into community leaders. This spring, YouthBuild Boston graduates Bobbi Jones, 26, and Yeren Rivera Cruz, 18, completed a coveted six-week apprenticeship working alongside *TOH* pros. You may spot them as they patched floors, repaired plaster, and installed trim at the Dorchester house; they also spent several days at GAF's Roofing Academy. Yeren sees carpentry as a "ladder you build to climb up in life." For Bobbi, job site experience "has made me feel like I can do anything I set my mind to."



COMING SOON: TOH PROJECT #81

TOH's Cape crusaders

LIKE MANY URBAN-DWELLING parents, Megan and Lincoln Pasquina are moving to greener pastures. Unlike many, they already have a house: this 1880 Cape, on three acres in Concord, MA, bought as a rental property five years ago. "We love how cozy it is, but it needs updating, and we want to add on," Megan says. "We're excited to make it our own." They're equally excited to have *This Old House* on the reno project, which will be filmed for Season 43. Both longtime fans, "we're thrilled to have the show involved and to work with a crew that really inspires us," says Megan. Stay tuned: The Cape Country Cottage airs starting in October.



Lincoln and Megan Pasquina and their son, now 2, are heading out of the city and into reno territory.

APPRENTICES: ANTHONY TIEULI; CONCORD CAPE: JOHN TOMLIN



EVER WONDERED who invented concrete? Or what it would take to build a house on Mars? Podcast host Kevin O'Connor and guest experts unravel those mysteries and more on Season 2 of *Clearstory*. Have a listen!





Carol (center) and Willie Wideman, with *TOH*'s Jenn Nawada at the thriving community garden in Roxbury where the sisters pitch in and help out.

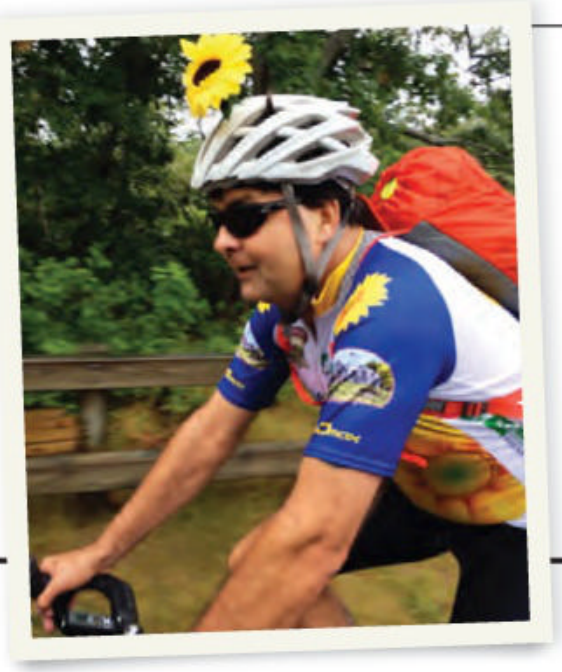
Weeding, watering, and communing

BOSTON HAS A LONG TRADITION of community gardening. When Carol Wideman isn't volunteering at the library or delivering meals to seniors in need, our Dorchester project homeowner can be found alongside her sister, Willie, helping tend two plots at the Lenox/Kendall Community Garden. *TOH*'s Jenn Nawada got a tour and bonded with the sisters over their shared interest in educating young people through gardening: "Where your food comes from is a fundamental thing to know, and when you grow your own, you take pride—it does something for your soul," Jenn says. Plus, all agree, it just tastes better. Itching to grow your own but squeezed for space? Community gardens aren't only in urban areas. Search online and ask around—there may be a spot at one near you.

25 YEARS AGO IN TOH

THEN-HOST STEVE THOMAS was seen taking the measure of the Savannah project on our May/June 1996 cover. Inside, he reflected on the 1884 Italianate rowhouse's solid construction, with its terne metal roof, old-growth heart-pine framing, and Savannah Grey brick exterior. The goal was to renovate "without compromising the home's historic and architectural integrity." Also inside: proof of a job well done.





GIVING BACK

Charlie cycles for a cure

IT'S NOW A RITE OF SUMMER. For the last 11 years, the first week in August has found *TOH* home builder Charlie Silva two-wheeling across Massachusetts or asking everyone he knows to support the Pan-Mass Challenge, an annual bike-a-thon that raises funds for research and treatment at Boston's Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Charlie rides alongside his best friend, Scott Wilson, and nine other members of Team Wilson Farm, as supporters cheer them on along the way. Why he does it: "Because I can." He adds, "It is the most unbelievable experience of your life." Learn more on Charlie's profile page at profile.pmc.org/CS0248.

GARDEN: COURTESY THE TRUSTEES/THETRUSTEES.ORG; NAWADA AND HOMEOWNERS: SARA FERGUSON

You did it!

Reader projects, tips, and triumphs



Clever cooker

TOH Reader: Michael Guarraia, Owings Mills, MD

I'm an engineer and teacher; watching *TOH* led to a lifelong love of working with my hands. Your November/December 2020 Editor's Letter inspired me to extend the outdoor season by repurposing a steel I-beam remnant as an outdoor cooktop. I designed it so the beam can swing away when not in use. For food safety, I removed all the mill scale with a flap wheel, then seasoned the surface. This (and cooking on it frequently) has kept it in great, rust-free shape.



Tin-ceiling success

TOH Insiders: Andy Przystanski and Mariel Nunez Santos, Adams, MA

My wife and I have spent the last eight years renovating our 1890 home, which needed a complete overhaul. We loved its decorative steel ceilings but couldn't rewire the house without destroying them. With the help of my father, who raised me on *TOH* and *New Yankee Workshop,* we painstakingly installed new tin ceilings in every room, doing the historic home justice. Those ceilings are what we're most proud of.

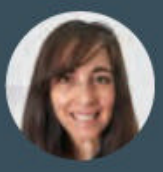
Easy-care garden

TOH Insider: Susan Wilkinson (shown, with daughters Charity Clark, left, and Kelly Blair), Ellisville, MS

My daughters and their families built me a 4-by-8-foot raised bed for Mother's Day. The only garden critters I've had to contend with are our Southern fire ants, which I hose off the wood frame. Planting marigolds helps repel other insects. Tending the garden is a breeze—it's truly the perfect gift that keeps on giving.

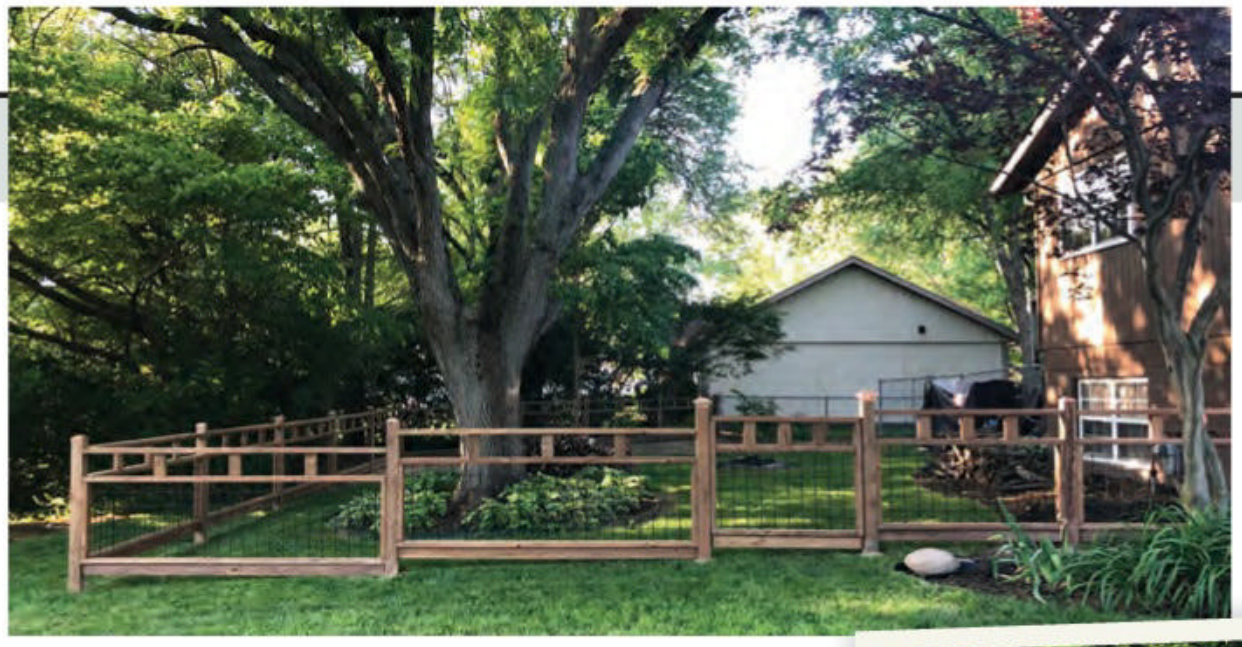


READER TIP



Turn exposed studs in a garage into a storage wall. Install horizontal 2×4s in the recesses for shallow shelves, or, for deeper ones, use plywood that's notched to fit around the studs and braced with wood strips underneath.

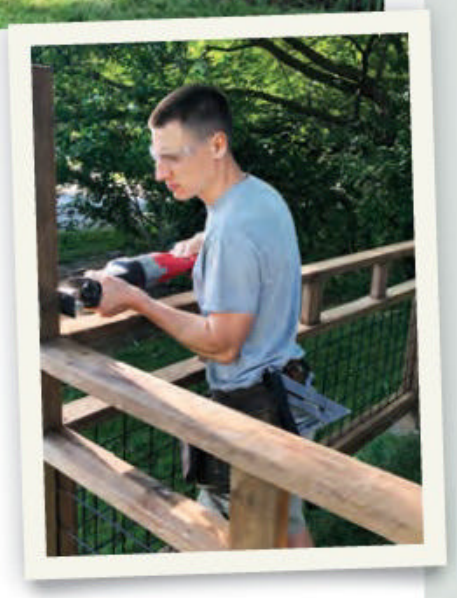
TOH Reader: Lisa Pascetta, Larchmont, NY



Neighborly fence

TOH Insiders: Ryan and Jillian Keene, Lafayette, IN

My wife designed this hog-wire fence for our corner property; all I had to do was figure out how to build it. It was really labor-intensive, but fortunately [*TOH* carpenter] Nathan Gilbert gave me some helpful advice during a *TOH* Insider Q&A. Transporting and cutting the wire panels was tough, but well worth the effort. It's beautiful, and neighbors stop to chat about it. We now live in "the house with the nice fence." Thanks, *TOH*!



READER TIP



My dad taught me this one, which I used when I built my pantry cabinets: To drill rows of evenly spaced holes for shelf support pins, use a pegboard as a template. Level it on the end panels, and use the holes as a guide to mark the shelf-pin locations.

TOH Reader:
Megan McFadden,
Fredericksburg, VA





Workable workbench

TOH Insider: Frank Osman, Long Beach, CA

I built a fold-down workbench for my small garage, inspired by the great Tom Silva (January/February 2017). Space is limited where I live, and as I took on more and more woodworking projects, I was in need of a proper workbench. Now every new project means an opportunity to work with supreme efficiency—all thanks to *TOH*.

Neat seat

TOH Insider: Jared MacDonald, Cambridge, MA

I made this built-in mudroom bench for some friends, inspired by the *TOH* episode where Tom and Kevin build a stand-alone version. My friends wanted storage for jackets and shoes, so, to make the project more manageable, I built the storage bench and upper panel separately. I used plywood with solid poplar rails and stiles attached with pocket screws for a frame-and-panel design effect, which I learned from the *TOH* episode. The contractors who painted it thought it was built by a pro. I am very pleased with how it turned out—and better yet, my friends are, too.



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INSPIRING SPACES, DESIGN DETAILS, AND FINISHING TOUCHES



Clean white cabinetry, marble-look quartz countertops, and a gray-stained hickory island and vent hood combine with new windows for a refreshed, welcoming workspace.

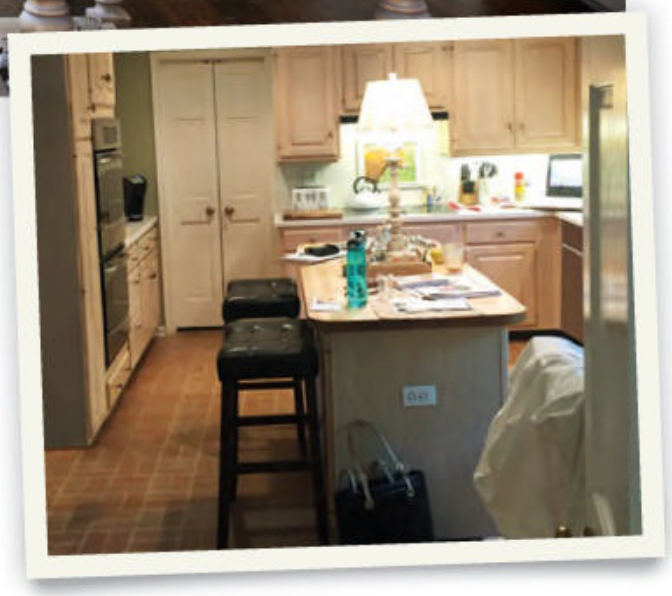
Before & After: Kitchen

All the light moves

Lose a wall, add windows, and reallocate adjacent space, then blend sparkling white surfaces with warm wood-tone accents. That's the recipe for a bright, open kitchen made for family gatherings

BY NINA MALKIN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY STACY ZARIN GOLDBERG





BEFORE Pickled cabinets and a brick-pattern vinyl floor were remnants of a 1980s remodel. Appliances ringed the room, which was closed off from the dining room at one end (shown) and the family room at the other.

Flexibility is fundamental to open-plan success, which can mean rethinking how you've used certain rooms for decades. Christy MacCormack discovered that in the process of renovating the kitchen of the 1970 Federal-style house in Bethesda, MD, she grew up in. "We wanted a welcoming space for everyone to enjoy," Christy says—and she means everyone, since members of three generations have been sharing the home, including her and her husband, Mike. "The cramped, dark kitchen from the 1980s really needed an overhaul to function and flow efficiently."

To get there, designer Colleen Shaut of Case Architects & Remodelers helped the MacCormacks reimagine much of the first floor. The wall between the kitchen and dining room came down and a peninsula with cabinet storage went in, opening up the room. The dining room took the place of the adjacent formal living room, allowing for a sitting area with an office nook where the family can catch up while connected to the activity in the kitchen. (A family room off the other end of the kitchen remains the primary gathering spot.)

To let in more natural light and open up views of the park-like backyard, five large windows went in on the sink wall. Appliances were relocated to be closer together for more convenient cooking, freeing space for continuous runs of countertop prep area. Crisp white cabinetry and countertops are balanced by stained-wood elements, including a handsome hickory vent hood and the slim, table-style island that replaced its clunky, clutter-prone predecessor. "The kitchen is both beautiful and sensible, with more storage and no one jammed in the corners," Christy says. "It's well equipped, bright, and joyful!"

↑ Now the fridge, ovens, and cooktop are in convenient proximity for cooking, and there are ample food-prep surfaces. A barn door on the family room side closes off any kitchen commotion. The hickory island and vent hood—both given a cool, light-gray stain—warm up white shiplap walls, Shaker-style cabinets, and marble-look quartz countertops.





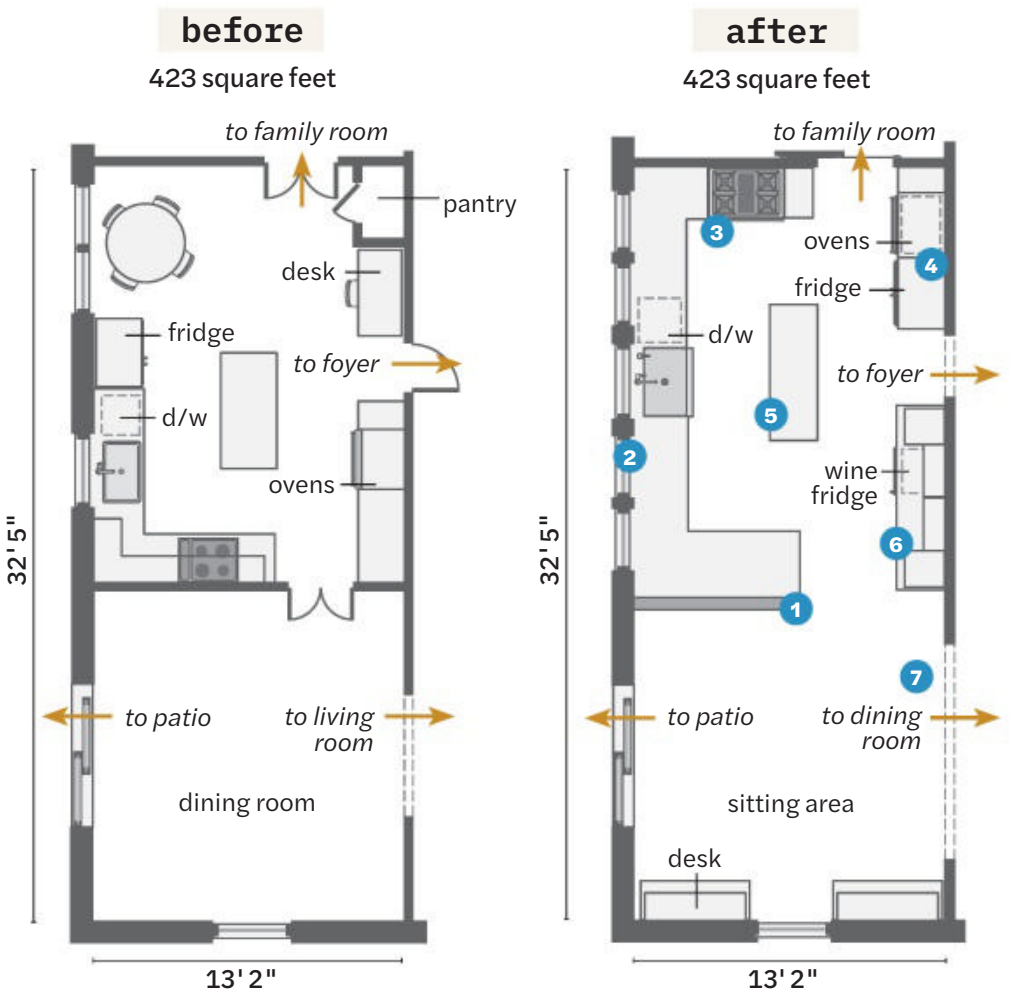
EXPERT ADVICE

"When designing an open-plan kitchen, think about traffic flow from other areas of the room. Create an aisle wide enough for people to walk freely without getting in the way of the cooks." **COLLEEN SHAUT,** *designer, Case Architects & Remodelers*

←

An update on a farmhouse staple, the new apron sink has an angular shape and a brushed-stainless-steel front. The sleek pull-down faucet offers plenty of maneuverability to reach every corner. New windows allow in plenty of natural light, and fully adjustable sconces provide both ambient and task lighting. *Faucet: Moen. Sink: Kohler*

FLOOR PLANS



FLOOR PLANS: IAN WORPOLE

Taking down a wall and moving the dining room opened up the kitchen to a new sitting area.

1. Demoed the wall shared with the former dining room, adding a peninsula and gaining 2 feet in the kitchen.

2. Put in five large windows to open up views and usher in natural light, centering a new sink under them.

3. Added a cooktop on the wall shared with the family room, shifting the doorway slightly to create a wider aisle to ease traffic flow, and replacing French doors with a barn-style slider.

4. Removed a pantry closet and built-in desk, creating spots for wall ovens and a refrigerator.

5. Replaced a built-in island with a narrower table-style model.

6. Installed a beverage area with a wine fridge and cabinet storage.

7. Moved the dining room into the adjacent living room, and created a sitting area in its place with a built-in desk and a wider opening to the new dining space.





Shiplap cladding and hickory shelves in the desk built-in echo the kitchen's finishes to bring a cohesive look to the open space. "The sitting area is a popular part of life around here," says Christy. The computer desk allows her to keep up with her social media while being part of the action.

New white oak flooring was woven in and the whole floor given a cool-brown stain. A wide open aisle creates an unimpeded passageway for people (and pets). "The flow around the island and into the sitting area, then into the dining room or out to the deck, suits our busy lifestyle," Christy says.

GET THE LOOK

Industrial meets refined in these reno-worthy finds, inspired by the kitchen on these pages

1. Library-style sconce / *HINKLEY*
Black-finished steel gives the articulating classic a graphic, modern slant. Arti Black Joint Arm Wall Lamp, $239; lampsplus.com

2. Modern apron sink / *ELKAY*
Stainless steel updates the farmhouse classic, while straight sidewalls and a flat bottom maximize usable space. Crosstown 18-Gauge Single-Bowl Farmhouse Sink, $691; elkay.com

3. Movable island / *POTTERY BARN*
This workhorse island on lockable casters can go from kitchen centerpiece to outdoor serving station, as needed, thanks to its durable acacia base and concrete top. Abbott Island, $1,699; potterybarn.com

4. Pared-down pot washer / *MOEN*
This sleek pull-down packs Power Boost technology for faster filling and stronger spraying. Align Spring Kitchen Faucet in Chrome, $541; moen.com


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BEFORE Cramped and dated, the 1970s builder-grade bath was marooned behind a double-width guest-room closet. Its only access was through the bedroom.

AFTER Expanding the footprint and relocating the entry made room for a wide double vanity, a walk-in shower, and a jetted tub. Clean lines and splashes of color give the room a fresh, updated look.

STYLED BY SARAH ALBA

Before & After: Bath

Modern makeover

Annexing adjacent spaces, moving the entry, and upgrading the fixtures and finishes allows a bare-bones en suite bath to become a stylish shared amenity

BY SUZANNE ZENKEL

Few things irk a professional designer like living with a drab, dysfunctional interior. For Cillesa Ullman, one sore spot in her 1960s post-and-beam home in Oakland, CA, was the tiny, no-frills guest-room bath on the lower level. “I could not wait to tear it out, so I literally did most of the demo myself,” she says. Her plan: Enlarge the space by relocating a laundry room and bedroom closet, and move the doorway so the bath could serve the entire floor, which was renovated to create another bedroom. To add a feeling of luxury to the new bath, Cillesa incorporated heated floors, a spa tub, and sleek new fixtures and cabinetry. She landed on her color inspiration when she came across a penny tile glazed in varying shades of aqua, “like a mermaid’s tail,” she recalls thinking. Using it to cover the tub skirt and line the shower floor, and echoing it on the double vanity, brought the space to life. “It’s both elegant and whimsical,” she says, “and with cool gray walls, it feels calming, too.”

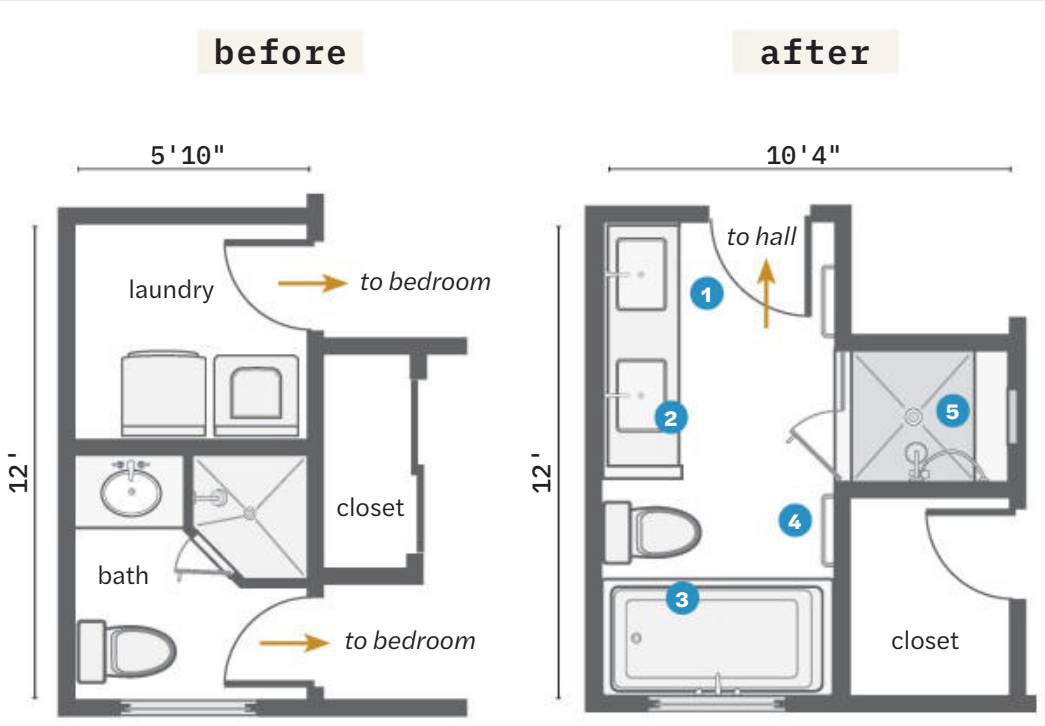
Photography by Philip Harvey



A practical choice in a bath that serves a variety of guests: a height-adjustable shower wand that can move up and down on a vertical bar. White 5-by-15-inch tiles wrap the walls, while aqua penny rounds add traction and color to the floor.

Pull-out shelf towers on either end of the vanity provide smart vertical storage. The white vanity top and backsplash are made from low-maintenance quartz. Oyster-gray large-format porcelain tiles cover the floor.





FLOOR PLANS

Relocating a laundry room and a bedroom closet allowed for an 80-square-foot bath with two sinks, a bathtub, and a shower.

1. Annexed the laundry and closed up its door to the bedroom to create a hallway entrance.

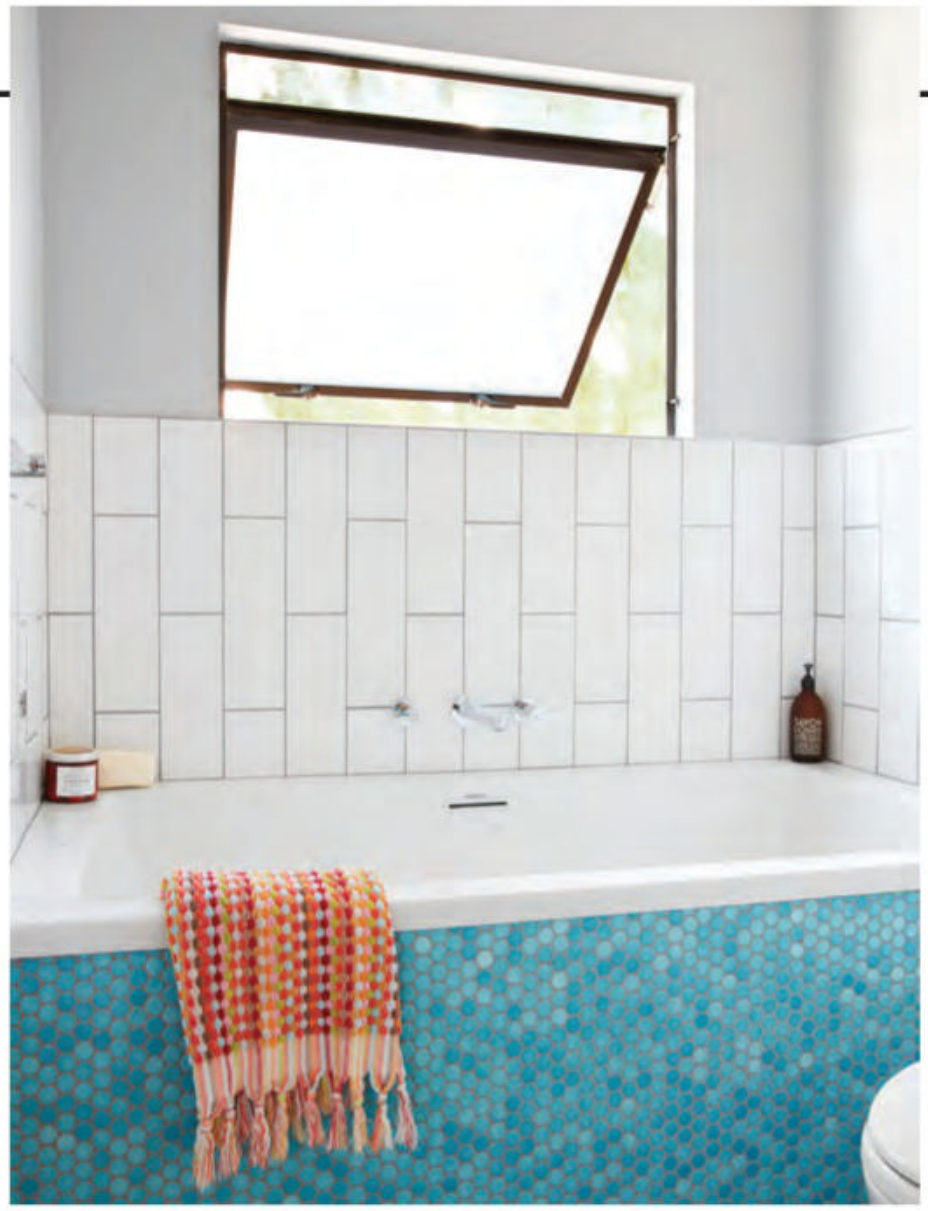
2. Installed a 72-inch-wide double vanity, adding a partition wall at the end to create an alcove for the toilet.

3. Put in an apron-front tub that spans the exterior wall beneath a new 42-by-32-inch awning-style window.

4. Mounted a 30-inch towel bar on either side of the shower.

5. Built a 36-by-39-inch shower with a bench seat and a toiletry niche where part of a bedroom closet had stood.

FLOOR PLANS: IAN WORPOLE





EXPERT ADVICE

"Try orienting rectangular wall tiles vertically to emphasize the height of a space and give it a visual lift. It's a twist on tradition that creates a refreshing, modern aesthetic."

CILLESA ULLMAN, *owner, Cillesa Interior Design & Space Planning*

Centered on the far wall, the focal-point tub's narrow lip makes the wall-mount faucet easy to reach from the front, where penny-round tiles enliven the apron. An acid-etched awning window provides abundant light, airflow, and privacy. *Tub: Americh. Tub filler: Hansgrohe. Window: Milgard*

GET THE LOOK

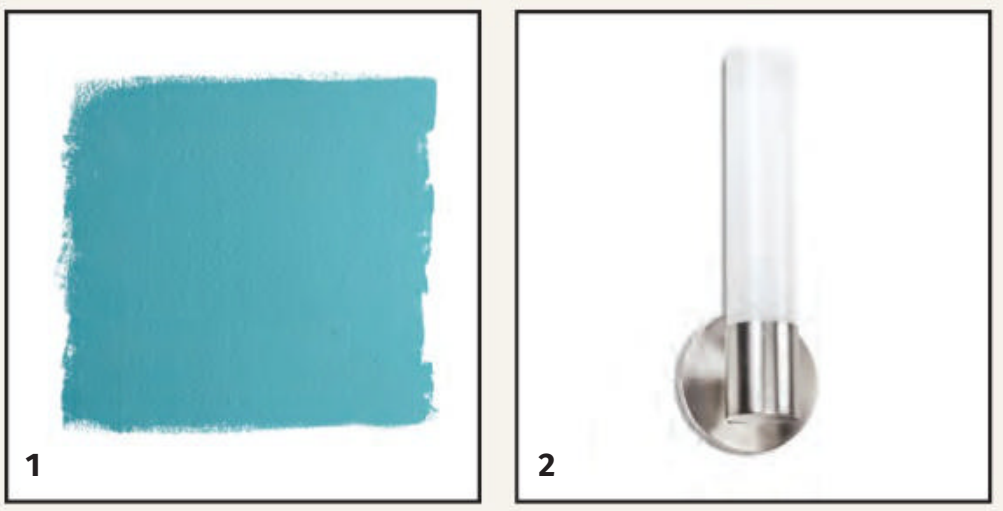
Take the plunge into watery blue hues and streamlined design elements like those on these pages

1. Refreshing blue paint / *BENJAMIN MOORE*
For a poolside vibe in a hard-wearing, cabinet-friendly finish, try the Advance line of water-based alkyd paint in Santa Clara. About $60 per gallon; benjaminmoore.com

2. Cylindrical sconce / *WAC LIGHTING*
Clean lines and a soft glow distinguish this dimmable LED wall light with a brushed-nickel finish and an acrylic shade. Turbo sconce, $70; lightology.com

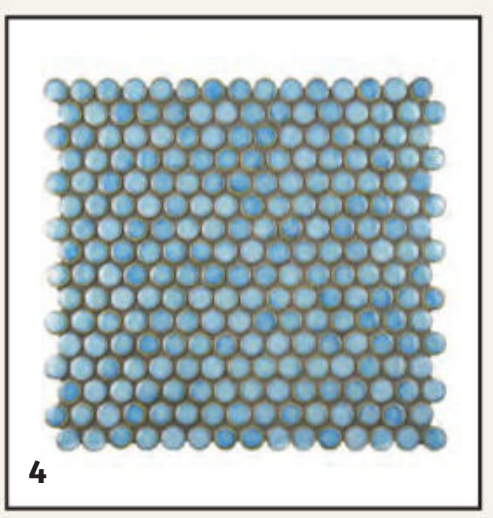
3. Sleek single-hole faucet / *GROHE*
Smooth operation, temperature-sensitive control, and water-saving smarts meet understated style. Cosmopolitan faucet in chrome, $217; grohe.us

4. Porcelain penny tiles / *ELITE TILE*
Durable penny rounds glazed in varying soft-blue hues look both classic and modern. Their small size makes them a slip-resistant choice for wet-area floors. $9.49 per square foot; wayfair.com


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A BEAUTY REBORN

A once-forlorn Queen Anne emerges with its spirit restored—and plenty of 21st-century amenities

BY TED CUSHMAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY NAT REA

The original seaside cottage, built circa 1890

PHOTO CREDIT HERE



NEW MEETS OLD: The elaborate shingle and trim details on the mudroom/garage addition precisely match the carefully restored historical facade on the original portion of the house.

THESE PAGES

NEW WINDOWS: **Marvin**
ROOF: **CertainTeed**
VAPOR BARRIER: **VaproShield**
SIDING: **SBC Cedar**
GARAGE DOOR: **Overhead Door**
GARAGE DOOR OPENER: **LiftMaster**
LAWN EQUIPMENT (NOT SHOWN): **Kubota**

A diamond in the rough—"with emphasis on the 'rough'!" That's how *TOH* host Kevin O'Connor summed up the 1890s Queen Anne in Narragansett, RI, when he first toured it last spring. Just under a year later, the house has been transformed, with a state-of-the-art 21st-century interior and a pristine, faithfully restored exterior.

A subject of *TOH*'s 42nd television season, the renovation addressed decades of neglect, saving what could be saved, replicating the rest—while working under newly formulated Covid-19 restrictions. *TOH* home builder Jeff Sweenor and his crew meticulously rebuilt the exterior, opened up the cramped interior spaces, and added 800 square feet of new construction. The result is still a jewel, but it's more than a piece of history; it's now a house ready for another century of service, in the modern era, with a full array of amenities for new homeowners Michael and Kassiane Campopiano, and their son, Giulian, 10, and daughter, Lucia, 7.

To open up the floor plan, five small downstairs rooms were combined into two—a family room and a kitchen/dining area—with a skeleton of steel beams buried in the ceiling to provide needed support. Upstairs, partition walls were reframed to create a new bedroom-and-bath layout. Across a newly built connecting passage is Michael and Kassiane's bedroom suite. On the first floor of the connector leading to the garage is a mudroom, a half bath, and a laundry area; an adjacent cabana space serves a backyard loaded with new features.

The compact kitchen—"small but mighty, like me!" says 5-foot-tall Kassiane—opens onto a dining area whose hallmark is a bay lined with original stained-glass windows, now painstakingly restored. Saving the original windows throughout the house was a major undertaking. "Some of them were in really bad shape," Jeff says. "And they all needed work." A steam box constructed in the Sweenor Builders shop softened the layers of paint and putty so they could be scraped clean for restoration. For the new portion of the house, custom dual-glazed windows were built to replicate the Queen Anne–style, divided-light originals.

Sweenor Builders interior designer Kristen Martone took the lead when it came to establishing the design themes. In the kitchen, Kassiane wanted white cabinetry, so they chose white Shaker-style doors around the kitchen perimeter. "White is also beachy," says Martone, "and the house is right down the street from the water. So I wanted that coastal feel."

The island's contrasting espresso-hued cabinets have gilded molding on the inset door and drawer fronts, which is echoed in the gilding on the range hood. Martone says, "I pulled the gold out of the stained-glass windows to create kind of an old-world feel." The gold theme continues in the



ABOVE: Michael and Kassiane Campopiano relax with their son, Giulian, and daughter, Lucia, alongside the island in the new kitchen. The room reflects the neutral color scheme that continues throughout the open-plan kitchen/dining area. Engineered white oak flooring, laid in a herringbone, is a modern take on a classic pattern. The marble-look quartz countertops are striking and durable.

STYLED BY JENNIFER VREELAND





TOP RIGHT: Restored original stained-glass windows bring dramatic color and sunlight into the dining area. Gold and brass accents are repeated throughout the interior, here in the chandelier and in the bar area to the right.

BOTTOM RIGHT: What was an attached outhouse some 130 years ago is now a convenient and practical storage pantry, hidden behind tall cabinet doors.

THESE PAGES

WOODWORK: **Baird Brothers Fine Hardwoods**
CABINETS: **Wood-Mode**
CABINET LIGHTING: **Häfele**
COUNTERTOPS: **Silestone**
FLOORING: **Rivafloors**
RANGE, REFRIGERATOR: **Wolf/Sub-Zero**
LIGHT FIXTURES: **Generation Lighting**
BARSTOOLS, DINING TABLE AND CHAIRS: **Boston Interiors**



TOH PRO TIP



TOM SILVA
General Contractor

"To make the original single-pane windows more energy efficient, we added exterior storm windows. That should improve their energy efficiency by as much as 20 to 30 percent."



veining on the quartz countertops and the brass light fixtures. Throughout, the color palette is light and neutral, which is reflected in the choice of pale engineered white oak flooring laid in a herringbone pattern on the first floor. "It's not a big space," says Martone, "so I didn't want it to be heavy."

Smart controls are installed throughout the house, integrated by a Wi-Fi brain that lives in an equipment rack in the crawl space, along with an amplifier that's connected to a dozen speakers around the house and in the backyard, including two "invisible" speakers buried in the living room ceiling. Each of five touch panels is equipped with a microphone, a motion sensor, a camera, and a touch-screen display. From any touch panel, Michael and Kassiane can view the security cameras and the doorbell cameras, and communicate with people at the door or with the other panels. One touch will activate a custom "scene" that sets lighting, audio, and the thermostat. "It's my favorite part of the house," says Michael of the system, which also operates with voice control. "And it's simple—my kids use it as much as I do."

ABOVE: The expansive living room was created by removing partition walls and inserting load-carrying steel beams to support the upper-floor spans. The gas fireplace and large TV screen create a focal point for the room.

THESE PAGES
WOODWORK: **Baird Brothers Fine Hardwoods**
FURNITURE: **Boston Interiors**
FIREPLACE SURROUND: **Polycor**
ELECTRICAL PRODUCTS: **Schneider Electric**
SECURITY CAMERAS AND SENSORS (NOT SHOWN): **ecobee**
HVAC: **Bryant Heating & Cooling Systems**

With energy efficiency as a priority, walls were insulated with 3 inches of high-density spray foam. An advanced hybrid HVAC system that combines a gas furnace with an electric heat pump will supply both heating and cooling. With a seasonal energy-efficiency rating (SEER) of 25, the modulating unit's efficiency is "something we haven't seen before in residential equipment," says *TOH* plumbing and heating expert Richard Trethewey (SEER 13 is typical in most of the country).

Controls for the system are "like a laptop on the wall," he adds. "You can enter the fuel and electric costs, and the system's smart enough to know when it makes more sense to use the gas furnace or the heat pump." The control system can send error messages to the maintenance company in case of any malfunction, and the equipment communicates with service technicians' tablet computers using Bluetooth technology. "It will tell you everything that is going on inside it without putting any gauges on it," says Richard. "That's really the future."

The challenge was finding places to put the equipment and ductwork. The furnace ended up





TOP: The first-floor redesign created long sight lines and clear traffic flow. This view from the front entry into the kitchen, past a storage nook in the living room, illustrates this feeling of space.

ABOVE: Accessible from the front walkway and from the backyard, the new mudroom offers a transition between the outdoors and the main living areas. To the rear, the sun-filled kitchen and dining area beckon.

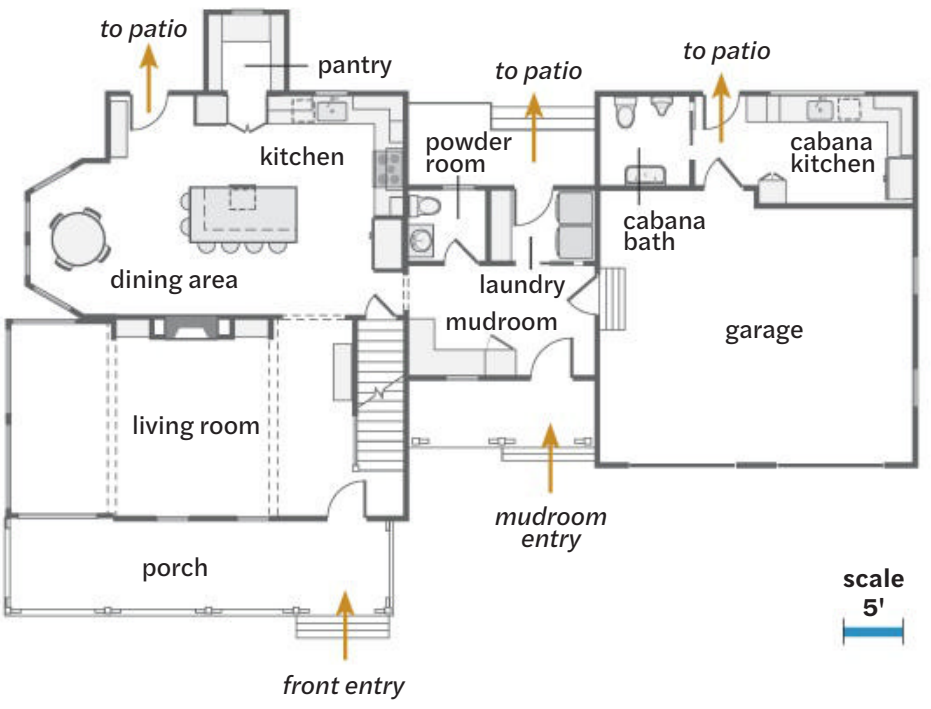
FLOOR PLANS: IAN WORPOLE

FLOOR PLANS

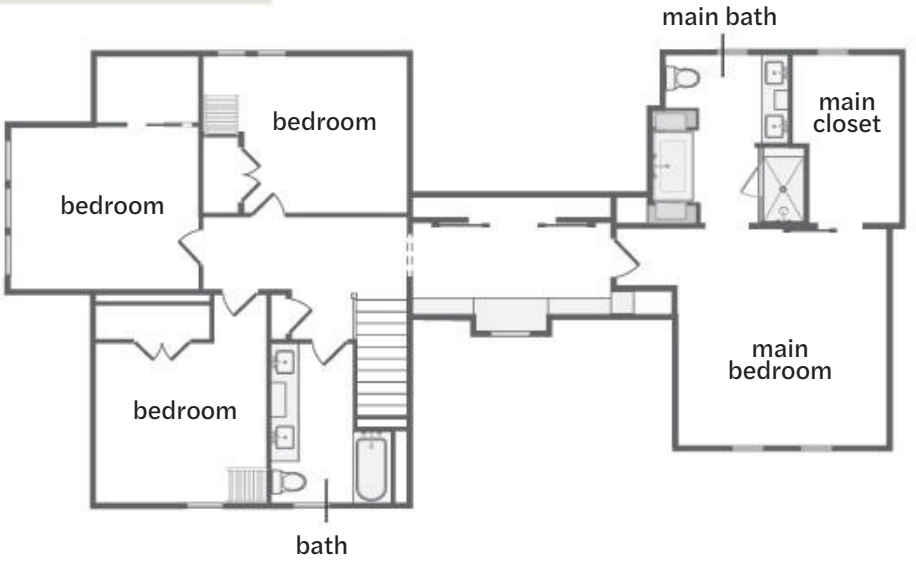


The expanded house now holds four bedrooms, two full baths, and two half baths, in 3,390 square feet of living space. In the original portion of the house, a large kitchen/dining area and a spacious living room replaced the cramped Victorian-era five-room layout. Part of the original porch was enclosed to allow an expansion of the living room. A new mudroom connector with a half bath and a laundry room leads to the garage addition, which has a cabana kitchen and half bath in the back. Upstairs, bedrooms over the original portion of the house were reconfigured, with loft space added in what was the original attic. A second-story passageway connects to the new main bedroom, with its own bath and dressing closet.

first floor



second floor



in the crawl space, and the crew "did a spectacular job of developing the ductwork through the old building, where there really wasn't any space," says Richard. "They were absolute magicians."

Like the heating system, the main suite's shower has state-of-the-art touch-pad controls. Users can set the lighting and sound as well as customize the shower experience. But there was a water-heating challenge: Besides the large tub, the shower is equipped with multiple body sprays, handheld sprays, and a rainfall head. Taken together, says Richard, all that adds up to a "dump load" that could amount to a hundred gallons of hot water in a 20-minute period. The innovative solution: an array of three high-efficiency tankless water heaters, also in the crawl space, connected by a manifold system and wired together in a daisy chain with a smart controller that decides how many heaters to activate in response to demand.

Replicating the exuberant exterior details was a labor of love for the team. The crumbling front porch was nearly a complete write-off; only the turned columns could be saved. The crew had to pour new foundation footings and piers (facing them with brick from the old chimney), then rebuild the porch using treated wood. With help from *TOH*'s Tom Silva, the team re-created the original half wall's staggered shingle pattern using a straightedge and a spacer block.

The existing gable ends were works of art: a layered siding pattern consisting of clapboards, sawtooth shingles, scalloped fishscale shingles, clapboard-and-shingle sunbursts, and built-up eyebrows with sawtooth shingles. All that intricacy had to be replicated on the addition's gable end. So the distinctive barge rafters, profiled with dadoes, drilled circles, and applied rosette medallions, were reproduced full-size, then hung from the edges of the garage's gable roof.

"We matched every detail," says Jeff. "Pretty much everything is what it looked like a hundred years ago."

Because the home is in the Narragansett Historic District, all the meticulous reproduction was strictly required on the street-facing exterior. But the commission was more lenient about the grounds, especially in the backyard. So there, the Campopianos went to town: The array of amenities on the expansive stone patio grew to include an outdoor kitchen with a gas fireplace and a wood-fired pizza oven, plus a plunge pool. A cabana area inside the house has a built-in pass-through for staging refreshments.



ABOVE: Removing a small attic created overhead space in the son's bedroom for a loft play or sleepover space. A window placed up high boosts daylight.

THESE PAGES
CHANDELIER: **Generation Lighting**
BEDDING: **Creative Threads**
ARTWORK: **South County Art Association**
MAIN BATH FANS: **Panasonic**
SHOWER DRAINS: **QuickDrain**
FAUCETS: **Kohler**
BATH TILE: **TileBar**
WATER HEATERS (NOT SHOWN): **Navien**
NEW WINDOWS: **Marvin**

In the end, Kevin says, the Narragansett project represents a satisfying compromise between modernization and preservation: "It's the perfect way to do it, in my opinion. The historical salvaged part is the public-facing touchstone for the community—the neighbors and the town. So you treat it differently from the private part, which you only share with family and friends. After all, the way we live today is different from the way we lived 50 years ago, and it's certainly different from the way we lived over 100 years ago."

For the Campopianos, it will become part of their own family's heritage, says Michael, who, together with Kassiane, plans to put the house in a trust for their descendants: "We hope it will be a gathering place for many future generations."

RIGHT: New windows made in the Queen Anne style and pale finishes throughout bring an airy serenity to the main bedroom, accentuated by the raised ceiling. Gold notes in the chandelier are repeated in the furnishings.

BELOW LEFT: A double vanity topped with marble in the main bath holds partially recessed vessel sinks. Gold faucets and brass accents warm up the mostly white space.

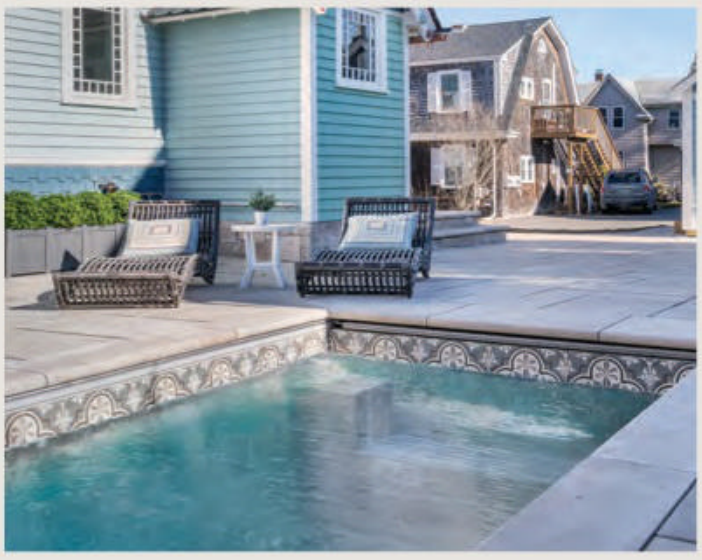
BELOW RIGHT: The main bath's shower—its door not yet installed—is equipped with a rainhead, body sprays, a handheld shower, and steam. Three styles of marble tile add interest to the walls and floor.

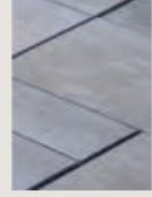










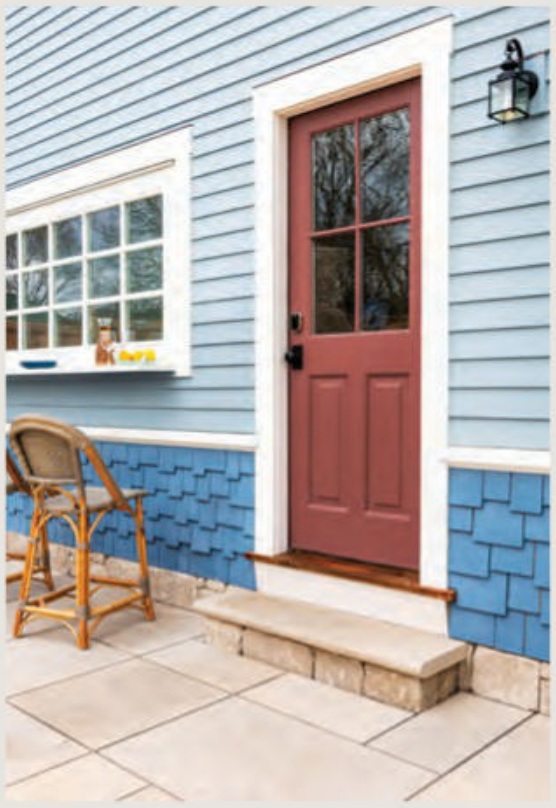


Summer playground

Freshly paved with Indiana sandstone, the Campopianos' backyard has become an extension of the house, ready to serve as a gathering place. In the full outdoor kitchen, a gas-fired range, a grill, a burner, and a fireplace are piped into the home's propane tank. The assembly is topped off by a wood-fired pizza oven. A cabana window provides easy pass-through access from the house. At the other end of the yard is a plunge pool that is heated to be able to serve year-round, and has a retractable, insulated safety cover.

TOP: Cooking, eating, and cooling-off zones make up the outdoor living area. ABOVE: The concrete plunge pool was precast in New Hampshire, trucked in, and craned into place. Its heater can raise the water temperature by 10°F an hour; app control means you can turn it on from a phone on the way home from work.

THESE PAGES
OUTDOOR FURNITURE: **Seaside Casual**
PAVERS: **Polycor**
ROOFING: **CertainTeed**
PIZZA OVEN: **Round Grove Products**
PLUNGE POOL: **Soake Pools**
DOORS: **Upstate**
SHINGLE SIDING: **SBC Cedar**



ABOVE: A four-color paint treatment accentuates the carpentry crew's careful craftsmanship. The red doors reference the color of the decorative rosettes in the gable ends' exterior trim.



TOH PRO TIP



JENN NAWADA
Landscape Contractor

"If you pave a whole outdoor area with hardscape, it makes a small space feel bigger because it's more usable. It fills in very quickly once you start adding furniture."



ABOVE: Protected by a tall privacy fence and by arborvitae shrubs that will grow in to create a hedge, the hearth provides a visual focal point for the outdoor kitchen and dining area. An eight-person dining table leaves plenty of patio space for family and guests to mingle.

LEFT: The outdoor kitchen, gas fireplace, and wood-fired pizza oven, built with steel framing and magnesium oxide cement board, were trucked to the site in pieces from Ohio, assembled, then faced with natural limestone.



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Paint It

Take a shine to the ceiling

Luscious color overhead in a light-reflecting finish can give your entry—and spirits—a lift

BY KATHRYN O'SHEA-EVANS

Nothing extends a more cheerful welcome than opening the door to reveal an expanse of uplifting, unexpected color. And nowhere is it more surprising than overhead—and with a gleaming, lacquer-like look.

Take the cantaloupe-colored "fifth wall" just inside the front door of this Nantucket, MA, cottage, selected by Connecticut interior designer Lee Ann Thornton. "I chose high gloss to reflect all the natural light in the entry," Thornton says, an effect she amplified even more with pale finishes on the walls and a pickled wood floor. "High gloss adds a pop of glamour, and a front entry can be the perfect spot for that little extra drama."



TOH PRO TIP



Mauro Henrique
Painter

"To create a lacquer look, I like to use a high-gloss oil-based formula like Fine Paints of Europe's Hollandlac Brilliant 98 system. This paint is really thick, so you'll need a stiff China bristle or white hog-hair brush. It will require two coats, but will give you a brilliant, mirror-like finish."

Photograph by James Ransom

This Old House Cottage Community NORWALK, CT 2021



Idea House

Welcome to the neighborhood

Meeting a growing demand for flexible housing and low-maintenance living, TOH's newest Idea House project offers spacious, adaptable floor plans in a collection of duplexes with contemporary cottage style

BY TED CUSHMAN

Try to find a new house with a first-floor bedroom suite in the city of Norwalk, CT, an hour's ride from Manhattan, and you may search in vain. Despite their popularity, "you won't find any," says builder Jerry Effren. That's a deficiency he and his wife, Sandy, of Greyrock Homes, are looking to correct. "There's a population that wants that kind of contemporary living on the main level and a wide-open floor plan—but also wants to have some space above for kids or grandkids, or for a gym or an office," says Jerry.

To meet that need, the Effrens worked with architect Jim Jamieson to develop a flexible plan of cottage-like homes that can adapt to different scenarios. The 1,500-square-foot first floor will include an accessible bedroom suite with its own bath, and an open-plan kitchen-living-dining area. One version of the 1,300-square-foot second floor will have another bedroom suite, plus two more bedrooms that share a bath; another version will

The duplex form will offer instant neighborliness, while garages dividing the units will provide privacy. Durable exterior finishes will minimize maintenance. As an energy-saving daylighting strategy, skylights and sun tunnels will be placed in stairwells, baths, hallways, and closets. A homeowners association will maintain the landscaping.

COURTESY JAMIESON ARCHITECTS



WATCH
See the Norwalk Idea House take shape at **thisoldhouse.com/cottage-community**

THESE PAGES
ROOFING: **GAF**
SIDING: **LP SmartSide**
SHEATHING & TAPE: **ZIP System**
SUBFLOOR ASSEMBLY: **AdvanTech**
ADHESIVES: **Gorilla Glue**
INSULATION/ SOUNDPROOFING: **Rockwool**
SKYLIGHTS AND SUN TUNNELS: **VELUX**
BUILDING MATERIALS DISTRIBUTOR: **Ring's End**

have three bedrooms, two baths, and a study. Each unit will also have a finished basement with a bedroom, a bath, and a common area like the one on the first floor. "They don't look huge from the outside, but there's a lot of living space packed into that footprint," Jamieson says.

The homes will be built as duplexes—two units abutting at a pair of one-car garages—with a common driveway and sidewalks, nestled around a cul-de-sac. From the outside, the look is that of a modern cottage, says Jerry: "With the black windows, the square columns, and the clean lines, it's meant to look as if we had two contemporary cottages, and connected them with a little carriage house."

As the pandemic spurs an exodus from cities to bedroom communities like Norwalk, the eventual occupants "could be empty nesters who want to downsize and stay in the area to be near their kids and friends, or they could be a growing family moving out from the city," Jamieson says. Other scenarios might involve adult children returning to the nest for any number of reasons, or a family making room for an elderly relative. Many households these days are also composed of unrelated people—to help pay the bills or to provide care for seniors, for example. "Having dual suites accommodates a lot of different lifestyles," Jamieson adds. Home offices are also a prized amenity; that role could be filled by the downstairs suite, the upstairs study, or the basement bedroom.

A total of 10 of these energy-efficient homes—potentially equipped with rooftop solar panels—will make up a pocket neighborhood on a two-and-a-half-acre site that backs up to the wooded banks of Five Mile River. A common outdoor space, shaded by a pergola, paved with large stones, and accessed by a sidewalk, will overlook the river and surrounding natural habitat.

To make life easier for busy parents or retirees, the Effrens are choosing building materials geared for low or no maintenance, yet compatible with the cottage look of the buildings. The siding is a durable engineered-wood product; windows may be fiberglass, which never needs painting. Porch decking will be a long-lasting, easy-to-care-for synthetic material. A homeowners association will take care of the landscape maintenance.

The combination of low maintenance, lifestyle flexibility, and access to the outdoors with proximity to the big city adds up to a rare offering, says Jerry: "We're hitting a lot of the buttons here."

> "Flexibility in home design is really key. People's needs can change over time. They may start out thinking they don't need a lot of space, then things happen and they do. These homes are designed to keep the options open for the people who will live there."
>
> —**JERRY EFFREN,** *builder (shown, with his wife, Sandy)*



NAT REA



1

Outdoor Rooms

DESTINATION *Relaxation*

Looking to eke a little more living out of your backyard patch of green?
As the past year has made clear, outdoor spaces are vital to our well-being—and they can double our dining, entertaining, and hangout space. Here's how three couples created a bit of paradise in their own backyards **BY KATHRYN O'SHEA-EVANS**





SEATING AREA: ROOM FOR TUESDAY; FIREPLACE: YELLOW BRICK HOME

THREE PLACES, THREE SPACES
1. A Southern California desert oasis hosts pairs of Acapulco chairs, a s'more-worthy fire bowl, a white-walled studio, and a portable projector for great outdoor movie nights. **2.** Key to a party-ready outdoor living room in Salt Lake City? A DIY sofa made from all-weather concrete block—just add cushions. **3.** In Chicago, a sculptural fireplace creates an instant gather-round focal point. Its mid-century design gets practical as well as style points, directing smoke up the chimney and away from nearby faces.

DESERT-STYLE GETAWAY

THE HANDY HOMEOWNERS Molly Madfis, who blogs at almostmakesperfect.com, and her husband, Gideon Boomer

PROJECT OVERVIEW Molly and Gideon wanted to give their LA backyard spaces a look inspired by the hip hotels of Palm Springs, using a palette of serene desert hues. First they replaced a falling-down fence along the back of the property, and much later "refaced" another one, covering it with redwood boards they then painted. They doubled the back porch's footprint to 12 feet deep and 25 feet wide—a nice chunk of real estate in their 2,000-square-foot backyard. Molly enlisted her stepdad, Scott Miller, to help redesign the space, and after hiring a crew to remove the lawn and level the soil, they laid stabilized decomposed granite, renting a plate compactor to firm it up. "You're supposed to keep a big barrel of it to fill in any holes that form, which we don't really do," says Molly. Still, it created a smooth canvas for plantings. Watering it periodically keeps the dust down.

STANDOUT FEATURES Molly's favorite parts of the revamp? The louvered pergola roof that Miller designed to shade the porch; a contractor built it using a 14-foot engineered beam and 44 Douglas fir slats held in place with 8¾-inch tubes of stainless steel. Plus the African sumac tree and podocarpus that disguise unsightly power lines and fencing.

LESSONS LEARNED After their toddler son, Arlo, crashed into one of the cacti they initially put in, they switched to "soft, flowy statement plants" like Pride of Madeira and coleonema, Molly says. What else she'd do differently: "I wish we'd splurged on a gas fire pit, since we were tearing up the yard anyway. And now that we have a kid, I wish we'd left one grassy spot."

THE PAYOFF Though the work took nearly five months to finish, the result is a hit. "We love our backyard," Molly says. "During the summer we have dinner out there every night. We hang out on the couch and listen to music." Or they'll throw some logs on the fire pit and project movies on the wall of the studio for date night—who needs a drive-in?

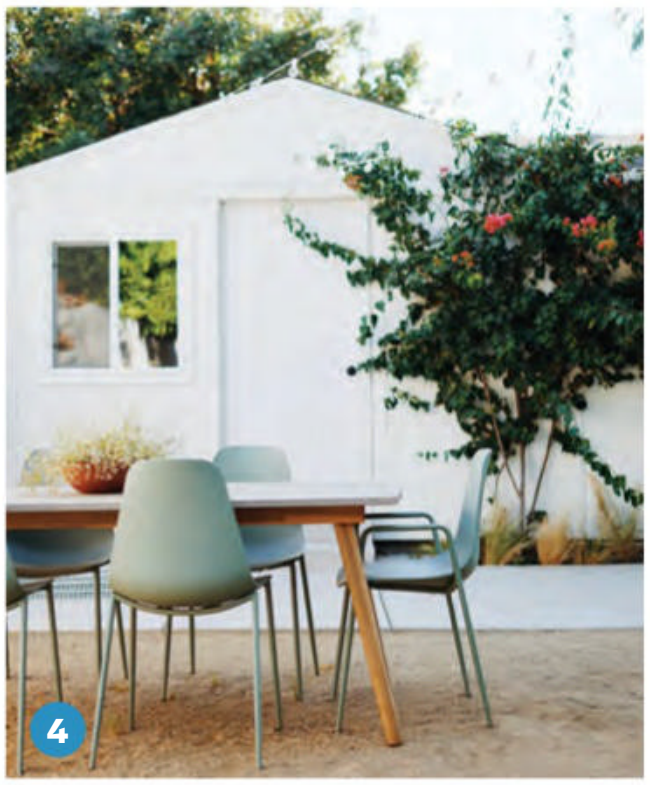

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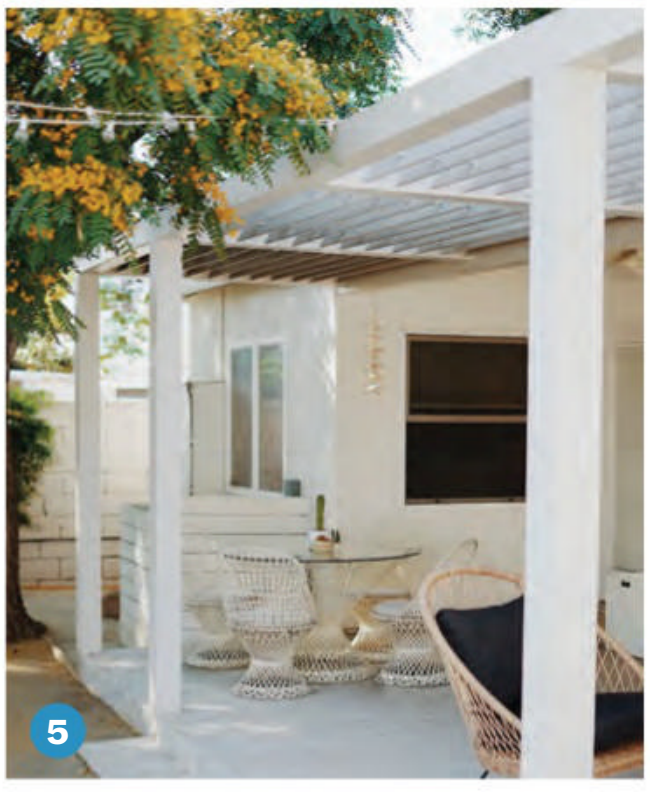

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BEFORE: The 1938 tract house came with yellow paint, a 6-foot-deep back porch, a privacy fence that was falling over, and a shed they've made into a studio and playroom. An AC condenser was another eyesore on the struggling lawn.









LIGHT AND SHADE

1. The backyard got a modernist makeover with decomposed granite underfoot, low-water plantings, and large-scale concrete pavers that were poured on-site.

2. Molly Madfis and Gideon Boomer enjoy a date night by the fire.

3. They painted their son's home-center playhouse to blend in with the main house.

4. In the outdoor dining area, a concrete-top table and plastic-seat chairs are easily hosed down for cleaning.

5. A vintage spun-fiberglass dining set found on Craigslist is tucked under the porch's slatted roof. The AC condenser got its own enclosure.

6. After the couple traded the house's yellow exterior for a warm white, they doubled the depth of the back porch, adding a custom pergola that Molly's stepdad designed. Its angular lines and bright white finish give the house a style boost. The slatted roof offers needed light control in sunny LA and creates interesting shadows at different times of day. A new concrete pad allows for more seating, with a mix of natural rattan chairs and an upholstered sofa. The porch steps down to large concrete pavers placed in a hopscotch pattern—handy for playing just that with their son, Arlo, now 4.

PARTY-READY SEATING PLAN

THE HANDY HOMEOWNERS Sarah Gibson, who blogs at roomfortuesday.com, and her husband, Emmett

PROJECT OVERVIEW To extend their living space, Sarah drew up plans for a 14-by-22-foot patio and a level new lawn bordered by fresh white fencing. "I wanted a big open space with plenty of seating for conversation and entertaining," she says, so she mapped out a large pergola-topped gathering space, plus a grill station, and a fire pit area with four additional seats. To make her dream a reality, these experienced DIYers—both grew up in families that were in the construction business—began by leveling the yard using rakes and shovels, then installing a sprinkler system for a lush new lawn. They unfurled sod around the patio's perimeter, then filled in its footprint with a base of aggregate and sand before laying the concrete pavers. Last, they installed a 12-by-12-foot stained pine pergola that they built from a home-center kit.

STANDOUT FEATURES To kick-start the furnishing plan, Sarah set about building an unexpected centerpiece: an L-shaped concrete sofa with room to seat eight. First she determined the overall measurements, using 46-by-26-inch, outdoor loveseat cushions she bought off the shelf. Then she laid a gravel base and tamped it in. She built the sofa by laying rows of concrete blocks, offsetting the joints, and pounding stakes of rebar down the middle, before filling them with concrete. Cap blocks set with construction adhesive gave it a solid top. For a smooth finish, Sarah stuccoed the surface with a fiberglass-reinforced bonding cement. The result? "Beautiful and functional," she says. "It has held up really well against the elements."

LESSON LEARNED "A couple of the pergola pieces were bowed, which is typical of these types of kits," Sarah says. "It went together fine, but had we built it from scratch we would have been more selective. It wasn't perfectly square."

THE PAYOFF They got the spring-through-fall entertaining destination they wanted as a result of all their hard work, Sarah says. Backyard cookouts can go from the heat of afternoon into the wee hours of the night, thanks to the pergola's overhead solar shades, bug-shooing fan blades, and string lights that add more than a little atmosphere after dark.





BEFORE: The yard behind their 1950s ranch house held a small area of buckled pavers, the remnants of a makeshift fire pit, patchy turf, and mismatched fencing. The fifth-of-an-acre lot also offered no respite during Utah's extreme summer heat.

OPEN-AIR GREAT ROOM

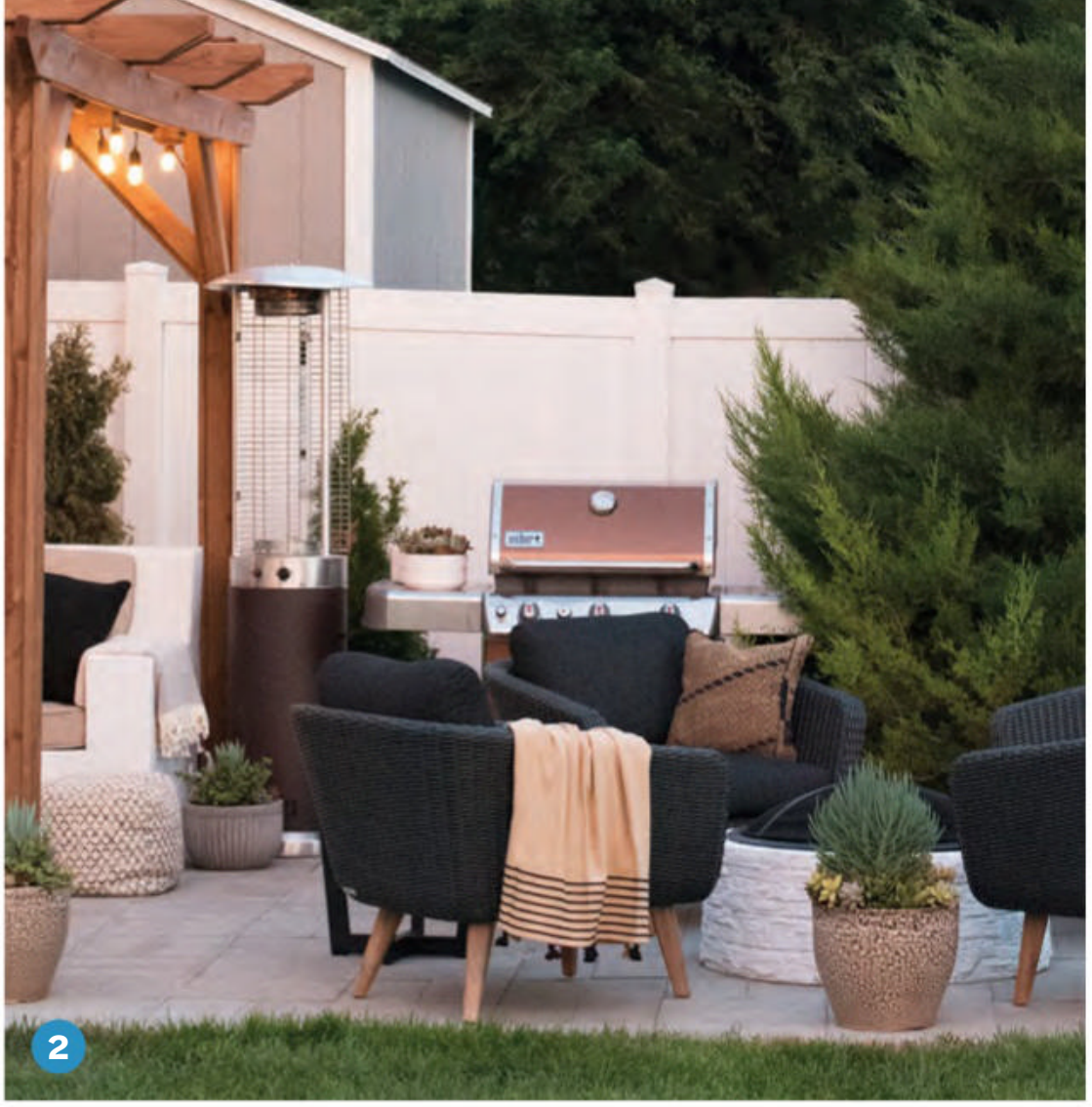
1. The outdoor living area's paved footprint hosts a pergola over a concrete sofa to create a room within the room. Retractable outdoor-fabric shades overhead and a fan offer relief during the intense summer heat. String lights add a party vibe as late afternoon turns into evening.

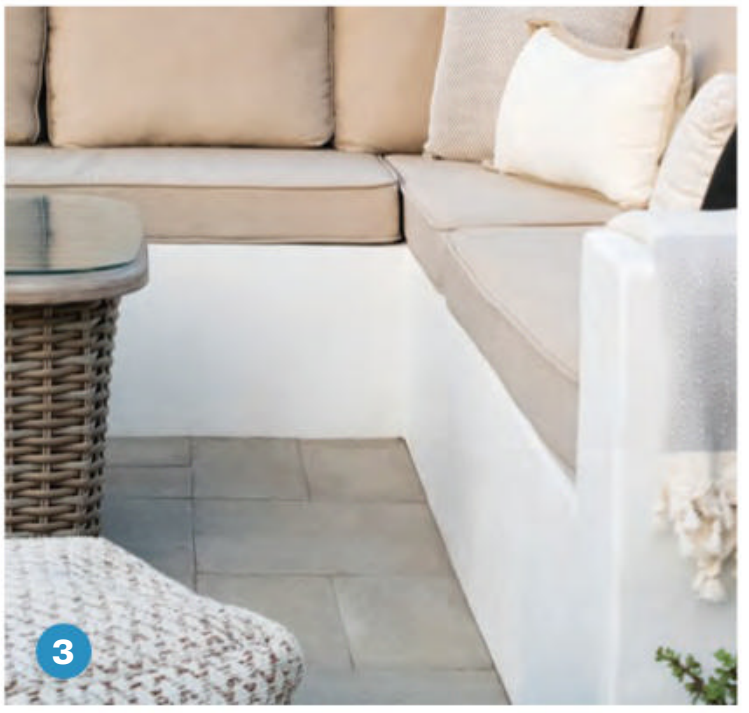
2. A new white privacy fence sets off the grill area, which sees plenty of use. A patio heater, a cast-stone fire pit—freshened up with a coat of heat-resistant white paint—and some comfortable outdoor seating encourage folks to linger longer.

3. Once the concrete sofa's form was finished and dried, Sarah stuccoed the surface, and later brightened it with white masonry paint and custom outdoor-fabric-covered cushions.

4. Sarah (center) and a couple of friends gather for a cocktail under the glow of the pergola's outdoor-rated LED bistro lights.

5. A fire pit has a magnetic attraction on a cool summer night. Emmett (center) and some pals enjoy the light and warmth of a wood fire, while a portable speaker brings their playlist outdoors.









A WORK-HARD, PLAY-HARD PATIO

THE HANDY HOMEOWNERS Kim and Scott Vargo, who blog at yellowbrickhome.com

PROJECT OVERVIEW "At the time, we had two dogs that were always in the backyard killing grass," Kim says. Their solution? A 6-by-8-foot "potty pit" under a new, wider exterior staircase. Filled with 8 inches of gravel, the pit gets hosed down frequently to keep it clean. Over the course of two months, they revamped the entire 25-by-25-foot backyard, adding a 15-by-18-foot patio with a wide gravel border. "We loved the idea of hardscaping the whole back, and giving it life and soft edges with planters lining the perimeter," Kim says. After a contractor excavated and added a level base of crushed stone and sand, the couple installed the brick pavers. "We sloped them slightly so rainwater runs back to the potty pit as a natural rinse," Scott says.

STANDOUT FEATURES To create the feeling of a garden room with wall-to-wall greenery, Kim and Scott built 37 linear feet of raised planter boxes in one weekend, using 10-foot lengths of ⅝×6 pressure-treated pine. Then they lined them with rigid-foam insulation to protect perennials during Chicago's severe cold. To give the greenery even more height—and improve the view from inside—they built wide slatted trellises from 2×4s they ripped down, and attached them to the side of the detached garage. A vintage metal fireplace they got secondhand and a dining table they built for $100 (inspired by a Restoration Hardware piece) anchor the patio.

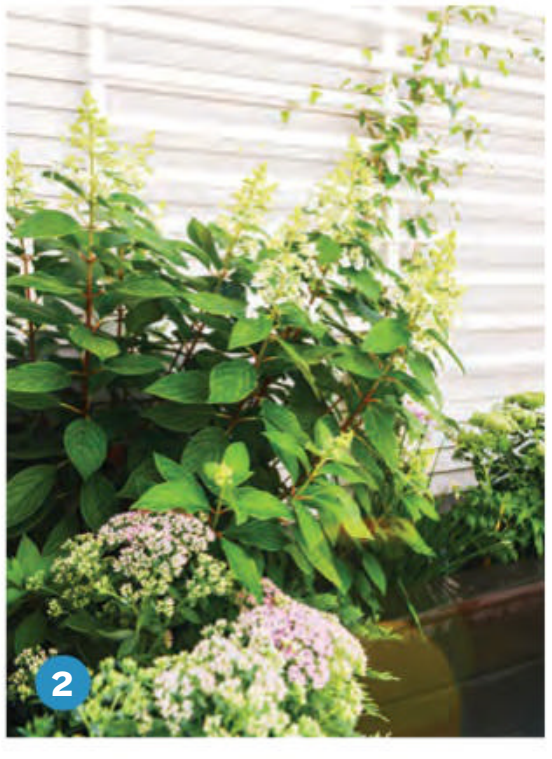
LESSONS LEARNED "The insulated planters have been nothing short of a miracle," Kim says. "Most of our plants have come back every year." Things they might change: "We stained the planter boxes chocolate brown, but today we might stain them black to make the plants really pop," says Kim. And having lived with their DIY dining table for a while, "we're thinking we'd be better off with a round table out there, for traffic flow."

THE PAYOFF "Kim and I are self-employed, so when the weather's nice we set up our laptops on the table and work outside," Scott says. "I've also been getting together with some dads on the block for socially distanced hangs by the fire. We play concert videos on YouTube. Our setup, which started with a laptop and a speaker, now includes a 32-inch flat-screen with streaming." All the comforts—and plenty of fresh air, too.

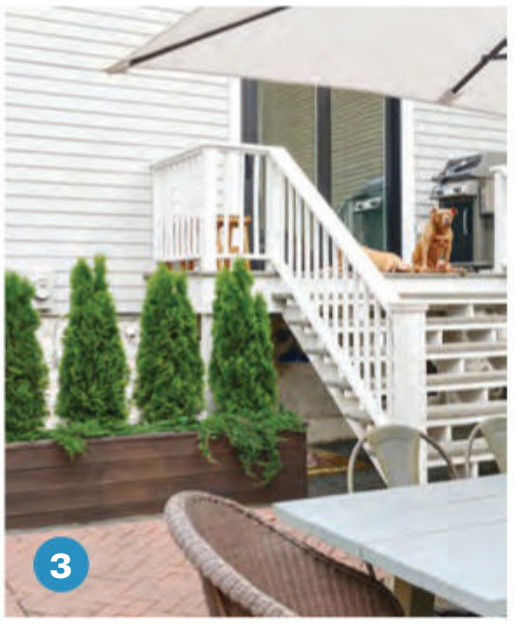




BEFORE: With the narrow, rickety back stairs removed from the 1887 house and the patio doors blocked off for safety, the backyard's rough condition is revealed: worn fencing, a patch of uneven brick pavers, and a spotty lawn.











WALL-TO-WALL INTEREST

1. Kim and Scott Vargo, with their then 1½-year-old daughter, Lucy, on a bench that joins a pair of raised planters. They built the contemporary wall trellises from treated 2×4s they ripped in half, then painted with exterior semigloss.

2. 'Jackmanii' clematis scrambles up the trellis slats and blooms on and off all summer. 'Autumn Joy' sedum and 'Pinky Winky' hydrangea fill the raised planters.

3. The rebuilt staircase, now 8 feet wide, doubles as stadium seating for guests and offers a spot at the top for grilling.

4. The vintage Preway fireplace was a bright-orange Craigslist find; the couple had it powder-coated black.

5. They laid the brick pavers in a handsome herringbone pattern. Painting their DIY table with a pale-gray exterior satin gave it a soft, summery vibe.



House Tour

BETTER THAN EVER

A couple rooted in Maine and skilled in all things house-related turn a 120-year-old charmer into a comfortable "keeper" by honoring its past and coaxing its hardest-working spaces into the present

BY DEBORAH BALDWIN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIN LITTLE



OPPOSITE: The house came with five arched openings; this one frames the sight line from the dining room to the kitchen. The renovation left the arches intact, while adding another one between the kitchen and the new mudroom. *Sconces: Rejuvenation. Floor tile: Clé Tile*

An old house is not frozen in time. And as the decades leave their marks, each owner leaves an imprint, too, based on what seems in the best interests of the house and its occupants. Compromises are involved. Tastes change.

Consider the story of this circa-1900 Dutch Colonial Revival and its current owners, Tyler and Katie Judkins. Located in Cumberland, Maine, just north of Portland, where the two both work, the house came with a kind of catalog of its home improvements: a photo album compiled by Carolyn Murray, whose family lived in the house for decades (she still lives nearby). The photos go back to a time when streetcars rumbled past it. There's the house when it was still a summer place, then around 1960, when it was

ABOVE: The island, with slim turned legs and a bottom shelf, was spotted at a flea market and is believed to be French oak. Its airy design keeps the view of the sink wall and its windows light and bright. *Windows: Marvin. Sink: LaToscana. Faucet: deVOL*



winterized. About that time it lost its wraparound front porch, while gaining an enclosed front entry. No one knows when the house acquired its first graceful arched opening, but one photo suggests 1969—four of them were there in the 1970s when Carolyn's family moved in. They renovated too, of course, adding a fifth arch, using a plywood form found in the attic, while putting in a new kitchen, windows in the front, bay windows along one side and in back, and, in one ambitious push, a two-story rear addition with a main suite and an extra bedroom over a family room, mudroom, powder room, and a kitchen extension, plus a back porch.

When the next owner arrived, so did a garage with a breezeway connection to the back porch. The same homeowner spiffed up the kitchen, with perhaps more interest in resale than entertaining. No matter. Four years after buying it, he sold the house to Tyler and Katie, who took it in hand, bent on making it even better.

The two were already seasoned home improvers. Tyler learned carpentry skills from his dad, and he and Katie had renovated a house in Portland before deciding to tear it down and build from scratch. Katie had just gone into the interior design business with her close friend, Heidi Lachapelle—Tyler's sister—who had mastered design





TOP LEFT: The circa-1900 house's gambrel roof and dormers allow for a spacious upstairs.

LEFT: The dining room came with a coffered ceiling and a quirky corner fireplace. Clean white paint gives the vintage brickwork a fresh look. *Paint (ceiling and trim): Benjamin Moore's Simply White*



LEFT: A pale-gray sisal wall covering adds texture in the dining room and hides a hard-to-remove layer of painted-over wallpaper. An arched opening frames the entry to the family room. *Table and sideboard: IKEA. Chandelier: Rejuvenation. Wall covering: Schumacher. Rug: West Elm*

BELOW: The renovated mudroom has a window twice the size of the original and a durable slate floor laid in a stylish herringbone. Ceiling-high built-ins serve as coat closets; the window-seat cushion is covered with a kid-friendly outdoor fabric. *Floor tile: Clé Tile. Paint (built-ins): Farrow & Ball's De Nimes*



while creating homey vignettes for the retail chain Anthropologie. She and her artist husband were renovating their own 19th-century fixer-upper. It was like having a design-minded family trust.

With a toddler underfoot and a baby en route, Tyler and Katie had been quietly itching for more space and period charm. "We weren't really looking," Katie says. "But then this house came on the market, it was in our budget—I loved the details, the working fireplaces with beautiful brickwork, the arched doorways, ample windows, and good light, which you don't always find in old houses."

Tyler, who describes himself as a 10th-generation Mainer and serves on the board of the Maine Historical Society, liked the fact that the place had a past. Town father Ephraim Sturdivant—famed for his many offspring and for importing the state's first merino sheep—built the house next to theirs. "My understanding is his descendants built this house as a summer cottage for guests or 'help,'" Tyler says. "It was half its current size and unfinished, with bare studs, until the 1950s."

Equipped with five bedrooms and two and a half baths when he and Katie bought it, the house was ready for another growing family—with a few fixes. The ’70s-era powder room was dated, and the kitchen felt small for a serious cook like Katie. The mudroom/laundry was sprawling, and in an adjacent room a low-efficiency, high-decibel boiler/water heater “sounded like a jet engine every time you took a shower,” says Tyler. Some windows seemed too small, others needed replacing. The floors sagged; over the years the addition had begun to settle, uneasily.

Luckily, Katie’s mom lives down the road with a guest cottage where two serial renovators and a grandchild could hole up while work went on.

When they weren’t busy with their day jobs helping other homeowners, Katie and Heidi focused on the first floor, working with an accommodating general contractor, Michael Monsell, on structural repairs and a new layout. Tyler juggled his job as a financial advisor and a hankering to help. Functioning as a design-build team, with Monsell’s crew carrying most of the load, the foursome embarked on a six-month renovation.

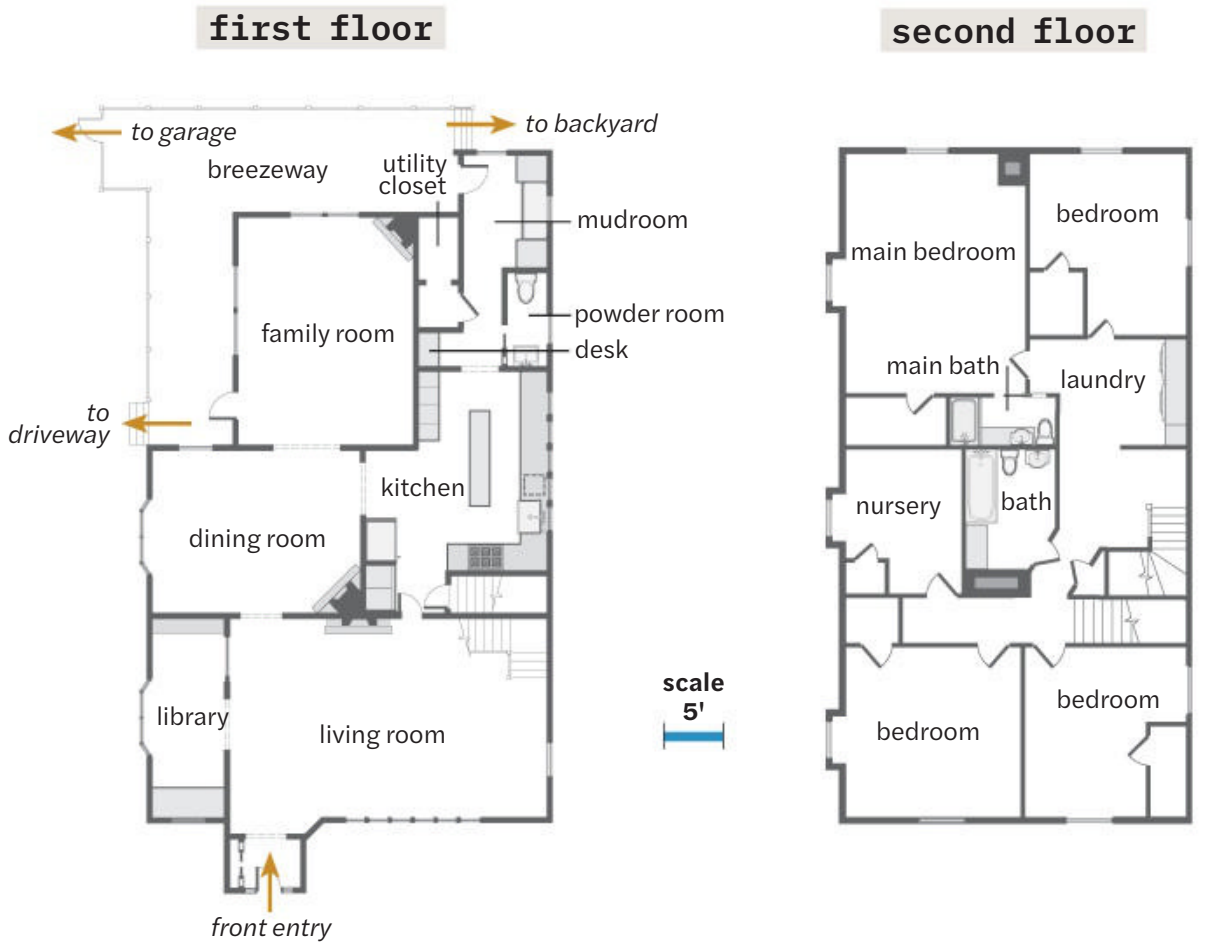
Monsell says he likes the challenge of wrestling with old houses, the creative rejiggering to make the old and new pieces fit together, while facing

RIGHT: Another archway echoes an adjacent interior window. It overlooks the library, which has a bookcase along one wall. Homeowner Tyler and his dad built the daybed, a gravitational force for nappers. *Artwork: Louis-Pierre Lachapelle*



FLOOR PLANS

The house came with five bedrooms, two and a half baths, and 3,189 square feet. The renovation kept the existing footprint while remedying the structural support, removing a bay window, and reworking the first floor in the existing rear addition: Walls came down to expand the kitchen, shrink a large mudroom/laundry area and a mechanicals closet, and shift the powder room into the former laundry area. The washer/dryer moved upstairs. The remodeled baths kept their footprints, as did a small bedroom turned nursery.



FLOOR PLANS: IAN WORPOLE

down the ghosts of renovations past. Here, an exterior wall bowed, and "there were definitely floor issues," he says, nodding to the way the addition was tied into the old part of the building.

"Older houses don't always get the attention they need over the long term," he notes. "A lot of times people get in there and want to do the kitchen but not address the underlying needs."

Katie and Tyler wanted to do both. Katie, an inveterate space planner, sketched out a larger kitchen with a row of windows—in the very wall that bulged. Normally, Monsell would jack it up and slip in supports, but that would have risked cracking the tile in the main bath overhead. "Renovations are tricky like that," he says.

With Monsell's blessing, Tyler took down walls and did some of the reframing to grow the kitchen and shrink the mudroom, move the powder room, and relocate the washer and dryer to an upstairs hall, where he built a cabinet for them. The mechanicals room would get cut down to closet size, and hold a smaller, quieter, more efficient boiler/water heater, with room for dustpans and brooms.

ABOVE: In the living room, previous owners exposed the ceiling's support structure, while replacing the original double-hung windows with casement-style units. *Sofa: Restoration Hardware. Floor lamp: IKEA. Pillows: CAMP by Heidi Lachapelle Interiors*

RIGHT: New cement tile in a crisp star-and-cross pattern enlivens the entry foyer. It's not clear when the interior arch was created, perhaps when the portico was added. *Tile: Clé Tile. Sconce: Circa Lighting. Chair: Noir Furniture. Rug: Annie Selke*





LEFT: The family room, added in the 1970s, has new six-over-six double-hungs. The existing wood-burning fireplace gained a glass-front insert and a white oak mantel. *Windows: Marvin. Fireplace insert: Jøtul*

Monsell rerouted pipes exposed by demolition and added a drain for the upstairs laundry. He used framing lumber to temporarily support the floor above, he adds, "while we pulled out structural members." Walls were opened to add windows and insulation; Monsell says it was "a fair amount of work" to get walls square and cabinet-ready, not to mention leveling the floors.

The team, preferring porous walls over open plans, opted to keep the wall between the kitchen and dining room, and its arched opening, and to cut a conventional doorway between the new mudroom and kitchen. But as Monsell and his crew were about to mop up, someone had an idea. Why not make that doorway a sixth arch?

There are kits to make the job easier, but Monsell doesn't love the MDF prefabs he sees around. So he copied the radius of an existing arch to make a form and used a jigsaw to replicate the trim. A still-awed Tyler quotes Monsell saying, "My dad and I will do the arch from scratch, for free." Tyler adds, "It's very labor-intensive to make a form, rip boards very thin, then steam them on the form, clamping and gluing, layer upon layer."

RIGHT: Handprinted wallpaper—coated to withstand humidity and allow for spot cleaning—sconces with glass shades, and a wall-hung, painted-steel sink add style and function to the tiny powder room. *Wallpaper: Hygge & West. Sconces and sink: Rejuvenation. Faucet: Kohler*





Other fixes included alterations to the three fireplaces, laying new floor tile in the foyer, and later, installing pine flooring upstairs and replacing the roof. Work has never really stopped—this is an old house, after all.

With a bedroom for each child and plenty of room to run around, it's a perfect home for a busy family. And it offers plenty to do, now that they're raising vegetables—and chickens. When they're indoors, "we mainly gather at the back of the house," where the family room holds toys and a TV, Tyler says. He does love reading and napping in the library at the front of the house, although, he adds, "I don't have much time to do those things these days"—their third child, a boy, arrived in March.

Katie still recalls first falling in love with the various details the house came with. "With those Dutch gambrels," she says, "it was just charming."

And now, in the wake of an especially thoughtful reno, a genuine keeper.

ABOVE: Walls and trim in the same clean, space-enhancing white emphasize the natural light coming into the main bedroom. *Paint: Benjamin Moore's Simply White. Pendant fixture: Target. Pillows: CAMP by Heidi Lachapelle Interiors*



Renovation recap

THE HOMEOWNERS: Tyler and Katie Judkins (ABOVE, with their third child on the way), with daughter Isobel, 5, and son Larsen, 3.

THE HOUSE: A 3,189-square-foot Dutch Colonial Revival in Cumberland, ME, built around 1900. Highlights included a handful of graceful arched openings on the first floor. Downsides included sagging floors and a bowed exterior wall. Also, the mudroom was a mess and the kitchen not set up for a serious cook.

WHY THEY CHOSE IT: It would get them out of the city (Portland), into roomier quarters, and onto a two-acre lot with a sunny spot for a garden.

THEIR PLAN: Shore up a decades-old addition and iron out its first floor, kicking the laundry upstairs, enlarging the kitchen, and reworking the mudroom and powder room. Replace the roof, boiler, and some windows; and usher in polished decor and lots of white paint.

THEIR APPROACH: Katie, the resident space planner, and husband Tyler worked with their contractor, Michael Monsell, and with Katie's sister-in-law and interior-design business partner, Heidi Lachapelle, on traffic flow and finishes.

LESSONS LEARNED: Go with your gut and play some things by ear. Heidi points to a late-in-the-game decision to put an arched opening between the new kitchen and mudroom. "There's only so much you can feel on paper," she says. "It's about intuition and recognizing you may not realize what's needed till you are in the space—and being okay with that."

Spotlight on

LIGHTING





Traditional by Design

Whether the inspiration is Old-World or Art Deco, Space Age or High Victorian, today's lighting is firmly grounded in the past. With fresh new takes on period looks, it's easy to up your style game with an eclectic mix of dazzling fixtures and accessories.





Above: Danville crystal & brass chandelier. Above Left: Wharton wall sconce. Center: Norwich faux-plaster ceiling medallion. Lower Left: Cartwright pendants in rustic brass. Below: Victorian floral pattern switch plate with mother-of-pearl push button dimmer.



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SUMMER 2021

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KNOW-HOW YOU NEED TO GET HOME UPGRADES DONE RIGHT

reno planner

Outdoor shower smarts

Even without a beachfront ZIP code, if your household includes a gardener, kids playing summer sports, or a mud-loving dog, an outdoor shower can see plenty of use. It might be time to reconsider how you clean up

BY SAL VAGLICA



Tucked behind slat walls, this shower has a classic cottage look with exposed plumbing and a valve that directs water to a foot spray.

PAUL DYER

Back in the day, an outdoor shower meant a basic cold-water hookup to rinse off beach sand and seawater. Today this popular add-on is more likely to resemble its indoor counterpart, with plenty of hot water on tap, plus thoughtful extras, such as a bench seat to perch on, a place for towels and clothing, even walls and a door for privacy, as well as custom flourishes, from decorative wood cutouts to a vine-covered trellis roof overhead.

Whether an outdoor shower takes its design cues from your home's architecture or you want a more whimsical or nature-inspired look, it pays to get the details right. That means choosing materials that will withstand the rigors of the environment, and setting up the plumbing to simplify maintenance. The first step: Check local building codes. In some areas, an outdoor shower for rinsing off can drain into the ground, but if you plan on lathering up, you may have to tie into your wastewater system. Here's what else you'll need to consider.

01 FIND WATER

An outdoor shower just off the house delivers the best bang for the buck since it's close to a water source. "If we can tap into supply lines in the basement, that's a lot less work than digging a trench to bring water to a freestanding shower," says Massachusetts-based master plumber Brian Bilo, who likes to poke the supply

lines through an exterior wall from below. Live in an area that freezes? Have the plumber add drains on those supply lines in the basement so you can empty trapped water into a bucket.

Another option: Add hot and cold spigots, then connect them to the shower with braided stainless-steel supply lines, which are easy to detach and drain before winter.

02 PICK A LOCATION

The site should balance utility and privacy. For busy families, a convenient shower near a back door makes sense. To screen the shower from neighbors' sight lines, you might tuck it off a more sheltered side of the house. If possible, avoid building it on the north side of the house so the shower can dry out in the sun to prevent mildew. If you have a pool, siting the shower between it and the house makes it easiest to rinse off before heading inside. Plan to shower at night? You might want to steer clear of tree canopies so you have a clear view of the stars overhead.

03 PLAN THE FOOTPRINT

Outdoor showers often have more elbowroom than those indoors. Plan on a footprint of at least 4 by 4 feet. Extra room is handy for adding amenities like storage cubbies or a dressing area. Planning for privacy? Aim for walls that start about 8 to 12 inches above grade and reach 60 inches high—that's generally conservative enough for the most modest user. Often, the showerhead gets installed 80 inches above the floor and the mixing valve at 48 inches.



Basics to consider

Rinsing off alfresco is more casual than showering indoors, but the best outdoor setups include carefully selected details

01. WALLS Build these from a weather-resistant material, such as cedar, masonry, composites, or PVC panels. The treated pine boards shown here are protected with an exterior stain. Eye-level cutouts in the sidewalls add a style boost.

02. FLOOR Pitch impermeable floors, like grouted stone, away from the house toward a trench filled with gravel. If the floor is permeable, like these pavers, install a simple dry well—an earthen pit filled with crushed stone—directly underneath, so water can percolate into the soil instead of puddling.

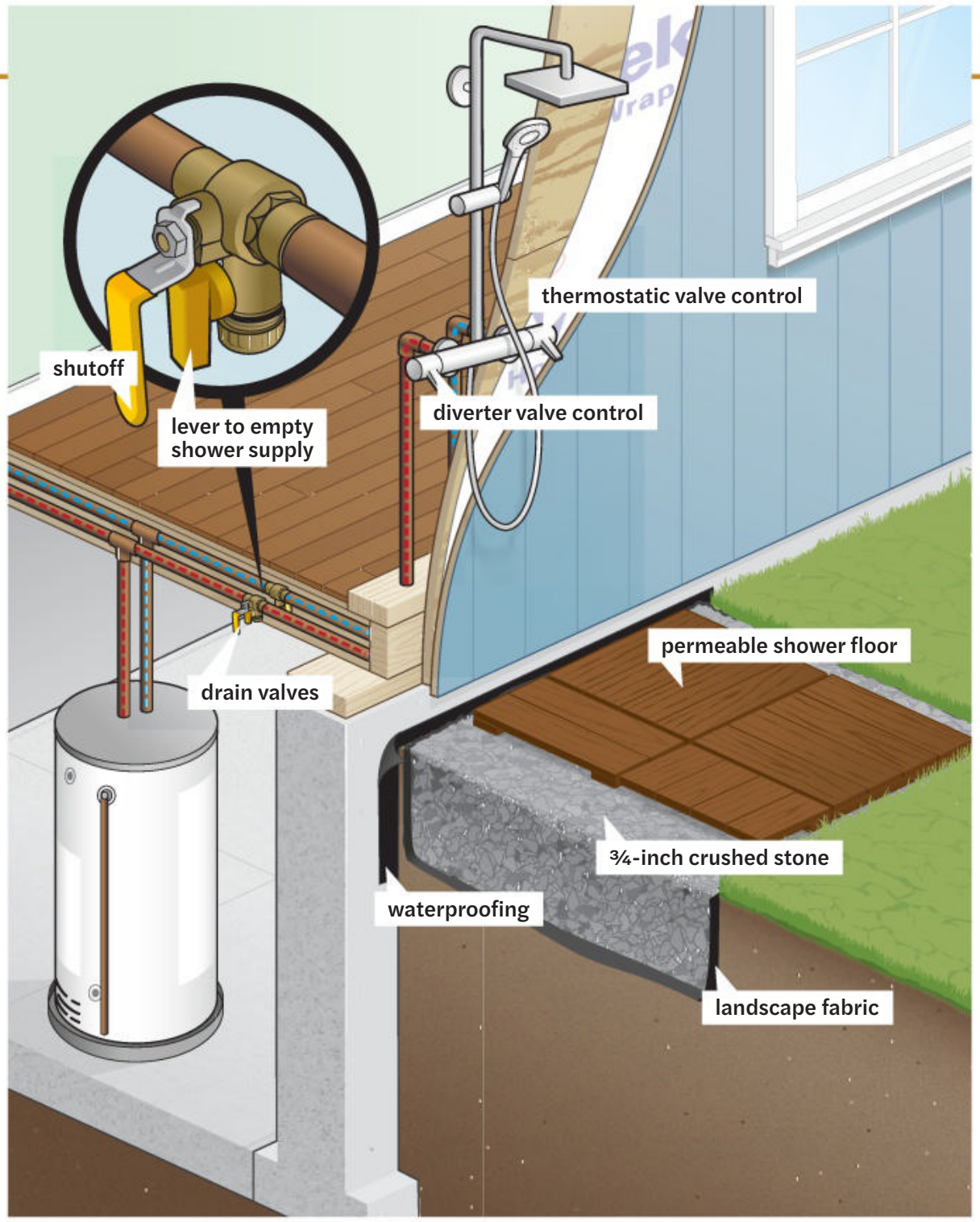
03. ROOF Wood slats, airy lattice, or pergola rafters overhead offer a cozy feeling of enclosure, while allowing the shower to dry out.

04. FIXTURES Almost any shower fixture will do the job outside, but driving rain and freezing temps can take the shine off standard fittings pretty quickly. Outdoor-rated options are more limited (signaturehardware.com and outdoorshowerco.com are two quality sources). To protect the finish on good-quality indoor fittings, like these chrome-plated brass ones, remove them in the off-season for storage, along with the valve cartridge behind the trim plate.

05. A SEAT A bench or stool is handy for toweling off and getting dressed, especially for those with young kids.

06. HOOKS Everyone using the shower will benefit from hooks to keep towels and clothes dry and away from the spray.

NAT REA



Bringing a shower outside

Minimize your plumbing run by locating a shower on an exterior wall of the house, says Brian Bilo, who has been the plumber on dozens of Silva Brothers projects.

> **Your plumber** will tap into existing hot and cold water lines that feed the rest of the house. Adding a pair of drain valves in the basement makes it easy to prep the shower for winter.

> **Bilo prefers** exposed one-piece fixtures, where the valve, riser, and accessories, such as a handshower, are connected and proud of the wall; that way the whole unit can be removed for winter storage.

> **He also** installs a thermostatic valve with a single-handle temperature control, which limits how hot the water can get—a code requirement in some states, including Massachusetts. With fixtures that have separate handles for hot and cold water, a child could open the hot-water tap and get scalded.

> **A permeable** shower floor with a simple dry well underneath allows the water to drain back into the soil.

The lowdown on outdoor fixtures



While most manufacturers won't warranty standard fixtures for installation outside, you can get years of use from top-quality, plated-brass shower fittings with proper winter storage. Most outdoor-rated shower fixtures are made from **304 or 316 stainless steel**. Both are more weather resistant than plated brass (316, or marine-grade, stainless steel is mainly used in commercial settings). These showers can start at $3,000 (valve not included) but come with warranties from five to seven years outside. Another option: Pick a material that's long lasting and meant to patina, like **uncoated bronze or copper**. It'll be a pricey custom order but should last a lifetime, even without a warranty.

Shown: Waterbridge model 970 in copper, $6,800; sonomaforge.com

TOH PRO TIP

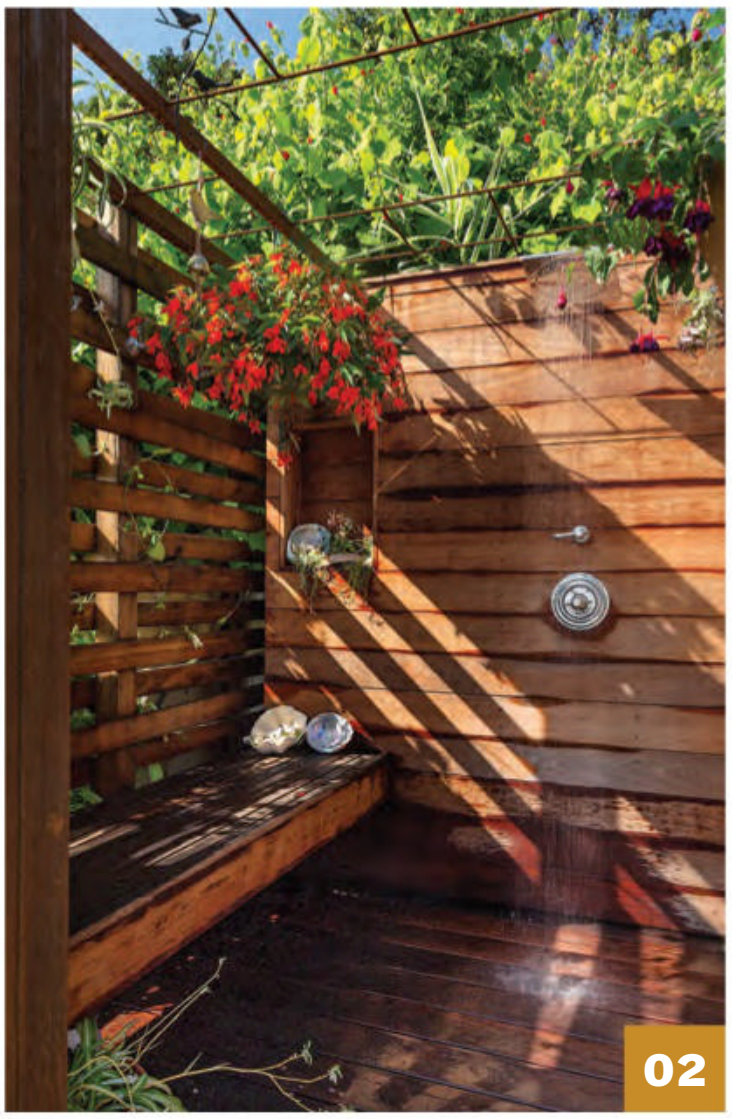


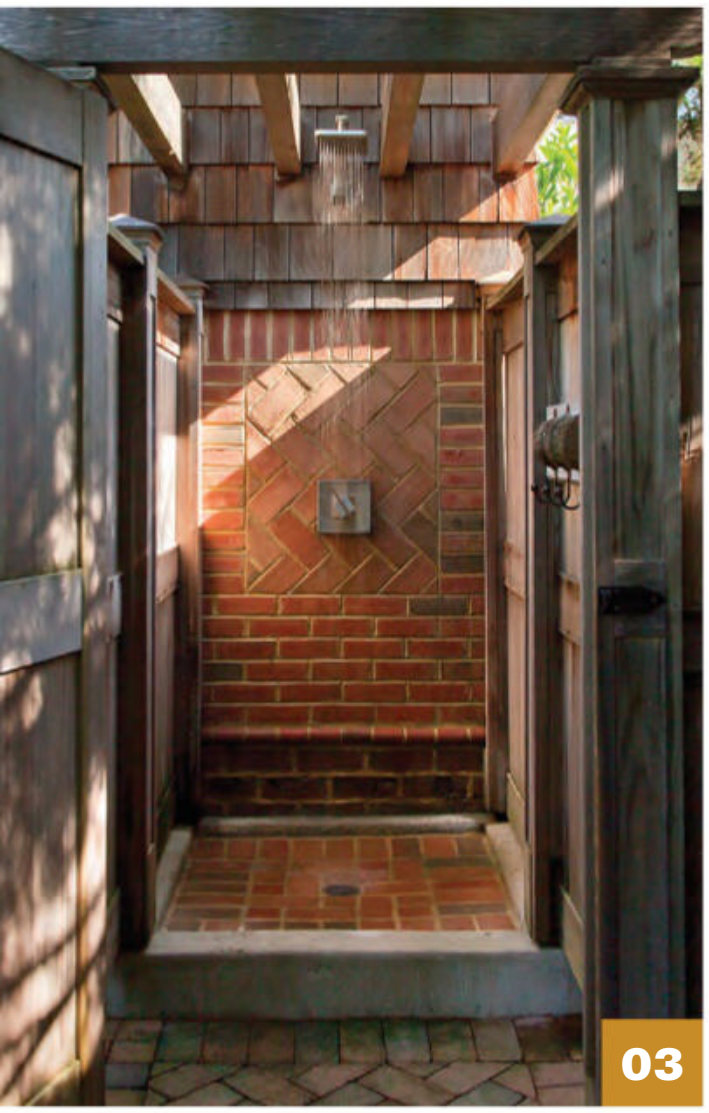
Charlie Silva
Home Builder

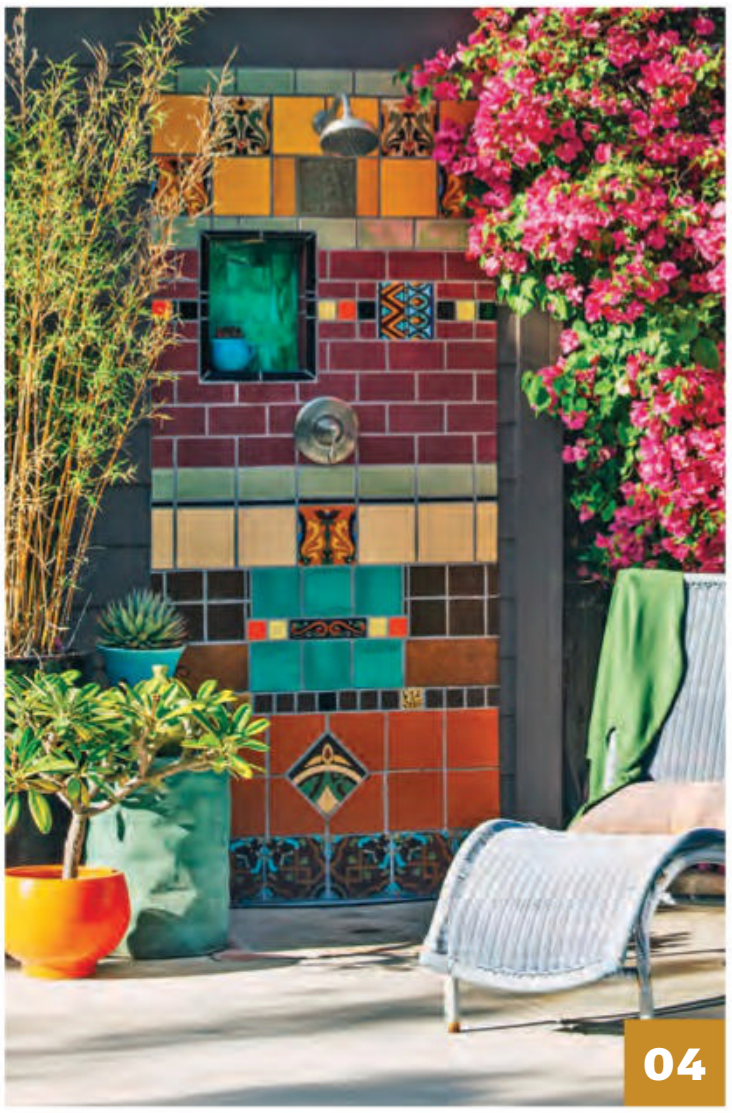
"If your exterior walls don't leak in the rain, then using your home's siding as one of the shower walls is fine. Add a simple dry well by excavating a 4-by-6-foot area, waterproofing the foundation, lining the pit with landscape fabric, then backfilling with crushed stone."

ILLUSTRATION: PETER SUCHESKI


01


02


03


04

Pick your shower style

These creative outdoor showers take cues from the house, the environment, or the owner's personal style

01. Disappearing act

Tucked behind a pair of hinged slat-style doors, this space-saving outdoor shower folds out of sight when not in use. Cubbies along the doors offer storage for toiletries and towels. Because the shower is built on a patio, the hardscaping's pitch directs the runoff away from the house.

02. Partial screen

While a wood-walled enclosure is a popular choice, it's not the only way to provide privacy. Surrounded by greenery, the airy slatted sides here screen most of the view inside. Hanging baskets overhead, and a steel grid ready to be engulfed by vines, lend a lush, great-outdoors feeling.

03. No prying eyes

Durable masonry makes a long-lasting floor for an outdoor shower; here, brick pavers work just as well protecting the side of the house from water. The tall, solid walls and door provide maximum privacy, while the open "roof" lets sunlight in and allows the enclosure to dry out. The raised shower floor ties the drain into the home's wastewater system to handle soapy runoff. An on-grade changing area has hooks to keep clothes and towels high and dry.

04. Accent wall

Showers with no enclosure are on display all year. The mix of colorful tile here helps brighten the patio space when the shower is not in use. Potted bamboo, succulents, and pink bougainvillea frame the area like the work of art that it is.

DISAPPEARING ACT: ANDREA CALO; PARTIAL SCREEN: JIM BARTSCH; NO PRYING EYES: ALLEN RUSS PHOTOGRAPHY; ACCENT WALL: RAY KACHATORIAN

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animal house

Dog heaven

Your yard is your happy place, and you want it to be your pet's, too. Here's how to protect your landscaping while giving her an ideal romping ground

BY SARAH KINBAR

Spots outdoors for lounging, refreshment, and sniffing the flowers: Sounds nice, right? Your dog thinks so, too. Adding these kinds of pet-centric areas to your yard, or reimagining existing ones with him in mind, means you can rest easy knowing he's safe and stimulated while exploring the outdoors. Sure, letting your dog out the back door and into a fenced-in yard is simple, but it won't prevent him from ripping up flower beds and a well-kept lawn if he's bored. Even worse, toxic plant material could make him sick if he munches on certain leaves or berries. These easy-to-add upgrades will keep dogs safely occupied outdoors.



1 Lawn for Playing

Turf grass is a durable surface for you and your dog to frolic on, but treat it with your pet's well-being in mind. "A lot of the health problems I see in pets stem from contact with grass that has been chemically treated," says Florida veterinarian Jason Palm. Switching to organic fertilizers or compost and chemical-free pest control is an easy swap. If you're planting a new lawn for your dog, buy seed for a native turf grass that will thrive in your area. Buffalograss is one that grows slowly, requires little supplemental water or fertilizer, and will come close to resembling a typical lawn.

2 Sand for Digging

While all dogs dig, some breeds—like terriers, basset hounds, beagles, and dachshunds—were born for it. Providing these dogs, or others that dig when bored or anxious, with a spot to paw at means they're less likely to rip up flower beds (or sofa cushions). A simple "sandbox" offers a safe outlet. To make one, excavate about a foot of topsoil, line the area with landscape fabric, and fill with play sand bordered by bricks, stones, or 2×4s. Cover it at night to keep other animals out, and clean the sand every few months by raking a 50/50 mix of water and distilled white vinegar through it to prevent mold.

3 Drinking Water

Remember to refill your dog's bowl with cool water whenever she's outside. "Dogs with impaired respiratory systems in particular, like pugs and bulldogs, can't dissipate heat properly," says Palm. "Lots of fresh water is important. A garden hose is fine, but reclaimed water is a no-no." If the bowl is to be on a deck, use one with a grippy rubber base to keep it steady. Stick with stainless steel—it won't scratch easily, unlike plastic, so it resists hosting bacteria. As with indoor water bowls, sanitize ones used outside daily with hot, soapy water, and try to keep them out of the sun.

Illustration by Eric Nyffeler



4 A Shady Spot

Providing an area out of the hot sun means your dog is less likely to want to go back inside to cool off. Under a shade tree is a natural choice, but if that's not an option, set up a tepee or doghouse that has plenty of ventilation to prevent heat buildup. Invest in an elevated dog bed for the yard—it promotes cooling under the dog, and it's more comfortable than a basic pillow. It also means the dog's main bed stays inside—and clean. To train your dog to use that shady spot, lead him there on a leash while using a phrase like "Go to your bed," and reward him with treats to reinforce a positive behavior.

5 A Rest Stop

You could remedy urine spots in the lawn with a garden hose or by trying pet supplements, but synthetic turf is the pros' go-to. "Pick an area away from the house to put down the turf, and make it part of the garden plan," says New Jersey–based landscape designer Jody Shilan. Remove a 3-by-3-foot section of lawn grass, then use spikes to pin down the synthetic turf. "Design it in by continuing planting-bed lines along the area and it will look like another garden space," says Shilan. Walk your dog to the spot daily for at least three weeks until she adopts the spot, and reward with treats.

TOH PRO TIP



JENN NAWADA
Landscape Contractor

"Skip treated or dyed mulch; it contains chemicals that can make dogs sick. Instead, find options at your garden center that are natural, organic, or native to your area. Avoid cocoa shells, which are as toxic to dogs as chocolate."

Pet protection

These safeguards will allow you some peace of mind when your dog is outside on his own

> To keep a dog contained, any fence's bottom rail should be just above grade. Consider burying chicken wire a foot below the bottom rail to foil a determined digger.

> Add springs and latches to entry gates so they close automatically and can't be nudged open.

> These garden favorites are toxic to dogs and best avoided: hydrangeas, azaleas, rhododendron, hollies, yews, hostas, daffodils, daisies, peonies, and tulips. See a complete list at aspca.org.

GO ONLINE
Find more ideas to make your yard pet-safe at **thisoldhouse.com/dog-friendly-yard**

all about

Multi-panel doors

Whether they fold, slide, or pivot, these door systems turn solid walls into light-filled expanses of glass

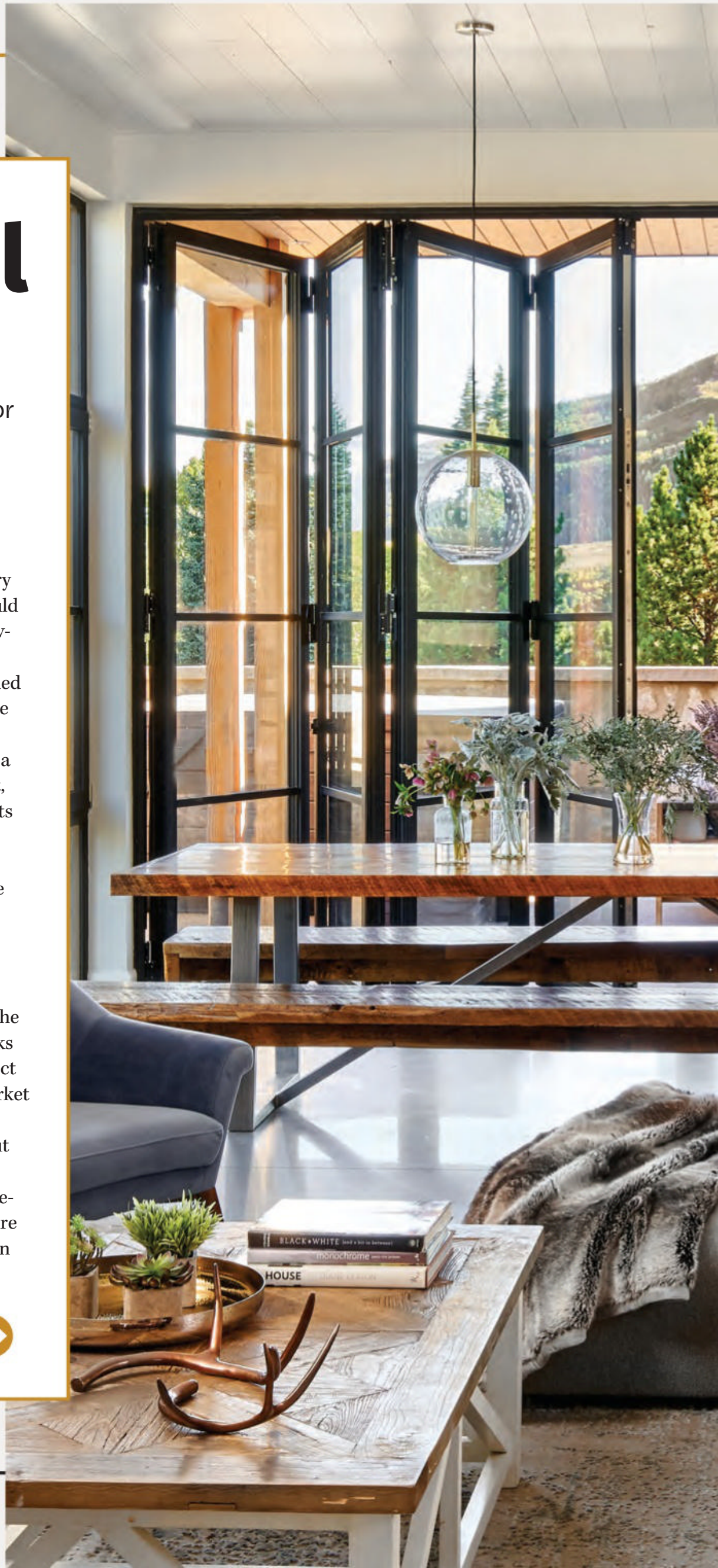
BY DAN DiCLERICO

As modernist architect Le Corbusier famously said, "The history of architecture is the history of the struggle for light." What an ally he would have found in today's multi-panel doors, movable glass wall systems that let sunlight stream in.

Like patio doors on steroids, these systems—also called "scenic doors," "big doors," or simply "multi-panels"—are made up of large glass panels that ride along or pivot on tracks, opening the house to what's just outside, usually a patio or deck. Where typical patio doors may span 6 feet, the sweet spot for these systems in a home remodel starts at around 10 feet, often with a trio of panels that delivers sweeping views when closed, then slide or fold open, blurring the line between indoors and out. Of course, the possibilities only get bigger from there.

"Moving glass walls do so much to enhance a home's sense of wellness, flooding it with fresh air and daylight, while creating a visual connection to nature," says New York–based designer Laurence Carr. Once reserved for the Sunbelt, these doors now work well in all climates, thanks to insulated frames, weathertight sills, and optional insect screens. While the first system, by NanaWall, hit the market in the 1980s, most major window and door manufacturers offer options today. That's brought the cost down, but multi-panels still come with a hefty price tag, thousands more than patio doors. Often, a contractor will have to rebuild the opening to support the added weight and ensure the precision tracks will operate well, making installation trickier and more expensive, too.

Here's what you need to know about this view-enhancing upgrade to make sure these big doors deliver a big payoff for decades to come.





These floor-to-ceiling folding doors retract to both sides of the opening for an unobstructed view. Black grilles give them a modern, industrial look. Similar to shown: Ultimate Bi-Fold Doors, from about $2,000 per linear foot (LF); marvin.com

Photograph by David Patterson

VITALS

What do they cost?

Figure on $700 to $2,000 per linear foot for folding doors; $600 to $3,200 for sliding panels; and $1,454 to $2,300 for ones that pivot. Installation adds roughly $1,000 per panel, not including the framing required. You'll likely need to hire an engineer to spec the header size. Expect the installed cost for a typical 10-foot-wide, 7-foot-high system to start around $10,000 without shades or screens. But the cost could easily be three times higher as the opening gets larger.

Where to buy?

You won't find multi-panel doors at the home center. Your best bet is to contact a local dealer through a manufacturer's website. Most dealers won't sell directly to homeowners, so you'll need to work with an architect or contractor.

How heavy are they?

Figure about 7 pounds per square foot, so even a small version, say 10 by 8 feet, is about 560 pounds. A typical residential system weighs between 500 and 1,000 pounds.

Who installs them?

Dealers and architects often have a list of local installers, so start there. Ask if the dealer has factory-authorized technicians who can install the doors once the contractor frames the opening.

What's the warranty?

Warranties typically run 10 to 20 years on the frame, and range from 2 to 20 years for the insulated glass, factory paint finish, and hardware. Some warranties may transfer to the next homeowner.



This multi-slide door retracts to one side, connecting the living room to a covered patio, doubling the entertaining space. Shown: MultiGlide door, from about $1,166 per LF; andersenwindows.com

Are they right for you?

While these door systems blur the line between indoors and out, there are pluses and minuses to consider

PROS

✚ **MORE LIGHT** With expanses of glass, multi-panels flood a home with natural light. Open or closed, they also create a strong connection to the outdoors, which can alleviate stress and promote better health.

✚ **MORE AIR** In tightly built, energy-efficient homes, these doors can combat stuffiness, ushering in fresh air. When the weather is mild, they provide natural ventilation, welcoming in cool breezes.

✚ **MORE USABLE SPACE** In nice weather, they create a seamless transition between indoor living spaces and patios, decks, or garden rooms. This expanded usable space adds value to a home, which can provide a return on some, if not all, of the cost.

✚ **CAN SUIT ANY STYLE** In natural wood or painted finishes, and with traditional or industrial-style grille patterns, as well as glass and hardware options that rival patio or French door offerings, multi-panels can look at home in a wide range of house styles.

CONS

✖ **EXPENSIVE** Ponying up for the product is just the start. If you're renovating, you'll pay for demoing the wall and reengineering it, plus installation. Your pro has to nail the details—or the doors may not work properly. You might pay $40,000 for a retrofitted system of 15-by-7½-foot folding aluminum-clad wood doors.

✖ **PRIVACY** That stunning view works both ways. If neighbors are close by, you'll have to be okay with the exposure, or invest in shades to provide privacy at night, which can add about $2,000 to $3,500 to the bottom line.

✖ **INSECTS** In areas with mosquitoes and other flying pests, you'll need a screen system if you want to fling the doors open all summer. Most manufacturers offer these for an added cost, about the same as privacy shades.

✖ **UPKEEP** You'll have to keep an eye out for fingerprints and vacuum the tracks frequently to remove debris before it builds up, causing friction. These heavy doors won't glide well over dirty tracks.

CHOOSE YOUR SYSTEM

They all deliver big views, but all multi-panels don't work the same way. Here are your options



FOLDING

Best for: Retrofitting into an existing wall

These accordion-style doors fold out or in, nesting together against the jamb, or both jambs if the doors meet in the middle. Since they ride in a single track, they work with standard wall depths, making them easier to install when remodeling. Keep in mind that when open, the doors need a few feet of clearance. *Shown: 205 Series folding doors, from $900 per LF; centor.com*



STACKING MULTI-SLIDE

Best for: Additions and new construction

Panels glide along a multi-track sill before they nest next to the jamb. The sill requires a wall that's at least three times deeper than usual, making these systems best for new spaces. "Lift and slide" versions hang off tracks installed above for easier operation; no wheels on the floor means a less obvious sill. *Shown: LaCantina doors, from $800 per LF; jeld-wen.com*



POCKETING MULTI-SLIDE

Best for: Delivering uninterrupted views

A type of multi-slide door system, these panels retract into a door pocket in the wall for an unimpeded sight line. Pocketing doors also require walls that are thicker than standard construction, plus room for them to disappear into a recess, so they're practical only where walls are newly built. *Shown: Euro Pocket Slider, from $1,100 per LF; agmillworks.com*



PIVOT

Best for: Adding a dramatic architectural accent

Rather than slide, these doors rotate on pins above and below the frame. This creates a unique floating effect, but the panels never move totally out of the way. A popular choice for very wide expanses and for use as front doors, this style is more about grabbing attention than uninterrupted views. *Similar to shown: Pivot door, from $2,300 per LF; andersenwindows.com*

PIVOT: COURTESY LAPIS DESIGN PARTNERS

Pick your materials

As with patio sliders, a number of options are available. Here, the most common choices

Wood

Cost: $$$$–$$$$$
Wood is warm, rich, and can be finished with a clear coat, stain, or paint. With a high thermal rating that improves energy efficiency, wood species range from oak and pine to mahogany. The warranty on finishes can last up to 20 years.

Aluminum

Cost: $$$$–$$$$$
Strong enough to have stiles and rails narrower than ones of wood, aluminum maximizes the amount of glass used. Factory finishes resist weathering for up to 20 years. But with low thermal resistance, aluminum doors often fail to meet energy codes in colder regions.

Aluminum-clad wood

Cost: $$$$–$$$$$
With wood inside and weather-resistant aluminum outside, the clad option reduces maintenance while echoing interior wood trim. As with aluminum frames, the paint warranty here is up to 20 years.

Vinyl

Cost: $$$–$$$$
Less common, vinyl doors help to cut costs while minimizing maintenance. The colors are limited to white, tan, or bronze, but they can carry finish warranties of up to 25 years, or as long as you occupy the house.



This traditional two-over-two grille pattern helps bring the scale of the doors down. Similar to shown: Bi-Fold Doors, from $800 per LF; sierrapacificwindows.com

Glass considerations

The star of multi-panels—the glazing—is always insulated, with a low-e coating. From there, you have a few upgrades to think about

➡ **IMPACT RESISTANCE**
Replacing a shattered panel on a multi-panel door will cost thousands, plus take weeks for the custom order. Impact-resistant glass, often reinforced with a clear plastic laminate sandwiched between two panes, might be mandated by code if you live in a high-wind area. But it could also make sense for families with young kids.
Cost: about 40 to 60 percent more than standard glass

➡ **TRIPLE PANES**
An extra layer of glass and insulating gas makes door panels about 15 to 20 percent more energy efficient. The extra glazing reduces noise significantly, too, a boon where there's an airport, highway, or hard-partying household nearby.
Cost: about 30 to 50 percent more than dual panes

➡ **ENVIRONMENTAL**
This bird-safe glass contains an ultraviolet pattern that makes it easier for wildlife to see, so they can avoid crashing into it.
Cost: about 60 percent more

➡ **PRIVACY**
While multi-panels are all about maximizing views, there are times when you want to limit visibility, including interior applications where the doors serve as an occasional room divider. Typically, manufacturers offer as many decorative glass options for multi-panels as they do for patio doors—tinted, etched, and with patterns that offer various levels of obscurity.
Cost: about 20 percent more

➡ **GRILLES**
While most people opt for large, uninterrupted expanses of glass, a variety of grille options—from Colonial-style grids to Craftsman-inspired triple-pane details—help multi-panel doors fit in with traditional architecture. Grilles that simulate divided lights are applied to the inside, outside, or both, and are usually removable for cleaning. Integrated grilles sandwiched between the glass panes are the least authentic-looking option.
Cost: about 15 to 20 percent on top of the cost of glazing

COURTESY DRESSING ROOMS & SPACECRAFT ARCHITECTURE

SELECT THE SILL

Depending on the door system, there are sills that impact looks, performance, and accessibility. Here are some common options



Performance / On-floor drainage >
Also known as surface-mounted, this sill sits 1½ to 2½ inches above the finished floor, acting as a curb to keep rain and snow from entering. Drainage channels outside (on the left) direct water away from the house; wood trim matches interior finishes. The trade-off is accessibility: It may present a trip hazard to young children or those with mobility issues.



Integrated / Flush > This sill—essentially a U-shaped track—projects 3⁄16 inch above the floor, or about as high as three nickels stacked. That alleviates accessibility concerns and delivers a clean line. But the sill won't keep out wind or water, so it's limited to interior applications, exteriors in warm, dry climates, or where the doorway is well protected by a deep overhang outside.



Hybrid / On-floor low-threshold >
Many manufacturers offer a hybrid option that combines elements of performance and integrated sills. These project above the floor about ¾ inch, with textured aluminum ramps on both sides of the track to improve accessibility. But hybrid sills aren't rated against water, making them practical only in mild climates without driving rain.

SHOWN: SILL OPTIONS FROM ANDERSEN WINDOWS & DOORS



ACCESS DOOR: YUZHU ZHENG PHOTOGRAPHY

Add an access door

Need to take the trash out? You can usually add a swinging door to a folding system. With multi-slide and pivot doors, you move one panel to get outside. Size is also a factor. "If you have large 5-by-10-foot panels, a swinging daily door can be a little easier to operate than a slider, especially if you're balancing a tray of burgers in one hand," says Andersen Windows' Brian Quick.

Size it up

Built to order in ⅛-inch increments, multi-panels are custom-made to fit just about any opening up to the maximum dimensions shown here. Configurations are plentiful, too, with choices in the number of panels, the direction of the opening, and the location of the access door. Here's a breakdown of multi-panel door options, by system.

SYSTEM TYPE	OPENING WIDTH	OPENING HEIGHT	NUMBER OF PANELS
Folding	UP TO 60 FT	UP TO 10 FT	UP TO 16
Multi-slide	UP TO 60 FT	UP TO 12 FT	UP TO 10
Lift and Slide	UP TO 60 FT	UP TO 16 FT	UP TO 8
Pivot	UNLIMITED	UP TO 16 FT	UNLIMITED



A Sweenor Builders crew member gives a newly installed folding door system a test-drive.

Don't even think about skimping on installation

Multi-panel doors have to perform like solid walls, so they require more structural support than other openings. Besides working with an experienced installer, that usually means involving a structural engineer, who will provide the necessary load calculations. The header, for instance, can't deflect more than 1/16 inch when carrying the weight of the door, or the entire system will start to rack. And the opening has to be level and square from the beginning to ensure proper door operation and to prevent water and air infiltration between the panels. To find an experienced pro, start with the dealer, or ask if the manufacturer has a certification program. Call potential contractors' references to see how the multi-panel doors they've installed are holding up.

TOH PRO TIP



Charlie Silva
Home Builder

"Don't leave anything to chance with the opening for these door systems, because if the structure sags even a little, the panels won't work well. If a 2×10 LVL is called for, I'll push for a 2×12. It's worth it, knowing the header won't move a hair for the next 100 years."

Game-changing upgrades

These door systems provide views and create a hybrid indoor-outdoor space, but certain add-ons may help you get the most out of your investment. Here are three that can be worth paying for

INSECT SCREENS

If mosquitoes bug you in summer, screens are key. Door manufacturers offer manually operated or automated retractable screens that ride in a dedicated track within the sill, requiring more wall depth. These move horizontally, although pull-down versions are possible, too. Specialty screen-makers offer denser mesh weaves that will also block solar heat and provide some privacy. Prices start at about $2,000 for a 10-by-7-foot basic screen system.

WINDOW SHADES

Blackout shades are essential for evening privacy. They also protect floors, furniture, and fabric from fading. Sheer solar shades preserve exterior views while filtering out harsh UV rays. Mounted inside and pulled down, shades tend to interfere with folding doors that open inward. Some manufacturers offer the option of a pleated shade mounted over the glass panes for a clean look. Prices start at about $2,000 for a 10-by-7-foot system.

AUTOMATION

While part of the genius of these doors is their easy operation, some homeowners can still find it difficult to move multiple heavy panels. Adding automation lets you control the system with a wall switch or smartphone app. The feature is most common on multi-sliders, since they are the heaviest to move. Some systems offer battery backup to work in a power outage. A typical install can add as much as $7,500 to the cost of the system.



This three-panel system of wood-slat screens retracts on the outside of the stacking doors, offering light control and privacy. Shown: Custom screens, ADBC Architecture


1


2


3


4

ENTRY: MICHELE LEE WILSON/DOTTER & SOLFJELD ARCHITECTURE; OFFICE: TOM ROSS; ENTERTAINMENT: YUZHU ZHENG PHOTOGRAPHY; (OPPOSITE PAGE) WOOD-SLAT SCREEN: MIKI DUISTERHOF

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

1. Open-plan interior divider

The pandemic has left some homeowners yearning for more separation in open-plan interiors to cut down on ambient noise. Multi-panels offer a solution, plus the option of turning two spaces into one again when it suits. Here, mahogany folding doors allow the dining room to double as a quiet homework area when closed, then open up to host a raucous game night. The recessed sill is barely noticeable. *Shown: Ultimate Bi-Fold Door, from about $2,000 per LF; marvin.com*

2. Statement-making entry

While nearly all multi-panel door styles work on the back of the house, pivot doors also pull double duty as dramatic front entry doors. Installed solo, paired with a fixed panel, or as functioning double doors, and painted a bright color, they point guests in the right direction, while ushering in plenty of fresh air. Add a smart lock to open and close the doors from your smartphone. *Similar to shown: Pivot Door, from $2,300 per LF; andersenwindows.com*

3. Home office with a view

Garage man caves and she-shed outbuildings have been popular for some time. With many such spaces now being converted to home offices, multi-slide doors can transform their window-starved interiors, infusing them with natural light to foster greater productivity. The wall of glass also offers fair warning should family members come by during a Zoom call. *Similar to shown: Multi-slide Door, from $700 per LF; sierrapacificwindows.com*

4. Entertainer's delight

Folding panel systems are the ultimate in throwing the doors open for guests, and on a tight urban lot, they usher in lots of light. Here, the doors create a wall-to-wall opening between kitchen and terrace, so serving—and mingling—is a breeze. Window-size panels above the countertop (on the left) form a convenient pass-through. An access door (with a handle) adds utility for everyday comings and goings. *Shown: WA67 door, from $980 per LF; nanawall.com*



home finances

Home away from home

Buying a beach house sounds nice, right? Be sure to do the math before taking the plunge

BY ELLEN STARK

Owning a second home for extended vacations, weekend escapes, or family reunions has never felt more appealing. Even before the pandemic, the market for second homes was heating up thanks to historically low mortgage rates and a prolonged stock market rally. Then 2020 ushered in an era of remote work, making vacation homes that could double as full-time retreats that much more attractive.

The yearning for a second home isn't likely to fade away soon, even as offices and schools reopen. "People are more comfortable buying homes hours from their job now," says Redfin lead economist Taylor Marr. "They still think they can take four-day weekends; the hybrid remote-work model is driving demand."

But before you join this rush to the waterfront—or the mountains or the desert—you need to understand the potential costs.

ASSESS YOUR RESOURCES

Lenders consider second homes a riskier bet—you're not there all the time to oversee the property. Plus, adds Greg McBride, chief financial analyst at bankrate.com, "it's not the roof over your head, so there's a higher likelihood of a default if things turn bad." As result, you'll probably have to put down 20 to 30 percent. Your interest rate could be as much as one percentage point higher, too.

To get as low a rate as you'd pay for a mortgage on your primary home, you'll need that high down payment, a high credit score (740 or more), and sufficient income to cover all your housing payments—no more than 28 percent of your income. Even if you're buying a home to rent out for part of the year, lenders won't give you credit for that cash when approving a loan.

CALCULATE ALL THE COSTS

Beyond mortgage payments, you'll need to factor in all the other expenses that come with home ownership: insurance, property taxes, maintenance, and repairs. Don't assume your primary home is an accurate reference point.

Homeowners insurance could prove more costly than you expect. For one, insurers take into account that the home will be unoccupied part of the time. You can compensate for not being there by installing a central alarm system, a

Illustrations by Carl Wiens



EXPERT ADVICE

"Renting out a second home can be advantageous because you're earning income and can take more deductions than on your principal home."

LISA GREENE-LEWIS, *CPA and tax expert, TurboTax*

front-door camera, water-leak and heat sensors, and other surveillance tech, says Janet Ruiz, director of strategic communications at the Insurance Information Institute. "You can use technology to your advantage to keep insurance costs down."

The bigger problem may be your view of the ocean or forest. "People tend to buy second homes in beautiful places that are disaster prone," Ruiz says. And insurers may charge more in regions that often see natural disasters like hurricanes and wildfires. Buying near a body of water may mean you'll have to buy flood insurance to cover damage from rising water.

Property taxes are another ongoing expense, and because 2017 tax reform capped the deduction for state and local taxes at $10,000, chances are that some or all of it will not be tax deductible. The interest on a second mortgage (of up to $750,000) still qualifies—up to the limit. Another tax twist: When you sell the home you'll owe taxes on the entire gain, unless you make it your primary residence first.

Finally, don't ignore maintenance and repair costs. Common rules of thumb for how much to budget every year include 1 to 3 percent of your home's value and $1 for every square foot of livable space.

CONSIDER IT A MONEYMAKER

The economics of buying a second home can change if you plan to rent it out when you're not there. "With the rise of Airbnb and other vacation rental sites, it's lower risk to buy a second home, knowing people will want to rent it," says Marr. One caveat is that many vacation towns, concerned that area homes are becoming unaffordable to locals, are putting limits on short-term rentals. Check what laws are on the books, and what's pending.

If you rent your home for just 14 days a year or less—a nice option in places that host major events—you don't owe a penny of tax on that income. Beyond 14 days, the tax picture becomes more complicated. You must declare rental income, but you can also deduct many costs, including advertising, property management fees, mortgage payments, repairs and maintenance, and utilities.

When you use the house part of the year and rent it at other times, the math is trickier. "You have to split up costs and deduct them in proportion to the amount of time you spend there," says tax expert Lisa Greene-Lewis. You may be able to deduct up to $25,000 in real estate losses against your ordinary income each year, if you "actively participate" in the work of maintaining or renting it.

Keep in mind that your insurance costs are likely to go up if you rent for more than 14 days total per year. In that case you may need to add a floater or rider. Some insurers may require a landlord policy. Whatever you do, don't hide what you're doing from your insurance company. You might find that damage isn't covered if you kept quiet about tenants. As Ruiz says, "With online listings, it's pretty easy for an insurer to track down how much you're renting it out."



What's your financial plan?

When you see how much vacation home prices are rising, you may think buying one is a good investment. But home values in vacation towns are more volatile than other markets—and more sensitive to the economy and stock prices. "You usually see back-off in vacation areas when the market is down," says Redfin's Taylor Marr.

Certified financial planner Louis Barajas doesn't consider a second home part of an investment portfolio, unless it's strictly a rental property. "It's an illusion that you'll sell it for more," he says. Plus, an investment should bring in cash, not cost you money. "If you look at the money that goes out every year, it's not an investment," says Barajas. "It's a luxury."

Review your entire financial plan to make sure buying a second home won't throw you off track, he advises. "But if you're following your plan to get to financial independence and retirement, go ahead and buy your dream home."

ADVERTISEMENT

85 Years of Quality

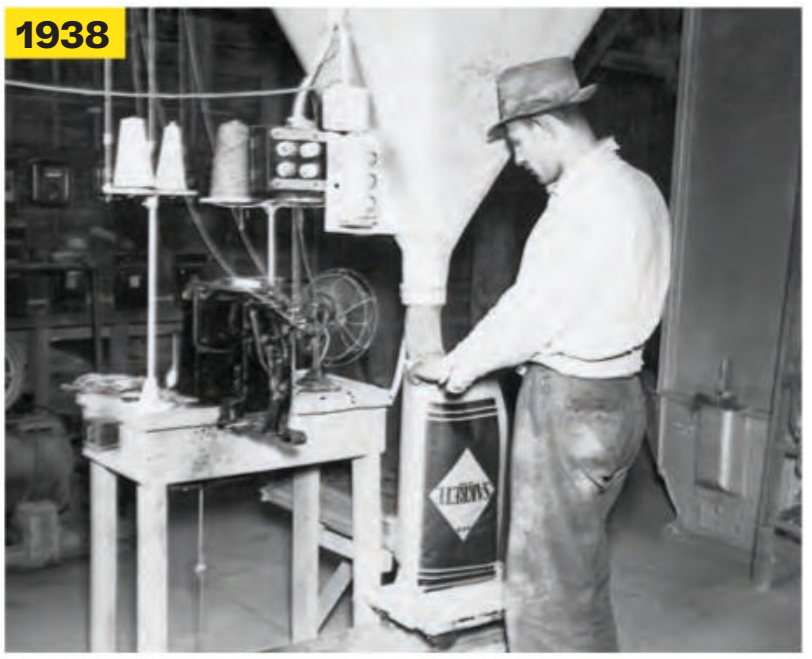
AFTER HAVING DOZENS of people come into his ready-mix concrete plant looking for a bucket or two of leftover "drippings" to use on their small projects, Art Avril sparked a revolution in concrete by offering pre-blended, precisely formulated concrete sold by the bag. **In 1936, Sakrete was born.**

1936



The first shipments of Sakrete are delivered to Cincinnati Gas & Electric Company.

1938



At Sakrete's first plant, Art and his wife, Mary, personally run bags one at a time and hand-stitch them closed.

1941



After adding one employee to the roster, Art and Mary increase production from 36,000 to 140,000 bags per year.

1946



Sakrete continues to gain traction with pros by ensuring consistent strength and performance from bag to bag.

1955



Ongoing advances in bagging technology deliver superior accuracy, automated stitching, and more output from every plant.

SINCE SAKRETE 1936

TRUSTED BY PROS SINCE 1936



1936 The first bags: multi-walled paper, stitched closed



1960s New valve technology begins to replace stitching

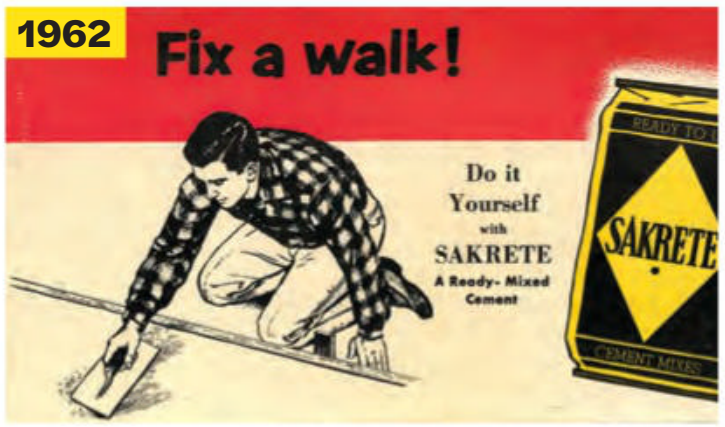


1990s The first major bag design update

and Consistency

SINCE SAKRETE 1936

1962



Sakrete helps promote the do-it-yourself revolution among homeowners by using national and in-store advertising.

1965



Concrete packaging sees its first major revolution with the valve bag replacing stitching, allowing plants to reduce labor and move faster.

1972



Sakrete's reach continues to expand with dealers large and small.

1990s



Sakrete's first major packaging update brings new color to the concrete industry.

2000s



Major modernizations are completed across the network of Sakrete plants, delivering better consistency, high-speed bagging, automated palletizing, and more.

2021



85 years after the first bags rolled off the line, Sakrete remains the brand trusted by pros!

TODAY, SAKRETE SELLS hundreds of millions of bags every year to pros and DIYers worldwide. From humble beginnings, the brand is now synonymous with quality, consistency, and strength—the promise that Art Avril delivered on in 1936 with those very first bags of Sakrete.

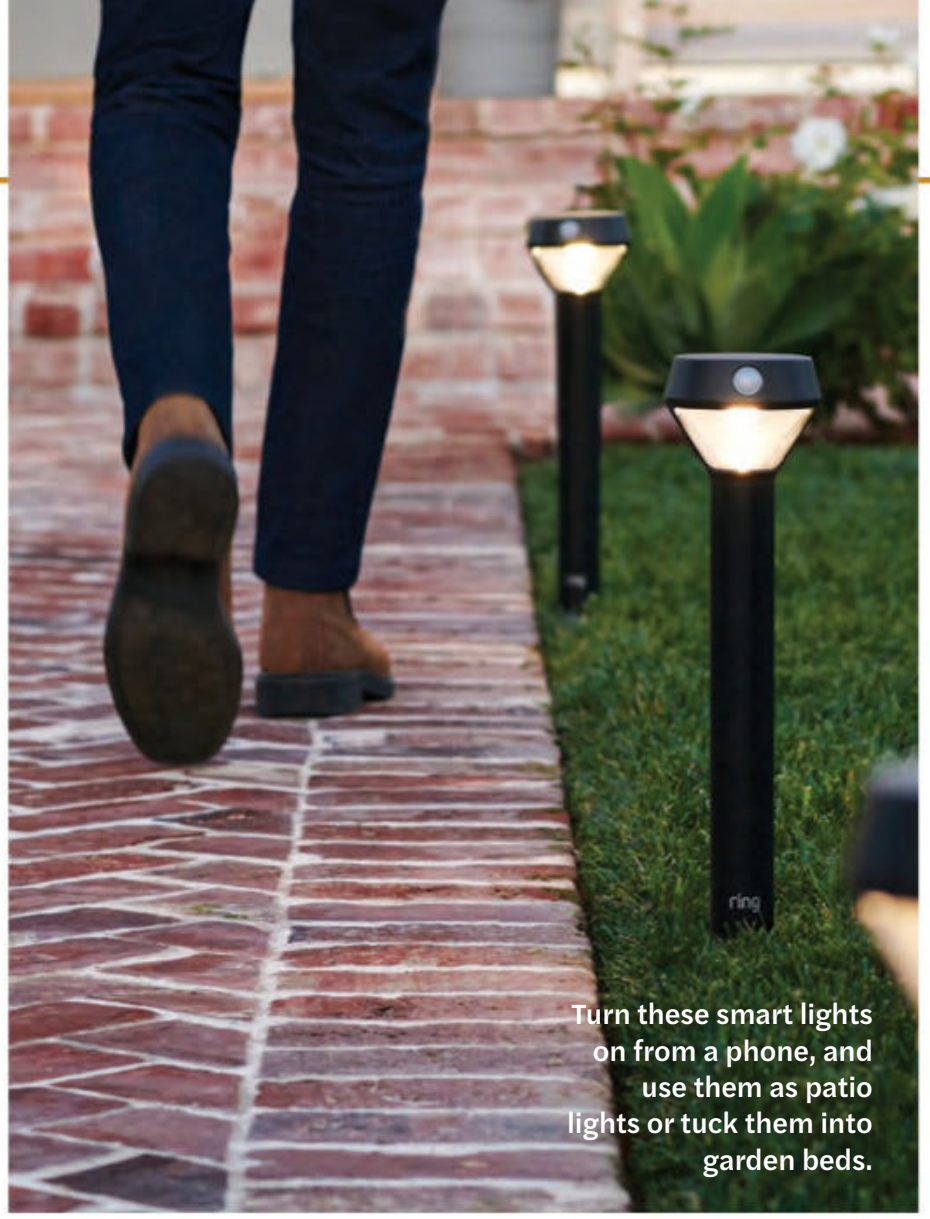
2000s A full line of repair products, and new packaging



2015 The modern Sakrete bag—and logo—are born



For inspiration, project solutions, and product instructions, visit sakrete.com



Turn these smart lights on from a phone, and use them as patio lights or tuck them into garden beds.

smart home

A brainier backyard

As smart tech aimed at outdoor living evolves, the range of tasks it can handle—from lighting the patio to freeing you from the grill to robo-mowing the grass—is more impressive than ever

BY TOM SAMILJAN

Months of social distancing have made outdoor spaces more central to our lives than ever before. So this might be the season to double down on smart home tech designed to make outdoor living and entertaining simpler, easier, and more enjoyable—allowing you to take your playlists to the backyard, tend the grill from afar, and dim the string lights for dinner with a voice command or smartphone app. The best devices give you the same level of control from a lawn chair that you're used to having from your family room couch.

Using smart home technology outdoors isn't a novel idea—you've probably taken a smart speaker out to the deck to crank up some tunes—but this new gear was designed with outdoor use in mind. That means it comes in a durable, weather-resistant build made to survive the elements, and in many cases with rechargeable batteries that untether you from an outlet. Ideally, the smart devices in a backyard mix are easy to set up and to control with either your phone or the virtual assistant you already use inside. Here are a few of our favorites.

Dinner and a movie



FILM SCREENER

Not much bigger than a soda can, this portable projector casts a 100-inch picture onto a screen or wall (or, in a pinch, a bedsheet) for open-air movie nights. Stream up to 4 hours of Netflix, YouTube, or Hulu—or download to its internal hard drive when Wi-Fi isn't available. *Anker Nebula Apollo Projector, $350; seenebula.com*



FLEX-TEMP COOLER

A refrigerator is a luxury in an outdoor kitchen, but this portable electric cooler might just be more versatile—it can freeze down to −7°F when plugged in. And its 36-liter capacity fits more than you'd expect, since no ice pack is needed. Monitor and set temps from your smartphone. *Dometic CFX3 35 Powered Cooler, $900; shop.dometic.com*



CLEVER COOKER

At one time, low-and-slow barbecue required minding a grill or smoker for hours—even overnight—to regulate the temperature. But once you sync this pellet cooker to your Wi-Fi, making those adjustments, and checking the temp of the food inside, happens from your phone, whether you're indoors on the sofa or across town. *Traeger Pro 575 Pellet Grill, $800; traegergrills.com*



WIRELESS HUB

This thermos-size smart speaker works with Alexa and the Google Assistant to control your other connected devices while cranking tunes during dinner. Its rugged, splash-proof body protects against drops, so you won't have to baby it. Connect through Bluetooth when you're away from Wi-Fi—say, at the beach. *Bose Portable Smart Speaker, $350; bose.com*

SMART LIGHTS: COURTESY RING

TOH PRO TIP



Ross Trethewey
Home Technology Expert

"If your mesh network has satellites, plug one in by your patio or deck, or move it to an interior wall nearby, for better Wi-Fi. Just remember to take the satellite with you when you go inside—they're not designed to handle rain or harsh sun."

Light up the night



SOUND-LIGHT COMBO

A touch-sensitive ring on this 8½-inch-tall outdoor-rated lantern controls the brightness and the volume of the built-in Bluetooth speaker. Delivers 15 hours of diffused, warm light and tunes per charge. *Pablo UMA Mini, $299; store.pablodesigns.com*



EASY SWITCH

This weatherproof outdoor plug turns any standard set of string lights into a smart one that you can control from your phone. It requires Lutron's Smart Bridge ($80), which uses a low-frequency wireless band to sidestep spotty Wi-Fi; or sync it with a virtual assistant's app for voice control. *Caséta by Lutron Outdoor Smart Plug, $80; casetawireless.com*



PATIO PILLAR

Line a path or an outdoor room with these solar-powered LED fixtures for up to 6 hours of soft, white light, using Dusk to Dawn mode. No wiring needed; just pop them in the ground. Connect them to Wi-Fi with a bridge ($50), then turn them on or off, or adjust the brightness, from a smartphone—or ask Alexa to do it. *Ring Solar Pathlight, $35; ring.com*

Less work, better lawn



PRECISION WATERING

Traditional irrigation controllers, with their gaggles of dials and switches, can be confusing to use. This one avoids all that with an intuitive smartphone dashboard. Wiring is DIY-friendly, and the controller uses Wi-Fi to find local weather updates so it won't waste water if rain is on the way. *Rachio 3 Smart Sprinkler Controller, from $230; rachio.com*



TURF SERVICE

This robotic mower keeps lawns as large as ¼ acre manicured, freeing up your weekends. It's quiet enough to run at night; schedule it so you wake to freshly cut turf. Onboard controls are easy to use, or operate it via a smartphone through a cellular network—perfect for those remote corners of the yard that Wi-Fi can't reach. *Stihl iMow RMI 422 PC-L, $1,900; stihlusa.com*

BLANKET YOUR YARD IN WI-FI

Even the latest, greatest outdoor smart tech won't work well if your home's Wi-Fi network can't reach it. Sure, moving an indoor satellite to a nearby wall, or even outside, can help. But for complete coverage, add a weather-resistant outdoor satellite extender, like the Orbi Tri-band Mesh WiFi Outdoor Satellite Range Extender ($350; netgear.com), which can live outside year-round. Plugged in to an outlet and linked to your main router, it'll add up to 2,500 square feet of coverage. Remember, a satellite sends out signals in all directions; for the best coverage, be sure to center it in your backyard, or mount it on a wall or fence post.


A stone threshold helps protect turf from foot and wheelbarrow traffic.
Granite blocks contain the raised beds’ soil and will never split or rot.

landscaping

Building a Kitchen Garden

A symmetrical design of raised beds grows out of a blank patch of turf, adding beauty and productivity to the landscape

BY ANN E. STRATTON / PHOTOGRAPHY BY HELEN NORMAN

Four-foot-wide, L-shaped beds are easy to reach into for planting and weeding.

Quick rewards are rare in the garden. Flowering perennials usually creep for several seasons before filling out, while small trees and shrubs can take up to 10 years to reach full size. But edibles? Now, that's a group that delivers instant gratification. Sow a packet of lettuce seeds tomorrow, and you'll have a nice little side salad within just weeks.

Having homegrown food steps from your back door is also convenient, which is why Helen Norman broke ground on her own kitchen garden seven years ago. The irony is that she lives on a farm—130 rolling acres in White Hall, Maryland—planted with field after field of certified organic vegetables. All that bounty, however, grows on land that Helen and her husband, Mark Elmore, lease to a professional farmer (her brother). It has taken nearly 27 years for the couple to shape their 1850s stone farmhouse and its ramble of outbuildings and overgrown grounds

ORGANICALLY GROWN vegetables, interplanted with flowers and herbs, provide a feast for the eyes, and a steady stock of fresh ingredients for a family of four.



STONE WALLS String lines established the outlines of the planting beds, LEFT, and provided a level line for the granite edging as it went in. The blocks were installed on end, leaving about 8 inches of exposed height.

WEED BARRIER Sheets of cardboard, all tape removed, were layered on top of turf-free soil, BELOW, to create a weed barrier, then watered well. As it decomposed, the cardboard added carbon to the soil.

PLANT-READY SOIL Eight inches of finished compost and topsoil, well blended, BOTTOM, made the beds ready for planting.



into the postcard-perfect setting they call Bright Star Farm. Not surprisingly, growing their own food got nudged off the priority list in the early years, as the couple balanced work schedules, house renovations, and the raising of two sons. "We had this big farm, but I never knew where my brother planted anything," Helen says. "I'd have to call him to ask, and then send the kids out in our go-kart to fetch a tomato or squash."

Eventually, though, craving her own personal stash of fresh-picked produce, Helen began drafting plans for a kitchen garden. As a professional lifestyle photographer, she had shot enough publication-worthy homes and gardens to know what she likes. The resulting garden—with its symmetrical beds, pops of red, and eye-level trellis plantings—clearly has the stamp of someone with an eye for design. And it was productive, too. As Helen recalls, "We got so many vegetables that first year, I could just grab a basket and go pick dinner."

That early success—and the years that followed—has yielded lessons any homeowner can learn from.

DESIGN IT RIGHT

From the outset, Helen was after more than just a good harvest from her kitchen garden; she wanted it to enhance her property, too. Her 50-by-50-foot layout of symmetrical beds—in an enclosed garden room surrounded by fencing, with arbors over the entry gates—lends what she describes as "coziness" to the sprawling landscape. Taking cues from the English countryside's many free-blooming borders, tidy clipped hedges, and formal kitchen gardens, which famously mix edibles with flowers, Helen laid out her own geometric design, framed by flower beds and pickets. Siting it in an open area just beyond a back door offers easy access, as well as the requisite 6 to 8 hours a day of full sun that vegetables generally require.

Proper sizing of the planting beds





and walkways ensures the garden functions with farm-level efficiency. Each leg of the L-shaped beds is 8 feet long and 4 feet wide, the maximum width for keeping the center of beds within arm's reach for easy hand-weeding and planting. Most paths span 3 feet, to allow for a mower or wheelbarrow to pass through, except for two paths beside the center bed, which measure 8 feet across. "We wanted a space for entertaining," says Helen, who on special occasions hauls in tables with seating for 8 to 10 guests. The 8-by-8-foot center bed has stone slabs to hold potted plants, a decorative boxwood planting, plus pockets for herbs. And an 8-foot-wide gate even allows access for tractor loads of compost.

From encouraging good drainage to dissuading nibbling rabbits, raised planting beds offer myriad benefits. Helen's beds are relatively shallow, at just 8 inches deep, framed by 8-by-11-by-4-inch granite blocks planted on end several inches below grade—a handsome,



ARCHITECTURAL ACCENTS Obelisk-style cedar trellises, TOP, add height and year-round interest to beds planted mostly with ground-hugging edibles and herbs. These are painted in Benjamin Moore's Heritage Red, echoing the nearby barn.

STRATEGIC WATERING Irrigation drip lines running through this planting of lettuces, ABOVE, soak the soil at the plants' roots without wetting the leaves, to help prevent fungal diseases, such as powdery mildew.

A QUICK GUIDE TO...

Lasagna gardening

In "lasagna gardening," or sheet mulching, layers of organic matter are spread on top of unimproved soil and allowed to compost in place—just add moisture. Start in spring to plant the following spring—or in fall, for the impatient.

STEP 1: To prep the bed, remove turf and loosen the top inch of soil where it's compacted. Adding a raised border will prevent runoff.

STEP 2: To thwart weeds, cover the entire area with a single layer of brown cardboard, all tape removed, overlapping edges slightly. Water thoroughly.

STEP 3: Spread a 6-inch layer of carbon-rich organic material (grass clippings, manure, vegetable scraps), followed by a 2- to 3-inch layer of nitrogen-rich organic matter (straw, wood chips, dried leaves).

STEP 4: Repeat Step 3 until the pile is twice as high as the desired height of the bed; finish with carbon. The bed will settle over time.

STEP 5: Water well to kick-start the composting process. Keeping beds moist (but not drenching wet) up till planting time will ensure all organic matter breaks down efficiently.

STEP 6: Top with 4 inches of topsoil or finished compost. Then sit back, and let the soil's network of organisms ready the beds for planting.

A QUICK GUIDE TO...

Crop rotation

ROTATING CROPS isn't just for farmers—it benefits home gardeners, too. Vegetables in the same plant family deplete soil nutrients similarly and attract the same pests and diseases; ideally, they shouldn't be grown in the same plot for at least three years. Quadrant bed layouts, such as the one here, make this task relatively easy. Simply rotate crops in a clockwise direction through the four beds each season, and you'll achieve the desired waiting period—no tracking spreadsheet required.

For an even more foolproof plan, consider grouping these compatible vegetable families together, and cycle them through your beds on a four-year schedule.

NIGHTSHADES + ALLIUMS
Interplant pest-prone tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant with pungent garlic and onions.

LEGUMES + CARROT FAMILY
Plant peas and beans, which add nitrogen to the soil, with taproot vegetables and herbs—carrots, celery, and parsley—that rely on this nutrient.

BRASSICAS + BRASSICAS
Plant these heavy feeders—cabbage, kale, Brussels sprouts, radishes, and arugula—on their own.

ASTERACEAE + GOURDS
Plant early-to-sprout lettuces with slow-growing cucumbers, melons, and squash, to crowd out weeds.



EDIBLE VARIETY CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: Cherry tomatoes are generally less disease prone than full-size varieties. A glass cloche protects tender seedlings from frost. Snipping Swiss chard leaves near the base encourages fresh growth. Heat-loving peppers produce all summer long.

durable material that will stand up to decades of contact with damp soil. The beds also incorporate a clever "mow path"—a flush-to-the-ground border of flat paving stones along the perimeter that keeps weeds from growing where a mower's blades can't reach.

After sketching her design, Helen hired a landscaper for the installation. Using a laser level, he measured out the bed layout, following Helen's plans, and set up a mason line, using corner stakes and string to mark the desired edging height. Then he got to work digging a trench and placing the stones, adding and removing soil to level each block. In colder climates, where frost heaves are a concern, *TOH* landscape contractor Jenn Nawada suggests digging down 6 inches and laying a 2- to 3-inch base of ¾-inch crushed stone before placing the blocks.

BUILD UP THE SOIL

As an alternative to breaking ground with a rototiller or shovel and double-digging to work in amendments, Helen used an easy no-till technique to cultivate her new beds. In a much simplified version of a popular layering technique (see "A Quick Guide to Lasagna Gardening," previous page), Helen laid tape-free cardboard over the entire area of exposed soil to smother weeds, watered the cardboard thoroughly, and then topped it with 8 inches of well-blended topsoil and finished compost until the soil level was just below the stone border's top edge. That thick layer of nutrient-rich, fluffy soil primed the beds for planting.

But first, Helen hooked up an irrigation system to make sure her edibles would get the water they needed. She ran drip lines down each bed, spacing



DAILY HARVEST
Home gardener Helen Norman can be found outside inspecting her beds daily during the growing season, harvesting vegetables and herbs for family meals. The garden's barefoot-friendly grass paths stay cool on hot days, resist erosion, and are easy to maintain with a walk-behind mower.

them roughly 16 inches apart to give each row of plants a designated water source. Though Helen doesn't fuss about hiding the tubing, Jenn says it's easy to do: Simply dig the tubes in just below the soil's surface, and secure them with irrigation staples. To save time buying parts, you can pick up a kit (such as those sold by DripWorks), and automate waterings with a timer.

That first year, Helen didn't do a soil test, but she did the second year. And she's made a habit of taking soil tests and amending accordingly every couple of years. "I only add compost when my soil needs it," she says, pointing out that too much compost, like anything else, can cause imbalances. As for mulch, the flower beds along the fence get a fresh layer of shredded bark seasonally, but Helen skips mulch—and the chemicals that can accompany it—on her vegetable beds. To prevent weeds around the edibles, Helen plants densely—leaving little bare ground for weed seeds to sprout—and those that do pop up are never allowed to get big. "I just stay on top of it, a little each week," says Helen, who swears by her trusty Hula Hoe. The long-handled stirrup-style tool cuts off weeds at the root; a built-in "wiggle" lets it work both backward and forward.

ADD YEAR-ROUND STRUCTURE

With its prominent location, on view from the road, this garden needed to look good through all four seasons. So Helen tucked in dozens of dwarf boxwoods, planting small to save pennies, and framed the garden's edges with gated arbors and picket fencing made from wood salvaged during a barn remodel.

Red-painted obelisk trellises, in beds flanking the center, also add year-round color. Hers are often engulfed in blooms, starting with 'Jackmanii' clematis in spring and a grand finale of sweet autumn clematis into fall. The metal obelisks and lattice A-frames that punctuate the garden's four corners add yet more vertical support—and eye-level beauty—sprawling with tomatoes, sweet peas, pole beans, and top-heavy dahlias.

LURE IN POLLINATORS

Flowers, growing among edibles, are more than eye candy. The marigolds that skirt Helen's tomatoes are there to ward off insects, such as root-nibbling nematodes, while zonal geraniums—her go-to for covering bare spots—deter Japanese beetles. Plus, Helen adds, "the flowers attract pollinators," which are essential



GARDEN TO TABLE Rustic fence pickets with mitered tops and tall trellises engulfed in orange-flowering honeysuckle vine and yet-to-bloom sweet autumn clematis create a cozy feeling of enclosure for summer meals outdoors.

players for producing big harvests.

With thoughtful planning, those harvests will keep coming. Helen likes interplanting cool-season lettuces and radishes, for instance, with Swiss chard, which is slower to "bolt"—or turn leggy and bitter in hot weather—for long-lasting leafy displays. Repeat sowings of quick-sprouting lettuces and radishes, spaced a week or two apart, provide a steady supply for spring-mix salads.

With summer's heat waves come her family's all-time favorite: peppers, from red-hot Cherry Bombs to the sweet Habanero look-alike, 'Habanada.' "We do everything with peppers, from pickling to freezing and making jam," Helen says.

Potted-up herbs, such as frost-tender basil and unruly mints, are also a summertime mainstay. "You can pop containers in anywhere," says Helen, who tucks them into beds and arranges ever-changing displays on the terrace above the garden.

Then, there are the root-cellar crops—cabbages, squash, garlic, carrots, potatoes. "If you store them properly, you can practically eat from your garden all winter." And, of course, there are the flowers for cutting—seed-grown zinnias and cosmos, as well as roses and dahlias. Because when you're out collecting kitchen ingredients in a garden, it's nice to bring back a bouquet for the table.

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WORKSHOP

SUMMER 2021

VOL. 26 | NO. 2

NEW PRODUCTS, PRO ADVICE, AND HOW-TO PROJECTS



READY TO GO OUTDOORS
Tom and Kevin show off a pair of completed Adirondack chairs, fashioned from pressure-treated pine.

[Build It]

Adirondack chair

TOH general contractor Tom Silva and **TOH host Kevin O'Connor** take you through the steps of making this iconic outdoor seat

BY THOMAS BAKER | PHOTOGRAPHY BY DOUG LEVY

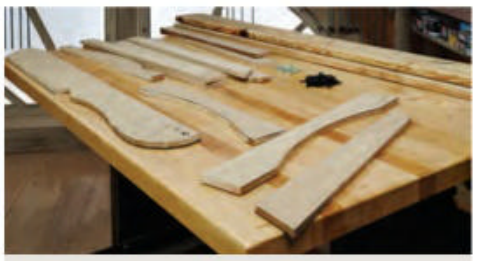
With its deep seat, tall back, and wide armrests, there's arguably no more restful spot to while away a long summer's day than an Adirondack chair. Little wonder that these seats are a nearly ubiquitous feature on lawns across the country this time of year.

As its name implies, the chair's early-20th-century design originated in the Adirondack Mountains of New York. Its signature details—the angle of the back, and the slope, depth, and curve of the seat—contribute to its unparalleled comfort. The version Tom chose to build, from a set of woodworking plans readily available online (rockler.com), has a gently curved back and an arched top.

Before getting started, and knowing that one chair wouldn't be enough, he added an extra, time-saving step. "I took the cardboard templates that came with the plans and made sturdy MDF templates of all the chair parts to guide my saw and router." With those templates at the ready, Tom can knock out a couple of chairs a day for little more than the cost of the pressure-treated lumber: about $120 each.

TOOLS

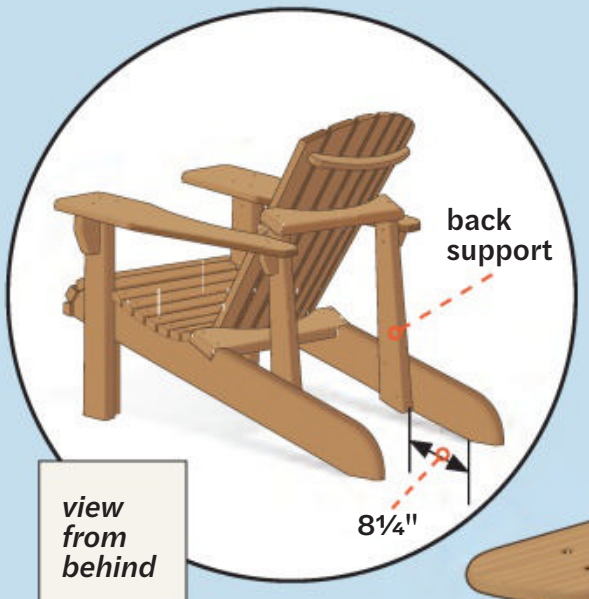
- ❑ jigsaw and miter saw
- ❑ rafter square
- ❑ drill/driver
- ❑ 11/64-inch twist bit
- ❑ band saw
- ❑ benchtop router table or handheld router
- ❑ straight router bit with bearing
- ❑ table saw
- ❑ tapering jig
- ❑ 5/64-inch countersink bit
- ❑ ¼-inch roundover bit

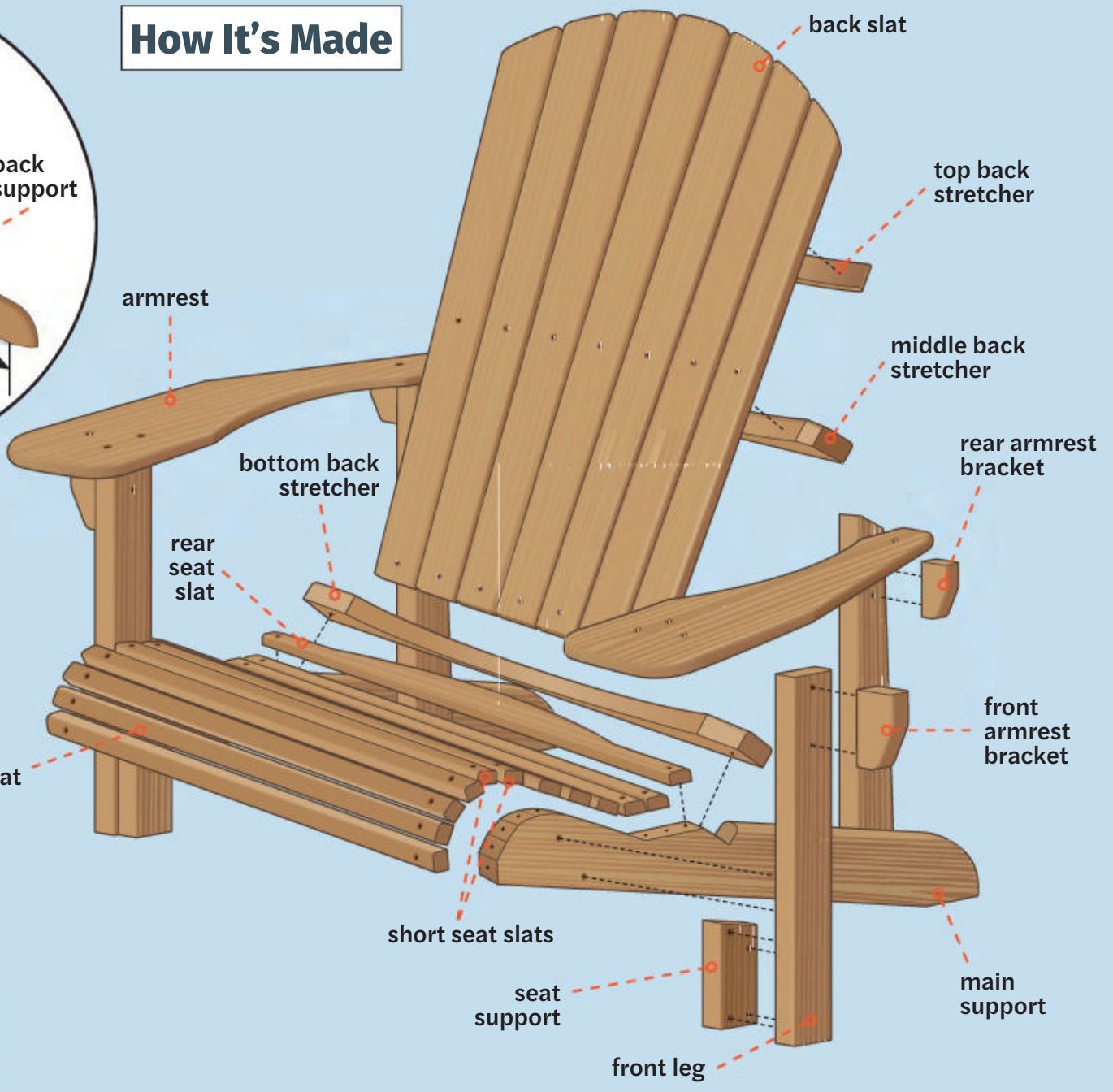


MATERIALS

- ❑ 1 sheet ¾-inch MDF
- ❑ 5/4×6 treated lumber, 64 linear feet
- ❑ 1⅝-inch #8 stainless-steel deck screws
- ❑ 2½-inch #8 stainless-steel deck screws
- ❑ 80-, 120-, and 180-grit sandpaper

How It's Made





Finished dimensions
32¾"W × 44⅞"L × 36¼"H

ILLUSTRATIONS: PETER SUCHESKI

STEP-BY-STEP

1] Make the templates Place the full-size cardboard templates from the plans on the MDF and cut out each shape with a jigsaw. Sand the MDF edges smooth to the edge of the cardboard, and drill 11/64-inch pilot holes in the MDF following the marks on the cardboard. Next, use a miter saw to cut each piece of lumber to length. Screw the templates to them.

2] Cut the curved pieces Using a band saw or jigsaw, cut alongside each cardboard/MDF template, taking care not to let the blade touch it. Note: To make the chair's armrests wide enough for the templates, rip two 1-inch strips and glue them to the edges of the armrest stock.

3] Trim the curved pieces On a benchtop router table, run the pieces against a spinning straight bit with a bearing. The bearing rides on the template; the bit shaves each piece to match it.

4] Taper the back slats Set up a tapering jig on a table saw to cut each back slat to match its template angle. After all the pieces are cut, rip them down to a ¾-inch thickness. Mark the slats' curved ends and cut them on the band saw.

5] Take off the sharp corners Using the holes in the MDF as guides, drill 5/64-inch pilot holes in the stock; remove the templates. Use a router with a ¼-inch roundover bit to ease the top edges where indicated in the plans. Sand the parts with 80-, 120-, and 180-grit paper.

6] Assemble the legs Attach a bracket perpendicular to and flush with the top of each front leg. Center the seat support on the inside face of a front leg, line up their square ends, then use four 1⅝-inch screws to fasten them together. Do the same with the opposite leg. Rest a main support on the angled end of a seat support so its front edge projects 3½ inches past the front leg. Drive two 1⅝-inch screws through the main support and into the front leg. Do the same with the main support on the other side.

For more steps, turn the page.


1


2


3

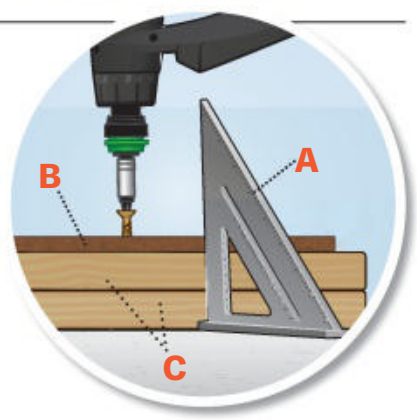

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6

HOW TO MAKE IDENTICAL PIECES

To save time making pairs of curved armrests and support pieces, Tom used a rafter square (A) to align one edge of the MDF template (B) with the edges of the stock (C). Then he screwed all of them together so they wouldn't slip as he cut the paired pieces on a band saw. Before unscrewing them, he did a final trim on all the edges with a flush-cutting bit, running its bearing along the template.



WATCH See Tom and Kevin build this project at **thisoldhouse.com/adirondack-chair**


7


8


9


10


11


12

STEP-BY-STEP (CONTINUED)

7] Join the sides Stand the main supports upright and fasten four seat slats to the front edges of the main supports. Let each slat end extend ½ inch past the supports. Fasten the bottom stretcher to the notches in the main supports. Its ends also project ½ inch past those supports.

8] Attach the back supports Line up the lower ends of each support with the bottom edges of the main supports and 8¼ inches in from the doglegs on the main supports. Fasten the main and back supports together with two 1⅝-inch screws; fasten each rear armrest bracket to the back supports with two 1⅝-inch screws.

9] Attach the back slats Screw the center back slat to the middle back stretcher. Line up the remaining back slats on either side so their tops form a smooth arch from side to side; set them ⅜ inch apart, top to bottom, then fasten them to the middle back stretcher with 1⅝-inch screws. When all the slats are attached, screw the middle back stretcher to the back supports with 2½-inch screws. Now fasten the back slats to the bottom stretcher with 1⅝-inch screws.

10] Add the remaining seat slats Bevel the rear seat slat on the table saw so it tapers from ¾ inch thick in front to 1 inch thick in back. Set the thick edge against the back slats and fasten it to the main supports with 1⅝-inch screws. Use the same screws to attach the remaining seat slats, leaving a ½-inch gap between each one. Leave a 1/16-inch gap between the arms and the short seat slats.

11] Secure the armrests Place the left armrest flat against the top of the left front leg and the left-hand brackets, front and rear. Line up the armrest's pilot holes with the top end of the front leg and the top edges of the brackets, then secure the armrest with four 2½-inch screws. Do the same with the opposite armrest.

12] Attach the top back stretcher Center the stretcher from right to left; it stops the slats from twisting. Drive a 1⅝-inch screw into it through each slat.

TIP

COATING PRESSURE-TREATED WOOD

Treated woods often have such a high moisture content, it takes three to six months before they'll accept a finish. For kiln-dried wood stamped KDAT or KD19, the wait is one or two months. Whichever treated wood you use, protect it from the elements: Prep with a deck cleaner and wood brightener, then apply one coat of a tinted semitransparent stain (shown) or an opaque solid-color stain.



BRUSH AND WOOD: MEG REINHARDT

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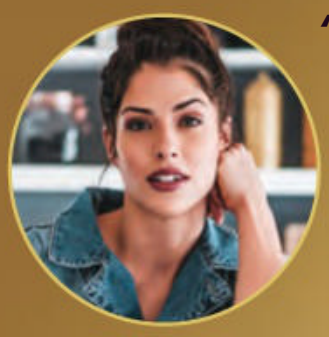
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–Rachel Metz, DIY Influencer

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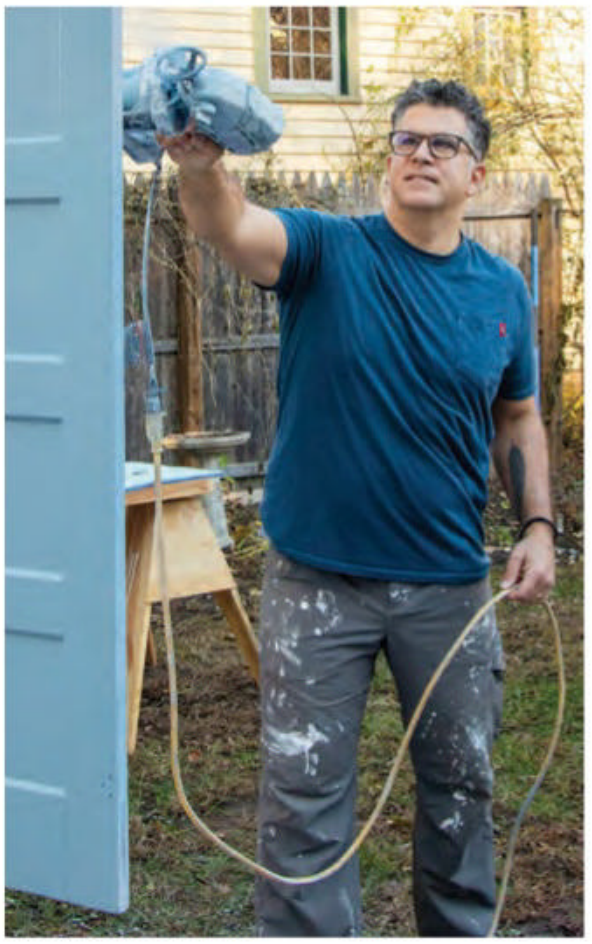
[Tool Lab]

Airless paint sprayers

TOH editor Chris Ermides, host of our Tool Lab video series, looks at a new generation of painting tools

When speed of application is paramount, pro painters go for an airless paint sprayer. These sprayers work by pumping coatings through a tiny opening in the gun's tip. The pressures are so high—up to 3,000 psi—that the paint explodes from the tip into a fine mist. Such pressures also allow these sprayers to work with coatings of any type, from thin stains to pudding-thick latexes, without any need to adjust their consistency. And because the droplets they generate are so tiny, airless sprayers are also able to lay down a flawless finish on broad surfaces like cabinets and doors. By contrast, the high-volume, low-pressure (HVLP) sprayers often marketed to DIYers atomize paint using low-pressure air streams. The bigger, slower-moving droplets they create are less likely to drift off as overspray—a plus for small jobs and detail work—but these sprayers' lower output makes them impractical for covering large expanses.

With the development of nimble, handheld airless sprayers, self-contained pump-and-tank combo units, and high-efficiency paint guns, this method of applying a finish isn't just for pros anymore. Here's the latest on airless units for homeowners.



ERMIDES: MEG REINHARDT

SPRAYING POWER Doors, shutters, latticework, balustrades—anything with a large surface area or hard-to-reach spots—are all good candidates for spray-painting.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Standard features

- **A** | Spray tip
- **B** | Spray tip guard
- **C** | Prime pump/spray knob
- **D** | Sprayer trigger
- **E** | Paint cup
- **F** | Power cord

Helpful upgrades

- **1** | Refillable paint-cup liner
- **2** | Onboard tip storage



GUIDE TO AIRLESS PAINT SPRAYERS

Small-project champ



Handheld

THE DETAILS: This little sprayer is incredibly convenient for painting cabinets, built-ins, doors, shutters, even the trim in a room. And it sprays in any direction, even upside down. The variable-speed feature lets you adjust paint output to suit the size of your project and finish viscosity: slower for thinner finishes and less overspray, faster for thicker finishes on larger surfaces. A flexible, refillable plastic bag inside the paint cup holds the finish, which simplifies cleanup and reduces paint waste. Comes with two tips.

Graco TrueCoat 360 VSP Electric TrueAirless Sprayer

MAX PSI: 1,500 variable speed
MAX OUTPUT: 0.24 gpm
TIP SIZE: 0.015 inch
PAINT-CUP CAPACITY: 42 fluid ounces
WEIGHT: 4 pounds
WARRANTY: 1 year
PRICE: $269; graco.com

Airless made simple



Combo unit

THE DETAILS: Pump and paint reservoir are integrated into one portable, gravity-fed unit that's simple to prime and clean. Its reservoir has a cover to keep debris from falling into the finish. The spray gun uses proprietary technology that reduces overspray (and wasted paint) by up to 55 percent compared with conventional airless sprayers. This sprayer comes with a 515 tip (see "Choose the Right Spray Tip," right), and can be fitted with four other tips to apply a range of paints and stains.

Wagner Control Pro 130

MAX PSI: 1,600
MAX OUTPUT: 0.24 gpm
MAX TIP SIZE: 0.015 inch
TANK CAPACITY: 1.5 gallons
HORSEPOWER: 0.375
HOSE: 25 feet
WEIGHT: 9 pounds
WARRANTY: 2 years
PRICE: $250; wagnerspraytech.com

Great for big jobs



Heavy duty

THE DETAILS: You get all the features, and complexity, of a high-output airless sprayer used by painting pros. Like standard airless models, this one sucks paint out of a separate bucket, but unlike those sprayers, it creates about half as much overspray. That makes it easier to get even coverage with less waste. Comes equipped with a 517 tip with a 10-inch spray pattern. You have a choice of three other tips, for stains (transparent and solid color), primers, and paints (oil- and water-based).

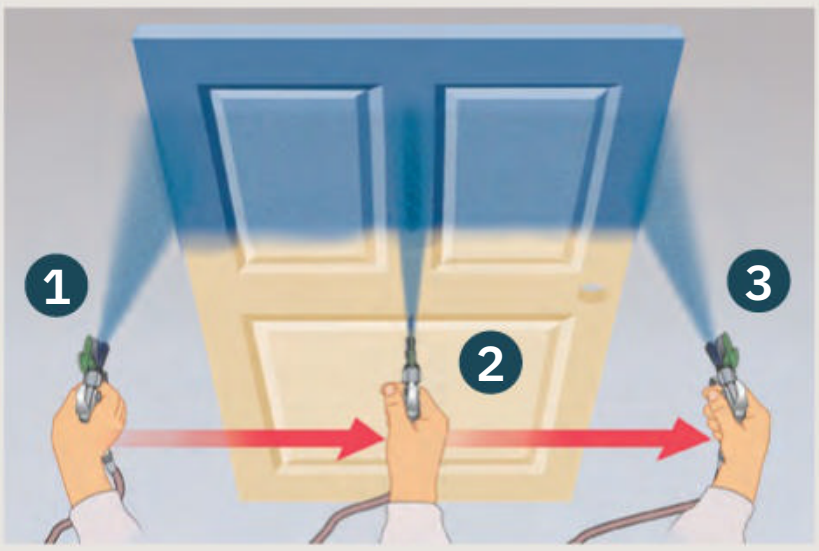
Titan Control Max 1700 Sprayer

MAX PSI: 1,500
MAX OUTPUT: 0.33 gpm
MAX TIP SIZE: 0.017 inch
HORSEPOWER: 0.60
HOSE: 30 feet
WEIGHT: 22.25 pounds
WARRANTY: 2 years
PRICE: $379; controlmaxhea.com

TECHNIQUE BASICS

How to paint like a pro

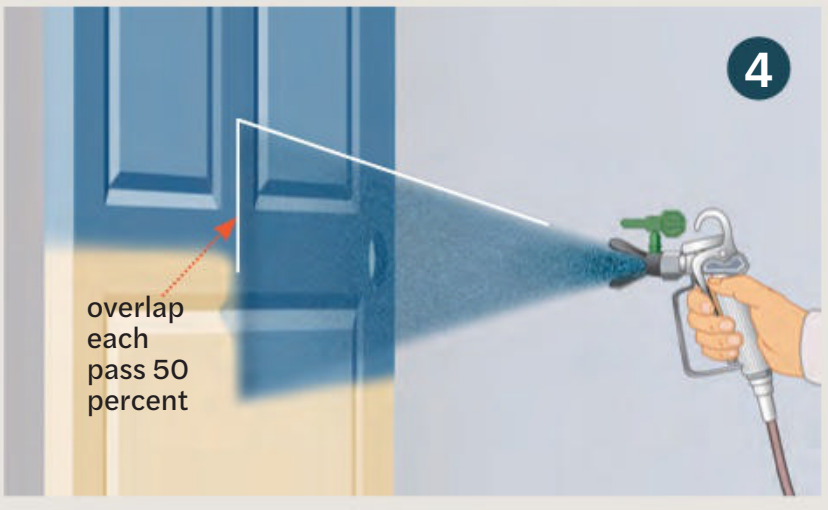
GET READY: Cover or mask off any surfaces that don't need paint. Put on safety glasses and an appropriate respirator. Wait until wind is calm before spraying outdoors. Prime the pump and spray into a bucket to check for clogs. Test spray a big paper sheet. If coverage isn't even, dial back the pressure.



STEP 1: Hold the gun perpendicular to and about a foot from the surface. Aim off to the side; squeeze the trigger.

STEP 2: Move the gun quickly in a straight pass, parallel to the surface. Turn your wrist to keep the gun at a right angle to the surface.

STEP 3: Release the trigger after the gun passes the opposite edge.



STEP 4: Continuing to hold the gun at a right angle to the surface, overlap each pass by 50 percent. Always keep the gun moving while the trigger is pulled; not doing so can lead to drips, runs, and uneven buildup.

SPRAY TIP: COURTESY WAGNER. ILLUSTRATIONS: IAN WORPOLE

key to spraying success

CHOOSE THE RIGHT SPRAY TIP



Paint sprayer tips determine how much coating comes out. To reach the sweet spot between application speed and good control, choose a tip size that's compatible with the viscosity of the coating being sprayed. Tips with smaller openings—0.009 to 0.013 inch—work best with thin stains, while thicker paints and primers call for tips in the 0.015- to 0.017-inch range. The last two digits embossed on a tip indicate its hole size. The first embossed digit, when doubled, tells you the width of the spray fan, in inches. For example, if that first number is 5, then the width of the spray is 10 inches, give or take an inch or two. The actual width depends on the pump pressure and the material being sprayed.

TOH PRO TIP



SPRAY-GUN SAFETY

"To keep a sprayer from accidentally driving paint under your skin (a poisoning hazard), always engage the gun's trigger lock when not in use."

Chris Ermides
Host, Tool Lab

Troubleshooting sprayer problems

- **Rounded spray pattern instead of a narrow stripe:** Tip is worn and should be replaced.
- **Uneven spray pattern:** Pump pressure is too low, or tip size is too big.
- **Too much overspray/paint doesn't stick to surface:** Turn down the pressure.
- **Paint sputters from gun/ no paint comes out.** The sprayer is clogged at some point. To clear the tip, twist it 180 degrees and spray into a bucket. If the gun sprays, turn tip back to the operating position. If it doesn't, clean the filter in the gun and on the end of the suction tube, then try again.

WATCH See Chris put a variety of tools to the test at **thisoldhouse.com/tool-lab**

[What's New]

Summer hits

A new crop of warm-weather problem-solvers for your home

BY THOMAS BAKER

1. Cuts and digs

HoriHori Garden Tool

This updated version of a traditional Japanese gardening knife has a forked, 7-inch stainless-steel blade for planting bulbs, slicing roots, and shearing stems. Finely honed on one edge, with sharp serrations on the other, the blade is embedded in a soft-grip polymer handle with an ergonomic profile. Comes with a plastic sheath that clips on to your belt. *$25; fiskars.com*

2. High-speed whacker

M18 Brushless String Trimmer Kit

Spinning at speeds of up to 6,200 rpm, this 9.1-pound trimmer can run for an hour on one charge as it makes a wide, 16-inch cutting swath. Fitting the optional attachments to its shaft can convert it to a chainsaw, pruner, hedge trimmer, or edger. *$249, battery and charger included; milwaukeetool.com*

3. No key needed

Tapplock one+

It works like an ordinary padlock to secure sheds and outbuildings, but this waterproof, biometric model opens without a key. Instead, you use a smartphone, your fingerprint, or tap in a custom code. The stainless-steel shackle and rechargeable battery function from 149°F to −4°F. *$99; tapplock.com/oneplus*

4. Protects weathered wood

WoodForce

Like the look of natural wood siding, fences, or railings as they age—but not the decay that comes with it? This penetrating, water-repellent coating guards against rot and blackening so that the wood will weather to a uniform color. Two coats, brushed or sprayed on to vertical surfaces, last four to six years. Comes in clear—or in 27 tints. *From $55 per gallon; sansin.com/product/woodforce*



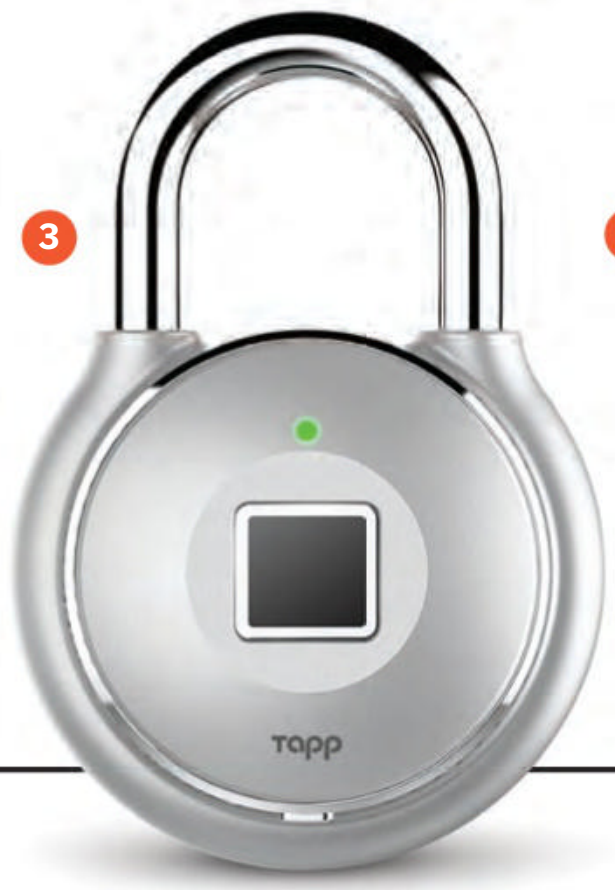


TOH PRO TIP



JENN NAWADA
Landscape Contractor

"Wide rings of mulch around trees will keep a string trimmer from getting too close and scoring the bark."





5



5. Find studs, and more

SuperScan Kx Series Studfinders

New scanning technology enables tools in this series to find the edges, centers, and direction of studs and joists, identify metal and plastic pipes, and alert you to live wires. *From $41; shop.zircon.com*

6



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This Old House

SEASIDE VICTORIAN COTTAGE

To see more of the Narragansett Seaside Victorian Cottage, turn to page 24.



A Seaside Victorian Beauty

Thanks to the support of our valued Sponsors and Project House Partners, this season we restored a timeworn but beautifully crafted Queen Anne. Watch the transformation unfold on **thisoldhouse.com/seaside-victorian-cottage**

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[Easy DIY]

Tiered planter

Using rot-resistant cedar lumber from the home center, **TOH DIY expert Jenn Largesse** explains how she built a durable, space-saving stand for growing herbs

It's no secret among my family and friends that I'm an indifferent cook, but when I do take the time to follow a recipe, I find that fresh herbs can make all the difference. To keep these aromatic plants close at hand, I built a three-tier planter to sit in a sunny spot on our patio right off the kitchen.

The tiered design built with cedar boards and stainless-steel screws makes for a small footprint, while providing space to grow a considerable quantity of herbs. Window-box liners with drainage holes keep the soil neatly contained. As a bonus, our sitting area is now perfumed all summer long with the scents of sage, rosemary, and thyme.

Now, with my little herb garden as fragrant inspiration, I might just be persuaded to prepare an herbed roast chicken instead of calling for pizza.



CLEAN CONNECTIONS Jenn used stainless-steel screws for this project because they won't blacken cedar over time, as galvanized screws will.



WATCH See Jenn build this project at **thisoldhouse.com/house-one/tiered-planter**

STARTING AN HERB CONTAINER GARDEN

Most herbs like full sun, but they can differ markedly in their moisture needs. Separating woody-stemmed perennials like rosemary and thyme, which prefer drier soil, from moisture-loving annuals like basil and dill will make for happier, more robust plants. Also, consider an herb's mature height and growing habit: Place taller plants on the top tier, or at the front of the boxes along with those that have a weeping habit.

WHAT YOU NEED FOR THIS PROJECT

TOOLS

- ❑ pencil
- ❑ tape measure
- ❑ miter saw
- ❑ drill/driver
- ❑ rafter square
- ❑ cam clamp
- ❑ level
- ❑ pocket-hole jig
- ❑ 5⁄64-inch drill bit

MATERIALS

- ❑ two 7⁄8" × 1½" western red cedar boards, 8 feet long
- ❑ three 7⁄8" × 2½" western red cedar boards, 8 feet long
- ❑ six 7⁄8" × 3½" western red cedar boards, 8 feet long
- ❑ three plastic window-box liners
- ❑ 1½" stainless-steel pocket-hole screws
- ❑ 1⅝" #7 stainless-steel trim-head deck screws
- ❑ Type III waterproof wood glue



STEP 1

Cut the pieces for the planter boxes.

MEASURE THE WIDTH, depth, and length of the window-box liners. (For this project, the liners are 23.75 inches long, 7.86 inches wide, and 6.6 inches deep.) Add about ¼ inch to each dimension so they'll slide freely into the planter box. Cut the 3½-inch boards for the boxes' sides and bottoms to length.

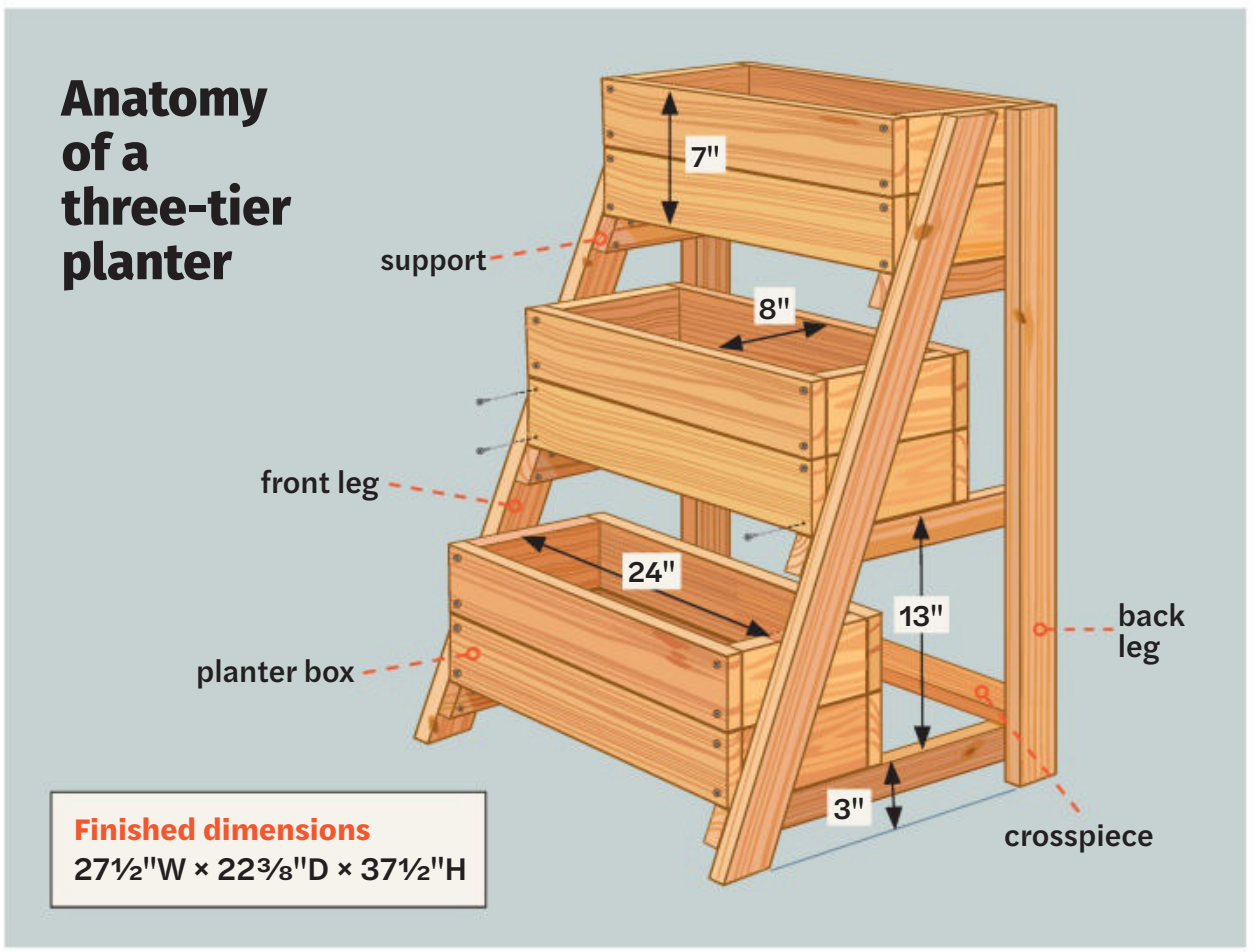


STEP 5

Cut the legs and supports.

USING A MITER SAW, cut the two back legs to length. Set the miter saw to 22.5 degrees and cut the ends of the two front legs to length. Keeping the same miter setting, cut the front ends of each pair of supports. Reset the saw to 90 degrees; cut the ends of each pair of supports to length. Mark the supports' location on the back legs.

ILLUSTRATION: IAN WORPOLE





STEP 2

Prep the boxes' boards.

THE PLANTER BOXES' SIDES consist of four pairs of the 3½-inch-wide boards. Drill pocket holes into the top boards' bottom edges, then assemble each pair with wood glue and pocket-hole screws; make sure the holes face down so they won't collect water. For the two bottom boards, drill two pocket holes at each end and along one edge.



STEP 3

Attach the boxes' sides to their bases.

WITH A FACE BOARD LYING FLAT, center a bottom board lengthwise, flush with its bottom edge. Drive pocket-hole screws through the pocket holes in the bottom board and into the face board. Do the same to attach the second base board to the box's back face.



STEP 4

Finish the box assembly.

SET THE ENDS OF EACH BOX between the front and back sides. To avoid splitting the wood, drill four ⅛-inch pilot holes through each face board and into the edge of the end piece, then fasten the pieces together with trim-head screws. Do the same on the back face of each box.



STEP 6

Mount the supports.

AT THE MARKS, fasten the supports perpendicular to the right back leg with two trim-head screws. Slide the right front leg under the supports until it's flush with their mitered ends and even with the top end of the back leg. Fasten each support to the front leg with two screws. Do the same with the left leg assembly, so that it mirrors the right leg's.



STEP 7

Add the back support.

STAND EACH LEG ASSEMBLY UPRIGHT; using a level, confirm that the supports are level and the back leg is plumb. Drill four pocket holes in the ends of the crosspiece. Place it between the back legs, resting its ends on the bottom supports. Stand the assembled legs upright, then drive trim-head screws through the crosspiece and into the legs.



STEP 8

Mount the boxes.

PLACE THE TOP BOX between the legs with its front edge flush with the top support. Drive two trim-head screws through the inside of the box and into the front and back legs. Attach the middle and lower boxes, driving two screws through each box end and into the front leg. Fit a liner into each planter box, then fill with soil and herbs.

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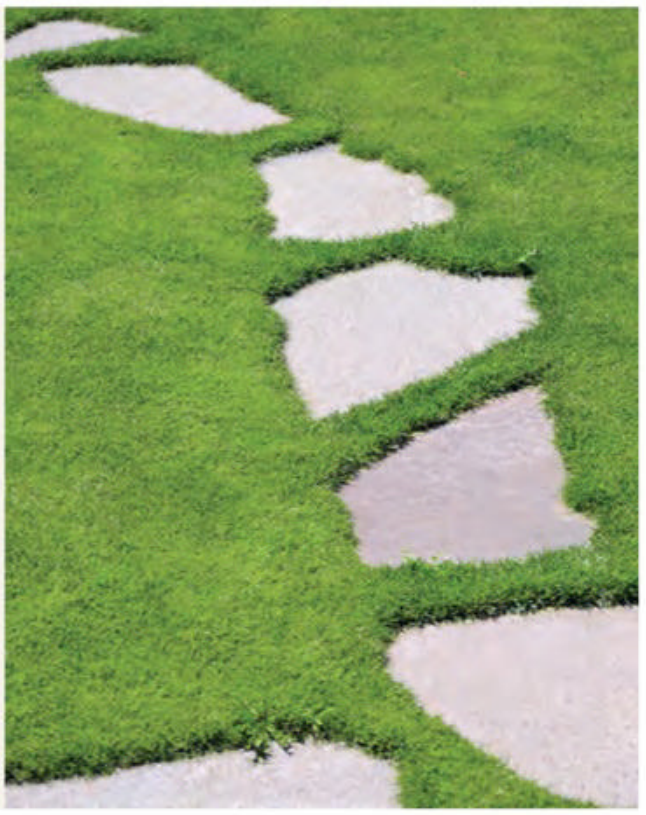
Small projects that pay off

Warm weather has finally arrived; time to head outside and give your house and landscape some TLC



Reset pathway stones

SUNKEN STONES overrun by grass are not an inviting sight. To reset them, cut away the overgrown grass with a string trimmer to expose the edges of each stone. Use a knife or trowel to cut those edges free from the turf, then work the bent end of a pry bar under the edges of each stone and lift it out. Fill just the recess with stone dust, hand-tamp it level, and lay the stone back in place; it should be sitting flat and on grade. If it wobbles, add or remove stone dust until it's steady underfoot.



Stop ants cold with new patio joints

ANTS LOVE TO TUNNEL through the mason sand found in many patio-paver joints. Halt their digging by filling those joints with polymeric sand, a silica-polymer mix that hardens when it gets wet. To ant-proof an existing patio, blast old sand out of the joints with a pressure-washer; sweep it away. When the patio is totally dry and no rain is forecast, brush polymeric sand into the open joints with a broom. (Leave no particles on the paver faces.) To activate the polymer, lightly water the joints.

Protect the bottom of your door

HAS THE BASE OF YOUR front door taken a beating from months of wet weather? Give it some protection, and dress it up at the same time, with a rustproof metal kickplate. Order a size that's 2 inches shorter than the door's width and no taller than the bottom rail's height. These plates can be attached with adhesive strips or magnets, but screws—ideally small, stainless-steel truss-heads—hold up better long-term.



PAVING STONES, ANT: ISTOCK; PRUNING: GRAHAM STRONG/GAP PHOTOS; KICKPLATE: COURTESY KICKPLATES.COM

TOH PRO TIP



CALL IN A CHIMNEY SWEEP

"Your chimney flue or woodstove pipe should be scrubbed of its flammable creosote buildup at least once a year. Now is a good time to schedule a visit from a local chimney-sweep pro, before he or she gets booked up in the fall."

Mark McCullough
Mason

Shape up Japanese maples



IN THE SPRING, maple trees "bleed" copious amounts of sap when you cut them. (That's why we tap sugar maples for syrup at that time of year.) But severe sap loss in mature Japanese maples reduces tree vigor; wait until summer before trimming errant branches. The goal is to create overlapping layers that don't touch one another. But to prevent sun scalding, don't remove more than a quarter of the foliage from any branch at one time, and prune only in temperatures below 80°F.



How to get an even green

WHEN YOU SPREAD lawn fertilizer this summer, use this trick for full coverage that will result in a lawn that's evenly saturated with color. Make a note of the application rate on the fertilizer bag recommended for your type of spreader, then dial down the setting by half. Now apply the fertilizer the usual way, by going back and forth from one end of the yard to the other. Once you've covered the entire yard, go over it again, but this time perpendicular to your previous direction. This crisscross application method still feeds your grass at the recommended rate, and ensures you'll have a no-stripe lawn.

Control basement humidity levels



A DAMP BASEMENT fosters funky smells, soggy cardboard, and rusty tools. To keep the humidity level where it should be—between 30 and 50 percent—plug in an Energy Star–certified dehumidifier. A 55-pint-per-hour model will do a good job in basements of up to 1,200 square feet, where humidity is 70 to 80 percent. (For larger basements, add more units, and remember to empty them regularly.) At the same time, run a large box fan or two to circulate the dry air and keep damp, stagnant air from accumulating in corners.

BASEMENT: COURTESY hOmeLabs; FERTILIZER: ISTOCK



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Fix for a lamppost light

The carriage lamp in our front yard no longer works. Its wiring, which runs underground from the house, is not in conduit, and we've nicked the wire while planting the garden beds. We've tried repairing it, but the circuit keeps shorting out. Can you help us?

—ORHAN KILKI, LOVELAND, OH

TOH electrician Heath Eastman:

You have a few different options for making this repair. The easiest and least expensive one would be to locate where the cable has been nicked or cut, and repair it using an underground wiring splice kit (see Tip). Start by switching off the power, then carefully dig around the damaged section of wiring until you have at least 12 inches of clearance on both sides of the nick or cut. Use a non-contact voltage tester to confirm that the line is de-energized, then wipe the cable clean with a damp rag. Following the kit's directions, splice the damaged wiring and cover the splices with the waterproof, heat-shrink sleeves that come with the kit.

If you can't locate the damaged section, then you'll have to dig up and replace the entire run. Most building codes allow you to bury cable directly in the ground, as long as it's labeled as "UF-B"—safe for direct burial—and covered with 24 inches of soil. Or you can run the new cable through a buried PVC conduit that extends from the lamppost to the house. Conduit offers a couple of advantages over direct-burial cable: It provides reliable protection against future damage and, in most areas, needs to be buried only 12 inches deep. Running wires in conduit costs a little more than using a direct-burial cable, but you'll have less digging, and the wires will be safer in the long term.

No matter which method you use, every outdoor circuit is required to have ground fault protection, either in the form of a GFCI breaker at the service panel, or an exterior GFCI receptacle.



POWER FOR A LAMPPOST When connecting a buried cable encased in conduit, Heath terminates the conduit inside a weatherproof junction box, which houses the splices that connect the lamppost light cable to the cable from the house.

EASTMAN: MAKAYLA TOWNSEND

TIP



Splice for underground wiring

The HST 1300 Underground UF Splice Kit for 14- to 8-gauge wire (gardnerbender.com) has screw-down connectors to ensure firm contact with the wires. The connectors are then sealed inside moisture-blocking, heat-shrink sleeves.

Dutch door conversion

Could I turn the paneled front door of my Cape Cod–style home into a Dutch door?

—DEREK COLE, CONCORD, CA

TOH general contractor Tom Silva:
If the original door is in good condition, and it has a rail across its middle, it is possible to make such a conversion by cutting that rail in half. Before you do any cutting, however, you'll need to get at least two additional hinges—a Dutch door requires a separate pair for the top and bottom halves—but I suggest that you buy four new hinges that are the same size as the existing ones so that they all match.

It's easiest to install the hinges while the door is still in place. (The existing top and bottom hinges can stay where they are.) On the door's hinge-side edge, mark the spot where its rail will be cut in half. (If there's already a hinge there, it will have to be removed once the new hinges are installed.) Measure, and chisel out mortises for the two new hinges about 6 inches above and below that mark. Then outline and cut mortises into the door jamb for the hinges' other leaves. When they're installed, you can replace the two original upper and lower hinges and remove the middle hinge, if necessary. (Fill its mortise with a thin piece of wood, glued in place.)

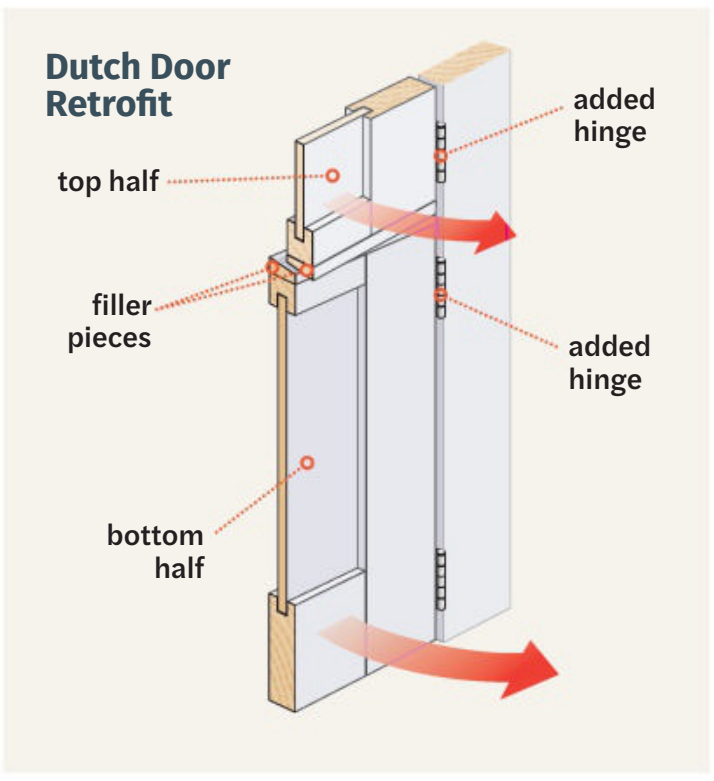
With the hinge installation complete, remove the hinge pins and set the door across a pair of sawhorses. If there is any door hardware within an inch or so of where the rail will be cut, remove it and fill the holes with wood plugs (see Tip).

To allow the halves of the Dutch door to close tightly against each other, a beveled filler piece has to be added to the bottom edge of the door's top half and the top edge of its bottom half. To make these pieces, set a table-saw blade at a slight 3- to 4-degree bevel and rip a pair of filler pieces from clear lumber a little wider than the door's thickness. Clamp the beveled strips together so their wide edges are on opposite sides, then mark their combined thickness on the centerline of the door's rail. Cut through the door along both lines. Screw one strip to the bottom edge of the door's top, making sure its narrow edge faces out.

Now rehang the door's top and bottom halves and close them. To fill the remaining gap so that both pieces fit snugly together when the door is closed, insert the bottom filler piece in the opening—narrow edge facing in. When the fit is right, glue and nail that filler piece to the bottom door's top edge and plane its edges flush with the door. Install a barrel latch to secure the upper half of your new Dutch door to its lower half, then paint the strips and any other exposed wood. Your door conversion will be complete.



DUTCH TREAT Tom shows off the two-part door he made by cutting the original in half.



SILVA, PLUG: COLLEEN MCQUAID. ILLUSTRATION: IAN WORPOLE

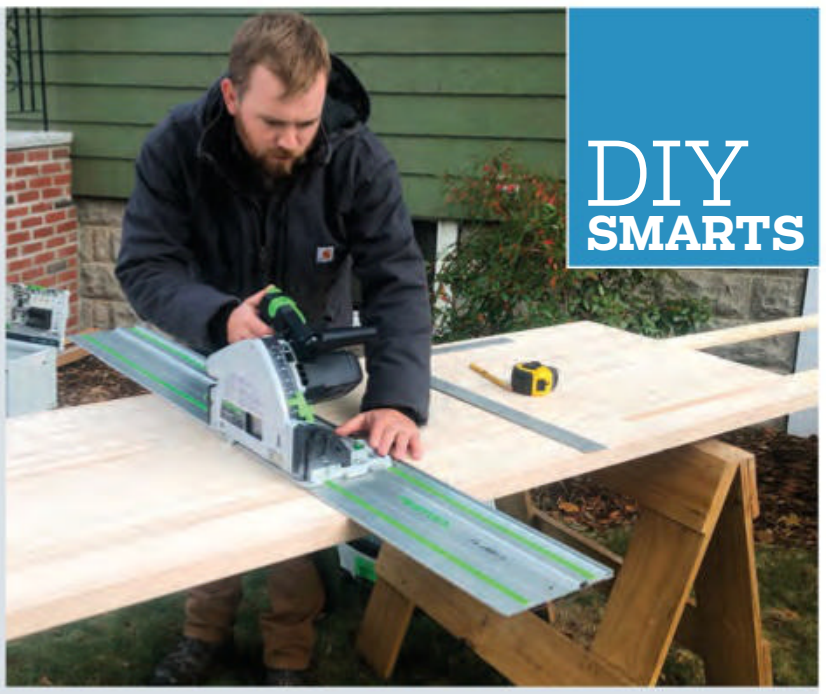
TIP



Plugs for doors

After the hardware is removed, use a hole saw to cut a clean hole in the door. Then use a hole saw with a slightly bigger diameter to make a plug to fit the hole. Here, Tom uses a polyurethane glue to secure the plug. After the glue cures, he sands it smooth.

WATCH See Tom convert an entry door into a Dutch door at **thisoldhouse.com/dutch-door**



STRAIGHT CUTS Nathan uses a Festool track saw equipped with a splinter guard to slice through a slab of maple butcher block. With other saws, a scoring cut is needed to keep the wood from splintering.

DIY SMARTS

How to install a butcher-block countertop

I recently purchased a house with a kitchen that was remodeled in the 1970s. The cabinets are in good condition, but I'd like to replace the L-shaped laminate countertop with butcher block. What tools and techniques do I need to do this? —KEVIN GERVAIS, MAYNARD, MA

TOH carpenter Nathan Gilbert:
A butcher-block countertop would certainly be a nice upgrade, and you cut it with ordinary woodworking tools. It's also fairly affordable: about $22 per square foot for a 1½-inch maple slab.

If you're also planning to replace the sink, you'll need to get a drop-in, or overmount, type. Undermount sinks don't work well with butcher block because they leave the wood's end grain exposed.

Once you have the butcher block and a sink, shut off and disconnect the garbage disposer (if you have one) and the faucet's water lines. Unscrew the dishwasher clips, and use a utility knife to cut the sealant along the backsplash and the underside of the counter. Gently pull the old counter away.

Butcher block usually comes with a clear A side and a B side with obvious defects. Place the A side faceup on a pair of sawhorses and cut the slab to length, as shown above. To make the L shape, cut another piece of the butcher block to size. The two pieces will butt together, joined by metal wood connectors that fit into pairs of mortises on the counters' B sides. Drill out the mortises with Forstner bits; the connectors will be put in after the slabs are installed.

Lay one slab in place and spread wood glue on the edge of the adjacent piece. Butt them together, then insert and tighten the metal connectors. Secure the counter by driving cabinet screws up through the undersides of the cabinets' frames.

Use a jigsaw to cut out the hole for the sink, following the template that comes with it. (The cutout makes a good cutting board.) Bed the sink rim in a clear sealant such as Quad Max Clear (ositough.com), reconnect the water lines, and reattach the appliances. Run a bead of sealant where the countertop meets the backsplash. I recommend sealing the wood with mineral oil, which is nontoxic. Apply and rub in two or three coats initially, then rub in a coat every month to maintain the wood's water repellency.

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Recurring lawn fungus

Every year, my lawn gets brown patches due to red thread disease. I've tried to get rid of it, without success. Should I kill the lawn completely and start over? —ALAN POULIN, BURLINGTON, MA

TOH landscape contractor Jenn Nawada:
Red thread disease is caused by a reddish fungus that turns patches of grass brown in the spring and early summer. Cool-season grasses such as red fescue, ryegrass, Kentucky bluegrass, and bentgrass are the most susceptible. Fortunately, red thread only shrivels grass blades—the roots and crown aren't affected. The turf recovers in drier weather.

Below are several ways to mitigate red thread damage. You'll probably need to implement two or more of them and keep at it for a number of years to control this fungus. But don't douse your lawn with fungicides. They may suppress red thread in the short run, but they don't address the underlying conditions that allow it to return.

- **Maintain optimum nitrogen levels.** That helps grass to outgrow fungal damage quickly.
- **Keep mower blades sharp.** Dull blades bruise grass, making it susceptible to fungal attack.
- **Avoid nighttime watering.** Instead, water early in the morning, and only when the lawn is dry.
- **Aerate.** A fall aeration reduces soil compaction and improves drainage, fertility, and turf vigor.
- **Overseed with fungi-resistant grasses.** These include 'Bilart' and 'Claudia' fine fescues, 'Chateau' Kentucky bluegrass, and 'Pennant' perennial ryegrass. Consult your local cooperative extension service for other resistant varieties.



WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE Red thread fungus (*Laetisaria fuciformis*) turns grass brown in moist conditions, but doesn't cause lasting damage to turf.

GILBERT: MIKE LAST; FUNGUS: HOWARD RICE/GAP PHOTOS

WATCH See Nathan install a new countertop at **thisoldhouse.com/butcher-block-install**



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Retaining wall rebuild

I built a concrete-block retaining wall next to my driveway several years ago. Now it's leaning over. Can I repair it? —GREGORY SATO, WATERTOWN, NY

TOH mason Mark McCullough:

I've seen quite a few retaining walls tilt and even collapse because they couldn't withstand the lateral pressure from the soil they're meant to hold back. Unfortunately, it's not usually possible to repair a bowed or leaning retaining wall. The best solution would be to dismantle it and start over with new materials and construction methods that promote water drainage, and thereby keep the soil pressure on the wall to a minimum.

When building a retaining wall with concrete blocks, look for ones with molded-in grooves, or keyways. Pins fitted into the keyways prevent the blocks from slipping sideways.

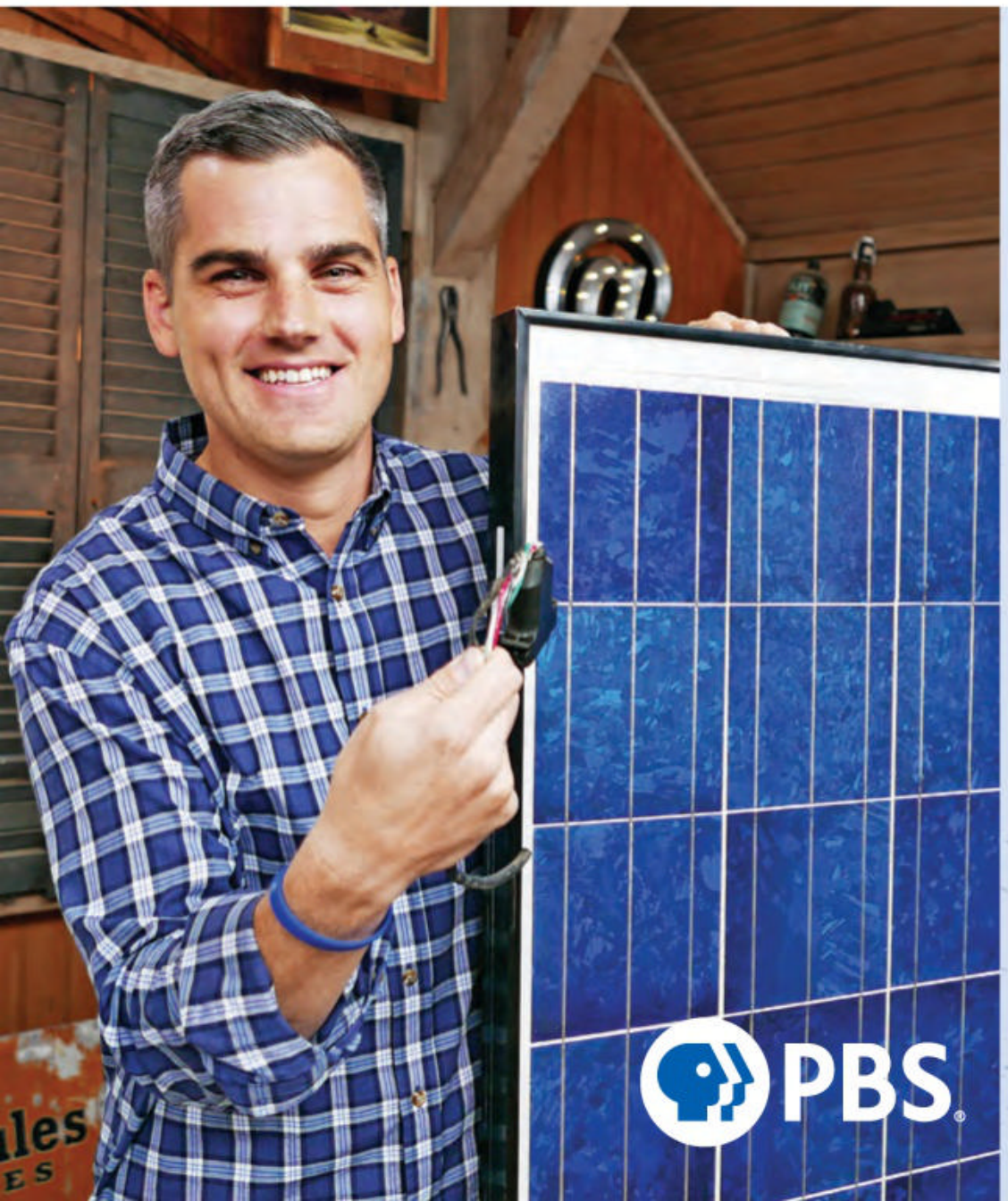
After you remove the original wall, dig a flat-bottomed channel about 24 inches wide and 10 inches below the level of the driveway, and shovel the soil off to the side. Compact the soil at the bottom of the channel with a hand tamper, then fill

WATCH
See Mark replace a dilapidated wall at **thisoldhouse.com/retaining-wall**



BUILD A BETTER WALL Mark sets the cap of this retaining wall with construction adhesive. Some of the other elements of a proper installation—landscape fabric and crushed stone—can be seen at left.

COLLEEN MCQUAID



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the channel with 6 to 8 inches of ¾-inch crushed stone. Hand-tamp it until it's firm and level.

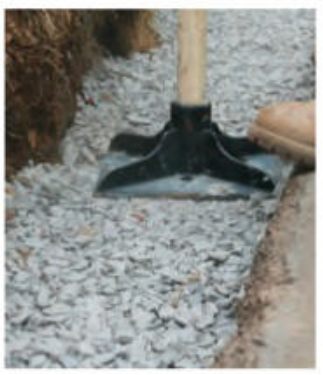
Set the first course of blocks so that at least half their height is below the level of the driveway; pound each block with a rubber mallet to set it in place. Make sure all the blocks in this course are level from side to side and front to back, then cover the exposed soil with landscape fabric to keep the soil from getting into the crushed stone and filling the voids that allow water to drain away.

Once the first course is in, installing the remaining courses is fairly straightforward: Just insert the pins in the keyways, and stagger the blocks' joints from one course to the next. When the second course is in place, add about 6 inches of crushed stone behind the wall, then lay a perforated plastic drainpipe on top to intercept water and carry it away from the house. Cover the pipe with crushed stone.

Set the cap blocks for the top course in construction adhesive. Once they're in place and the adhesive has cured, fold the landscape fabric over the crushed stone and backfill behind the wall with the soil you removed earlier.

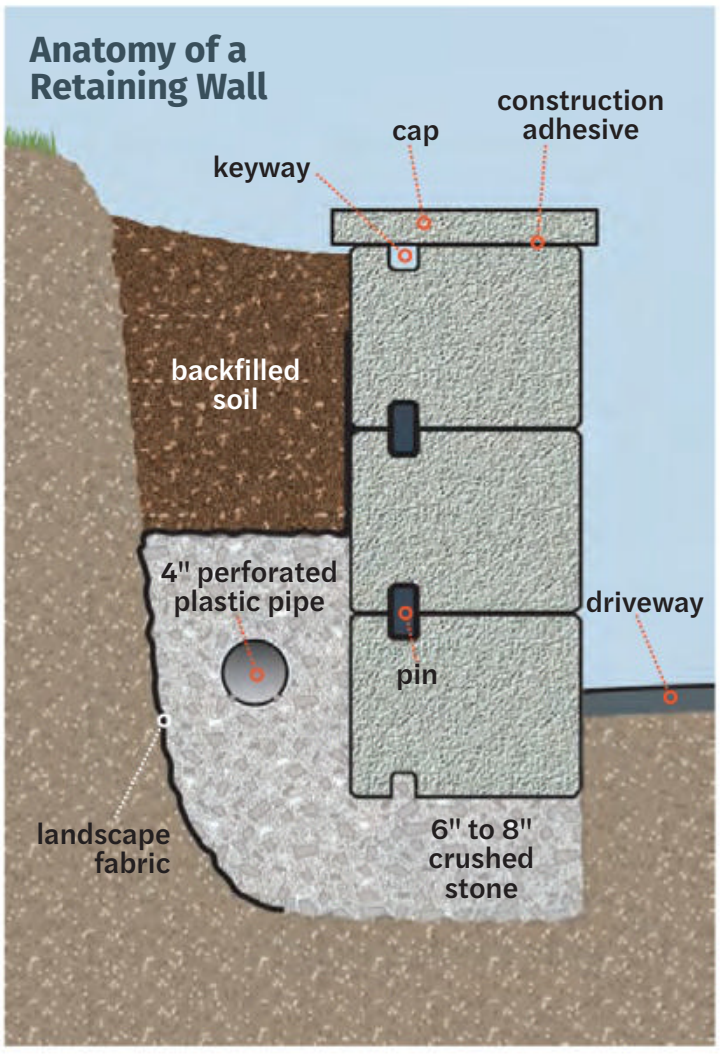
COLLEEN MCQUAID. ILLUSTRATION: IAN WORPOLE

TIP



Crushed stone or gravel?

Crushed stone makes the best base for walls because the stones' sharp, angular edges lock together when tamped, and provide excellent drainage. Gravel contains weathered stones that are more rounded and therefore more difficult to compact.



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KEEP THEM HYDRATED Jenn sets seedlings into the fresh soil of a newly built raised bed, left, which has a soaker hose already pinned in place. The hose connects to a spigot on an Aquacorner Raised Bed Soaker System (gardeners.com), below. A regular garden hose, threaded onto the Aquacorner's lower end, feeds water inconspicuously up to the bed's level.

Irrigation for raised-bed gardens

When we purchased our home, we bought the parking lot next door and dug it up to make a raised-bed garden. But I'm finding that watering it by hand is very inconvenient. Help!

—LIZA MEIER, DENVER

TOH landscape contractor Jenn Nawada:

The easiest and least expensive solution would be to lay a soaker hose over the bed in a serpentine pattern and connect it to an irrigation timer (see Tip). Then you can control how much water each bed gets. An unobtrusive hose-bib fitting at the corner of each raised bed (shown, far right) will keep hoses from becoming tripping hazards.

After your irrigation system is installed, do some test runs to determine how often and how long to run the water. I suggest starting with a 10-minute irrigation session in the morning, with a repeat session in the late afternoon. After each session, check your beds; the soil should be moist 3 inches below the surface. If it isn't, increase or decrease the watering time accordingly.

TIP



Hands-off irrigation control

Watering a raised-bed garden can be a daily chore in hot summer weather. A single-zone electronic watering timer, like this one from Orbit (homedepot.com), gives you a break from that routine. Installation is simple: Just thread it onto an outdoor faucet. On rainy days, push a button to stop irrigation.



COLLEEN MCQUAID (3)

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WATCH See Jenn set up a garden for automatic watering at **thisoldhouse.com/raised-bed-irrigation**

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BEFORE & AFTER: KITCHEN **All the Light Moves** *(pp. 15–18)* **Designers:** Colleen Shaut and Zahra Keihani, Case Architects & Remodelers, Bethesda, MD; casedesign.com. **Custom cabinets, island, and vent hood:** Crystal Cabinet Works, Princeton, MN; crystalcabinets.com. **Quartz countertops:** norwoodmarble.com. **Paint (walls):** Stonington Gray; benjaminmoore.com. **Wall ovens and refrigerator:** kitchenaid.com. **Cooktop:** thermador.com. **Flooring:** atlasfloorsinc.com. **Windows:** andersenwindows.com. **Sconces:** visualcomfort.com. **Hardware:** topknobs.com.

BEFORE & AFTER: BATH **Modern Makeover** *(pp. 21–23)* **Designer:** Cillesa Ullman, CID, Cillesa Interior Design & Space Planning, Oakland, CA; cillesa.com. **General contractor:** Clevenger Construction, Pleasanton, CA; 925-260-2691. **Custom cabinetmaker:** SKM Construction, Walnut Creek, CA; 925-788-2986. **Paint (walls):** Whitestone; benjaminmoore.com. **Quartz countertop, shower bench, niche shelf, and pony wall cap:** Bianco Supremo; teltos.net. **Sinks:** Verticyl; us.kohler.com. **Sink faucets:** Metris, Hansgrohe; hansgrohe-USA.com. **Vanity hardware:** emtek.com. **Toilet:** totousa.com. **Mirrors:** wayfair.com. **Recessed medicine cabinet:** robern.com. **Shower door:** Ronson Shower Glass & Mirror, Hayward, CA; 510-783-8510. **Shower mixer:** Ecostat; hansgrohe-USA.com. **Handshower:** Raindance; hansgrohe-USA.com. **Shower niche and wainscoting profile strips:** Schluter-Systems; schluter.com. **Tub:** americh.com. **Tub fixtures:** hansgrohe-USA.com. **Sconces:** Loft; modernforms.com. **Towel bars:** Hopewell Bath Collection; topknobsdecor.com.

FROM THE TOH JOB SITE **A Beauty Reborn** *(pp. 24–33)* **General contractor:** Jeff Sweenor, Sweenor Builders, Wakefield, RI; sweenorbuilders.com. **Architectural designer:** Lori Foley, Sweenor Builders. **Interior designer:** Kristen Martone, Sweenor Builders. **Kitchen designer:** Rachael Louzon, Heritage Kitchen Design Center, North Kingstown, RI; heritagekitchendesignri.com. **Electrical:** Ben Giles, South Shore Electrical Contractors, Wakefield, RI; southshoreec.com. **Painting, exterior:** Dennis Moffitt Painting, Wakefield, RI; experiencedmp.com. **Painting, interior:** Happy Trees Painting, North Kingstown, RI; happytreespaintingri.com. **Insulation:** Ecologic Insulation, Tiverton, RI; ecologicinsulation.com. **HVAC:** AGS HVAC Services, Westport, MA; agshvacservices.com. **Plumbing:** J. N. Jordan Plumbing, Narragansett, RI; 401-284-1617. **Kitchen counter and backsplash installation:** East Coast Countertops; eastcoastcountertop.com. **Kitchen appliance installation:** Accurate Appliance Installations, Wakefield, RI; 401-932-7724. **Hardwood floor installation:** GQ Hardwood Floors, Central Falls, RI; gqhardwoodfloors.com. **Technology installation:** Brilliant Technologies; thinkbt.com. **Garage door installation:** garageheadquarters.com. **Hardscape:** Damian Ciccarelli Home Improvements, Cranston, RI; 401-654-8313. **Masonry:** Sandoval Masonry, Cranston, RI; sandovalmasonry.com. **Landscaping:** Frank Walsh Landscape Company, Canton, MA; frankwalshlandscape.com. **Construction equipment:** Kubota Tractor Corp.; kubotausa.com. **Shingle siding:** sbccedar.com. **Engineered framing lumber:** Lamco Forest Products; lamcofp.com. **Trim and clapboards:** Tru-Pine by Claymark; claymark.co.nz. **Exterior doors:** upstatedoor.com. **Smart lock:** Yale; us.yalehome.com. **Garage doors:** overheaddoor.com. **Water heaters:** Navien; navieninc.com. **Rainscreen:** vaproshield.com. **Construction adhesives:** gorillatough.com. **Framing material and trim board:** coastalforestproducts.com. **Roof shingles:** certainteed.com. **Steel beams:** westwarwickwelding.com. **HVAC condensers and thermostat:** Bryant Heating & Cooling Systems; bryant.com. **Electrical components:** Schneider Electric; se.com. **Security cameras and sensors:** ecobee.com. **Generator:** championpowerequipment.com. **Bulkhead steps:** jolleyprecast.com. **THROUGHOUT > Paint, exterior:** sherwin-williams.com; **interior:** benjaminmoore.com. **Custom millwork, interior doors:** Baird Brothers Fine Hardwoods; bairdbrothers.com. **New windows:** marvin.com. **Artwork:** South County Art Association; southcountyart.org. **KITCHEN > Cabinets:** Wood-Mode Fine Custom Cabinetry; wood-mode.com. **Cabinet hardware:** emtek.com. **Countertop and backsplash:** Silestone; silestoneusa.com. **Light fixtures:** generationlighting.com. **Cabinet lighting:** Häfele; hafele.com. **Flooring:** rivafloors.com. **Range and refrigerator:** Wolf/Sub-Zero; subzero-wolf.com. **LIVING ROOM > Furnishings:** bostoninteriors.com. **Staircase and railing:** East Coast Stairs Company; eastcoaststairs.com. **Fireplace surround:** polycor.com. **BATHS > Plumbing fixtures:** Kohler; us.kohler.com. **Tile:** tilebar.com. **Bath fans:** Panasonic; na.panasonic.com. **Shower drains:** quickdrain.com. **Countertops:** polycor.com. **BEDROOMS > Bedding and pillows:** Creative Threads; creativethreadsusa.com. **PATIO AND YARD > Pizza oven:** roundgroveproducts.com. **Pool:** soakepools.com. **Pool cover:** automaticpoolcoversnewengland.com. **Outdoor furniture:** seasidecasual.com. **Shed:** Reeds Ferry Sheds; reedsferry.com. **Hardscape pavers and veneer:** polycor.com. **Sod:** sodco.net.

HOUSE TOUR Better Than Ever *(pp. 46–53)*
Interior design: Heidi Lachapelle Interiors; heidilachapelle.com. **General contractor:** CA Monsell and Company; monsellconstruction.com. **New windows:** marvin.com. **KITCHEN** > **Vintage island:** brimfieldantiquefleamarket.com. **Marble countertops:** Morningstar Stone and Tile; morningstarmarble.com. **Cabinets:** Maine Custom Kitchens; mecustomkitchens.com. **Sconces and pulls**: rejuvenation.com. **Floor and wall tile:** Clé Tile; cletile.com. **Faucet:** deVOL; devolkitchens.co.uk. **Dishwasher:** Miele; mieleusa.com. **Paint:** Simply White (walls), benjaminmoore.com, and School House White (cabinets, trim), farrow-ball.com. **DINING ROOM** > **Table and sideboard:** ikea.com. **Vintage chairs:** chairish.com. **Rug:** westelm.com. **Floor lamp:** anthropologie.com. **Paint (fireplace and trim):** Simply White; benjaminmoore.com. **MUDROOM** > **Floor tile:** cletile.com. **Built-ins:** mecustomkitchens.com. **Pendant fixtures:** circalighting.com. **Cushion fabric:** kravet.com. **Accent pillows:** CAMP by Heidi Lachapelle Interiors; heidilachapelle.com. **Rug:** villageuncommon.com. **Paint:** De Nimes; farrow-ball.com. **LIBRARY** > Artwork: Louis-Pierre Lachapelle; lplachapelle.com. **LIVING ROOM** > **Sofa and curtains**: Restoration Hardware; rh.com. **Artwork:** Louis-Pierre Lachapelle; lplachapelle.com. **Pillows:** CAMP by Heidi Lachapelle Interiors; heidilachapelle.com. **Paint (walls and trim):** White Dove; benjaminmoore.com. **Throw:** anthropologie.com. **FOYER** > **Floor tile:** cletile.com. **FAMILY ROOM** > **Fireplace insert:** Jøtul; jotul.com. **Sofa:** interiordefine.com. **Credenza:** worlds-away.com. **Paint (walls and trim):** Simply White; benjaminmoore.com. **POWDER ROOM** > **Wallpaper:** Hygge & West; hyggeandwest.com. **Mirror:** anthropologie.com. **MAIN BEDROOM** > **Pendant fixture and table lamp:** target.com. **Stools:** Noir Furniture; noirfurniturela.com.

BUILD IT *(pp. 91–94) Thanks to* SaverSystems Defy Extreme Wood Stain; defywoodstain.com. Rockler Taper/Straight Line Jig; rockler.com.

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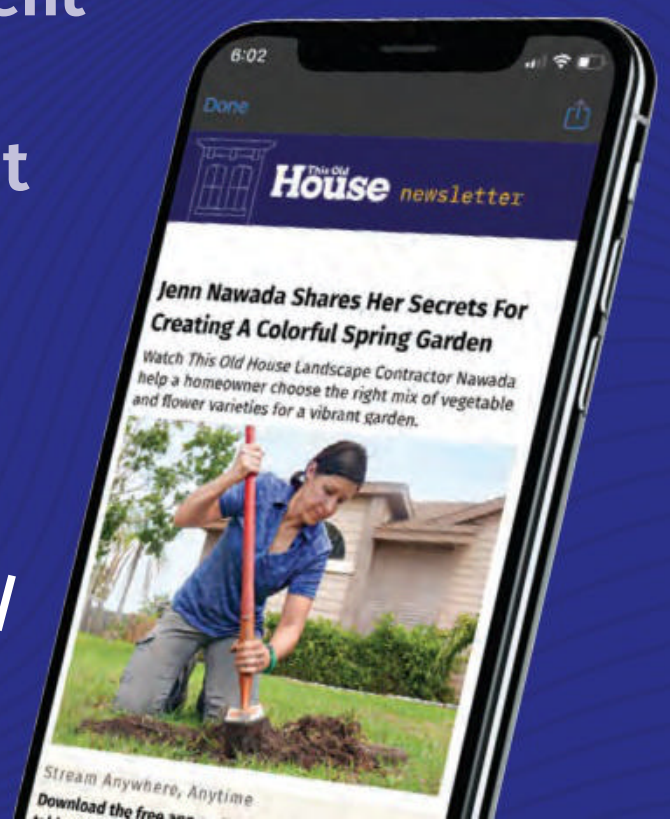
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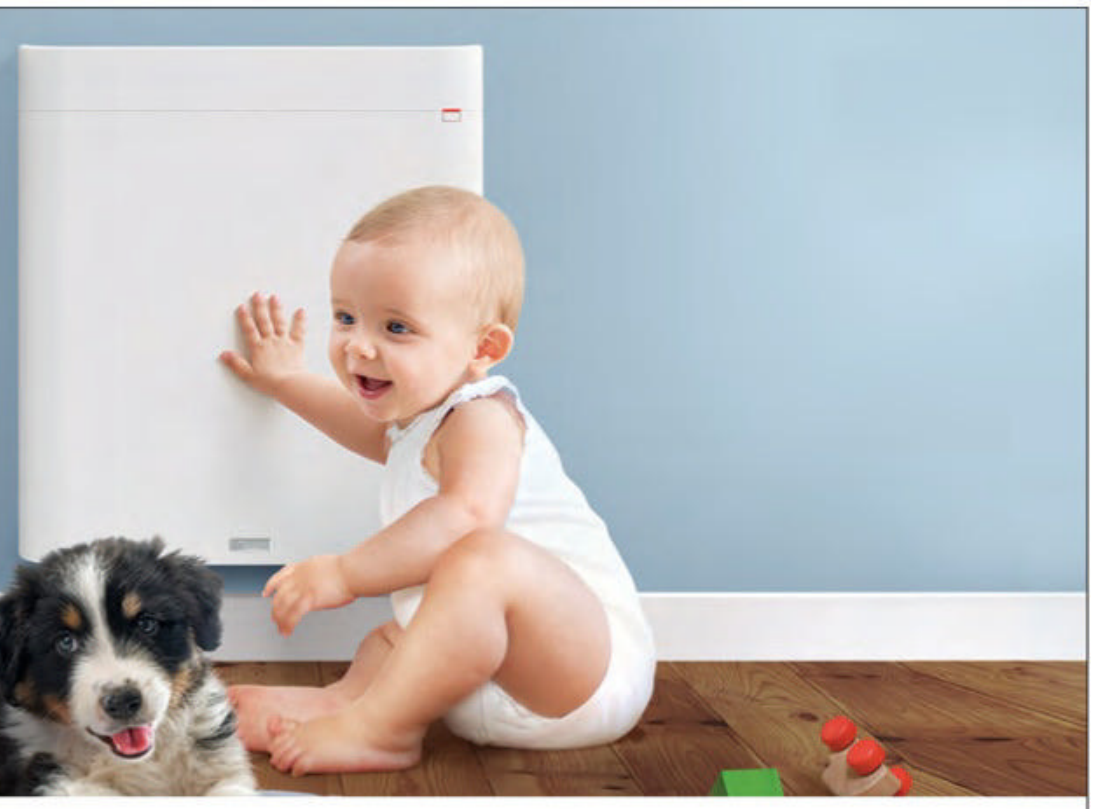
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A classic with good bones, and a cottage!

THE HISTORY Originally built in the Greek Revival style in the 1840s, and attributed to noted local carpenter Jacob Holt, this spacious house was remodeled as a Colonial Revival in the 1920s, when it gained its fine brick cladding and a front porch, now long gone. At that time it became home to Eugene Allen, the prominent owner of a building supply company, and his wife, Florence. It eventually passed to the Allens' socially active, civic-minded daughter, Louise, who lived there until 2006, when the house was sold.

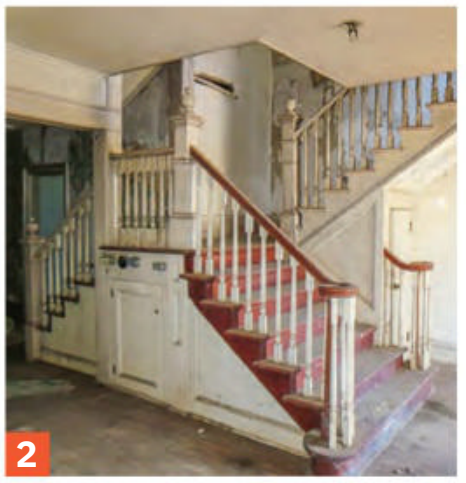
PRICE $35,000
LOCATION
Warrenton, NC
CONTACT
Cathleen Turner, Preservation North Carolina; cturner@presnc.org

WHY SAVE IT? The four-bedroom, three-bath house retains original 19th-century features inside, including Greek Revival–style fireplace mantels and dog-ear casings. The graceful double staircase and a sunroom remain, as do the exterior brickwork and dentiled cornice, all added in the early 20th century. As a bonus, the house also comes with a charming Craftsman-style cottage that dates to the 1930s and might last have been updated in the 1950s. The houses sit on an acre and a half in the town's picturesque historic district. An hour's drive from Raleigh, and known as a welcoming small town, Warrenton has become a popular weekend getaway.

WHAT IT NEEDS While the main house is structurally sound, it requires a total rehab, including all new mechanical systems, a modern kitchen, and bathrooms. The front porch could be reconstructed from historical photos. Inside, the front rooms' plaster walls and wood floors are in fair condition, but the back of the house shows signs of water damage. Restoration covenants do apply, and state tax credits are available. Located in a vibrant community, this unique "twofer" just awaits an energetic old-house lover—and guests!

—SUZANNE ZENKEL









1. The symmetrical facade of the 2,992-square-foot house is in keeping with both the Greek Revival and Colonial Revival styles. The brick front and dentiled cornice were added in the early 20th century.

2. Turned balusters and handrail volutes distinguish the double staircase.

3. One of five fireplaces in the house, with its original Greek Revival mantel.

4. The property's 1930s Craftsman-style cottage is laid out with two rooms and one bath in about 1,200 square feet. Once updated, it could make a fine home office, guest house, or in-law apartment.

COURTESY PRESERVATION NC (4)

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