

# This Old House

Make it.  
Share it.

**#DIYDARE**

Win our  
Challenge!  
p. 62

## Cozy Cottage Redo

Small updates,  
big payoff

**Great Paneled  
Walls and  
Paint Ideas**

Vintage  
boards  
make white  
trim pop

THE  
**\$95**  
MUDROOM  
p. 20

**33 AMAZING  
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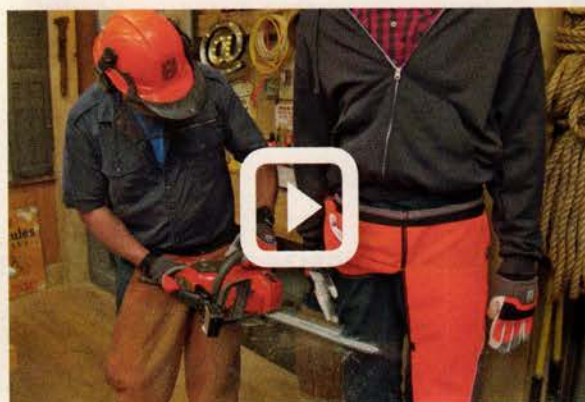
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# Contents

THIS OLD HOUSE APRIL 2016

## *Small updates, big payoff*

- 22 **before + after: kitchen design**  
A Connecticut couple upgrade a congested kitchen to an open space fit for company
- 26 **before + after: bath design**  
From awkward angles to a rustic retreat, a master bath gets a face-lift
- 29 **landscaping**  
Embellish any garden with just the right vine
- 36 **animal house**  
Custom built-in features for the family canine
- 46 **Photoshop redo**  
Updated entries and a transforming coat of paint warm up an uninviting exterior
- 54 **into the woods**  
Putting her green thumb to work, a woman turns her mundane yard into a garden playground for kids and adults alike
- 62 **#DIYDare challenge**  
Ten TOHers show off their DIY prowess and challenge you to do them one better
- 74 **cozy cottage redo**  
Follow a newbie home buyer's adventure in creating the perfect abode



**54**  
INTO THE WOODS

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APRIL 2016





# Contents

THIS OLD HOUSE APRIL 2016



## Early access on tablet!

Now you can download the latest issue of TOH on your tablet before the print issue is available. Go to [thisoldhouse.com/tablet](http://thisoldhouse.com/tablet)

## On the cover



p. 74

pp. 15, 16, 29, 43, 46, 49, 54

pp. 26, 32, 38, 74

Cover Photograph by CASEY DUNN  
Styling by ANN EDGERTON

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## 62 #DIYDARE CHALLENGE



## 34 GET THIS LOOK FOR LESS

## upgrades

- 15 **home solutions**  
Stair-riser plant stand; top grass seeds by region; speed-cleaning tips; popcorn-ceiling fixes; budget-friendly mudroom redo; and more
- 34 **get this look for less**  
Colorful, eclectic dining room
- 43 **shopping**  
A knock on the wild side

## TOH TV

- 38 **that's a wrap!**  
A deft blend of modern functionality and a Victorian-era feel, the Queen Anne renovation is complete

## how-to projects

- 32 **paint ideas**  
Wall-adorning waves from a homemade template
- 49 **weekend remodel**  
Protect veggies from pests with a sturdy garden fence

## ask this old house

- 81 **Q+A** Herb garden tips; replace stair treads; baseboard removal; cover holes left after hinges are replaced; and more
- 86 **editors' picks**  
Six outstanding products you should know about

## IN EVERY ISSUE

- 9 letter from This Old House
- 10 reader mail
- 12 checklist
- 88 directory
- 98 save this old house





# WHAT HEADACHE?

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## On rampant vines and inspiring DIYers

**D**on't know about you, but sometimes I think home-improvement projects exist to strangle us for time and money and sanity like some sentient science-fiction vine.

Or maybe kudzu. Me, I've got my own vine problems. There's the Virginia creeper that doesn't creep so much as sprint—usually across a row of hedges, up a nearby tree, and into the neighbor's yard. That's me having it out with the creeper in the photo, there. And then there's the honeysuckle, which offers the sweet gift of a fragrant yard along with the tart price of a knotted mess of brown, dead branches that each spring need to be teased out of the creeper and the ivy. Yeah, the ivy; that's vine problem No. 3. That was planted to grow up a back fence but consistently avoids the climb and instead tries to sneak across the garden bed and gravel patio toward the house. Fortunately, I move somewhat faster than it does, so I manage to whack it back before it gets me in my sleep.

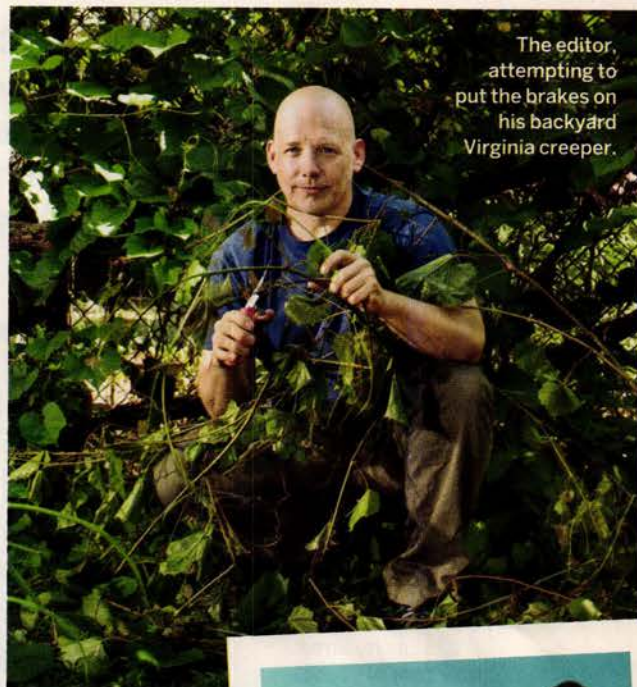
Lucky for you, that worry can be avoided by checking out one of my favorite stories in this issue, "Quick Climbers," on page 29. I could have avoided so much had I read it before planting, but there's enough in it to fix my problems. You know, a bit of vine-dication.

Meantime, my other favorite story in this issue takes us back to home-improvement projects—odd how things come full circle around here, huh? It's almost like we're playing a game. Which we are. It's called the *This Old House* #DIYDare Challenge. In it, five teams of *TOH* staffers were tasked with turning a collection of random project leftovers, a couple of newly bought items, and whatever tools they needed into a handsome bit of DIY. The results impressed us enough to extend the challenge to you. Can you improve on Sal and Allie's window box? Or Nate and Lyndsey's kitchen island? Or the umbrella stand Bob and his daughter, Ivy (no relation to my ivy), built? Or, better, can you create an entirely different—and cooler—project from what you've got lying around the house? Give it a shot, snap it with your phone, and upload it to social media with the hashtag #DIYDare.\* We'll feature the best of them in *TOH* and, hopefully, discover a couple of readers so talented that they become regular contributors to *This Old House*. And that's no fiction—science or otherwise.

*Scott Omelianuk*

SCOTT OMELIANUK, EDITOR  
scott@thisoldhouse.com

\*Antisocial? You can send your project via e-mail instead to [DIYDare@thisoldhouse.com](mailto:DIYDare@thisoldhouse.com). Good luck!



The editor, attempting to put the brakes on his backyard Virginia creeper.



*TOH* staffers Allie Adams and Sal Vaglica do the #DIYDare.

### ANOTHER WAY TO WIN!

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# Reader mail



## How to reach us

E-mail the editors at [TOH\\_letters@thisoldhouse.com](mailto:TOH_letters@thisoldhouse.com) or write to This Old House magazine, 225 Liberty Street, New York, NY 10281.

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

To find articles from the January/February issue, go to [thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2016](http://thisoldhouse.com/janfeb2016).

ONE THING'S CERTAIN: *This Old House* readers—and editors—love to geek out over their home's history and features. The January/February 2016 issue prompted a number of folks to pull out their brag books and share stories and photos of architectural details that recall ones seen in the magazine.

## Long-ago update

I have to smile at how much the front stairs on the cover of your January/February 2016 issue look like mine [right].

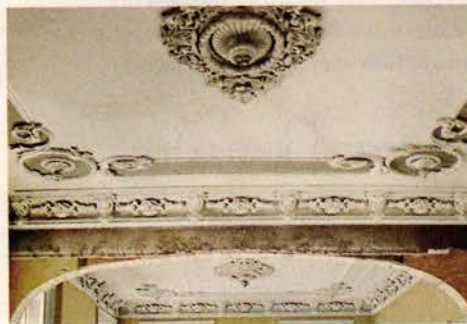
Sailmakers bought my 1834 wood-frame Greek Revival from the oystermen who built it. They replaced the original staircase with this more "modern," fanciful one in about 1860.

—BARBARA POCHAN, NEW HAVEN, CONN.



## Plaster detail connection?

In his January/February Letter from This Old House, editor Scott Omelianuk is pointing at a familiar pair of plaster ornaments. They are exactly the same as ones I restored [below] in a house in Savannah, in 2007. The Brantley House was built in 1857 by architect John S. Norris, who was from New York. He designed some of Savannah's most romantic-style houses. I'm curious to



know the year Scott's house was built and who the architect was.

—JAMES HUNDSRUCKER, BY E-MAIL

**SCOTT REPLIES:** My house—a far humbler place than the amazing one you've redone—was built in 1870, according to tax records. Many homes in the neighborhood that were built around that time have the same crown detail. I've been told that builders would bulk-order such material out of catalogs from places like Chicago Ornamental. I'm afraid I don't know the architect's name, but I think you've just started me off on a bit of a detective hunt.

## Old-time ingenuity

Your January/February Design Insider column, "Details Make the Difference," brought to mind an inspiration I got from the restoration of the Sag Harbor Custom House, decades ago, when a mystery was solved: There had been a large grandfather clock in the house, but no one could figure out where the clock belonged, as the ceilings were too low to accommodate it. During the work, the removal of the newer ceiling revealed a scooped-out cavity in the original—where the clock once stood.

When my husband inherited his family's clock, we had the same problem, but we already knew the solution—so we scooped out a space in our ceiling to make room for the clock to stand tall [above].

—CAROL GLONINGER, SAG HARBOR, N.Y.





A woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a black sleeveless gown and long black gloves, stands against a background of horizontal wooden planks. She is holding a miniature two-story house by a brown leather handle. The house is light blue with white trim, a balcony, and a flower box. The scene is set on a dark wooden deck.

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# Checklist

APRIL 2016

*Easy ways to  
improve your home  
right now*

## 6 FAST FIXES

**Inspect porches:** Check floorboards for signs of rot or damage, looking underneath—where most rot will start—if the area's accessible.



**Organize the attic:** Before summer heat sets in, remove items that can be sold in a yard sale or donated, and make an inventory of what's left.

**Head off spring allergies:** Prevent pollen and other allergens from spreading deeper into your home by placing area rugs in entryways.

**Check for termites:** Look for spongy wood, narrow tubes of mud, or discarded wings along your home's foundation, inside and out.

**Recaulk around tubs:** Ensure that no water is seeping behind bathroom tiles by removing old caulk and replacing it with fresh stuff formulated for tubs and tile.

**Refresh old potting soil:** If last year's potted plants were healthy, you can reuse the soil this year. Remove old foliage or roots, and fluff it up with 25 percent peat moss or compost.

## ✓ Silence slamming doors

If your storm or screen door is swinging shut with a bang, it's usually simple to fix: Look for the adjustment screw attached to the pneumatic cylinder—the tube-shaped piston that regulates the door's closing speed—and give it a few turns to the right to slow the door's closing. Need to speed up a door that's taking too long to close? Turn the same screw to the left to loosen it and give the door a boost.



## TOH TIP

### □ Plant a tree on April 29

Happy Arbor Day! To get in the spirit, consider planting a fast-growing flowering species that will offer up plenty of color. In hot, sunny climates, try a crape myrtle; in cooler zones, opt for a purpleleaf sand cherry. Both can grow up to 2 feet per year. Choose a planting site large enough to accommodate future root and canopy growth.



**Spruce up shutters**  
With temps steadily above 50°F, it's the perfect time to take on exterior painting projects, such as

freshening up painted shutters. Don't be tempted to touch them up in place—remove them first, and you'll be able to inspect paint on horizontal edges for cracking and blistering and see any hidden damage to your siding, too. Be sure to paint all sides and edges of the shutters to protect against moisture.

### □ Disinfect workspaces

Get your home office in top shape before filing taxes this month. Unplug your computer keyboard, mouse, and phone, and remove any batteries. Blow dust from



keyboards with compressed air. Then use a cloth dipped in isopropyl alcohol to tackle germs on the surfaces of these devices, taking care to avoid screens.



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# home solutions

Edited by Megan Baker

INSIDE

GARDEN GEAR

LAWN TIPS

DIY DECOR

CLEANING HACKS

MORE



## Stair-riser plant stand

How to create a container garden that's a step above the rest? Build a plant riser using stair parts. To create this cheery display, we started with two three-step stringers, using 1×4s to create back legs. For each tread, we used two more 1×4s, making sure to leave a bit of drainage space between them. Two mitered 1×2s nailed in place form a charming crisscross back, and a coat of punchy yellow exterior paint (Behr's Citrus Splash) makes the whole piece sing.

The final step: filling it with pots large and small so you can watch your garden grow to new heights.







## Cut-above gloves

Not all gardening gloves are created equal. Here, three standouts to help you foster a flourishing yard.

### 1 | Coverage to the max

Rose gloves, \$36; [westcountygardener.com](http://westcountygardener.com)

Durable, heavyweight synthetic-suede gauntlets protect your forearms, making these ideal for pruning roses and other prickly shrubs.

### 2 | Soft yet supportive

Gold Leaf Soft Touch, \$43; [gardeners.com](http://gardeners.com)

Deerskin provides plenty of cushioning for fingers and palms and helps reduce fatigue while using high-impact machines, like a lawn mower or garden tiller. The stretchy nylon-Lycra insets and back offer a comfy snug fit, making these suitable for weeding, pruning, and planting, too.

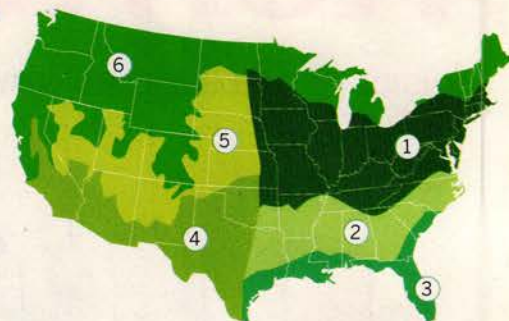
### 3 | Nimble fingered

Nitrile gloves, Bellingham, \$6; [gardeners.com](http://gardeners.com)

Breathable nylon dipped in flexible, water-resistant nitrile makes for a lightweight glove that's well suited to deadheading and light planting; the rubbery texture also helps with gripping rakes and shovels.

## Super seeds

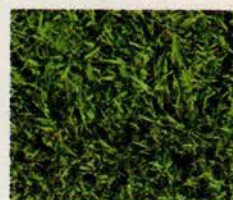
Seed companies are always developing grasses that promise greater resilience and less maintenance. To find the best, we consulted the experts at the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program. Here's what you should be planting in your area. —SAL VAGLICA



### region 1

COCHISE IV  
Tall fescue

Along with a dark-green color, Cochise packs tightly, which creates a dense lawn. This grass is designed to grow slowly, so it requires less-frequent mowing than older cultivars. About \$20 per pound; [seedsuperstore.com](http://seedsuperstore.com)



### region 2

ZENITH  
Zoysia grass

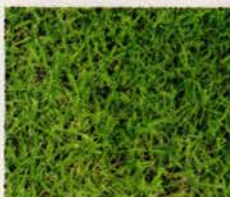
This zoysia grows in nearly any condition, from full sun to partial shade. The dark-green blades have a medium texture that's comfy underfoot and can withstand drought. \$25 per pound; [seedsuperstore.com](http://seedsuperstore.com)



### region 3

CAPTIVA  
St. Augustine grass

It's not as easy to find as older cultivars, but Captiva, sold as sod or plugs, is darker than other varieties and has excellent heat, shade, and drought tolerance. It can also grow in both sand and clay. \$6 per square foot for sod



### region 4

LATITUDE 36  
Bermuda grass

This dark-green grass is more cold-hardy than other Bermuda grasses, giving it a wider growing zone. It resists fungal diseases and tolerates pest infestations. 71 cents per square foot for sod



### region 5

SUNDANCER  
Buffalo grass

Native buffalo grass gets overrun with weeds when cut short, but Sundancer can handle traditional mowing and grows only 8 inches in a year. \$17 per pound; [stockseed.com](http://stockseed.com)



### region 6

EVERGLADE  
Kentucky bluegrass

Quick to germinate, this seed has excellent disease resistance and can withstand drought and foot traffic in summer and snow mold in spring. \$28.50 per pound; [seedsuperstore.com](http://seedsuperstore.com)



## Catalog looks for less

This month, we were inspired by a number of mail-order home decor pieces with an industrial wood-and-metal vibe—so inspired, in fact, that we thought we'd create something similar ourselves. Here, the products of our labor: all a breeze to make, and each costing \$25 or less.



### ▲ Reclaimed-wood shelf

Aged barn wood becomes a functional focal point with this rough-hewn storage piece. We made brackets from  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch steel pipe fittings, including 8-inch nipples finished with caps, and flanges for mounting—all sprayed matte brown for a rusty look. To secure it, we screwed the flange into the wood from behind, then mounted the entire piece using drywall anchors.

**CATALOG PRICE: about \$200**

**DIY PRICE: \$24, plus paint**



### ◀ Handsome note board

Reminders stay front and center with this sleek wood clipboard. To make it, we used an 18-by-12-inch piece of pine common board, rounding the corners with a jigsaw and finishing the edges with veneer tape. After staining it a warm maple tone, we attached clips (\$5 for two; joann.com) and drilled holes for screwing the board to the wall.

**CATALOG PRICE: about \$40**

**DIY PRICE: \$15, plus stain**

### ► Vintage-industrial candleholder

Distressed wood and steel pipe lend some heft to dainty tea lights. To give our new piece of 3×3 cedar an aged look, we roughed it up with hammers, chains, and nails, then stained it a dark walnut tone before drilling  $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch holes with a Forstner bit. A rubber mallet helped us hammer  $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch pipe caps into place. Pea gravel placed in the caps helped create a level surface for the tea lights. All that was left: to bask in the glow of our handmade decor.

**CATALOG PRICE: \$50**

**DIY PRICE: \$25, plus stain**







## Speed-clean with these pro tips

While there's no magic potion for making your house immaculate in minutes, years on the job give pro house cleaners an edge when it comes to tackling dirt, dust, and grime. Here, experts share some of their best time-saving tricks. —PAUL HOPE

**ASSEMBLE A KIT** Keeping cleansers and tools together makes it easy to pick up and go. "Fill a handled plastic bin with your go-to cleaners," says Melissa Homer, chief cleaning officer at MaidPro. "One of the reasons cleaning is overwhelming is because people run all over the house looking for what they need."

**USE DOUBLE-DUTY ITEMS** An edited cleaning stash is an efficient cleaning stash. For Meg Roberts, president of Molly Maid, most items have to serve multiple purposes to keep a spot in her cleaning closet. "Dryer sheets are surprisingly versatile," she says. Roberts uses them to clean grimy shower doors, to dust baseboards and moldings, and as deodorizers at the bottom of trash bins. Other pros recommend just three must-haves: an all-purpose cleaner for hard surfaces, a scrubbing cream cleanser for bathrooms, and white vinegar for glass.

**LET CLEANSERS DO THE HEAVY LIFTING** "I can't stress enough that cleansers need to soak before you try to scrub," says Homer. "Most need a minimum of

60 seconds, but almost any cleanser becomes more effective if you leave it on for 5 to 10 minutes."

**DON'T CONFUSE ORGANIZING WITH CLEANING** Homer says homeowners frequently get overwhelmed because they get distracted trying to put everything back in its rightful place. "Instead of trying to put things away, stick a laundry basket in the corner of the room and fill it with objects that don't belong as you encounter them," she says. "Then when it's time for a break, you can pick up the basket and put everything back all at once."

**HAVE A SYSTEM** MaidPro follows what the firm calls the cleaning spiral. "Start with your dominant hand and pick a corner of the room. Work your way around the room, starting at the ceiling, then moving down to cabinets or hutches, then counters or tables, before ending at the floor," Homer says. With this method, not only do you ensure that you're hitting every spot—you're also guaranteeing that as you hit high surfaces, dust and grime won't fall onto areas you've already cleaned.

## Fixes for a popcorn ceiling

Want to ditch a dated "cottage cheese" finish overhead? Before starting work, be sure to have any pre-1978 ceiling tested for asbestos. If it tests positive, don't touch it—you need a certified asbestos abatement contractor. Get the green light? These tips should smooth the way. —KATELIN HILL

**Scrape it** Using a 4-inch utility blade or a 12-inch drywall knife, start by dry scraping. If you're getting stuck or damaging the ceiling as you work, moisten the popcorn finish with a garden sprayer, taking care not to oversaturate and cause the substrate to sag.

**Smooth it** Fill in and patch ceiling imperfections with joint compound. Or add a hand-troweled texture for a vintage look: Prep the existing substrate with quick-set drywall mud, apply a bonding agent like joint compound, and then trowel on a finish compound in a decorative pattern.

**Cover it** Masking it under a layer of drywall is a great option if it's too difficult to scrape. Use lighter-weight ½-inch wallboard. To ease the work if you're going it alone, rent a drywall lift (about \$34 per day).



Scraping is messy, but cheap to DIY.

PHOTO: BENJIE SANDERS/ARIZONA DAILY STAR; ILLUSTRATION: ALLAN SANDERS



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# Mudroom makeover for \$95

A custom-built bench and plenty of hooks squeeze every bit of storage out of a tight space



BEFORE

**BEFORE** Houston's warm climate didn't warrant a full-scale mudroom, but the homeowners still needed a designated entry drop spot.

**AFTER** The lone wall was well-suited for trying out graphic stripes; a custom-designed bench fits the tight space perfectly.

**FOR A BUSY FAMILY**, even a small mudroom can change the whole flow of a home. Just ask Emily Allison, whose entryway off the garage of her Houston home caught a lot of clutter but lacked a real system for corralling the family of three's outerwear and bags. To devise a fix, Emily cleared out the space so she could create a mini drop zone. First, she used paint she had on hand to make bold navy and white stripes on the wall of the entry—a feature she'd wanted to include in her home elsewhere but lacked a logical spot for. Then, she worked with her cousin's husband, Ben Landers, to design a custom storage seat, which he built for her out of cabinet-grade birch plywood. Emily painted it with the same leftover white paint used on the walls to give it a bright, clean look. Storage baskets borrowed from other parts of the house provide places to hide shoes. A charming coatrack—a \$10 garage-sale steal—holds outerwear, keys, and her 3-year-old's school gear, no longer strewn around the house; a new chevron rug stops dirt at the door. "Sometimes you do a room and get tired of it," says Emily, who blogs at [decorchick.com](http://decorchick.com). "I still really love that room. I haven't changed a thing about it!" —KATELIN HILL



\$0 leftover navy paint

\$50 sheet of birch plywood

## THE PROJECT TALLY

Created large graphic stripes on the wall with paint she had on hand.....**\$0**

Constructed a bench from birch plywood and pine 1x2s and 1x4s, then trimmed it out with stop molding before coating it with leftover paint.....**\$65**

Scored a chalkboard coatrack at a yard sale.....**\$10**

Finished off the space with a bright cotton area rug.....**\$20**

**TOTAL.....\$95**

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## Major multitasker

A dated cook space gives way to a sophisticated, open gathering place for family and friends BY DEBORAH BALDWIN • PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN GRUEN



→ **THERE'S A REASON** they call it the heart of the home. More than just a place for food prep, today's kitchens are lively destinations, where guests pile in and children gravitate in search of snacks and homework help. Elizabeth Kemp and her husband, Doug, who are known to entertain dozens of adults and kids at a time, had the needs of their busy household—and social schedule—in mind when they renovated the 1970s house they share with three young sons, in New Canaan, Connecticut. Working with designer Terry Scarborough, of Deane Inc., and general contractor Chris Kuehn,

they enlarged the kitchen to create a free-flowing staging ground with a marble-topped island, a butler's pantry, a breakfast nook, and prep space to spare. Finishes like flat-panel cabinets, sleek pulls, a subtle palette, and snazzy light fixtures contribute to the fresh, semiformal look. Elizabeth, a pro organizer and weekend baker, also homed in on storage. "I like having everything in its place, like dedicated shelves for baking racks and trays," she says. Twin sinks and dishwashers allow kids and guests to help rustle up dinner, though there's plenty of room to just grab a seat and watch.



**BEFORE**

**BEFORE** Despite a spruce-up in 2000, the 1970s kitchen still had a traffic-curbing peninsula and head-banging cabinets.

**AFTER** Homeowner Elizabeth Kemp sits with son Chase, 10, at an island designed to serve the whole family.



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EVERY SINGLE TIME.**



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DELICIOUS CUP IS GOOD TO THE LAST DROP.**



• **before + after:**  
kitchen design

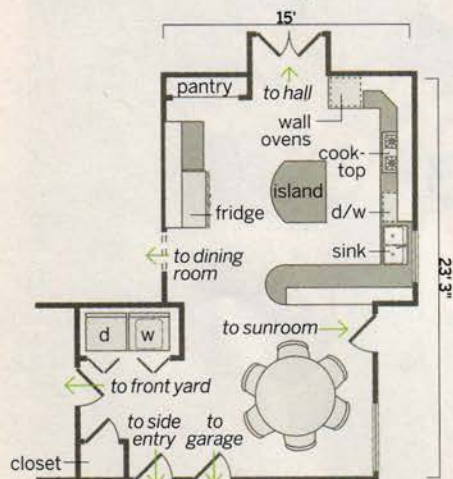
Light travels through lantern-style chandeliers from an enlarged window overlooking the sunroom.  
Pendant lights: Regina Andrew Design



Glass-front cabinets have built-up crown molding and a drawer above counter space, suggesting a hutch. The backsplash is antiqued mirror.  
Pulls: Top Knobs

## before

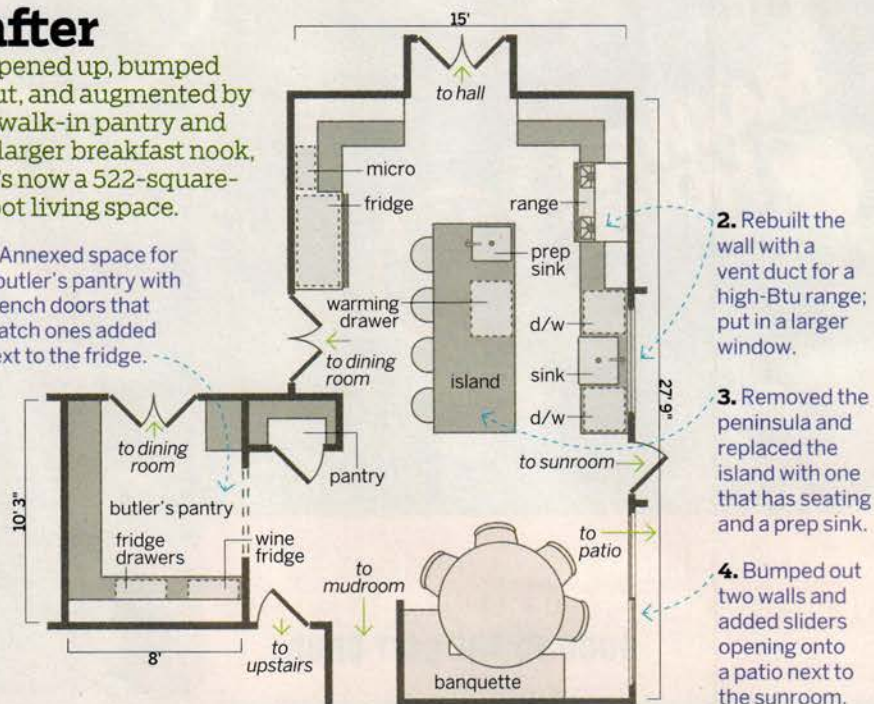
A peninsula cut the 350-square-foot space in half.



## after

Opened up, bumped out, and augmented by a walk-in pantry and a larger breakfast nook, it's now a 522-square-foot living space.

1. Annexed space for a butler's pantry with French doors that match ones added next to the fridge.





A drawer packed with school supplies hides under the breakfast-nook banquette. Vinyl upholstery fends off food stains.



Elizabeth finished the new breakfast nook with a cast-aluminum pedestal table and artwork she painted herself. Table: Oly

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Thirsty kids and guests can dodge the cooking zone by tapping the fridge drawers and wine rack in the butler's pantry. Refrigerator drawers: Sub-Zero



**pro advice** TERRY SCARBOROUGH, KITCHEN DESIGNER, NEW CANAAN, CONN.  
 "If space allows, go for two sinks—one for prep and one for cleanup. It signals that this is an 'interactive' kitchen, where friends and family members can get involved."



The first-class butler's pantry boasts "leatherized" black-granite countertops, silvery grasscloth wallpaper, and a sparkling ceiling fixture. Wallpaper: Phillip Jeffries



# Pitch perfect

A couple of DIYers move their master bath out from under a treacherous ceiling slope to create a rustic retreat that befits their mountain home

BY NINA MALKIN • PHOTOGRAPHS BY HEIDI LONG

→ **ODD ROOM** angles can telegraph old-house charm. Or not. The sloped ceiling in the upstairs bath at Felesha and Jeremiah McAfee's 1920s farmhouse, in Bigfork, Montana, was just plain annoying. "You couldn't stand up without hitting your head," Felesha recalls. Since they were gut renovating, the couple decided to turn the bath and two bedrooms on the second floor into an open-plan master suite. For convenience, as well as better head clearance, they moved the bath to a rear-facing north wall, closer to the sleep space and under a gentler slant, and finished it with the soft-white walls and rustic wood trim Felesha planned for the whole house. Jeremiah's construction skills brought the vision to life in one month of working weekends, not including stockpiling the materials: a slab of blue pine from a friend for the vanity top, salvaged 2x4s for the base, and barn wood bought on Craigslist for \$1 per foot for the paneling. "It's such a sense of accomplishment to have results custom-designed to our taste," says Felesha of the remodel. "It's our sanctuary, and it came out even better than we imagined!"

**BEFORE** Inconveniently located down the hall from the bedroom, the dated bath had a head-banging ceiling slope.

**AFTER** Pale walls and floors contrast with the wood vanity, while rectangular sinks and nickel faucets give it a modern update.



BEFORE







## homeowner tip

FELESHA MCAFEE,  
BIGFORK, MONT.

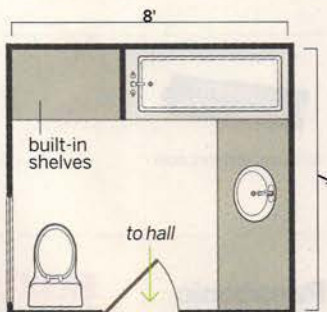
**"Cohesion is key. We repeated the shower floor tile in the toilet alcove and barn-wood trim throughout."**



Mosaic tile, painted tongue-and-groove paneling, and barn-wood trim finish the commode area. Toilet: Kohler

## before

The ceiling slant was too steep to allow for a shower, and the couple had to share a single sink.



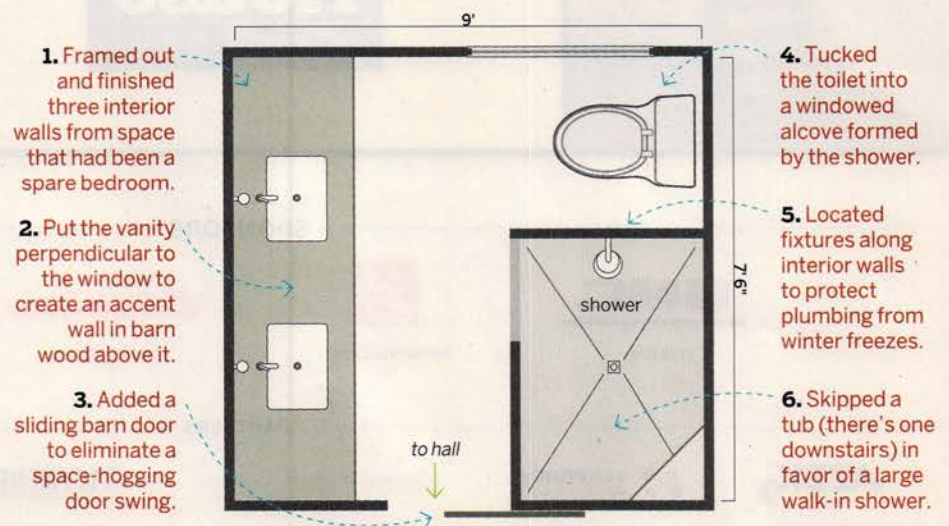
Jerimiah mounted the salvaged barn door on a sliding track and screwed in the antler handle from behind. He made the light fixture from an old ladder and cord kits.

Sale-bin travertine and rose-quartz mosaic tile, plus glass accent tile from a friend, cover the shower walls and floor. The couple's one splurge: a pro tiler.



## after

Rebuilding the bath next to the new sleep space made room for a walk-in shower, double sinks, and a higher ceiling.







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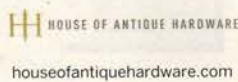


Photography: Anthony Tieuli

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## Quick climbers

Vigorous perennial vines can turn a bare arbor, fence, or stacked stone wall into a garden focal point in no time—just be sure to choose wisely

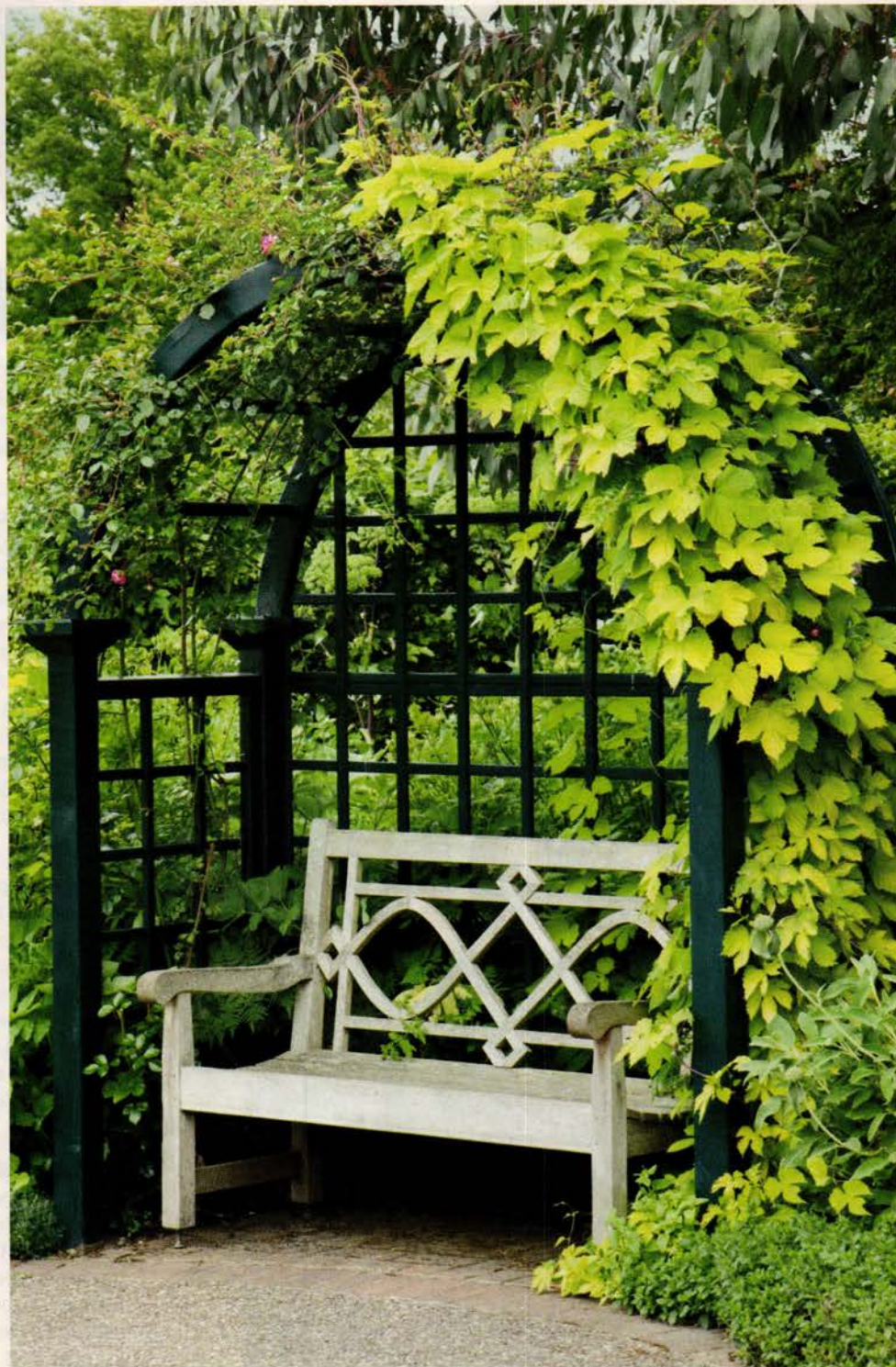
BY ANDREW KEYS

→ **TOO RESTLESS** to stay put, vines are forever bound for greater height and brighter light as they clamber upward and onward. Eager as they are, the wrong kind of vine soon becomes a garden pest that can smother anything in its path—think the English ivy creeping toward your house from under the neighbor's fence. But the group of well-behaved ornamental perennial vines highlighted here, both native and noninvasive imports, need only routine pruning to keep them in check. Use their robust growth to envelop everything from a utilitarian chain-link fence to a handsome pergola with an exotic mantle of color. These fast growers can provide the coverage, privacy, or shade you need in a jiffy, growing from 6 to 20 feet in a year.

Soft-stemmed species, like hops, establish quickly and are on their way to maximum height after a second year in the ground. Woody vines, like wisteria, are slower to take and support the “sleep, creep, leap” adage: not much productivity the first year, then a little growth the following season before a spurt in the third.

Read on for 11 choice vines and outstanding cultivars that will add colorful flowers, interesting foliage, or enticing fragrance faster than just about any other garden plant.

The cascading chartreuse foliage of a hops vine, trained on a latticework garden-bench surround, can provide relief from the summer sun.





## Summer bloomers

Train these flowering vines along a fieldstone wall or up a trellis for waves of blossoms that start in June.

### 1. TRUMPET CREEPER (*Campsis radicans*)

The best known of the woody clan is this rowdy Southeast native that uses aerial rootlets to climb up to 30 feet, with orange to red blooms. In a smaller garden, the less aggressive *C. grandiflora* 'Morning Calm' (shown) has a similar look, with peachy-orange trumpet flowers from June to August. It grows up to 25 feet tall and 9 feet wide in Zones 6–9.

### 2. CLIMBING BLEEDING HEART (*Dicentra scandens*)

Heart-shaped flowers in glowing yellow, white, or purplish pink dot this vine's dark-green foliage and tendrils from summer into fall. It grows up to 15 feet tall and 8 feet wide in Zones 4–8.

### 3. CORAL HONEYSUCKLE (*Lonicera sempervirens*)

This woody twiner, native to the Southeast, is beloved by hummingbirds. Try 'Major Wheeler' (shown) for blockbuster red flowers and dark-green leaves from early summer into fall; once established, the blooms retain their color even in drought. It grows up to 15 feet tall and 6 feet wide in Zones 4–9. But sidestep invasive *L. japonica*—it will overwhelm a yard.

### 4. CLEMATIS (*Clematis viticella*)

This group of small-flowered twining vines blooms later than other clematis species, from midsummer into fall. Deer-resistant 'Polish Spirit' (shown) outblossoms many other cultivars, with 3-inch-wide, deep-purple petals over dark-green, deciduous leaves. It grows up to 15 feet tall and 6 feet wide in Zones 4–11.



## Foliage standouts

Have a shady yard? These vines, prized for their ornamental foliage, can tolerate low light.

### 1. VIRGINIA CREEPER (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)

This woody vine clings to anything without help, by means of adhesive disks, and thrives in sun to part shade. The foliage on Red Wall (shown) starts out bronze and finishes with strong fiery fall color. It grows up to 50 feet tall and 10 feet wide in Zones 3–9.

### 2. COMMON HOP (*Humulus lupulus*)

This unfussy twining vine attracts butterflies and tolerates drought. 'Aureus' (shown) has stunning lime-green lobed leaves that darken over time. It grows up to 20 feet tall and 6 feet wide in Zones 4–8.

### 3. VARIEGATED KIWI (*Actinidia kolomikta*)

Light shade helps boost the color of this twining vine's green-to-white-to-pink mottled leaves. It grows up to 20 feet high and 10 feet wide in Zones 4–8.



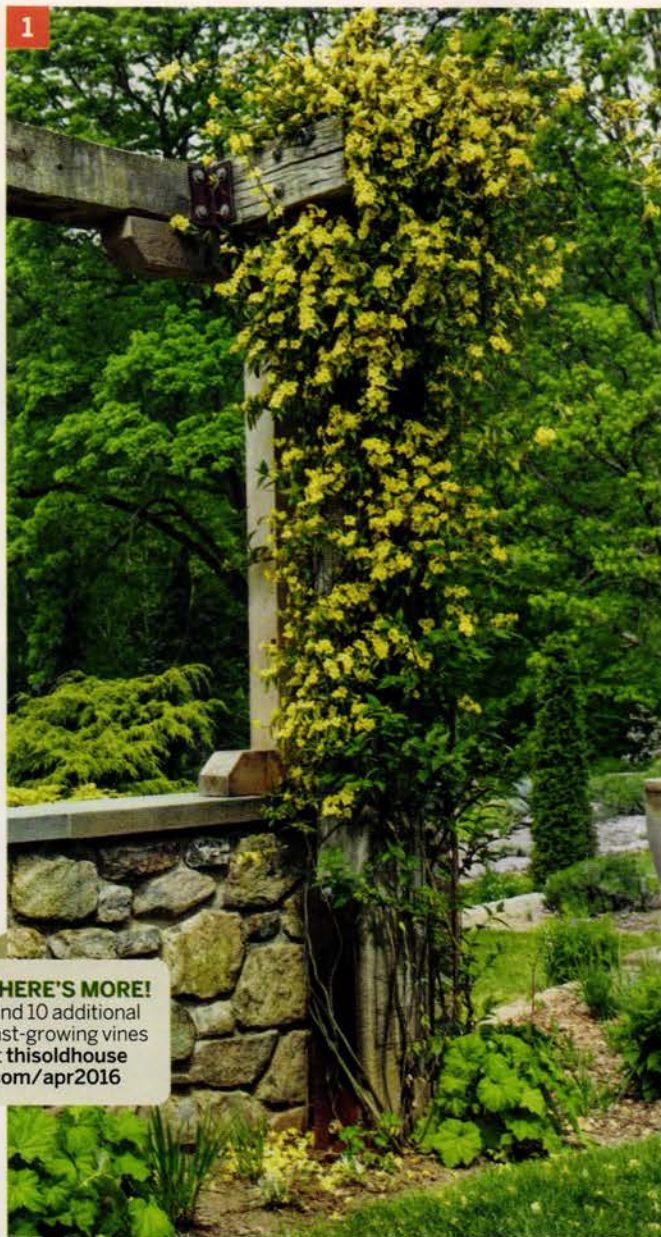
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**THERE'S MORE!**  
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## Fragrant beauties

Place these aromatic climbers near patio seating or a pathway where visitors can enjoy their scent.

### 1. CAROLINA JESSAMINE (*Gelsemium sempervirens*)

This twining woody evergreen vine's sumptuous clouds of gold, honey-scented trumpets perfume the landscape from February to April. 'Margarita' (shown) has bigger flowers and purplish winter foliage. It grows up to 20 feet tall and 6 feet wide in Zones 7–10.

### 2. WILD PASSIONFLOWER (*Passiflora incarnata*)

This summer-blooming tendril climber has intricate purple-and-white, citrus-scented flowers. Drought resistant with age, it bears edible fruit in midsummer. It grows up to 8 feet tall and 6 feet wide in Zones 5–9.

### 3. KENTUCKY WISTERIA (*Wisteria macrostachya*)

Native twining wisteria is more manageable than its Asian cousins and matures to flowering age sooner. The sweet-smelling 'Blue Moon' twiner (shown) blooms in early summer with foot-long clusters of lavender flowers and becomes heavy and woody with age, so structural support is vital. It grows up to 25 feet tall and 8 feet wide in Zones 3–9.

### 4. POET'S JASMINE (*Jasminum officinale*)

Sweetly scented pink-to-white flowers cloak this twining climber throughout the summer. Fiona Sunrise (shown) has gold foliage but needs protection from hot afternoon sun to keep the color bright. It grows up to 30 feet tall and 15 feet wide in Zones 7–10.



## Lend some support

Encouraging a vine to grow where you want it starts with understanding how it climbs and the kind of support structure it needs.

Vines climb using one or more of these methods.

**Twiners**, like Carolina jessamine, naturally wrap themselves around narrow supports like those of a metal trellis but need a guide wire to make it around wider structures, like a 4×4 post. **Other vines**, like bleeding heart, use **tendrils**—little feelers that sprout from the main stem and grab on to grow up. **Clinging vines**, such as Virginia creeper, climb on nearly any surface with adhesive disks, while trumpet creeper uses dozens of tiny, hair-like arms to grip fiercely as they spread.

Most young vine plants, but especially twiners, benefit from a little direction in the form of jute ties or wiring to get them clambering up. Tendrils, when they don't find something to latch onto, wrap around one another, creating a tangled mess, so train those on hardware cloth. Charming as they look on brick houses, clinging vines can damage masonry. Instead, install a trellis on brick or mortared stone using 4-inch standoffs for proper airflow. Woody vines, like trumpet creeper, become heavyweights with age and need a substantial structure like a pergola to hold them up. ■



# Make waves

Looking to warm up a wall? Try this whimsical pattern

BY DEBORAH BALDWIN • PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW MCCAUL

➔ A CHAIR RAIL is a classic way to bring the eye down and make a large room feel more intimate. Here, paint achieves the same effect while also enlivening the room with a pattern in triplicate—call it an accent wall of receding waves, or maybe festive scalloped pennant strings.

A DIY template makes this project pretty straightforward. First, choose two paint colors and put down the base coat. Then decide how high you want the rows to be, keeping in mind the height of the ceiling, fixed elements like a window, and furnishings like a bookcase, dresser, or headboard.

To make our template, we used a strip of Mylar 3 inches wide and about 2 feet long; longer strips would work too.

We opted to align the waves neatly, but they could also be staggered for a more dynamic look. Either way, have some fun and furnish the space in the same playful spirit.

## WE LOVE PAINT

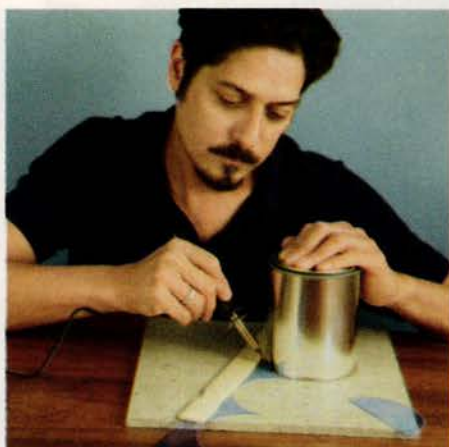
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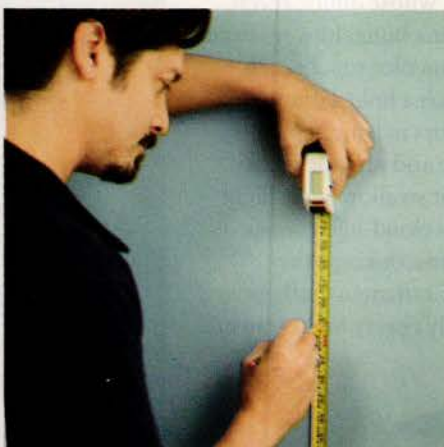




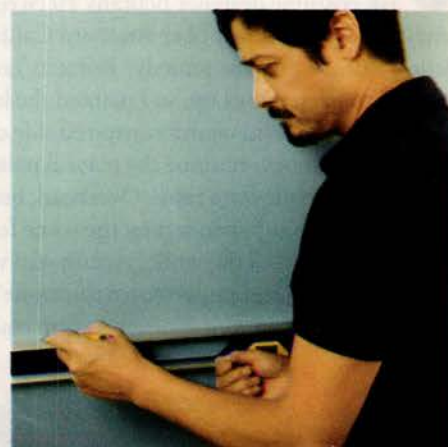
## STEP-BY-STEP



**1] Create a template.** Cut a strip of Mylar 3 inches wide. Align a paint stick or ruler along its top edge and bump a paint can or small plate against it. Trace a semicircle, move the can over, and repeat. Cut out the semicircles with a hot knife (available at craft stores) or an X-Acto blade.



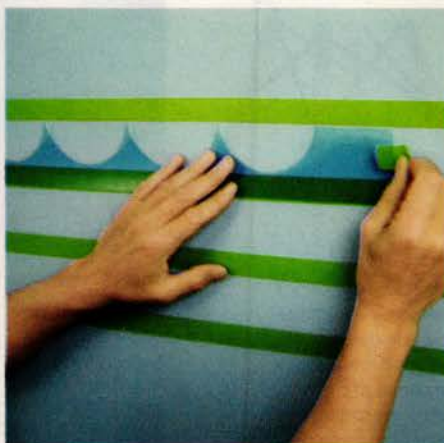
**2] Mark the tops of the rows.** With the help of a tape measure and a pencil, lightly mark the heights of the three sets of waves, allowing for the width of the Mylar strip between marks.



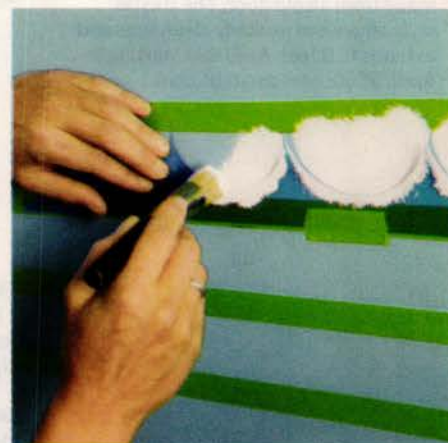
**3] Continue the marks along the wall.** Use a level to draw horizontal lines for the three rows plus a line 3 inches below the lowest one (see Step 4).



**4] Tape off the rows.** Apply painter's tape just above each penciled line. The fourth strip of tape will protect the base coat when the bottom row of waves is being brushed on.



**5] Position the template.** Apply spray adhesive to the back of the template and press it in place, with the points at the tape edge, or use a bit of painter's tape to secure it.



**6] Paint the waves.** Lightly pounce paint around the edges to avoid bleeding, and use the stencil brush or a small painter's brush to fill in. Wait a few minutes, peel up the template, reposition it, and repeat. ■



# Colorful, eclectic dining room

Playful shades and retro accents make this family gathering spot anything but stuffy **BY MICHELLE BRUNNER • PHOTOGRAPH BY VICTORIA PEARSON**

➔ **HAPPY HUES CAN BRIGHTEN** even the darkest room. Just ask costume designer Bethany Herwegh, whose dining room, situated in the middle of her Southern California bungalow, received little natural light. The remedy? Bring in Technicolor touches. “I wanted to liven things up, so I painted the hutch a bold Tiffany-box blue,” she says. Mid-century-inspired side chairs in lemon- and lime-sherbet tones continue the playful palette and provide a fun contrast to a rustic farm table. Overhead, bright swallows take flight on whimsical wallpaper, setting the scene for a cloud-like vintage glass chandelier. All the while, creamy-tan wainscot keeps the room grounded and underscores the home’s Craftsman aesthetic.

For ways to give your dining room an equally cheery look, read on.



## farm table

The generously proportioned table at right dates from the 1870s and was made from an old door. The trestle style above has similarly clean lines and extends to 8 feet. Available starting in April, \$560; [worldmarket.com](http://worldmarket.com)



## mod side chair

Inspired by the space-age classic designed by Charles and Ray Eames, the chairs at right are authentic reproductions made of fiberglass. This molded-plastic version delivers the silhouette at a bargain price. \$72; [lexmod.com](http://lexmod.com)



## bird-print wallpaper

No need for a skylight—take a cue from Herwegh, who transformed the ceiling here with a stunning skyscape. Daydream wallpaper, \$165 for a 30-foot roll; [hyggeandwest.com](http://hyggeandwest.com)



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Share your bedroom, living room, or dining room redo in the **Search for America's Best Remodel Contest** for a chance to win a \$1,000 Delta prize package and appear in our October issue. Visit [thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH](http://thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH)

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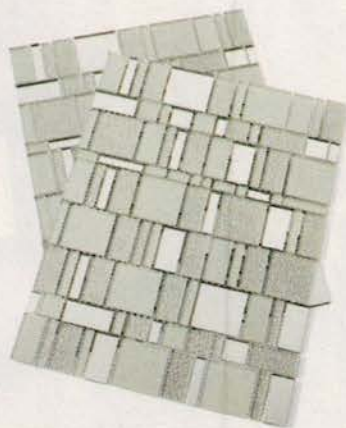


### vintage-look hardware

Swapping out plain cabinet knobs and pulls for ones with more character is an easy way to give any piece instant charm. Matchbox latch, \$7, and glass knobs, \$4 each; both, [homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com)

### glass pendant

Herwegh scored her one-of-a-kind 1960s light fixture on [1stdibs.com](http://1stdibs.com). This glass-droplet chandelier echoes its shape and gives off softly diffused light—perfect for over the dining room table. \$449; [westelm.com](http://westelm.com)



### mirror backsplash

The reflective mosaic tile on the hutch at left comes from a high-end retailer. These tiles offer similar sparkle for a fraction of the cost. Casanova tile, \$19 for a 10-by-14-inch sheet; [tilebar.com](http://tilebar.com)



### oversize hutch

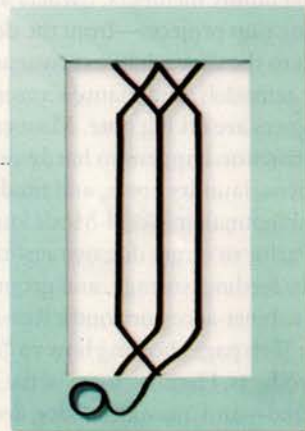
With a fresh coat of blue paint and a few modifications, this handcrafted solid-pine hutch could stand in for the homeowner's. \$599; [gothiccabinetcraft.com](http://gothiccabinetcraft.com). Glidden's True Turquoise, \$26 per gallon; [homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com)



### DIY

### faux leaded glass

Door panels like the ones shown at left are a hallmark of Arts and Crafts cabinetry. You can scour flea markets for similar hutches or salvaged glass inserts. Or try black coming line as an easy and inexpensive way to get the look. Just roll out the sticky-backed tape into your design. Cut and press into place. \$10 for a 6-foot roll; [joann.com](http://joann.com) ■



PHOTOS: (CHAIR, WALLPAPER, HARDWARE, MIRROR TILE, FAUX LEADED GLASS, PAINT DAB) TED MORRISON; MAIN IMAGE FROM THE BOOK BECKMAN 1802 STYLE: THE ATTRACTION OF OPPOSITES



## Creature comforts

Planning a remodel? Don't forget about Rover. Today's special built-in features and custom designs go way beyond the doggie door

BY MARY HUHN



This pet-friendly laundry features kibble-dispensing and food-bowl pullouts and a dog-size sink. Cabinets: Pet Parlor by Wood-Mode

➔ **HEATED FLOORS**, custom built-ins, a separate shower—for the dog? As more households than ever count four-legged family members, owners are adding pup projects—from the down-to-earth to the downright extravagant—to their remodels, and manufacturers and designers are taking note. Most canine construction happens in hardworking kitchens, laundry areas, and mudrooms, so cabinetmaker Wood-Mode launched Pet Parlor to target dog owners' three big needs: feeding, storage, and grooming. And cabinet-accessory outfit Rev-A-Shelf has a Web page showing how to "dogify" its products. Here are some of the most in-demand—and ingenious—dog designs.

**Chow time** According to the most recent National Kitchen & Bath Association trend report, food stations are the top pet-centric ask in remodels. Owners are building them into kitchen islands, under benches, or into drawers that open and close. Some even have separate water-bowl niches with spigots. The latest dog-dining location? Toekicks, says Oregon designer Robyn Rigby Fisher. "Why not? It's totally unused space." For a client with Italian greyhounds, she installed three, spaced far apart. "One of the dogs was a chowhound and would eat the others' food."

More commonly, owners decide to

create a nook in the bottom of an open base cabinet, often fitted with cutouts to hold bowls. But whether the food stays accessible or gets tucked away when guests appear, the most important thing is to place it out of the way—in a corner near a pantry or back door, say. And forget about traipsing around filling bowls. Extra slide-out trash and recycle bins next to the food station are perfect for storing those big bags of kibble.

**Good grooming** Picturesque galvanized tubs are a thing of the past. Today, you can bathe your dog in everything from extra-roomy sinks to virtual spas. Architectural designer Ritch





More saving.  
More doing.

## PROJECT OF THE WEEK

# HOW TO BUILD A TAKEOUT MENU HOLDER



Photo: Wendell T. Webber

Looking for a tidy alternative to your cluttered menu drawer? Craft our wall-mount menu holder. We cut plywood to size and framed it with 1x2s, then made an angled bin from a 1x4, cut into two wedges. A coat of milk paint gives it a sunny pop of color, and a rectangle of green chalkboard paint lets you customize a message—or scribble down your order.

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

For step-by-step instructions, go to [thisoldhouse.com/project](http://thisoldhouse.com/project)

Holben is building a dedicated grooming room for a 40-pound Portuguese water dog, complete with fur-colored tiles to hide stray shedding. For convenience, his client opted for a shower pan raised waist-high so he can scrub in straight-up comfort. Other amenities on the rise: concrete floors with radiant heating, towel storage, and laundry chutes.

Can't swing a dedicated dog room? Try adding a grooming spot to the laundry or mudroom, says Magda Chiarella, a New Jersey designer who also breeds Norwich terriers. Start with a tiled floor that pitches into a drain, and designate a corner for the bathing area. People with larger dogs tend to opt for a low-threshold mini-shower, with a handheld nozzle, while smaller dogs do fine in a laundry sink. She reminds clients to also think about extra storage for towels and other grooming accessories, and always suggests using taller baseboards, which are easier to clean than walls.

**Snooze zones** “The most important consideration for sleep spots is visibility,” says NKBA president Maria Stapperfenne. While dogs need a quiet place to relax, “they still want to be able

to see their humans—and vice versa,” she explains. Many homeowners integrate beds or crates into a run of cabinetry, a kitchen island, or a built-in bench. Dogs like to be cozy, so look to install beds near existing heat registers, or add registers to a new sleep spot.

**Gate update** Sometimes Fifi needs to stay out of the dining room. Portable barriers don't score any style points, so for one home Fisher created a custom pocket half-door to close off the kitchen from the dining room. Anticipating canine curiosity, she inset the waist-high mahogany with rain glass and topped it with stainless steel to prevent damage from dog nails.

Less costly solutions include an interior Dutch door to, say, a laundry room, or even a custom wrought-iron or wood gate installed in a doorway.

**A space of one's own** Then there are the people who build pet palaces, dedicated spaces that range from clever to downright cushy. When Oregon designer Joel Fraley replaced the porch of his circa-1900 farmhouse with a kitchen extension, he built a doghouse in the crawl space below, complete with cedar floors, a removable bed, and an exit to the outdoors. He says dog's-eye-view windows are an add-on his clients frequently request. One owner we know of added a dog run with heated water bowls and a heated-concrete ice-melt system to keep it ice- and snow-free during winter.

And while Chiarella made sure to include a TV and workstation in her 1920s bungalow basement, the space is mostly a man's-best-friend cave. “We made it dog-friendly with heated ceramic floors, dog doors, step stools up to the couches, and doggie hangout spaces,” she says. A wooden crate “condo” houses five pups, with bedding and toy storage on top.

Those are some lucky dogs. ■



A raised shower pan makes for a bend-free bath time.



# That's a wrap!

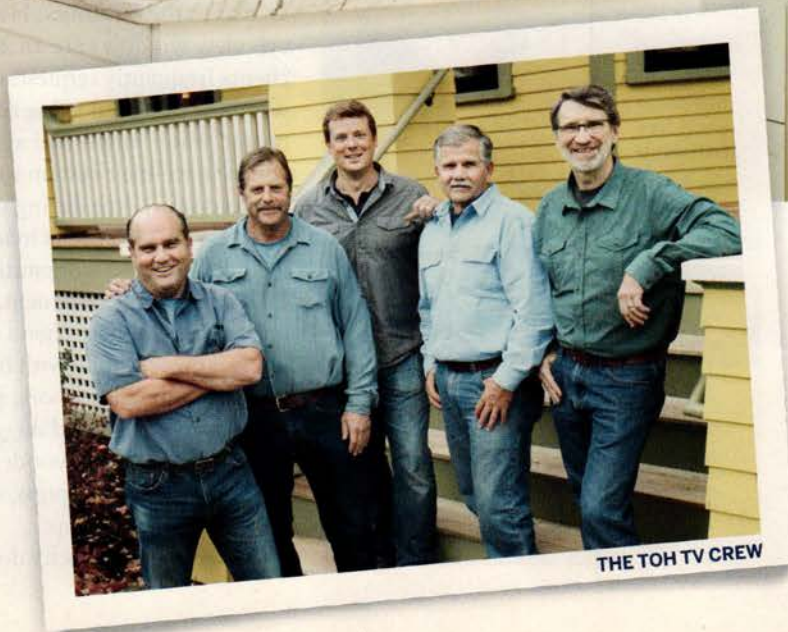
The TOH TV crew finishes remodeling an 1895 Queen Anne for a young family and delivers both modern functionality and Victorian-era charm BY JILL CONNORS • PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTHONY TIEULI



## BRIGHT AND HARDWORKING

ABOVE: Homeowners Murat and Katherine Bicer and their children gather at the marble-topped island in their kitchen, a new space that owes its luminosity to classic white cabinets, a large bay window, and layered lighting. The island itself is a storage stalwart: 8 feet long, with a wide drawer for dish storage on the side that faces the sink and shallow shelves behind cabinet doors for dry goods on the other side. Vintage bin pulls Katherine found at a salvage shop were just right for the cabinet drawers.

INSET: The TOH TV crew worked with the architect's plans to blend the best of old and new.



THE TOH TV CREW





→ **WHEN KATHERINE** and Murat Bicer fell for their old house, they envisioned a cheerful space for their family, but they knew it needed upgrades—so much so that they never really unpacked after buying the place in August 2014. They moved out again eight months later so that *TOH TV* general contractor Tom Silva and the crew could renovate the three-story, 3,200-square-foot Queen Anne. Architect Mat Cummings created the master plan, and the Bicers also tapped the expertise of kitchen designer Linda Cloutier and interior designer Amanda Reid. The renovation mantra: Keep it Victorian-era in feeling but here-and-now in functionality.

Once the dust settled, the Bicer home emerged as a deft blend of old and new, seen and unseen. Largely hidden are such essentials as beams supporting a reconfigured kitchen-eating-mudroom area that spans the entire back of the house, new ductwork for heating and cooling, and a new copper water line from curb to house. In full, glorious view are a cheery kitchen with a new bay window looking out onto the backyard; a back-entry and mudroom bumpout; a luxurious master suite; fresh color palettes inside and out; and salvaged items incorporated throughout the house, which Katherine and Murat find “good for the soul.” With the renovation complete, the Bicers have moved back in—and this time, Katherine reports, they unpacked everything. “We are here to stay,” she says. “The house perfectly suits the way we live and play as a family.”



## ENTER GLADLY

**TOP:** Previously blocked off by a full wall, the once coffin-like foyer is now welcoming and elegant, thanks to lower stairs upgraded with handcrafted newel posts and custom wall paneling installed by the *TOH TV* crew.

**BOTTOM:** The eating area, just off the kitchen, features a vintage round table that Katherine found at an antiques market and a custom floorcloth that hews to family tradition: She has always had yellow kitchens. The column-topped partition and large closet provide charging stations and prime storage near the tiled mudroom, just a few steps from a newly added rear entry.

THESE PAGES  
KITCHEN CABINETS: **Wood-Mode**  
FRIDGE AND STOVE: **Thermador**  
BACKSPLASH TILE: **The Winchester Tile Company**  
PENDANT LIGHTS: **Cisco Brothers**  
UNDER-CABINET LIGHTING: **AFX**  
RECESSED LIGHTING:  
**Juno Lighting Group**  
FOYER CHANDELIER:  
**Historic Houseparts**  
INTERIOR PAINT: **Benjamin Moore**  
KITCHEN CHAIR UPHOLSTERY:  
**Kamper and Prospect Upholstery**  
HARDWARE:  
**House of Antique Hardware**  
COLUMNS: **Chadsworth Incorporated**





### FORMAL YET FRESH

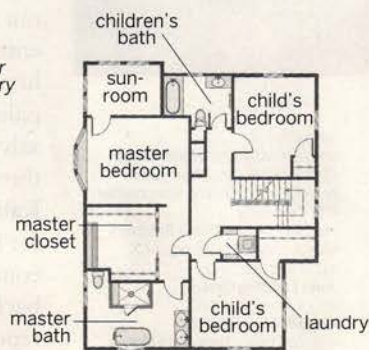
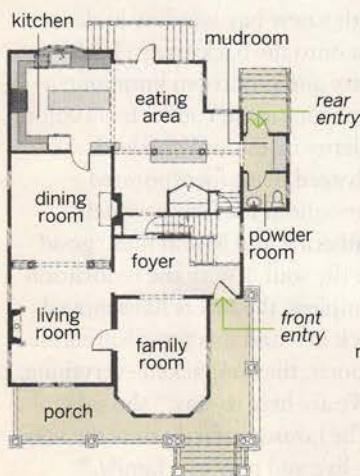
LEFT: Columned half walls now delineate the entertaining spaces—living room and dining room—without closing them off, while an antique oak fireplace mantel supplies character. The drapery fabric's whites, grays, blues, and lavenders established the color palette for the entire house, including the new powder room (ABOVE).

## FLOOR PLANS

scale  
5' = ADDITION

On the first floor, removing a stairway wall that faced the front door ushered in a new sense of the home's Victorian-era grace. A bumpout for a new mudroom and powder room allows easy entry from the driveway to the opened-up kitchen and eating area. Upstairs, the master bath took over a front bedroom, forming a suite that leaves the structural center wall undisturbed. On the top floor, adding a wall created a guest suite, an office, and a dedicated playroom. A new, historically inspired wraparound porch (RIGHT) restored the house's 19th-century character.

### 1st floor



### 2nd floor



### 3rd floor



THIS PAGE  
EXTERIOR TRIM: AZEK  
STORM WINDOWS:  
Harvey Building Products  
INSULATION: Icynene  
BATH FAN: Panasonic  
POWDER ROOM INSULATION:  
Roxul  
POWDER ROOM WALLPAPER:  
Farrow & Ball  
POWDER ROOM CONSOLE:  
Palmer Industries  
CUSTOM DRAPERY: Fabrika  
DRAPERY FABRIC:  
Schumacher





## MASTERFUL SUITE

ABOVE: In the master bedroom, an existing bay window invites in natural light, and walls with a stenciled floral pattern in soothing tones of pale lavender and gray continue the color palette.

FAR RIGHT: The former sleeping porch kept its shingled walls, painted to match the new exterior paint scheme.

RIGHT: The master bath exudes a spa-like serenity with a glass-walled shower, a marble floor, and the original claw-foot tub reconditioned with nickel-plated feet and a new accent color of eggplant. Tom Silva and crew salvaged the strip flooring from the old bedroom-turned-master-bath (INSET) and used it to patch flooring elsewhere in the house. 🏠



## WATCH THE MAGIC HAPPEN

Tune in to your local PBS station to catch the new season of TOH TV. To stream any episode from the past 13 years, go to [thisoldhouse.com/watchTOH](http://thisoldhouse.com/watchTOH)



TOM SILVA

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**Patina Designs**  
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# This Old House blueprint

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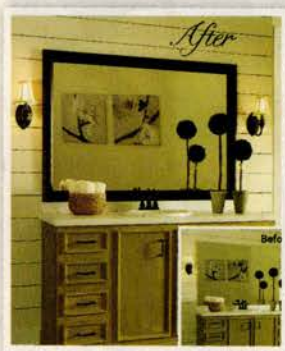


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## EVENT SPOTLIGHT

### 2016 International Builders' Show

Las Vegas | January 19-21

**T**he 2016 NAHB International Builders' Show attracted thousands of building professionals over the course of three days in Las Vegas. TOH General Contractor **Tom Silva** was on hand at this year's show, greeting fans, signing autographs, and answering a variety of home improvement questions.



Tom greets fans at the **AZEK/TimberTech** booth.



Tom talks flooring at the **Lumber Liquidators** booth.



# Fauna for your door

A knocker is an opportunity to give your house a little extra personality.

So why not go wild? BY KATELIN HILL • PHOTOGRAPHS BY TED MORRISON

→ LONG BEFORE electricity propelled doorbells to the forefront for announcing visitors, knockers had been doing the job, even as far back as ancient Greece. But ones with a fanciful look only became popular during the Renaissance, when they evolved into small-scale works of art; door knockers shaped like menacing gargoyles were hung to ward off evil spirits, while mythological beasts amused waiting guests. In a similar vein, a slew of animal, insect, and sea-life designs are showing up today—occasionally fierce, but mostly fun. Here, 11 of our favorite featured creatures.



## take flight

MICHAEL HEALY

Made of: Brass with an oiled-bronze finish

Size: 8½"W × 6¼"H × 1¼"D

Highlights: This oversize dragonfly makes a graceful statement. \$115; wayfair.com



EXCLUSIVE  
TOH  
DISCOUNT

## mane attraction

COPPER MOUNTAIN  
HARDWARE

Made of: Brass with a hand-applied antiqued finish

Size: 4½"W × 8⅝"H × 2"D

Highlights: The iconic lion's head gets an East-meets-West makeover. \$75; lookintheattic.com \$15 off! Details at thisoldhouse.com/deals





EXCLUSIVE  
TOH  
DISCOUNT

### **buzzworthy**

MICHAEL HEALY

Made of: Brass with a polished brass-and-black finish

Size: 4½"W × 5"H × 2"D

Highlights: A cartoon-like quality and high shine make this bee a keeper. \$125;

atgstores.com

20% off! Details at

thisoldhouse.com/deals



### **just hanging out**

THE RENOVATOR'S SUPPLY

Made of: Brass with an antique-brass finish

Size: 2"W × 5"H × 1¼"D

Highlights: Perfect for a Tudor or Gothic house, a roosting bat is sure to lighten the mood of any door. \$39; rensup.com



### **sly find**

HOMART

Made of: Cast iron with a natural-rust finish

Size: 4"W × 9½"H × 3"D

Highlights: Nailed by the tail, this fox nods to announce an arrival. \$28; areohome.com



### **wise choice**

THE KINGS BAY

Made of: Brass with an antique-bronze finish

Size: 3½"W × 5¼"H × 2"D

Highlights: This owl will keep a watchful eye out night and day. \$48; thekingsbay.com



### **slowpoke**

SIGNATURE HARDWARE

Made of: Brass with a brushed-nickel finish

Size: 2½"W × 6"H × 3"D

Highlights: Sleek and sinuous, this snail's silvery shine will really pop on a dark-hued door. \$32; signaturehardware.com



### fabled appeal

ANTHROPOLOGIE

Made of: Aluminum with an antiqued finish

Size: 3¼"W × 3½"H × 2¼"D

Highlights: A classic ring shape is reimagined with the fox and the hare in motion. \$38; anthropologie.com



### TIP

A knocker shouldn't infringe on door panels, so measure your door's stiles and rails before buying. Hang it 5 feet high for best effect.



### trophy mount

TREASURE GURUS

Made of: Cast iron with a rust-brown finish

Size: 9"W × 11"H × 3½"D

Highlights: Weighing in at 5 pounds, this antlered elk's head delivers a major impact. \$30; treasuregurus.com



### pretty nutty

HOME DECORATORS COLLECTION

Made of: Aluminum with a brown-and-gold finish

Size: 3½"W × 9½"H × 3"D

Highlights: The squirrel's tail forms a natural handle. \$54; homedecorators.com



EXCLUSIVE TOH DISCOUNT

### what a tail

MICHAEL HEALY

Made of: Brass with a polished nickel-silver finish

Size: 6"W × 6"H × 2½"D

Highlights: This whale disappears into the door, thanks in part to concealed hardware. \$115; atgstores.com 20% off! Details at thisoldhouse.com/deals



# From dated to "Do come in!"

A more open entry, a fresh coat of paint, and spiffy new doors warm up a lackluster 1960s house

BY KATHRYN O'SHEA-EVANS • ILLUSTRATION BY DRAWGATE INC.

Upgrading to wood-grain doors for the entry and garage gives the house a luxe look.



BEFORE



## finishing touches

Handsome accents add warmth and polish to a ho-hum facade.

1234

### house numbers

These 5-inch-high stainless-steel digits from HouseArt, finished in deep bronze, are a clean-lined (and rustproof) way to announce an address. Around \$30; wayfair.com



### paint

An instant update for the multihued brick veneer: waterproof masonry paint in Soleil, a buttery yellow. \$66 per gallon; benjaminmoore.com



### sconce

The house's horizontal lines are echoed in this distressed-bronze industrial fixture, with opaque glass to soften its glow. \$140; houseofantiquehardware.com



### entry door

A new wood door with one large light, complemented by a carriage-style garage door, is a major curb-appeal boost. Simpson Door, from \$800; simpsondoor.com

→ "OUR HOUSE isn't very inviting," says Eamon O'Donnell of this 1961 Minimal Traditional, in Rocky River, Ohio, which he shares with his wife, Nicole, and their two kids. So we asked architect Mark Wright for ideas to make it more welcoming.

"It's similar to the other mid-century houses on the street but has what we call 'weak ornamentation,'" Wright says, pointing out the plain garage door, plastic shutters, and dated light fixtures as eyesores. His first recommendation to make the facade more friendly: Remove two of the "cage-like" porch posts and dress up the remaining one with wood trim boards to suggest a grander column. Creamy-yellow paint softens the look of the multicolored brick, and wood-toned garage and entry doors offer a nice contrast.

Eamon's takeaway: "We like that the changes are so doable—especially that opened-up porch!" ■

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PROMOTION



Photo: Jim Westphalen

# This Old House is Brand New!

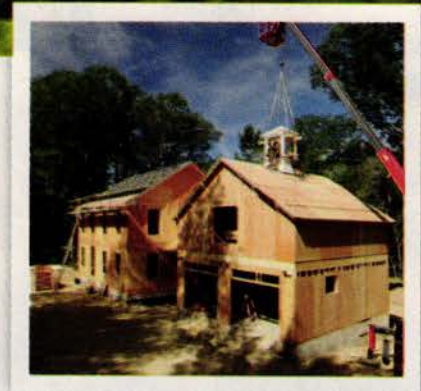


Photo: Kevin O'Connor

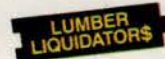
**Tune in this month** as the crew begins work on a built-from-the-ground-up farmhouse that combines state-of-the-art engineering with traditional expert craftsmanship.

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# Install a critter-proof garden fence

Use pressure-treated lumber to build a sturdy post-and-rail enclosure that prevents animals from swiping your veggies

BY SAL VAGLICA • PHOTOGRAPHS BY WENDELL T. WEBBER



**COST** \$651 for 66 linear feet of fence

**TIME** Two days

**DIFFICULTY** Moderate. Squaring the corner posts takes some patience.

➔ **IF YOU'RE ELMER FUDD**, you thwart carrot thieves by sending an Acme Pest Control robot after Bugs Bunny. If you're a seasoned gardener, you know that fencing in your tomatoes, peppers, herbs, and other edibles is the way to go. Our version fends off two varieties of varmints, with wide, welded-wire mesh panels to keep out rabbits and dogs, and tighter, PVC-coated galvanized wire buried below to stymie subterranean-bound woodchucks and moles. A gate at each end allows you to wheelbarrow in garden amendments like mulch and compost. *This Old House* senior technical editor Mark Powers shows you how to use common building materials—and not mechanical mercenaries—to preserve and protect your hard-grown produce.

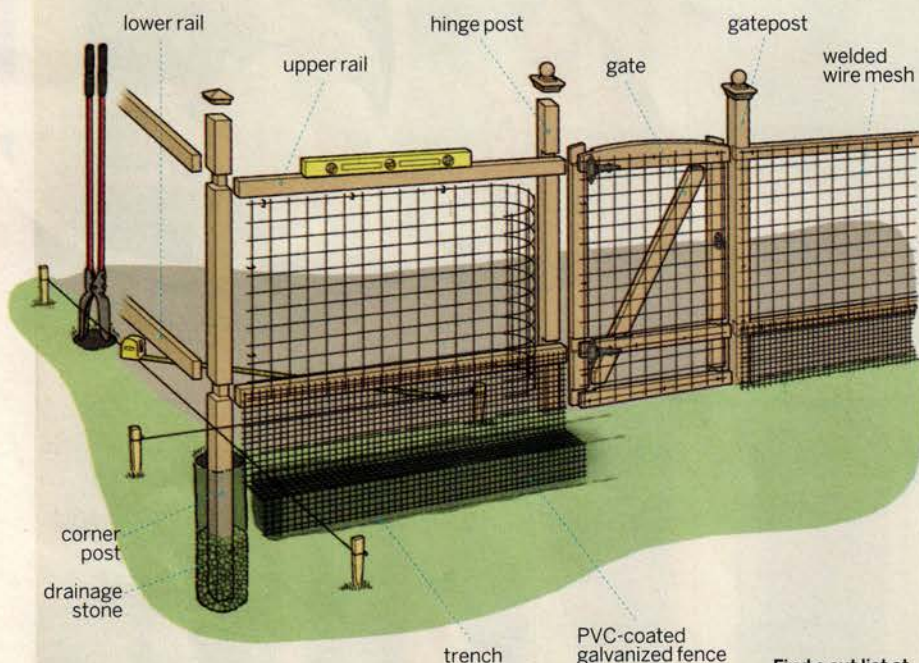
Pressure-treated 4×4 posts, \$14 each, and 2×4 rails, \$4.37 each; pressure-treated post caps, from \$4; gate hardware, \$20; welded wire, \$62 for 50 feet; all, homedepot.com. PVC-coated wire, \$110 for 100 feet; critterfence.com



## DAY-TO-DAY TIMELINE

**SATURDAY** Install posts and rails (Steps 1–4).

**SUNDAY** Attach mesh and build gates (Steps 5–7).



Finished dimensions:  
15'W x 18'D x 6'H

Find a cut list at  
[thisoldhouse.com/apr2016](http://thisoldhouse.com/apr2016).

### TOOLS

- > hammer
- > mason line
- > tape measure
- > felt-tip marker
- > string level
- > handsaw
- > posthole digger
- > trencher (or trenching shovel)
- > spade
- > rafter square
- > circular saw
- > chisel
- > level
- > drill/driver
- > linesman pliers
- > jigsaw
- > screwdriver

### MATERIALS

- > 2-foot-tall garden stakes
- > spray paint
- > drainage stone
- Get one bag for each post except gateposts.
- > 4x4 posts
- Get ten 10-footers.

- > 2x4 rails
- Get sixteen 10-footers.
- > 2x6 gate rail
- Get one 6-footer.
- > fast-setting concrete
- Get one bag per hinge post.
- > 3-inch deck screws
- Get a box.
- > 1 1/4-inch deck screws
- Get a box.
- > welded wire mesh
- Get enough linear feet to cover the fence.
- > 3/4-inch galvanized staples
- Get a 1-pound box.
- > PVC-coated wire
- Get enough linear feet to cover the fence.
- > post caps and finials
- > stainless-steel nails
- Get enough to fasten the post caps.
- > sandpaper
- > shims
- > gate hardware

# 1 Locate the posts

**A] Square the corners.** Determine, roughly, the four corners of the fence. Use 2-foot-tall stakes and mason line to mark all four sides, extending the lines several feet at each end so they cross at the corners. Then square the corners using the Pythagorean theorem: Hammer in a stake 3 feet from one pair of intersecting lines, touching the string; then, using a felt-tip marker, mark 4 feet from the same corner on the other line. Measure between the stake and the mark, as shown, and adjust the marked line until the distance between the two is 5 feet. Repeat the process to square the remaining corners.

**B] Find the height.** Hang a string level on each line and level it about 12 inches off the ground, to represent the top of the lower rail. Then, if the grade is level, notch the location of the strings on each stake. If the garden slopes, measure between level lines and the ground at each corner; if the difference between the four is more than a foot, use 12-foot posts in the low corners (as we did).





## 2 Dig footings and trench

**A] Mark the post locations.** Use spray paint at the location of each corner post, as shown. Then measure off the string lines to determine the locations of the field posts 8 feet away and mark the locations just inside the strings. Finally, in the middle of two sides, mark locations for the gateposts 36 inches apart, allowing for a gate wide enough to accommodate a wheelbarrow.

**B] Prep the postholes.** Untie the lines and dig 8-inch-diameter holes deep enough to get below the frost line and to bury at least one-third of the post. Pour 6 inches of drainage stone into the bottom of each hole and tamp it using the end of a post.

**C] Dig the trenches.** The PVC-coated galvanized wire sits below grade in a trench that runs outside the posts. Rent a trencher for large projects, or use a spade and a trenching shovel for smaller ones. With a trencher, guide it so it digs just outside the postholes, cutting down about 18 inches. Then use a spade to excavate the strip between the footings and the trench down 12 inches, creating a stepped ditch.

**TIP** To clean out a notch, rest the chisel's wider face on the wood. Move the cutting edge in an elliptical pattern as you push the chisel forward.



## 3 Notch the posts

**A] Mark the corners.** With a post on a work surface, use 2x4 scrap to mark the notch location for the upper rail 15 inches down from one end. Then make a mark for the lower rail 56½ inches away. Repeat the process on the other corner posts, using a rafter square to carry the marks around corners. On the field posts and gateposts, mark only one face.

**B] Cut the notches.** Use 2x4 scrap as a gauge to set the depth of the circular saw. Make several passes between the rail marks on two adjoining faces of the corner posts. Knock the slivers free with a hammer, then clean out the notches with a chisel, as shown. Cut the field posts and gateposts the same way.





## 4 Set the posts

**A] Sink the first corner post.** Restraining the stakes using the notches made earlier. Drop a corner post into its hole and add or remove stone until the bottom of the lower rail notch meets the string. The faces of the notched sides should touch the string. Use a level to plumb the post in both directions and backfill the footing with a mixture of excavated earth and stone, tamping it with a scrap of 2×4.

**B] Set the next post.** Drop a field post in the next hole. Screw a 2×4 rail into the upper notch of the first post temporarily and fit its loose end into the matching notch of the second post. Check the rail with a level, as shown,

and add or remove stone from the hole for the second post until the rail comes to level. Plumb the post, with its face touching the string, then backfill it. Remove and reuse the temporary rail to set the remaining posts. For the two hinge posts, use fast-setting concrete as backfill.

**C] Attach the rails.** Once all the posts are set, position an upper rail with one end in the corner post notch, leaving space for the perpendicular rail, and the other end in the notch of the next post. At the overhanging end, make a cutline on the rail at the halfway point of the notch. Remove the rail and cut it to length with a circular saw. Align the rail in the notch using a 2×4 scrap, as shown, then attach it to the corner post with a pair of 3-inch deck screws. Attach the loose end with two more screws. Repeat the process for the remaining rails, skipping over the space between the gateposts.



## 5 Add the fencing

**A] Staple on the upper fencing.** Begin by attaching the fencing to a corner post, hammering in 3/4-inch galvanized staples every 18 inches along its cut end, so the top lands in the middle of the upper rail. Staple the fencing along the upper rail, unspooling the roll as you go. Use linesman pliers to trim it and staple it along the opposite corner post. Then fasten it to the middle posts and lower rail. Repeat the process for the remaining sides, skipping the space between the gateposts.

**B] Add lower fence.** Use linesman pliers to trim the PVC-coated galvanized wire as long as a fence side. Staple the top edge of the wire to the lower rail and posts. Push the fence down 12 inches into the trench, and use your hand to crease the wire away from the posts, forming a shelf that will prevent any burrowers from getting under, then bend the wire down into the channel. Repeat for each side of the fence, then backfill the trench with soil.





# 6 Build the gates

**A] Assemble the frame.** Back on the work surface, overlap the gate rails with the stiles, keeping the width about 1 inch narrower than the distance between the gateposts and as tall as the space between the rails. Square the corners with a rafter square and mark where the parts overlap. Set the circular saw depth to cut half the thickness of the material and notch half-lap joints with a series of cuts, as shown. Clear the notches as before, then screw the parts together with a pair of 1¼-inch deck screws at each joint.

**B] Arch the top.** Drive a nail into the center of the 2×6 top rail, set in slightly from the top edge. Add one nail on each stile, centered on the rail's width. Bend a length of scrap over the center nail and under the end nails; trace the curve with a jigsaw, then round the edges with sandpaper.

**C] Add the brace.** Rest a 2×4 diagonally across the gate with either end roughly centered on a corner. Mark where the brace overlaps the gate, as shown, and transfer the mark up the edges of the brace. Cut the brace's angled ends with a circular saw, then screw through it and into the gate with 3-inch deck screws. Cover the gate with welded wire mesh using staples. Repeat this process to build the second gate.



**TIP**  
To prevent the gate from sagging, screw the brace in so the lower end points toward the lower hinge.

## SHARE YOUR DIY PROJECT

Upload photos of something you built for a chance to be featured in our October issue. Visit [thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH](http://thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH)

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# 7 Install the gates

**A] Shim the gate.** Place the gate in the opening. Add spacers underneath until the gate's lower rail is level with the ones on the fence. Center the gate in the opening by tapping shims in between the posts and the gate, as shown.

**B] Add the hardware.** Position the strap hinges on one side of the gate and mark the location of the screws on the rails and hinge post. Remove the hinges, drill pilot holes, and attach the hardware. Repeat the process for the latch, as shown, then install the second gate the same way. Finish the posts off with caps and finials attached with stainless-steel nails or construction adhesive. ■





**A**

Handcrafted bridges were among the first additions to homeowner Ellen Lathi's expansive garden. This one was given a weeping larch on either side and an akebia vine that softens its lines.



# INTO THE WOODS



**B**

Young visitors continue to enjoy the landscape features that foster an appreciation for nature, including this stream-spanning zigzag bridge, inspired by Japanese garden design.

**HERE'S HOW AN ORDINARY SUBURBAN LOT TRANSFORMED INTO A SERIES OF **MAGICAL GARDEN ROOMS**—WITH IDEAS ANYONE CAN USE**

By Tovah Martin \* Photographs by Keller + Keller





## It all started simply enough,

with her son's request for a playhouse.

Before that, Ellen Lathi was busy with her neurology practice and hadn't given a thought to exploring the two suburban acres around their home, in Needham, Massachusetts. Of course, young Jonathan didn't see the point of a playhouse sitting primly on the lawn; he wanted an adventurous hideaway far from the prying eyes of grown-ups.

Searching for a suitable getaway that wasn't plastic or prefab, Ellen happened upon a cedar playhouse built by Bill McKenny, a farmer and carpenter in Maine. "A wonderful, Paul Bunyan type of fellow," as Ellen describes him, McKenny made the trip to deliver the perfect rustic hideaway. To forge a path to it from the house, an exercise that unearthed a swamp, meant McKenny would add a bridge. Farther out, the path hit a stream. Could he add two more bridges to the agenda? But flat ones didn't add anything to the landscape; they needed to be vertical structures, Ellen realized. And the fanciful bridges that McKenny crafted warranted appropriate plantings to grace their lines, she saw. They deserved evergreens arching around their walls, and the view out their open sides needed to frame something beautiful and botanical. Meanwhile, Jonathan had another request—how about some roundabout paths

ABOVE: The "meditation circle" (C) is a quiet spot in front of the house, not far from the street but sheltered by an American beech hedge. Japanese forest grass thrives in the shady environment.

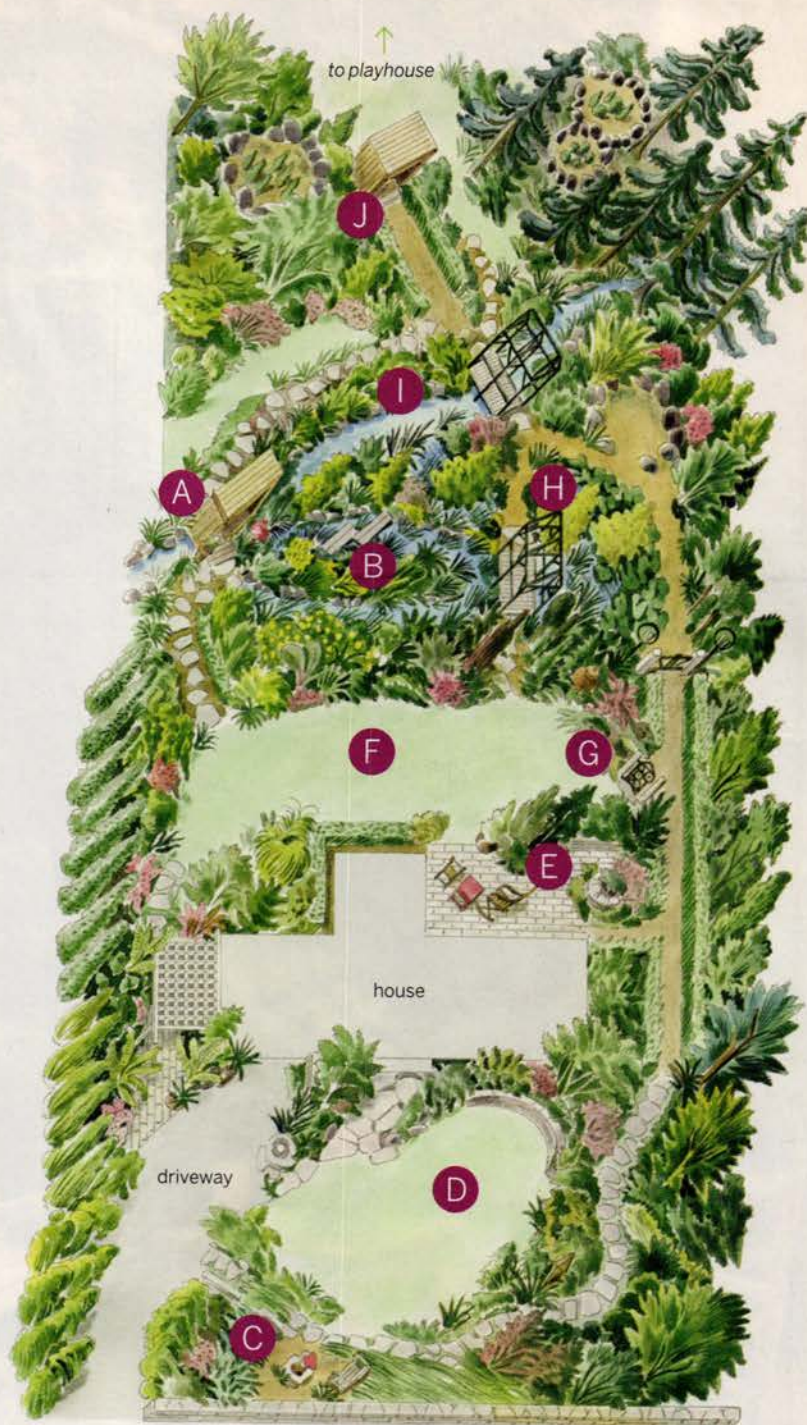
RIGHT: A woodland garden leads into the front yard with a low wall bordering a raised bed of hostas (D), which also line the path to the door.



leading to his playhouse so he could make expeditions through the outback? Of course, more paths would mean more plantings, and before she knew it, Ellen was enrolled in landscaping courses.

Early in Ellen's education as a gardener, a friend gave her a birthday present that proved providential: four seasonal visits to Boston designer Kevin Doyle's garden, Cairn Croft, which is divided into outdoor "rooms," each accented with sculpture and clay pots. His landscape also features open lawns, woodlands, and wetlands. She soon engaged Doyle to help her develop her ideas, including ways to give the land welcome contours without the need for earthmovers. The eventual result was a perimeter of boulders that swoops around from the side yard to hem in shrubs on the front walkway path. More immediately, they discussed a gathering spot after the first bridge that would be designed with the whole family in mind, and which took form as a circular area with granite seating and a monolithic rock table surrounded by Japanese maples. That successful space was followed by a simple "folly," a three-sided building covered by a roof—where Ellen heads with her morning coffee, even when it rains—and, later, the addition of an allée of native black gum trees leading to it.

As any novice would, Ellen learned valuable lessons as the garden took shape. "Jonathan wanted a 'moat'



## THE PLAN

Before homeowner Ellen Lathi got bitten by the gardening bug, the two-acre suburban lot held a larger front lawn, a few token evergreens around the foundation, and no landscaping in back. Over the course of almost two decades, she added rustic pathways to a playhouse on the edge of the property, several bridges, a three-sided folly, and a wood pergola. Massive stone features include a Goshen-stone front walkway, fountains, a bench, a table, and planters that mark gathering spots. Given the swamp and the stream, all the plants tolerate moist conditions.









OPPOSITE: A brick terrace (E) was laid behind the house with an accompanying raised stone planter and stone wall to furnish a protected area for admiring the view out the back.

LEFT: Cooper romps on the back lawn (F), which is bordered by plantings that emphasize golden and burgundy foliage. In late summer, the silphiums send up yellow flower spikes.

BELOW: A gate crafted from salvaged gears (G) swings between granite posts marking the dog run.

around his playhouse, so I planted a sweep of immense-leaved ‘Sum and Substance’ hosta. The next morning it was gone—totally eaten by deer,” recalls Ellen.

With the garden forming a panorama spreading out from the back of the house, Ellen renovated the brick terrace to better admire the view. When she wants shade, she settles into a chair beneath a pergola near the driveway, surrounded by a noninvasive clumping bamboo. To screen out the neighbors, she planted a hedge of variegated western arborvitae along that side of the house.

**A**s a network of paths, beyond the initial trail to the playhouse, was installed, plants went in to make the journeys more interesting. In the swampy areas, moisture-loving primroses, ferns, primulas, astilbes, ligularias, and clethrass love the soggy soil. With the backyard full of purpose and plants, the front yard was due for a face-lift. To screen the street, Ellen added a hedge of American beech underplanted with boxwood and ‘Ice Dance’ carex at its feet. So much privacy resulted from the hedge that Ellen was able to insert a meditation circle with a fountain and stone seating just footsteps from the road. A low field-stone wall defines the front yard and leads foot traffic around from the side of the house to a gated dog run, her most recent installation. That low wall continues in front of the house, forming a raised bed for weeping Japanese maples along the walk to the door.





Early in the process, she opted for a DIY approach. “I decided that part of the fun was doing it myself rather than hiring someone to design my landscape,” she explains. “I wanted to be responsible for my own mistakes and successes.” Along the way, she learned that plants are what really excite her. But aside from some clematis and hydrangeas, flowers are not critical players in her garden. To preserve Jonathan’s wild domain, she kept buffering areas semiuntouched, and against that backdrop, she found, fascinating foliage stands out. She mastered the art of filling space with maximum impact from a class taught by mentor-turned-friend Gary Koller. “He suggested taking black-and-white photos of the garden throughout the year,” she says. “Only strong statements work in black and white. I could see what was missing.”

**T**hat realization led to an emphasis on form. From there, Ellen worked on color. One of her favorite combinations is the gold and chartreuse leaves of shrubs such as Thunberg’s meadowsweet, Tiger Eyes sumac, and golden dwarf barberry with the burgundy foliage of plants such as bronze dwarf barberry, ligularia, pennisetum, and a banana that she houses indoors in winter. And ornamental grasses sprinkled in add fountain-like shapes and late-season plumes. To add more strong structural elements, she brought in works by artist and friend Jill Nooney, including gates crafted from farm



**H**

**ABOVE RIGHT:** The first bridge (H), built with cedar poles, has a rustic wood canopy with akebia vines forming a green roof.

**RIGHT:** Primroses and grass-like sweet flag line the stream (I) where it curves away from the covered bridge.

**OPPOSITE:** Visiting children play in the “folly” (J). It holds chairs, a table, and a wall of decorative baskets and buckets.



**I**

salvage that honor the agrarian roots of the region. Granite posts were stationed beside walkways, and local fieldstone was used for paths. Frost-tolerant concrete urns serve as focal points throughout the year.

The plant list has evolved, of course. As trees such as the golden metasequoia, magnolias, umbrella pines, and stewartias gained size over the first 10 years, they shaded out the large grasses. The garden features fewer perennials today and more shrubs and trees. All tolerate the slightly damp soil in residence.

While Jonathan and his sister, Stephanie, are now grown and on their own, visiting children and grandchildren still enjoy exploring the garden’s fanciful destinations, including the furnished folly. For Ellen, the rewards of her passion for plants extend way beyond the visual feast that she has orchestrated. “I am so connected to the land now—I know where the dragonflies hang out and where the worms congregate,” she explains. “It’s such a powerful thing.” ■







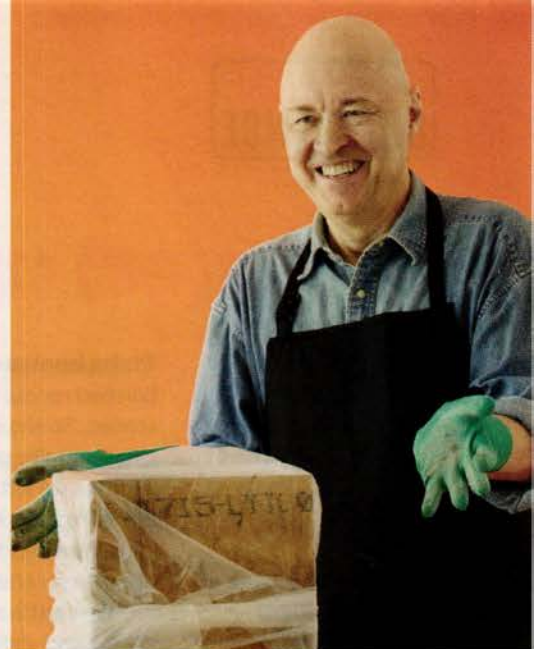
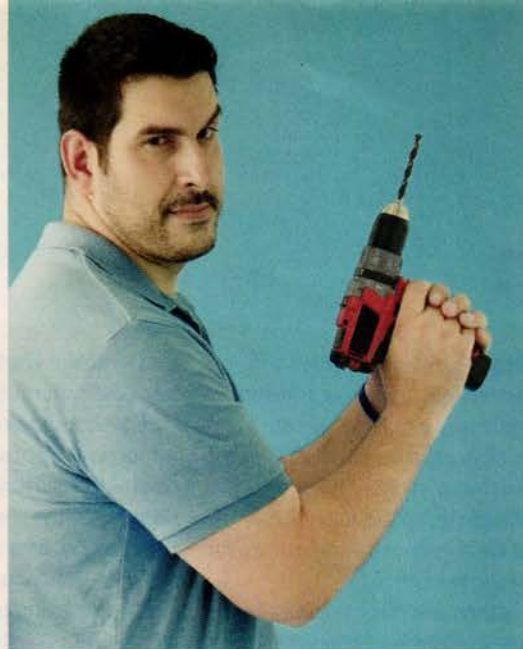


**What would you do with a few feet of trim and spray paint? Or a wall-mount sink and several scraps of cedar? Or a workbench top and some casters?**

Those are the questions we put to the teams of TOHers in the following pages. After some head-scratching, a threatened resignation, a couple of disagreements (shouting matches, really), and a mistake or two (but, fortunately, none that drew too much blood), the answers are in. We think they're pretty great. So here's another question: **COULD YOU DO BETTER?** It's your turn to make use of any scraps you've got lying around, supplemented, of course, by one or three trips to the home center, to build a project of your own. We're calling it the **#DIYDARE**. Just check out the pages ahead and get inspired, then snap a photo and send it along. **(HASH)TAG, YOU'RE IT.**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK LUND • STYLING BY VAUGHAN GLIDDEN  
ILLUSTRATED LETTERING BY MARY KATE McDEVITT







# Dress(er) up

## THE TEAM

Michelle Brunner  
Senior Editor  
Tisha Leung  
Design Editor

## THEIR STUFF

- > dresser ([lampsplus.com](http://lampsplus.com))
- > shellac primer ([zinsser.com](http://zinsser.com))
- > latex paint ([behr.com](http://behr.com))
- > metallic paint ([modernmasters.com](http://modernmasters.com))
- > stencils ([cuttingedgestencils.com](http://cuttingedgestencils.com))
- > knobs ([amazon.com](http://amazon.com))

## THEIR SOLUTION

Use metallic paint and stencils to replicate the look of an expensive bone-inlay dresser.

**Tisha knows color**—she finds the beautifully finished rooms that we feature in most of our stories. So she didn't sweat pulling a jar of glitzy metallic paint from the box of #DIYDare supplies we left with her and Michelle, the staff furniture guru. Michelle wasn't fazed either, knowing it was the ideal accent for the makeover of a dresser she had in her office.

"We can do a pattern and hack the look of a thousand-dollar inlay dresser," Michelle said. Tisha was sold and suggested stencils to speed the process of creating the furniture's intricate look. "It'll be superfast and consistent," she said. Tisha went stencil shopping online,

and Michelle started clearing papers from her bowfront muse.

Like most paint projects, this one included important prep: a primer coat before a base coat. After settling on a pattern, Michelle dabbed on the metallic paint as Tisha positioned the stencils, and together they covered the dresser with glimmering detail.

"An amazing transformation with just a little paint," Tisha pronounced once the stenciling dried. "And I'm thinking the perfect spot for that #DIYDare trophy," Michelle said.



> **A coat of pigmented shellac** dries faster than latex primer and gives the base coat an even color.



> **A quick spritz of adhesive** is all it takes to keep the stencils in place while painting.



> **Replacing the dresser's basic metal knobs** with bone-white ceramic versions is an easy upgrade. The fluted curves on the hardware now echo the shape of the furniture's legs.



**"Effortless  
beauty?  
Compared  
with  
painstaking  
bone inlay—  
absolutely!"**

**Michelle Brunner**  
Senior Editor

**Tisha Leung**  
Design Editor

↖  
The metallic paint  
really pops when  
paired with a dark  
and saturated top  
coat, like this  
blue or a black.





**"Strumming  
by the sink  
you just  
made from  
scrap lumber  
is better than  
singing in  
the shower."**

**Doug Adams**  
Deputy Art Director

**Liz Mundle**  
Assistant Photo Editor

If the casual  
cottage vibe  
these knots  
impart isn't  
your style,  
pick 4x4s with  
clear grain for a  
cleaner look.





# Standing water

## THE TEAM

Doug Adams  
Deputy Art Director  
Liz Mundle  
Assistant  
Photo Editor

## THEIR STUFF

- > wall-mount sink  
([homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com))
- > cedar 2x2s,  
4x4s, and decking  
([realcedar.com](http://realcedar.com))
- > wood glue  
([gorillatough.com](http://gorillatough.com))
- > faucet  
([deltafaucet.com](http://deltafaucet.com))
- > tung oil finish  
([minwax.com](http://minwax.com))

## THEIR SOLUTION

Create a stylish vanity by adding legs and a shelf to an inexpensive wall-mount sink.

**"A sink? What are we gonna do with a sink?"** Doug asked when Liz told him it'd be part of their #DIYDare challenge. "And cedar posts, too? We're doomed." "Relax," said Liz, measuring a length of cedar to vanity height. "We're gonna clean up."

Doug immediately got it, and, relieved, began to draw an open but storage-friendly base for the \$32 sink's square edges to sit on. A shelf and a towel bar completed the sketch.

They built a rim for the sink to rest on with

cedar, nails, and glue. Then Liz notched the legs with the miter saw to accept the shelf. Once the legs and shelf were assembled, they rubbed on a coat of tung oil to add luster and some protection to the piece, which now appeared far pricier than the sink's original cost.

"Yes indeed, clean up," Doug said, thinking of winning the #DIYDare, before Liz added, "You know, I meant that literally," and handed him a bar of soap.



> The sink rests on three mitered pieces of cedar that are inset slightly, creating a reveal around the porcelain.



> A miter saw makes quick work of the notches in the legs for the frame and the shelf supports.



> Cedar is tough stuff, but adding a coat of penetrating oil—especially to the end grain on the legs—gives it a cheap layer of protection.



**"Nope, not real  
cast iron, but our  
planter will last  
just as long, plus  
the lightweight  
PVC means I look  
as strong as Sal."**

**Sal Vaglica**  
*Senior Editor*

The appliques are  
a cinch to add: Coat  
them and the box  
with contact cement,  
press them in place,  
and let them sit  
for 15 minutes  
before painting.

**Allie Adams**  
*Designer*





# Cast in plastic

## THE TEAM

Sal Vaglica  
Senior Editor  
Allie Adams  
Designer

## THEIR STUFF

- > PVC trim and moldings ([azek.com](http://azek.com))
- > PVC cement
- > latex appliques ([efexusa.com](http://efexusa.com))
- > hardware
- > spray paint ([rustoleum.com](http://rustoleum.com))
- > contact cement

## THEIR SOLUTION

Mimic the details of a heavy cast-iron planter with lightweight PVC boards and stick-on appliques.

**Head cocked sideways**, Allie was looking at a length of PVC trim in her #DIYDare box. She had just realized it was about the same size as the cast-iron planters on the windowsills of townhouses in her neighborhood, the legit antique versions that salvage shops charge a bundle for and that weigh about 75 pounds—before soil and plants.

"We could totally build planters from this," Sal said. He'd just used the material on a maintenance-free lamppost project for *TOH*. It's lightweight, won't rot, and holds paint better than wood, he said. "Hmm...and we could get the cast-iron look by gluing appliques onto a basic box and painting it," said Allie.

She began to sketch an idea while Sal rounded up some more materials.

They made the box by joining the boards with PVC cement and finish nails. Once the cement dried, Allie added the rubber appliques and Sal attached the handles. Then it was time for two coats of spray paint.

"Dead ringer for cast iron," Sal said, admiring their work. "Easier to move around, too," Allie said, "but come on—I've got two more windows to worry about."



> **Brad nails act as clamps** to keep the PVC sides together while the cement cures.



> **Lengths of molding**, cut with the miter saw, frame the top and bottom of the planter.



> **When they weren't** threatening to spray each other, the team coated the planter with black paint. A second coat, with a textured brown paint, gives the box a vintage, oxidized look.



# Speed cart

## THE TEAM

Nate Stamos  
Publisher  
Lyndsey Natale  
Senior Account  
Manager

## THEIR STUFF

- > slip-on pipe fittings and aluminum tubing ([hollaender.com](http://hollaender.com))
- > casters ([shepherdcasters.com](http://shepherdcasters.com))
- > oak boards
- > workbench top ([homedepot.com](http://homedepot.com))
- > mineral oil

## THEIR SOLUTION

Turn aluminum tubing and fittings into a hardworking kitchen cart.

**Lyndsey looked at** the aluminum tubes and fittings poking up from the box of parts in her #DIYDare kit and fist-bumped Nate.

"Whatever we do, it's gonna be like building with Tinkertoys," she said. "But what should it be?" The stainless-steel color and a nearby workbench top made it click. "A rolling island," Lyndsey said.

They cut the aluminum tubes to length and joined them with fittings and a hex key. With the frame built, they added slats below for bulk storage, the beefy maple work surface above, and an overhead rack to keep frequently used pans handy.

Standing back and admiring their work, Nate said, "Not bad for the kitchen, but those wheels mean we can roll it right outside for backyard-cocktail time!" An idea they'll clearly drink to.



> A hex key and special fittings lock the tubing together at the corners.



> A generous 2-by-4-foot maple workbench top will withstand years of abuse and can be sanded to remove any knife cuts or burn marks.



> A coat of food-grade mineral oil helps prevent the top from cracking.



**"The island came together like child's play, but the wine is strictly grown-up."**

**Nate Stamos**  
*Publisher*

**Lyndsey Natale**  
*Senior Account Manager*

A host of different fittings can configure the tubes for nearly any use, from an island to a closet to a bookcase.





# Smiling in the rain

## THE TEAM

**Bob Newman**  
Creative Director  
**Ivy**  
Bob's daughter

## THEIR STUFF

- > plywood
- > concrete  
([shapecrete.com](http://shapecrete.com))
- > concrete dye  
([behr.com](http://behr.com))

## THEIR SOLUTION

Use concrete to make an umbrella stand that looks like wood.

As soon as her dad, **Bob**, told her the tub of concrete they were given molds like clay, 12-year-old Ivy started rolling up her sleeves.

Bob had worked with concrete in the past and knew the material could be embossed. "If we make a form from distressed plywood, it will give the concrete shape and imprint the grain," he said. Ivy was fine with that but still wanted to know what to make. "Leave it to me," said Bob, who proceeded to look for a circular saw.

Bob cut strips of plywood for the sides, and Ivy scrubbed out the grain with a wire brush before screwing the parts together to create

the form. After mixing up a batch of concrete, Ivy, with a whole lot of glee, used it to pack the walls of the form. Once it cured, they applied a concrete dye.

"Who knew you could use concrete like clay?" Ivy said. "Who knew I could trick you into making an umbrella stand so we can clean up the front hall?" Bob answered back, with a grin.



> **The sides of the form**, made from rough, exterior-grade sheathing, impart the grain onto the concrete as it cures.



> **The concrete is fiber-reinforced** to minimize cracking. The team packed it onto the walls, a handful at a time, until the sides were about 1/2 inch thick.



> **Paint would have masked** the wood-grain detail, so the team added color with a penetrating concrete dye. ■



"With a bit of water, gray concrete powder became a rock-hard umbrella stand that won't mind getting a little wet."

**Bob Newman**  
Creative Director

**Ivy**  
DIYer-in-training

Concrete doesn't have to look like a sidewalk. A coat of blue-green dye makes this umbrella stand look great even when it's empty.

## Can you do better? Prove it!

We want to see what you can create using scraps left over from past projects. Build it, shoot it, then share it with us on social media using **#DIYDARE**. (Or, if you prefer, e-mail photos to us at **DIYDare@thisoldhouse.com**) Our favorites will appear in *This Old House* magazine.







# COZY COTTAGE REDO

A first-time homeowner  
**revives a neglected  
1928 bungalow** with  
patience, perseverance,  
and a little help from  
her skilled friends

By **Helen Thompson**  
Photographs by **Casey Dunn**  
Produced by **Tisha Leung**  
Styling by **Ann Edgerton**



In the dining room, homeowner Brenna Byerlotzer left the shiplap exposed for dramatic effect, as well as a tribute to the original structure of the little house.

LEFT: She also kept the native Texas limestone facade, which had been brightened with a thorough power-washing just before she bought the place. She added the bright-blue window and door trim.









**Buying a first house** is a personal landmark that often signals the beginning of adulthood. But at 26, Brenna Byerlotzer didn't have homeownership on her mind when she came upon the small stone house that she would claim as her own. In fact, she decided in a split second to take the major domestic step. Despite that sudden start, nothing else in her homeownership saga would move fast.

This was 10 years ago, when Brenna was living nearby with her parents, an arrangement that suited everyone—though she worried that her two rescue pups were wearing out their welcome. One night, fate made a move. “I was riding my bike through the neighborhood when I noticed a FOR SALE sign,” explains Brenna, a restaurant manager. She wasn't planning to buy, but taking in the compact size and rustic exterior that reminded her of the little Texas Hill Country houses that she loved, “I had a flash this was the right place for me,” she says now. The 1,050-square-foot stone structure stood out from

**ABOVE:** The window on the range wall was too low to allow for 32-inch-high base cabinets, so it was replaced with two double-hungs set higher and flanking a fixed pane to bring in more light.

*Range:* Kenmore Pro.  
*Refrigerator, vent hood:* KitchenAid. *Pendants:* West Elm. *Tile:* Architerra

**RIGHT:** The washer and dryer once stood in this corner of the kitchen, now used more efficiently for counter space. The wheeled island contributes a staging area for dishes en route to the dining room. *Island:* Crate & Barrel. *Rug:* World Market







## floor plan

Before the redo, the 1,050-square-foot, two-bedroom house included a master bedroom that could be reached only by going through the bathroom from the living room. With the remodel, the kitchen and dining room remained in place, while the living room and front bedroom swapped places. The result: The relocated bedroom has immediate access to the bath, which gained a few precious inches from the former master bedroom, now the office/guest room.



**ABOVE:** The six-light French doors are original to the house. The shiplap boards were discovered as drywall was removed during the renovation. Chairs: West Elm. Rug: Safavieh

**LEFT:** The green sectional Brenna chose just happened to fit the room's dimensions exactly. Little B enjoys a rare moment on the sofa with her, while Lucy naps nearby. Sofa, coffee table, rug: West Elm

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the other houses on the street in East Austin, a neighborhood of once-grand Victorian-era homes shoulder to shoulder with neat wood-frame bungalows that was being rediscovered by artists, retirees, and young professionals.

The house's quirky charms diverted Brenna from its structural challenges. A front porch cut into the boxy dwelling suggested a place to linger; a door on the porch's right side led to a room that was being used as a bedroom but would be well suited to serve as the living room, with the dining room and kitchen lined up behind it. On the back wall of the porch, another door opened onto the designated living room; a bathroom connected it to the master bedroom. Its ricketyness hinted that the bedroom had been tacked on at some point.

Brenna loved what she saw, even if there were aesthetic shocks, too. "The walls and the ceilings were covered in this terrible popcorn texture," she says. Other issues surpassed the cosmetic, and that's





when Brenna called on architect Rebecca Devine, a member of her soccer team. “There wasn’t a lot of inherent value in the structure,” says Devine. The inspector’s report sounded dire, too. “He noted the bad addition, that the house needed new wiring and plumbing, the roof was dodgy, and the stone veneer was cracking,” she adds. Despite the flaws, 9-foot ceilings, stately door casings, glass-paned French doors, and a built-in dining room hutch encouraged the newbie home buyer. Brenna bought the house, optimistically ignoring the holes in the kitchen floor that gaped to reveal dirt below.

In the meantime, contractor David Wilkes—also a soccer player who had served on coed teams with Devine—began work on an addition to Brenna’s parents’ house. Talk naturally turned to the improvements needed at their daughter’s house. Then the economy tanked and everything was put on hold.

Five years in, with the economy picking up, the time was finally right to start work on the kitchen. Wilkes’s biggest task: to stabilize the 13-foot-by-15-foot cook space. “My concern,” he says, “was how well the house was framed.” The reality presented

**ABOVE LEFT:** The office (and sometime guest room) was formerly the master bedroom. Contractor David Wilkes suggested the alder-wood barn door on a steel track for aesthetic as well as space-saving reasons. Pocket doors to the closet and the bathroom, both off the hall, also free up space.

**ABOVE RIGHT:** The tiny bathroom appears larger thanks to a wall-hung sink cabinet, floating shelves, white walls, and splashy patterned ceramic tile that continues from the floor to the tub surround. Tile: Architerra. Cabinet: Lacava. Tub deck, floating shelves: Caesarstone



by the rotted cedar-post foundation was scary.

But Brenna was all in at that point, and not about to turn her back on the little house. The foundation concerns did nix any hopes she had for a second-floor master suite, however—which was okay with her. After living in the house, Brenna realized, “I really only used three rooms, so I decided to keep the house the size it was.”

Wilkes proceeded, shoring up the shaky structure with 12 concrete piers. He also ripped up the kitchen floor to add a subfloor. “We could only save part of the floor,” he says, so he found reclaimed longleaf pine from an outside source and toothed in pieces he could salvage from the original floor. New electrical replaced insulated-cloth wiring, and all the plumbing was replaced with PVC. Double-pane low-e windows and spray-foam insulation in the attic and in the walls weatherproofed the house. A bonus: “Even though we were just doing the kitchen,” says Wilkes, “it affected as much as 20 to 30 percent of the rest of the house because we upgraded systems and the foundation.”

An unexpected complication to the renovation





arose when Devine moved to New York and had to bow out of the project. So Wilkes enlisted Austin architect Rose Bartush to work on the plans to untangle the graceless spaces on the left side of the house. Just getting to the bedroom in the back was a trek: The only existing route was via the former living room and through the bath.

The changes were organized along a short hallway that slices from the front bedroom (the former living room) to the office/guest room (the former master bedroom). Shallow closets in each bedroom were closed off to merge them into a walk-in closet accessible from the hallway. Then the bathroom was reoriented so that it opens onto the hall across from the closet, a vast improvement over its former

**The bedroom—with a view onto the front porch—is furnished with mid-century-style pieces such as the chest of drawers Brenna inherited from her grandmother. A vintage sewing-machine table serves as a nightstand. The barn door and steel track match those in the office/guest room at the back of the house. Bed, pink-and-white rug; hall pendant: West Elm**

double life as passageway to the back bedroom.

Brenna, who has now lived in the stone cottage for a decade, has no regrets about a result that was a long time coming. She's been able to furnish the cozy abode slowly, with a mix of old pieces and new finds, vintage and modern. "When I bought this house, I didn't know what my style was," she says. "I would have chosen the wrong things."

She is especially grateful that she had a good team to work with: "It's been nice having people who know what I'm like help me." The combination of Brenna's flair, Devine's support, and Wilkes's unflapability has made for a winning outcome. "I understand myself and my house better," says Brenna. "It was worth the wait." ■



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# Ask

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48

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

Q

I'd like to start an herb garden this year. Can you give some pointers on where to locate it and how to care for it?

—TIM ANGELOSANTO, STONEHAM, MASS.

A

Herbs love sun, so find a spot that gets at least 6 hours a day, and provide a compost-rich soil that drains well; they don't like "wet feet." Group them by their watering needs. Rosemary, thyme, and sage, for example, don't mind drier conditions. Basil, chives, and parsley prefer to be kept moist. —THE EDITORS

PHOTOGRAPH BY VICTOR SCHRAGER





*Our cast  
of veteran  
experts*



**TOM SILVA**  
General Contractor



**NORM ABRAM**  
Master Carpenter



**RICHARD TRETHEWEY**  
Plumbing and Heating  
Expert



**ROGER COOK**  
Landscape Contractor



**KEVIN O'CONNOR**  
Host

**The stair treads leading up to my deck are starting to split and need to be replaced. What's the best way to do that?**

—MARIO VALONE, BALTIMORE



Norm Abram uses a marking guide that he built to make every step of a tree house ladder exactly the same size. This type of guide works for deck stairs, too.

**NORM ABRAM REPLIES:** Let's assume that your deck stairs were built to code, with a tread depth of at least 10 inches, a width of at least 36 inches, and no more than 7¼ inches from the top of each tread to the top of the next. If not, then your stairway should be rebuilt for safety. But if it is up to code, take an impact driver and unscrew the old treads from the stringers. Check that the structure is in good shape and install new treads, all cut to exactly the same size.

A marking guide like the one I'm using at left will come in handy during the cutting phase of this project. Just cut one tread to the desired length and screw a batten to one end. Make sure the batten overhangs so that you can hook it over the end of the tread stock. Then use the guide's other end to quickly and accurately mark each cut. There's no measuring, so every piece comes out exactly the same.

I can't say for sure why your original treads split, but that commonly occurs when wide pieces of wood are screwed down so tightly that they can't move. You can avoid this problem by using two pieces of narrower stock to form each tread.

PHOTOS: (TOP 5) ANTHONY TIEULI; (BOTTOM) CARLENE RILING; (OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT) TED MORRISON





## Q Picture rail on plaster

My 1871 Italianate house has soft brick interior walls covered in plaster. How do I fasten a picture rail to those walls without damaging them?

—KEITH LEWIS, CAMDEN, IND.

**TOM SILVA REPLIES:** Don't bother with fasteners. A high-quality construction adhesive should do the job very nicely. Make sure it's a high-tack or fast-grab type, like PL Premium Fast Grab Polyurethane (loctiteproducts.com). Without a high-tack adhesive, the rail is likely to sag or fall off soon after you put it in place.

First, check the condition of the paint where the rail will be installed. If it's not well adhered, scrape it off. Then, using a chalk line, snap a straight line on the wall that's roughly parallel to the ceiling to guide you as you glue the rail in place. Let your eye tell you if the line looks right. One that's dead level will probably look out of place if your house has settled at all in the last 145 years.

## Q What do you do with a rusty drainpipe?

The 30-foot cast-iron drain that runs under our slab floor is rusted, rough, and constantly clogging. I call a plumber to clear it at least once a year. Does anyone make a sleeve or a coating to make the pipe smooth? I don't want to jackhammer my floors.

—JERRY THROWER, OKLAHOMA CITY

## What is it?

**A**  
Seat pad for a lawn tractor

**B**  
Kneeling pad for gardeners

**C**  
Shoulder pads for roofers

**D**  
Vibration isolation pad for washers and dryers

FOR THE ANSWER, SEE PAGE 84.



A bland, cracked concrete walkway would look much better if covered with the same flagstone that's on the porch.

**RICHARD TRETHEWEY REPLIES:** As a matter of fact, there is a way to reline an old drainpipe like yours and avoid the cost and disruption of cutting into the slab. The technology, called cured-in-place pipe (CIPP), basically involves inflating a resin-coated fabric balloon inside a pipe. After the resin hardens, the old pipe is left with a smooth new lining.

Some CIPP systems use a polyester resin, which doesn't adhere to the inside of the pipe. As a result, the ends of any pipes that feed into the main drain have to be carefully sealed to prevent water from getting between the lining and the old pipe. That's not always easy to do.

Other systems, such as Nu Flow (nuflowtech.com), use an epoxy resin that sticks to the wall of the old pipe. To get good adhesion, the pipe has to be mechanically scoured before the fabric is introduced, but with no gap between the pipe and liner, cutting the openings to the lateral pipes is easier. Nu Flow uses robots to make those cuts from inside the pipe.

Whichever system you choose, make sure an experienced professional performs the work, and uses a video cam to inspect the lining after it's installed.

## Q Cracked walkway fix

We want to eliminate an unsightly crack in the concrete walkway off our porch and have the repair tie in seamlessly with the existing flagstone porch floor. Any suggestions?

—BECKY KNITTEL, SHARPSBURG, GA.

**ROGER COOK REPLIES:** I'd buy enough matching flagstone to lay an entire walkway over the existing concrete. If the stones are all the same thickness and smooth on at least one face, they could be glued down with an exterior-grade construction adhesive, like the one made by Gorilla Glue (gorillatough.com). More likely, the stones will have a rough texture and an uneven thickness. In that case, set them in a bed of mortar. Whichever approach you take, the joints between the stones should be filled with mortar.

Before you start, look at how the stones' added thickness will affect the ends of the walkway. At the porch end, the step may have to be rebuilt so that it's between 5 and 7 inches above the new walkway. Anything more or less will be a tripping hazard. You may also need to add a step at the walkway's other end, where it meets the sidewalk.



Once you've figured out the ends, chisel and wire-brush away the loose material around the crack, then scrub the walkway with a power-washer or a brush and a cleaning solution containing TSP or TSP substitute. When the concrete is dry, fill the crack with a polyurethane sealant, such as Quikrete's concrete-crack sealant (quikrete.com). If the crack is more than 1/4 inch wide, press foam backer rod into it before you caulk.

Now the stone-laying can begin. If you're bedding the stones in mortar, add an acrylic-latex bonding agent like SikaLatex R (usa.sika.com) to the mix to ensure good adhesion to the concrete. Just be sure not to bridge the crack, or you'll end up with fractured stones as the concrete on either side moves. Instead, create a soft joint by leaving a narrow gap directly above that crack. Hide this joint with backer rod and gray silicone sealant. Unlike other sealants, silicone remains flexible and won't be damaged by the sun. To disguise the sealant, blend in some mortar dust collected from a grinder or a saw.

If your new walkway runs past a lawn, you can hide its edge by peeling back the turf a few feet and adding enough loam to raise it up even with the stone edge. Just lay the peeled-back grass back in place and your walkway will look like it's always been there.

## **Q The baseboard has got to go**

**I have to remove about a zillion feet of poorly installed baseboard. Is there a way to get it off without doing a number on the drywall?**

—JIM STRONG, ANACORTES, WASH.

## **What is it?**

**D Kneeling pad for gardeners**  
The Kneeler's soft, closed-cell foam rubber provides a comfortable cushion for any task that involves kneeling. \$20; backjoy.com



**TOM SILVA REPLIES:** That won't be too difficult, if you work methodically and use the right tools: a utility knife, a fairly stiff putty knife, a couple of 6-inch tapping knives, and two pry bars. A pair of comfortable kneepads will also be a big help.

Use the utility knife to slice through the paint and caulk sealing the horizontal joints between the top of the baseboard and the drywall and between the baseboard and the shoe molding, if there is one, and the vertical joint where a baseboard meets a door casing.

Starting at the door casing, use the putty knife to pry away the shoe molding, then finish the job with a pry bar. Now, back where the baseboard butts into the casing, hold a tapping knife against the wall at a stud location. If you don't have a stud finder and there aren't any obvious imperfections in the wall to show where a stud is, look for a light switch. It will most likely be attached to a stud. The tapping knife will protect the drywall from scrapes and crumbling as you pry off the baseboard, first with the putty knife, then a pry bar.

While a single pry bar has enough leverage to pull the baseboard away from the wall, it's probably not enough to free the

piece completely. To do that, place the second tapping knife at the next stud—the nails in the baseboard should indicate the spot—and use the second pry bar to ease the trim out. Leave that bar in place, then leapfrog to the next set of nails with the first tapping knife and pry bar. Work both pry bars at the same time, and the end of the baseboard should come free.

Continue prying and leapfrogging, and the baseboard should pop off in one piece without damaging the drywall.

## **Q Deer-resistant shade garden for clay soil**

**I dream of having a lush shade garden filled with deer-tolerant perennials, but our wooded lot has heavy clay soil and many tree roots. Can you make my dream come true?**

—DEANNA LUTZ, ACCOKEEK, MD.

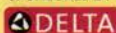
**JENNIFER NAWADA REPLIES:** Deer. Shade. Clay soil. Each one is a challenge by itself, and you've got all three! That said, it is possible to overcome these conditions by selecting the right plants and taking steps to improve the soil.

Let's start with the plants. Woody shrubs that would perform well in your Zone 7a garden

## **GOT ANSWERS?**

If you've got a tip that would impress the show guys, share it with us for a chance to appear in the October issue. To post ideas, visit [thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH](http://thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH)

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include witch hazel, fothergilla, boxwood, clethra, drooping leucothoe, arrow-wood viburnum, and oakleaf hydrangea. And for perennials to go with the shrubs, consider these tough shade or partial-shade lovers: astilbe, bleeding heart, brunnera, foxglove, epimedium, ferns, Japanese forest grass, pulmonaria, and liriopse.

All of them are deer-resistant, meaning deer won't feast on them with the same gusto as on hostas, hollies, yews, and rhododendrons, which also like shade. But no plant is truly deer-proof; they'll eat whatever is within reach when their preferred food sources run low. If their browsing becomes excessive, you can install deer netting or apply a repellent such as Deer Scram (deerscrum.com). Both products can be found at your local garden center.

The plants I've listed will also tolerate a wide range of soil types and pH, from slightly acidic to slightly alkaline. But before you head to the nursery, have the soil tested by the local cooperative extension service. The test will show the soil's pH and fertility, and tell you exactly how much of which nutrients or neutralizers should be added for your new additions to thrive.

As you plant your garden, take care not to disturb the living roots of any tree that you want to keep. A groundcover such as periwinkle, which needs only 3 to 5 inches of soil, would be a good choice in beds close to trees or with lots of surface roots. Where there are fewer roots and you can successfully dig, use a rototiller or a shovel to thoroughly incorporate a 50/50 mixture of compost and coarse—not fine—sand into the clay to improve its fertility and ability to drain.



For perennials, work in the sand and compost to a depth of at least 6 inches, and plant them in masses of three to seven plants to give their display a more substantial impact. Shrubs should be placed to provide a backbone to the garden when the perennials die back in winter.

Mulch and hand-water each new specimen after planting, and make sure they all get watered regularly during their first growing season to help them become well established in their new home. Have fun developing the garden of your dreams!

*Jennifer Nawada is a landscape designer, a certified horticulturist, and the owner of Nawada Landscape Design in Boston. She appears regularly on TV episodes of Ask This Old House.*

### Shade-loving plants for heavy clay soil:

- 1 astilbe
- 2 boxwood
- 3 viburnum
- 4 brunnera
- 5 Japanese forest grass

## Q Hide screw holes in kitchen cabinets

I want to change the hinges on my cabinets to the concealed type. But how do I cover the screw holes left by the old hinges?

—BEVERLEY MORRISON, PARADISE, NEWFOUNDLAND

**TOM SILVA REPLIES:** The fix depends on whether your cabinets are painted or stained. If painted, simply fill each hole with a small dab of polyester wood filler, like the ones made by Bondo (bondo.com) and Minwax (minwax.com). You mix a little hardener into the putty and in about 25 minutes it sets hard enough to sand. Then just prime and paint to complete the repair.

Disguising holes in cabinets with a stained finish is more of a challenge. You'll want to use a colored wax pencil, like the Blend-Fil pencils made by Minwax. Find one that matches the shade of your existing finish and rub the pencil's tip back and forth over the hole to fill it with wax. Wipe off the residue around the hole with a clean cloth.

If no pencil's color is a close enough match, try blending a few. Start by filling the hole with a slightly lighter shade, then go over it with a darker pencil. That's all there is to it; wax can't be top-coated with a clear finish.

## Ask THIS OLD HOUSE

**Go to:** [thisoldhouse.com/asktoh](http://thisoldhouse.com/asktoh)  
**Or write to:** Ask This Old House  
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Include a complete address and daytime phone number. Published questions will be edited for clarity and length and may be used in other media. We regret that, because of the volume of mail received, we're unable to reply to unpublished questions.





## More great stuff

Every month, we discover new tools, materials, and home-improvement products. Here are the latest standouts. —THE EDITORS



### Clip it and go

**Universal Tool Holders, by Worx**

These handy reinforced-nylon helpers, which attach to the edge of a wheelbarrow like giant clothespins, securely grip a single rake, shovel, or gardening fork by the handle. Affix them to a shelf edge and they'll also store your yard tools. \$10 per pair; [worx.com](http://worx.com)

### Rotates under pressure

**Brass Hose Swivel, by Damm**

Tired of your hose kinking? This little brass coupler should help. It allows the hose and the attachment you're holding to turn independently, even when the water is running. No more fighting with the hose while watering. \$18; [damm.com](http://damm.com)



### Solid as rock

**Board-on-board concrete fence, by Superior Concrete Products**

This privacy fence will never rot or become termite fodder—its posts and tongue-and-groove boards are made of reinforced cast concrete. Suitable for all climates, it's strong enough to withstand winds of up to 160 mph. About \$125 per linear foot for a 6-foot-tall fence; [concretefence.com](http://concretefence.com)



### Smart sensor

**Geo Wi-Fi-connected thermostat, by Lux**

Here's a full-featured, Wi-Fi thermostat that doesn't cost an arm and a leg. You can control it remotely from your smartphone, or let the geofencing feature automatically ramp up the system when your phone comes within a certain radius. It will also send alerts when the temperature rises or falls outside a set range. \$180; [luxproducts.com](http://luxproducts.com)



### Not your average board

**Vault Decking, by Deckorators**

Lighter, stronger, and more stable than other nonwood decking, this unique, 7/8-inch-thick capped composite—a blend of polypropylene and ground limestone that's stretched like hot taffy at the factory—comes with a 25-year warranty against fading, stains, and structural failure. About \$3.85 per linear foot; [deckorators.com/vault](http://deckorators.com/vault)



### Tames stubborn screws

**Cordless hex impact driver, by Makita**

It looks like a cordless screwdriver, but it's actually an in-line, variable-speed impact driver, the first we've seen. And it has the power—up to 195 inch-pounds of torque—to drive and remove screws and bolts that would defeat an ordinary cordless screwdriver. Use it in a pistol-grip configuration (shown) or as a straight stick. Its slim profile allows it to fit into tight situations. \$314; [makitatools.com](http://makitatools.com) ■



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# Directory

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**COVER:** See listing for "Cozy Cottage Redo."

## HOME SOLUTIONS

(pp. 15–20) **Speed-clean with these pro tips:** Thanks to Jan Dougherty, author, *The Lost Art of House Cleaning*, Outskirts Press; outskirtspress.com.

**Fixes for a popcorn ceiling:** Thanks to Mike Poellinger, Poellinger Inc., La Crosse, WI; 608-785-1234; poellinger.com

## BEFORE + AFTER: KITCHEN DESIGN

Major multitasker (pp. 22–25) **Kitchen design, cabinets, range hood, and backslashes:** Deane, New Canaan, CT; 203-972-8836; deaneinc.com. **General contractor:** Longridge Builders, Danbury, CT; 203-966-1922; longridgebuilders.com. **Paint:** HC-167 Amherst Gray (island and butler's-pantry cabinets), 1535 Seattle Mist (perimeter cabinets and trim), and custom blend (walls); benjaminmoore.com. **Range, refrigerator, refrigerator drawers, warming drawer, and wine refrigerator:** subzero-wolf.com. **Dishwashers:** asko.com. **Sinks:** julien.ca. **Faucets:** kallista.com. **Countertops:** Stonehenge Marble & Granite LLC, Stratford, CT; 203-377-1962; stonehengellc.com. **Cabinet pulls:** topknobs.com. **Pendant lights above island:** Regina Andrew Design; lampsplus.com. **Barstools:** leeindustries.com. **Breakfast table:** olostudio.com. **Butler's-pantry wallpaper:** phillipjeffries.com (to the trade only)

## BEFORE + AFTER: BATH DESIGN

Pitch perfect (pp. 26–27) **Tile contractor:** Raymond Pitman, Big River Tile, Whitefish, MT; 406-250-4927. **Toilet:** kohler.com. **Sinks, faucets, showerhead, and mirrors:** homedepot.com. **Paint:** W-D-710 Creamy White (walls); behr.com

## LANDSCAPING

Quick climbers (pp. 29–31) **Author's book:** *Why Grow That When You Can Grow This?*, Timber Press; timberpress.com

## PAINT IDEAS

Make waves (pp. 32–33) **Paint:** 724 Peacock Feathers (wall) and OC-117 Simply White (stenciled); benjaminmoore.com

## GET THIS LOOK FOR LESS

Colorful, eclectic dining room (pp. 34–35) **Farm table:** Wood Farmhouse Extension Table; worldmarket.com. **Mod side chair:** Pyramid Dining Side Chair in Light Green; lexmod.com. **Bird-print wallpaper:** Julia Rothman Daydream (green); hyggeandwest.com. **Vintage-look hardware:** 2-inch Cocoa Bronze Matchbox Door Latch and 1½-inch Clear Victorian Glass

Cabinet Knob; homedepot.com. **Glass pendant:** Droplet Glass Chandelier; westelm.com. **Mirror backslash:** Casanova Platinum Mirror Tile; tilebar.com. **Oversize hutch:** American Pride Large Kitchen Buffet Server and Hutch; gothiccabinetcraft.com. #HDGB29 True Turquoise Semi-Gloss Latex Interior Paint with Primer; homedepot.com. **Faux leaded glass:** Caring Lines Stained Glass; joann.com

## THIS OLD HOUSE TV

That's a wrap! (pp. 38–41) **Architect:** Mat Cummings, Ipswich, MA; 978-356-5026; cummingsarchitects.com. **Interior designer:** Amanda Reid, Boston; 917-796-5852; mandarinastudio.net. **Kitchen designer:** Linda Cloutier, Greenland, NH; 603-964-2959; lindacloutier.com. **Living room drapes:** Indian Arbre in Hyacinth; fschumacher.com. **Powder room wallpaper:** Lotus; us.farrow-ball.com. **Paint:** 2118-60 Misty Memories (foyer), 2128-60 Beacon Gray (kitchen), and 2121-70 Chantilly Lace (powder room trim); benjaminmoore.com

## SHOPPING

Fauna for your door (pp. 43–45) **Mane attraction:** Solid Brass Regal Lion Door Knocker in Antique Brass; lookintheattic.com. **Take flight:** Dragonfly in Flight Door Knocker by Michael Healy Designs; wayfair.com. **Buzzworthy:** Michael Healy MH1101 Bumblebee Door Knocker, Brass; atgstores.com. **Wise choice:** OWL Solid Brass Door Knocker Hoot in Antiqued Darkened Bronze Finish; thekingsbay.com. **Just hanging out:** Antique Brass Door Knocker Hanging Bat Gothic Home Vampire; rensup.com. **Sly find:** Fox Door Knocker in Cast Iron Rust; areohome.com. **Slowpoke:** Brass Snail Door Knocker in Brushed Nickel; signaturehardware.com. **Fabled appeal:** Forest Friendship Doorknocker; anthropologie.com. **Trophy mount:** Cast Iron Moose Head Door Knocker in Rustic Brown Finish; treasuregurus.com. **What a tail:** Michael Healy MH105 Whale Tail Door Knocker in Nickel Silver; atgstores.com. **Pretty nutty:** Squirrel Door Knocker; homedecorators.com



**PHOTOSHOP REDO** From dated to "Do come in!" (p. 46) **House numbers:** HouseArt; wayfair.com. **Paint:** AF-330 Soleil (body); benjaminmoore.com. **Sconce:** Reef Entry Light in Victorian Bronze;

houseofantiquehardware.com. **Entry door:** Thermal Sash door; simpsondoor.com

**WEEKEND REMODEL** Install a critter-proof garden fence (pp. 49–53) **PVC-coated galvanized wire:** critterfence.com

## COZY COTTAGE REDO

(pp. 74–79) **Architect:** Rebecca Devine, Devine Austin; 512-751-6040; devineaustin.com. **Architect:** Rose Bartush, Bartush Design, Austin, TX; 512-415-3787; bartushdesign.com. **Contractor:** David Wilkes, David Wilkes Builders, Austin, TX; 512-328-9888; davidwilkesbuilders.com. **Kitchen:** Island; crateandbarrel.com. **Range:** kenmore.com. **Refrigerator and vent hood:** kitchenaid.com. **Pendants:** westelm.com. **Cabinets and flooring:** Custom. **Tile:** architectrashowroom.com. **Dining room:** Table: Vintage. **Chairs:** westelm.com. **Sheepskins:** ikea.com. **Pendants:** Silvia Bell & Ball Pendants; crateandbarrel.com. **Rug:** Safavieh; onekingslane.com. **Knobs:** anthropologie.com. **Yellow tray:** Nannie Inez, Austin, TX; 512-428-6639; nannieinez.com. **Living room:** Sectional, coffee table, and rug; westelm.com. **Orange bowl:** Mockingbird Domestics, Austin, TX; 512-677-4004; mockingbirddomestics.com. **Office:** Multicolor rug; onekingslane.com. **Desk:** Vintage. **Yellow tray and blue pots:** nannieinez.com. **Bedroom:** Bed, pink-and-white rug, and hall pendant; westelm.com. **Nightstand:** Vintage. **Cactus art:** Anna Kamburis Design. **Bathroom:** Surround and open shelves; caesarstoneus.com. **Tile:** architectrashowroom.com. **Wall-mounted cabinet:** lacava.com

## ASK THIS OLD HOUSE

(pp. 81–86) Q+A: **Deer-resistant shade garden for clay soil:** Thanks to Jennifer Nawada, Nawada Landscape Design, Inc.; 617-942-2985; nawadalandscape.com

## SAVE THIS OLD HOUSE

(p. 98) Thanks to Memi Perez Rennewanz, MPR Realty, Logansport, IN; 574-992-8011; mprrealty.net

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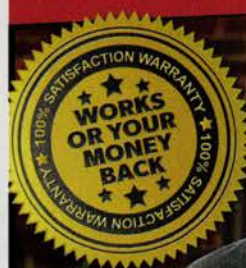


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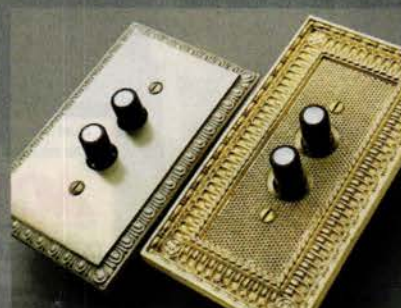
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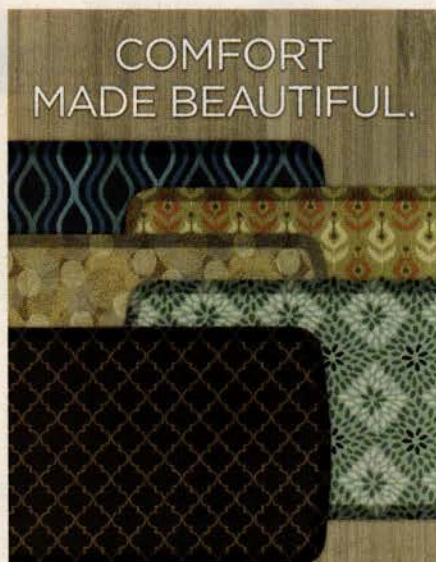
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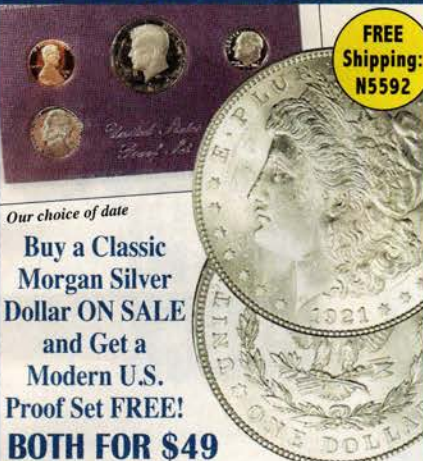
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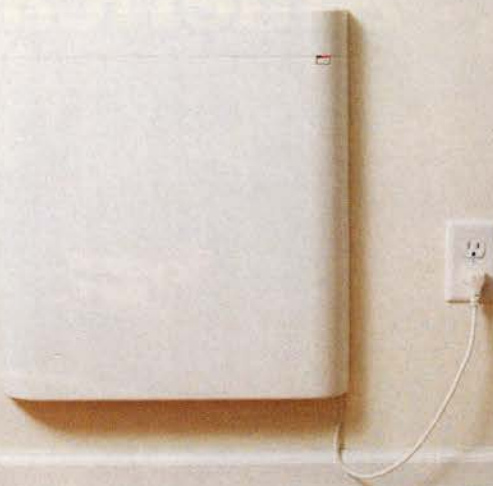
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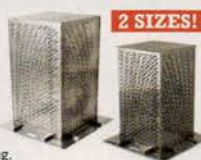
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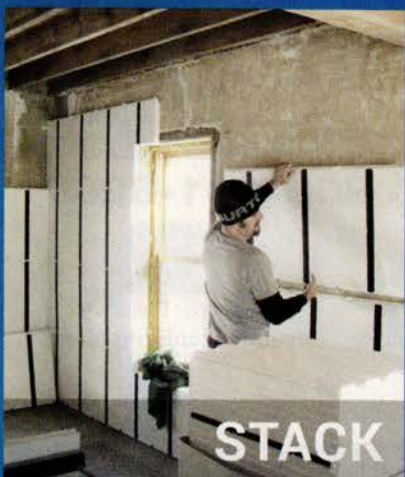
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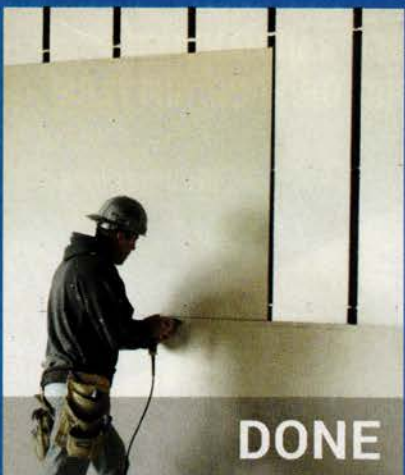




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# Save THIS OLD HOUSE

**PRICE** \$69,900

**LOCATION** Logansport, Indiana

**CONTACT** Memi Perez Rennewanz,  
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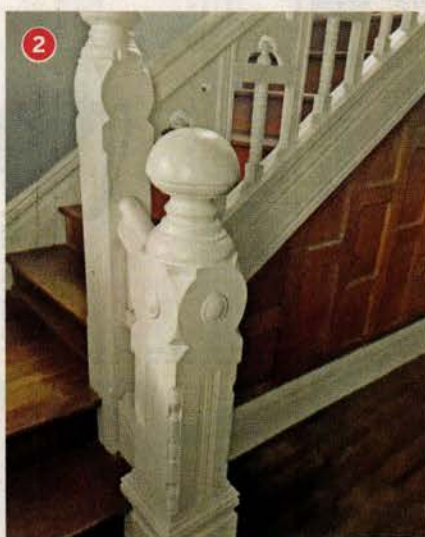
**THE HISTORY** When Senator John Tipton died, in 1839, his 11-year-old son, George, was barely old enough to help out on the family farm. But the adult George didn't allow that early misfortune to stand in his way, transforming the small parcel his father left him into a flourishing business that sold produce to markets in Chicago. Around 1850, he and his wife, Sarah, built this sprawling home on the land and eventually had five children. When George died, in 1873, the house was sold outside the family. In 1890, the facade was altered where it faced the newly built street, including the addition of an impressive two-story porch. Most recently, the house was purchased by a local real-estate agent, who started a restoration. She's now looking to sell it to someone with the time and means to finish the job.

**WHY SAVE IT?** The refined exterior is accented by a handsome double-height porch with massive Corinthian columns. The interior features a number of original details, including two fireplaces, turned oak spandrels, and a stained-glass window in the staircase landing.

**WHAT IT NEEDS** While the house is structurally sound, it needs some updates to the electrical system and the master bathroom. Logansport is a town of about 18,000, located 75 miles north of Indianapolis. A wide array of historical structures have helped fuel a restoration of the downtown area. Now, locals are hoping that this momentum will inspire someone to restore one of the most lavish houses in town.

—PAUL HOPE

Victorian-era gem filled with character



1. The 3,948-square-foot house has four bedrooms and one bathroom and sits on a half-acre lot. A new owner could finish the basement and attic to add another 2,500 square feet of living space.

2. A handsome newel and balustrade were likely added around 1890, when what had been the side of the house was altered to face the newly built street.

3. French doors separate the living and dining rooms.

4. There are two fireplaces in the home, both of which have been converted to run on natural gas.



## GOT A HOUSE?

If you know of an old house that should be saved and is for sale, write to [savethisoldhouse@timeinc.com](mailto:savethisoldhouse@timeinc.com) or This Old House, 225 Liberty Street, New York, NY 10281.



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