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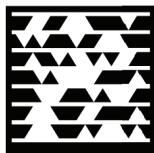
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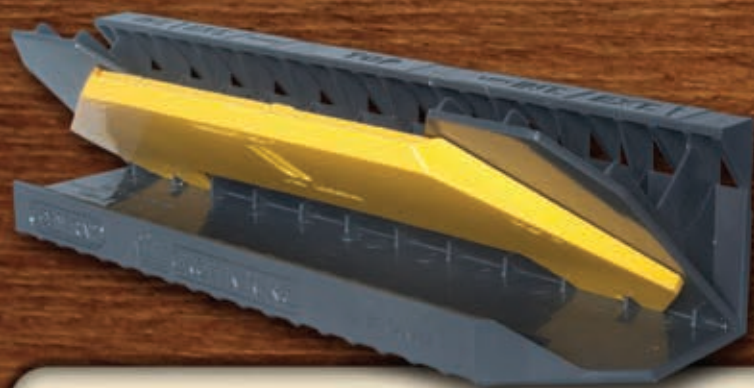


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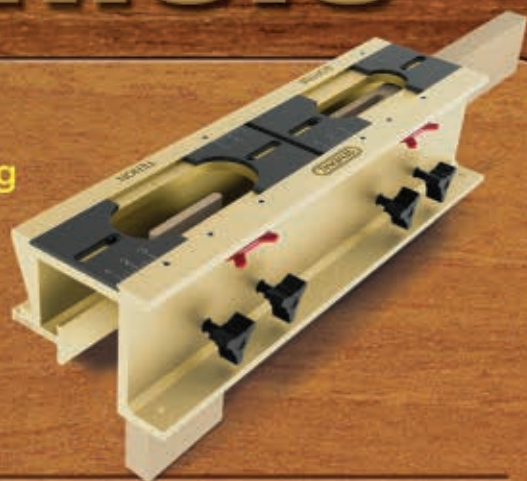
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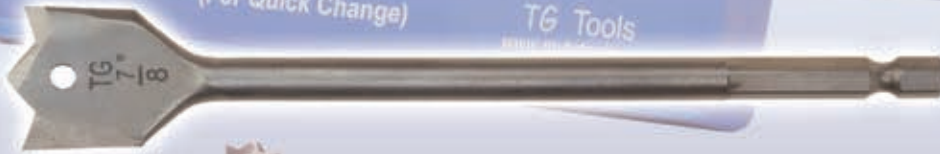
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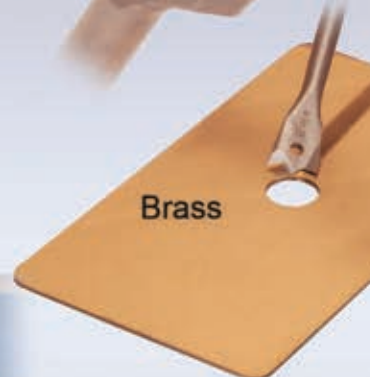
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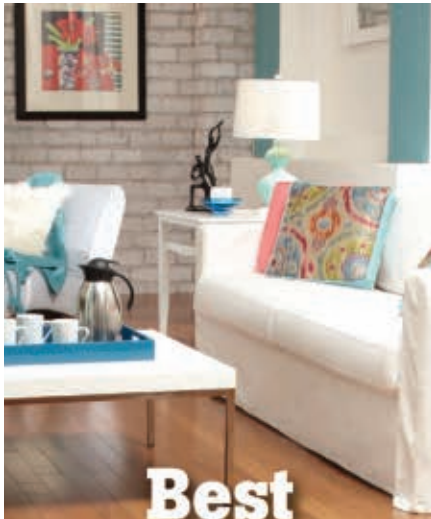
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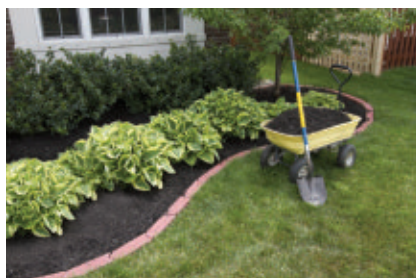
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Now that we're entering the warmer months it's tempting to crank up the air conditioner, but the high cost of electricity will have many of us biding our time. When money is tight, people often sweat out the heat a little longer to cut energy costs and keep more money in the bank. For decades, the home's heating and cooling accounted for more than half of all residential energy usage. But that's starting to change.

Estimates from the most recent Residential Energy Consumption Survey (RECS), collected in 2010 and 2011 show that 48 percent of energy consumption in U.S. homes was for heating and cooling, down from 58 percent in 1993. The trend is largely the result of more efficient HVAC equipment, better insulation, more efficient windows, and population shifts to warmer climates. And it's notable that this shift in how energy is consumed has occurred even as per-household energy consumption has steadily declined.

On the other hand, while energy used for air conditioning has declined, energy consumption for appliances and electronics continues to rise. Although some appliances such as refrigerators and clothes washers have become more efficient, it's actually the increased number of devices that consume energy in homes that has offset the efficiency gains.

Energy use for appliances, electronics, water heating and lighting now accounts for 52 percent of total consumption, up from 42 percent in 1993.

So, as our dads used to gripe at us for running the air too cold or for leaving a window open to heat "the whole neighborhood", maybe this generation of parents should reset its targets. But don't worry. With all the TVs, PlayStations, Blu-ray machines and X-Boxes, parents should still have plenty to gripe about.



P.S. — Despite the new energy trend, space conditioning still accounts for a huge chunk of the home's power bill. Updating your insulation and weather-sealing your home are great ways to reduce heat loss/gain and cut down on energy costs. Check out www.extremehowto.com for a wide range of articles on how to optimize your home for the most energy efficiency.

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Q: I'd like to strip the veneer off a piece of furniture to refinish it. What's the best method for removal?

A: Soak a towel with a mixture of equal parts water and vinegar. Place it on the furniture surface to saturate the veneer. Allow it to soak overnight, keeping the towel wet. The soaking should release the adhesive, and in the morning you should be able to peel up the veneer easily with a putty knife or chisel.

Q: How often should I drain my hot water heater?

A: Proper maintenance on a hot water heater typically is to flush the bottom drain at least once a year to eliminate sediment and keep the water as clean as possible. In some localities where city officials flush the fire hydrants, it's a good idea to flush the water heater a few days afterward to clear any disturbed sediment that ends up in your system. The problem with sediment is that sandy particles collect on the bottom of the tank and displace the water. This results in hot spots on the bottom of the tank where the heat is not evenly dissipated. When this happens the burner overheats the tank which breaks down the steel and leads to tank failure.

However, if you haven't flushed the water heater in a very long time, and the overheating has not yet caused a complete tank failure, then flushing the tank may not be a good idea. This is because after many years without maintenance, the overheating may have created tiny holes which are "plugged" with the sediment, preventing the tank from leaking. Therefore, if you flush the tank after many years of not doing so, the sediment that has been filling the holes may be washed away and result in a leak. (Source: TipTopHouse.com)

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Q: I used a hot iron with a damp rag to repair a few dents in a piece of furniture by swelling the wood grain. It worked. The problem is that I now have burn marks on my wife's iron that won't scrub off. How do I remove them?

A: Try scrubbing the burn marks using cotton swabs with acetone or nail-polish remover. The marks will come off easier if the iron is warm, so turn it on low when cleaning but be careful not to contact the plate with your skin. When the swab turns dark from the stain, replace with a clean one and continue scrubbing until the burn marks are gone. Once clean, use a damp cloth to remove any residue.

Q: What is the easiest way to check a home for termites?

A: Termite infestation originates from the soil, so inspect all exposed wood framing near the ground and areas such as crawlspaces. Look for raised, branchlike tubes that contain cream-colored or yellowish insects. Check the intersection of the siding and house foundation for grain-size droppings or tiny dirt clumps next to pinholes. Professionals often use termite bait stations in the ground around the home, which contain wood or other cellulose material to lure the termites and detect their presence. If you spot signs of termite infestation, you should consult a licensed and bonded exterminator to address the problem. **EHT**

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Blade Running

Edging a Lawn for Clean Cut



By Matt Weber

When it's time to give your lawn its first summer haircut, be sure to keep the edges neat. Grass and weeds that grow next to driveways and sidewalks slowly begin to creep over the edges and encroach on the paved surface. A powered edger neatly cuts this organic material to leave a well-defined edge for a clean-cut lawn.

A powered lawn edger provides a dramatic step up in cutting power

from a string trimmer, utilizing a rigid steel blade to cut through tough grass roots, thatch and soil. Although some string trimmers come with an "edging guide" for edging applications, the string is not as aggressive as an edging blade and must be used frequently to keep the cutting chore to a manageable level. String trimmers also are not designed as ergonomically for comfortable edging since edging is a secondary application,

The cutting power of a dedicated edger keeps a lawn looking neat and orderly.

plus the string-line of a trimmer wears away quickly when contacting concrete. On the other hand, the vertical metal blade of an edger can cut several inches below the surface of the ground to rip through the roots of vegetation and trench a distinct separation between the lawn and hardscape features.

Edgers come in a variety of configurations; some with a single guide wheel, others with multiple wheels. The wheel rides along the edge of a sidewalk, patio, border or driveway as the offset blade cuts along the concrete or masonry. Some units start with a pull-cord, while others utilize a push-button electric start that eliminates the cord. Also, edgers are available with either electric or gas-powered motors.



The edger's rigid, steel blade cuts through thatch, root and soil. Our demo model is the ergonomic and reliable Husqvarna 327ES Edger. The 7" blade provides a 2.68" depth of cut for slicing through root systems.

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For single-wheeled edgers, keep the top of the blade tilted away from the hardscape when cutting.

The purpose-built design and ergonomic advantage of a dedicated edger make it a must-have tool for landscape professionals. Homeowners who are serious about lawn care will also appreciate the cutting advantage of a powered edger and the "manicured" look it achieves. The unit shown in this article is the Husqvarna 326ES, a reliable unit for both the pro and discerning DIY'er. Equipped with the company's E-TECH II engine for power and fuel economy, the 326ES is lightweight, easy to use and quick to start. The front handle can quickly be adjusted using the thumb screw to suit the user's height and posture.

When selecting an edger, try carrying it in various working positions to make sure you choose a

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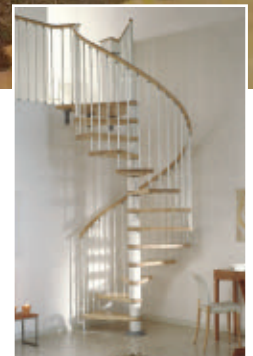
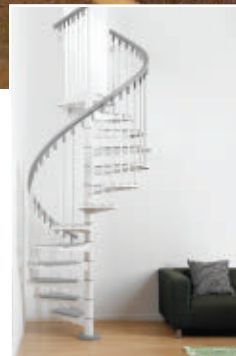
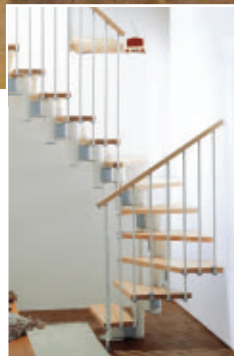
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unit that feels comfortable to operate. If possible, test the model's start-up performance and cutting action at the dealership.

When using an edger, bring the blade to full speed before

engaging the turf. You'll get the best results by setting the blade's cutting depth for a shallow pass when making your initial cut. Make progressively deeper cuts with successive passes until

you're satisfied with the grooming.

Tip: When operating a single-wheel edger, slightly tilt the cutting head so the top of the blade leans away from the hardscape. Doing so prevents damage to the upper, most visible edge of the concrete

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The overgrowth at the edge of this driveway was too thick for a string trimmer. Only an edger would do the job.



Be prepared to clean up the lawn debris. You may be surprised how much organic debris an unkempt lawn can accumulate when edging.



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By edging the driveway, we added 1-1/2 feet of usable width!

while the bottom of the blade guides the cutting action through the thatch and roots.

For lawns with a lot of perimeter or several landscape features, a dedicated gas-driven edger can be a sound investment for a professional-looking lawn. For small yards, if you don't mind the hassle of an extension cord, then you might check into an electrical edger, which typically sells for less than the gas-driven counterparts. Your lawn will love you for it. **EHT**

After edging, the driveway perimeter looks crisp and clean.



PAY ATTENTION AT THE GAS PUMP!

Leading engine manufacturers are warning users of all gasoline-powered lawnmowers and other outdoor power equipment to be vigilant when fueling their equipment. Gasoline blends containing more than 10 percent ethanol—such as E15 and E85—should not be used. These blends, which are already available in several U.S. states, can cause permanent and irreversible damage that is not covered under warranty.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently gave approval for gas stations to start selling 15-percent ethanol-blended fuel. However, E15 is not approved for off-road engines. This includes engines found in edgers, lawnmowers, riding mowers, power washers, portable generators, weed trimmers, leaf blowers and other commonly used outdoor power equipment.

The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) has released the following tips to help consumers properly fuel their mowers and other equipment:

- Check your owner's manual, which will clearly explain what fuels can be used to ensure a properly functioning product. Don't put any fuel containing more than 10 percent ethanol (E10) into small engine products, unless otherwise stated.
- Check the gas pump to be sure that it is dispensing E10. Some pumps at local gas stations may offer both E10 and E15, or have blender pumps that dispense mid-level ethanol fuels for "flex-fuel" automobiles.
- Don't be tempted by price. Higher ethanol fuel (E15) may be less expensive than regular (E10) fuel, but putting E15 into an E10-approved product could cause your equipment to fail and void its warranty.

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Gold Medal Garbage

How to Make a Compost Bin



By Mark & Theresa Clement

If the value of a project is measured in how often you use it, our compost bin is well near the top of the list. If measured like the Olympics, it'd consistently be on the medal stand.

It's a project that you can have up and running in a day, turning coffee grinds and toilet paper rolls into terrific topsoil.

MATERIALS

We used twelve 2x6x8 Western Red Cedar boards. The material is naturally rot-resistant and chemical-free. Plus, it looks great and stays looking great for years. We fastened everything together with coated deck screws.

CUT THE PIECES

Our compost bin is five individual rectangular boxes stacked together with a 3/4-in. gap in between. Each box has an outside dimension of 36 by 24 inches. To make that work, cut the front and back pieces 36 inches and the side pieces 21 inches. We added a detail that makes our bin less "boxy" by alternating each box's end-grain, lending a pleasing "box-joint" look to the corners.

Next, cut the staves. The staves are the internal vertical supports that hold the individual boxes together. We ripped a 2X6 in half on the table saw, then cut them to length at 30-3/4 inches.

The top is four pieces of 2X6 at 36 inches. It's held together by two 2X6 struts cut at 20-3/4 inches. We also beveled the ends of the struts so the lid sits inside the bin a little easier during use.

ASSEMBLE THE PIECES

Assemble the boxes and, before driving all the screws tight, make sure the box is as square as possible then send the screws home. Next, fasten a staff in each corner as square as possible to the body of your bottom box.

Add the next box. Use 1-by spacers on each corner to gauge accurate spacing and fasten. Keep adding boxes and spacers.



Work on a flat surface. Square up the box before driving screws home.



Our bin is a series of stacked boxes.

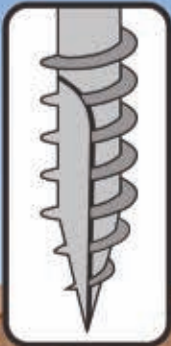
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DO IT YOURSELF

Note: To access the compost, we fastened the bottom two boards from the face of the bin. That way we can take them off and dig out from below, where the

best compost will typically be.

Assemble the lid. Again, use spacers. Hold it all together with the 2x6 struts fastened to the underside of the lid. Be careful not

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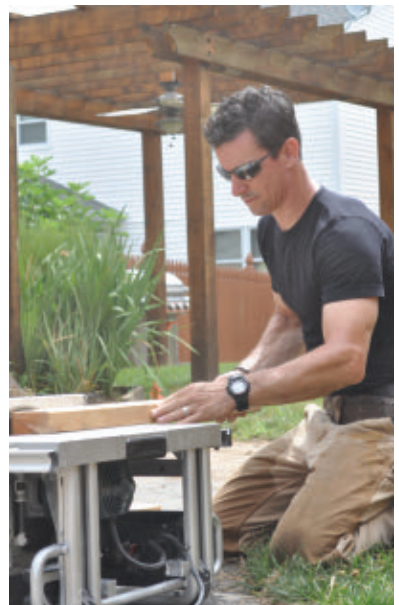
**Drill
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Use 1x scraps as spacers for uniform gaps that let air into the bin.



Cut the pieces to length.



Staves are 2x6 ripped in half on the table saw.



We used a framing square and a layout square to get the staves nice and square.



Use spacers for the lid too.



Fasten 2x6 struts to the bottom of the lid with 2-1/2" screws.

DELIVERING MORE THAN DIRT

Composting as a household routine—like laundry or lawn mowing—is often viewed as a fringe movement: something that seems cool from a distance or practical for farmers, but not suburbanites.

The reality, for us anyway, is that composting makes simple sense for regular people. It takes no more time than taking out the trash, which we all do anyway.

We're trying to build into our kids' source code that even though the world seems automatic, it isn't. We call this policy "chicken wasn't born at the grocery store." Everything you touch, buy, or use has to be invented and made. It takes persistence, effort, process—just like turning banana peels into black soil. We teach that the more garbage we divert from the waste stream—read: diesel-belching garbage truck—the gentler our impact is on the world. Our family diverts somewhere around 500 pounds of material annually. If just everyone on our street did it we would divert 10,000 pounds of uneaten salad and waffles from having to be hauled and processed.

Plus, as we try and overwrite the "no effort required" world, we're sneaking basic science and civics lessons into their everyday lives: Bananas and waffles break down naturally. The world isn't anybody's garbage dump. And, doing something for the environment is important.

We actually use the compost sometimes, mostly for lawn repairs and soil amendments to flower beds. It works, plain and simple, and creates valuable nutrients for gardeners.

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DO IT YOURSELF

to overdrive the screws so they poke through the finished side. We used 2-1/2-in. screws here.

In hot weather, the bin can give off a noticeable aroma when you're near it. So, find a spot in a remote corner of the yard, set the box level—and happy composting. **EHT**

Editor's Note: Mark & Theresa Clement host MyFixitUpLife.

WHAT WE COMPOST

Basically, if it used to be a plant (plus a few other things) it can be composted. The vast majority of what goes in our bin is stuff we consume every day:

- Eggshells
- Coffee Filters/Grounds
- Non-protein, un-eaten food (salad, peels, rinds, bread, etc.)
- Paper towels
- Paper board like paper towel rolls
- Plant cuttings



We beveled the ends of the struts so the lid would more easily slip onto the bin.

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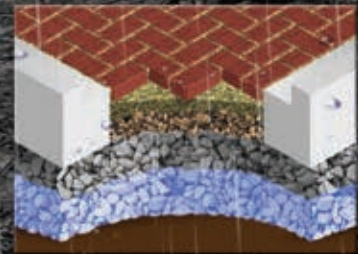
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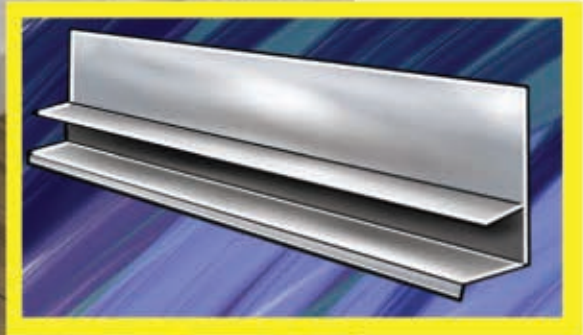
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GEAR



UP FOR THE GREEN SEASON



New Supplies for the Great Outdoors

Before friends and neighbors ever make it to your home they're greeted by your lawn. The home's curb appeal is the first chance to make a great impression, which is why so many savvy homeowners go crazy over lawn care. From hardscapes and flower gardens to outdoor retreats, if the home is your castle then the yard is your kingdom. Here's a roundup of new tools and supplies to keep it looking great.

PINE HALL BRICK CITYCOBBLE PAVERS

When is a cobblestone not a cobblestone? When it's a clay brick paver that takes advantage of an optical illusion. For patios, walkways and driveways, CityCobble pavers by Pine Hall Brick Company come in two sizes, 5-1/3-in. square and 5-1/3-by-8-in. rectangles, and in two colors, Mahogany and Siesta Full Range. When installed in an "I" pattern or in a modified herringbone, CityCobble gives a random cobble appearance, reminiscent of an ancient European stone walkway. In addition to CityCobble, the company offers conventional rectangular pavers, permeable pavers and thin pavers, which are laid over the top of existing poured concrete sidewalks and patios. As with all of Pine Hall Brick pavers, CityCobble are consistently sized, which makes installation easy, and many homeowners install their own projects. Plus, the pavers can withstand the weight of vehicular traffic, boasting a compressive strength of 13,000 psi, which is greater than concrete. Visit www.PineHallBrick.com.

GEAR UP

FOR THE GREEN SEASON



EARTHWAY 2170 BROADCAST SPREADER

Earthway Products, Inc. now offers the 2170 commercial-grade push broadcast spreader, popular as a high-capacity model in the EV-N-SPRED broadcast spreader product line. It features a powdercoat steel chassis, height-adjustable handle, 100-lb. rust-proof poly hopper, and 13-in. pneumatic wheels on rust-proof rims. The 2170 is designed for evenly spreading all types of granular products, and is built for a lifetime of commercial use. Use it for applying pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, as well as ice-control products. This model is also available in a towable version. See this and all of the EarthWay products at www.earthway.com.

STIHL FS 50 C-E HOMEOWNER TRIMMER

The Stihl FS 50 C-E string trimmer is lightweight, balanced in hand and has a curved shaft for exceptional handling. Compared to previous models, The FS 50 C-E has the added benefit of an 8-in. longer shaft, which is great for taller users. The low exhaust emission and fuel-efficient engine—20 percent more fuel efficient than the FS 46—is ideal for home use, powering through grass and weeds with ease. This affordable trimmer features the TapAction AutoCut C 5-2 cutting head for faster line reloads, plus Stihl's innovative Easy2Start Technology, so you can get to work with just a simple pull of the starter cord. Visit www.stihl.com.





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AV2 Video



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Toggle Video



GEAR UP

FOR THE GREEN SEASON

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Bon's Landscape Tie Dolly features a V-shaped bed and a wide 39-in. wheel base for easy maneuvering of heavy and cumbersome loads around the work site. The bed is well balanced on large 16-in. diameter pneumatic wheels, making it ideal for moving large railroad or landscape ties. The unit weighs 55 lbs., bed length is 30-3/16 in., bed width is 16 in., and the handle is 29 in. Visit www.bontool.com.



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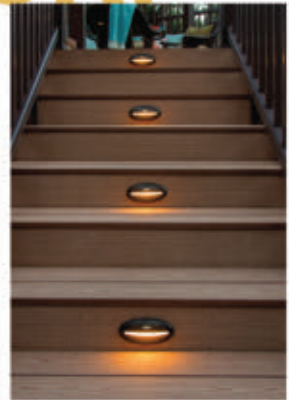
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DIXIE CHOPPER ZEE 2 LAWMOWERS

Dixie Chopper now offers the Zee 2 series lawnmower, its newest and largest line of residential zero-turn lawnmowers. Ideal for large property owners, Zee 2 mowers include a variety of features for fast performance, quality cutting and comfortable operation. The Zee 2 series includes three models: 2142, 2348 and 2354. Model 2142 features a 21-horsepower Kawasaki FR engine and 42-in. cutting deck for mowing up to 2.45 acres per hour. Model 2348 features a 23-hp Kawasaki FR engine and 48-in. cutting deck for mowing up to 2.8 acres per hour. Model 2354 features the 23-hp engine and a 54-in. cutting deck for mowing up to 3.15 acres per hour. All Zee 2 models include a 4-gallon

fuel tank with a stainless-steel body for maximum protection from impact, corrosion and sunlight. They also come with Dixie Chopper's Elite Cutting System. This triple-blade deck features high blade-tip speeds to create a

powerful vacuum for mowing all varieties of grass in any condition. The Elite System has a 1.75-in. blade overlap, allowing Zee 2 mowers to produce high-quality cutting performance at any speed. Visit www.dixiechopper.com.



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GEAR UP FOR THE GREEN SEASON

SOLAR DRIPPER

The new European-designed Solar Dropper dispenses the proper amount of water (and plant food, if desired) with solar power. In

addition, any glass or plastic soda/cola, juice or water bottle can be used to dispense the water. It will feed either indoor or outdoor plants for days or weeks.



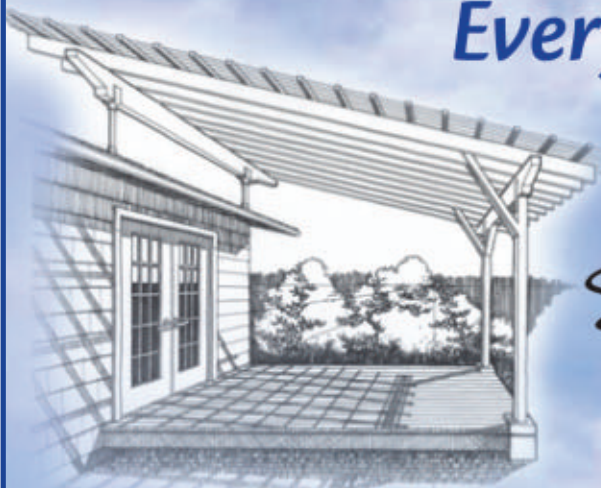
The patented watering system is intended for home, office or small outdoor plants. It's sold in single units or packages of six, and requires no maintenance or batteries since it is solar-powered. All that is required is to screw on a used glass or plastic soda, water or juice bottle that has been filled with water and nutrients, if desired, and insert the Solar Dropper into the soil. Unlike other indoor or other small plant watering units, the Solar Dropper is compact, easy to use, virtually indestructible, won't clog or jam and ensures the proper amount of water and/or nutrients are dispensed, based on the amount of solar energy/light shining onto it. Visit www.absentmindedgardener.com.

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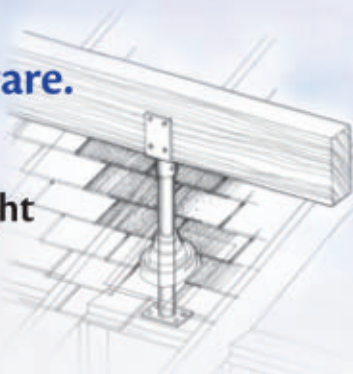
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The products allow for heavy traffic and excellent resiliency, surpassing other technologies in the industry when it comes to the destructive activity that active dogs can create. The exclusive Pet System installation process provides specific menu options for customers, depending on the behavior and nature of dogs involved. Visit www.SYNlawn.com.

SOIL PH METER

You can easily check the pH level of your garden soil with the quick-read meter available from Lee Valley Tools, ensuring that your plants have the correct balance for healthy, vigorous growth. It requires no tablets, paper strips or batteries. Chemical reactions between the bi-metal probe and acidic or alkaline soil produce enough voltage to make the indicator needle move, measuring pH from 3.5 (strongly acidic) to 9 (strongly alkaline). All you need to do between test locations is wipe



the dirt off the probe. The 26-1/2-in. long cord lets you insert the 4-1/4-in. probe into the soil with one hand and hold the meter in your other hand to easily read the

results. A chart listing over 430 plant species and their preferred pH range is provided, along with instructions for adjusting the pH of your soil. Visit www.leevalley.com.



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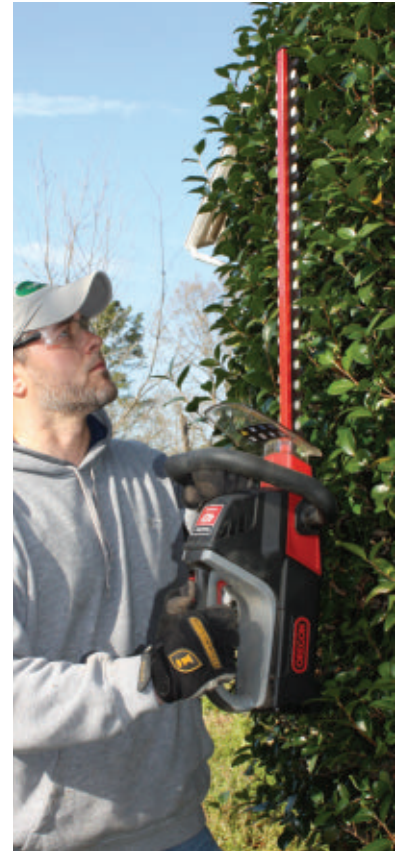

GEAR UP FOR THE GREEN SEASON

OREGON HT250 HEDGE TRIMMER

With cordless convenience and muscle to spare, the Oregon HT250 Hedge Trimmer is powered by the company's PowerNow 40V lithium-ion battery platform. If you've been using an 18V trimmer, then upgrading to the HT250 will seal your old trimmer's retirement. The new trimmer features a 24-in.

blade with laser-cut precision blades for long reach and clean cutting. The dual blades have a smooth action with reduced vibration and noise. The lightweight design offers balanced handle placement for comfortable maneuverability, plus a variable-speed trigger for better control and run time. Capable of cutting branches up to 3/4-in in diameter,

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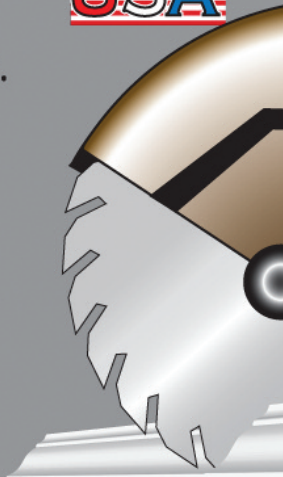


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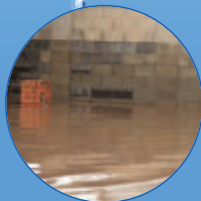
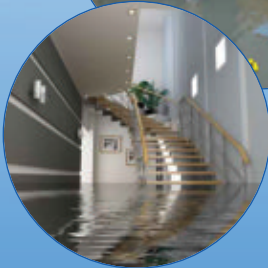
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High Voltage Hot Rods CEO Andrew McClary holds an aluminum adapter plate he designed, and built with the ShopBot, to mount his high-energy electric motor to a 1966 Corvair's original Powerglide transmission.



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They recently completed a project using a 1966 Corvair. The project is called the Electrovaire III, because back in the 1960's, the original car manufacturer tinkered with developing two electric versions of the Corvair.

WHY SHOPBOT? Company CEO Andrew McClary explains, "I needed a manufacturing tool that would be precise, easy to reconfigure, and not take up too much room in the shop — every square foot is prime. We already were familiar with the power and precision of ShopBots, as we'd used a ShopBot in a wood furniture business. Our new ShopBot Buddy takes up very little space. We chose the optional casters so we can move it around easily as needed — nice wheels!"

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BUILDING A WOOD STORAGE SHED

By Rob Robillard

Keeping firewood dry is critical to a successful fire. You don't want to find that your wood's wet or damp when hoping for a warm fire on the hearth or wood stove. And you don't want to have to shovel a foot of snow off a tarp to get to your woodpile! A wood storage shed is necessary if you want a wood burning fire during the cold months. It keeps your firewood stacked, dry and ready to use.

A customer recently asked me if I would build a wood storage shed large enough to hold one cord of firewood. The customer wanted the shed attached to the rear of the family garage.





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BUILDING A WOOD STORAGE SHED



A gravel-covered base lined the foundation.

This project was supported on concrete footings, post-base anchors, posts, a ledger and joists system.

SCOPING OUT THE SITE

The rear of the garage faces southeast and gets a lot of exposure to sun, which I knew was going to be helpful for drying out the wood. There were three windows on the right side and no windows on the left of the structure. The left side seemed like the perfect spot and also meant that we were not taking any light away from inside the garage by removing or blocking windows

My customer gave me free reign on the design, and I chose to build a simple open-faced, shed roof structure with clapboard siding and trim details that mimic the

details on the Colonial farm style house and garage. For the roof detail we discussed coming off the upper garage roof with a gable roof (the woodshed roof having the same pitch as the garage) but decided that was too costly. They were looking for something clean and simple.

I measured a pile of wood that they told me was the equivalent of a cord and sized their new wood storage shed accordingly. The final dimensions of the wood storage shed are 6 by 12 feet.

BEGIN WITH A SECURE FOUNDATION

Attaching the wood storage shed to the rear garage wall actually made my job easier. This meant that I could attach a ledger board

off the garage wall, hang my floor joists from it, build two walls and a roof and call it a day. The floor joists were to run perpendicular to the garage wall and sit on a double outside rim joist that would attach to two 4x6 pressure-treated posts, both attached atop 10-by-48-in. deep concrete footings.

INSTALLING THE LEDGER BOARD

Once I determined exactly where the wood shed was going, I cut my 2x6 pressure-treated ledger board to size and secured it to the garage's concrete foundation wall with 8-10 concrete wedge anchor bolts. Because the ledger board was only 8 feet long, I predrilled my holes in the ledger board with a wood drill bit and then used a ½-in. SDS hammer drill bit to drill



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BUILDING A WOOD STORAGE SHED



The floor boards were spaced to facilitate air flow to the firewood.

The walls were assembled and tilted into place.



the holes in the concrete wall.

The concrete wedge anchors secure the ledger to the wall. Once the wedge anchor bolts are tightened, wings inside the concrete anchor expand and compress against the walls of the concrete hole, securing the anchor in place and providing shear strength.

PREPARING THE FOOTINGS

With the ledger board installed level onto the garage, I measured out a rectangle on the grass that was slightly larger than the woodshed. I used the rectangular space and 3-4-5 triangle measurements to determine the footing locations.

Tip: In order to get corners square and as close to 90 degrees as possible I use the 3-4-5 rule based on basic geometry: $A^2 + B^2 = C^2$. This

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means that the square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the square of both legs.

The purpose of the rectangular space was to create a gravel-covered ground base and drip-edge to match the existing garage roof drainage gravel.

To create this drip-edge I first removed all of the sod and organic soil, installed 2x6 pressure-treated boards as border strips and then we installed landscape fabric and filled the space with 3/4-in. river stone. Note: This was done after I poured the footings.

POURING THE FOOTINGS

A footing helps support the structure by spreading out the load created by each support post over a wider area.



We used regular 2x4 Douglas fir studs 16-in. on center for the wall framing, and built the walls tall enough to accommodate a 3- to 4-pitch roof.

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BUILDING A WOOD STORAGE SHED



A 2x10 double header carries the roof load over the wood shed opening.

The header is supported by double 2x4 king structural studs.



Concrete footings need to be installed below the frost line typical for your region. The frost line is not consistent around the country, and there are often dramatic differences from state to state. For example in Florida the frost line is less than one foot and in Minnesota it is closer to 6 feet. The best resource to check your frost level and depth of footing is your local building department.

In my area the building inspector wants to see footings dug to 48 inches deep. Because the wood shed was only 8 feet wide I was able to span that distance with a double rim joist and needed only two footings, one at each corner.

We laid out a 3- to 4-pitch roof and installed a header on the side wall of the garage.

I used a spade shovel and a post-hole digger to get to the proper footing depth. Once there, I used 8-in. round footing forms cut at 48 inches.

Tip: To avoid having to keep pulling out a tape measure, I measured 48 inches on my spade shovel and post-hole digger and

marked this measurement with a permanent marker. That saved time and effort while digging.

I use premixed 80-lb. bags of Sakrete concrete mix for my footings. I pour the contents into a wheel barrel and mix it with water a little at a time to get the perfect consistency. If a hose is not readily available, I use a 5-gal. bucket with water.

Once mixed, I pour the concrete into the footing tubes with the wheelbarrel and use my shovel to get the droppings. No matter how careful I am there is always a ton of concrete outside the edge of the footing tube.

Often I will pour about half the concrete and then lift my tube 4 to 6 inches out of the hole. I do this to keep my 4x4 or 4x6 pressure-treated posts away from the ground. This uses a bit more concrete, but I like the look, and it's better for the longevity of the posts.

Once I have both footings poured I insert galvanized "J-bolts" into the footing center. These J-bolts will be used later to secure my post base connectors, galvanized hardware designed to permanently attach the support posts to the concrete footing.



Note: If your deck has two wood support posts and a ledger board that is bolted to the house, each of the two deck posts hold up approximately 25 percent of the total weight. In this situation, the soil under each deck footing may be called upon to support 3,000 plus pounds.

Depending on the wood shed's load, the diameter of the hole will probably range between 8 and 24 inches. Larger diameter holes spread the weight out over more soil area. I used 10-in. diameter footings.

FLOOR FRAME

On small structures I like to build my floor frame, square it and then dig my footings and install my support legs. In this case the frame was too low to the ground to dig the footings so we installed the footings but not the support posts.



The 2x6 rafters were installed and additionally supported with rafter clips or "hurricane ties".

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BUILDING A WOOD STORAGE SHED



The walls as well as the roof received 1/2-in. CDX plywood sheathing.

It is much easier to build your floor system first and use temporary stilts (or in this case a block of firewood) to hold it up, square and level it, and then get an exact measurement for your support posts.

We built our floor system out of 2x6 pressure-treated joists 16 inches on center. For strength we doubled our outside rim and side joists.

We used leftover synthetic deck boards from a prior job and spaced the floorboards 2-inches apart to facilitate airflow, rain drainage and drying of the firewood. The floorboards were secured with screws and installed under the walls to the edge of the shed.



We secured wall and roof sheathing with 8-penny ring-shank nails every 10" in the field and every 6" at seams and edges.

We installed our rake and fascia trim and then used scrap pieces of our crown molding to figure out the size of the roof sheathing.



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BUILDING THE WALLS

Prior to building the walls we measured and leveled, mark, cut and removed only the garage wall siding that was in the way of the 2x4 wall and sheathing. We also removed an additional 3/4-in. of clapboard siding to accommodate a vertical corner “ground” for the wood shed and garage siding to butt into. We used a circ saw for the majority of this cut and completed it with a multi-tool.

Slowing down and taking these steps saved us from ripping a ton of siding off the garage wall and later having to replace it inside the new wood storage shed.

The owner disliked pressure-treated splinters and specified that she did not want pressure-treated 2x4's used inside this structure. We used regular 2x4 Douglas fir studs 16-in. on center for the wall framing, and built the walls tall enough to accommodate a 3- to 4-pitch roof.

A 2x10 double header carries the roof load over the shed opening and is supported by double 2x4 king structural studs. Tyvek house wrap covers the sheathing.

BUILDING THE ROOF

We laid out a 3- to 4-pitch roof and installed a header on the side wall of the garage. The 2x6 rafters were installed and additionally supported with rafter clips. (Since this is an open structure the outer edge of this roof is susceptible to uplifting winds.)

To further protect the roof rafters from wind lift we ran 1/2-in. CDX plywood wall sheathing all the way up the sides of the two outer rafters and installed a pair of nails every 6 inches. We then cinched the nails over on the inside of the rafter to prevent nail pokes.

The walls as well as the roof received 1/2-in. CDX plywood

sheathing. We secured wall and roof sheathing with 8-penny ring shank nails every 10 inches in the field and every 6 inches at seams and edges.

DO THE ROOF FIRST

After sheathing the roof we covered every square inch with Ice and Water Shield and ran it up the sidewall of the garage. This is an unheated structure, but I consider the rubber membrane as cheap insurance against water leaks.

We wrapped the roof in drip-edge and installed the same shingles that were in the existing garage. At the garage wall we installed lead flashing as a counter flashing and replaced the siding and trim.

Tip: We installed our rake and fascia trim and then used scrap pieces of our crown molding to



The crown molding provided a nice finish detail.

The sheathing was wrapped in building paper.



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BUILDING A WOOD STORAGE SHED

figure out the size of the roof sheathing. This allowed me to run my roof sheathing out to cover the top of my crown molding, providing a place for it to rest as well as a secure nailing surface.

FINISHING THE EXTERIOR

The exterior of the woodshed was trimmed out in similar detail but in a smaller scale to the garage. We used all PVC trim, pre-primed cedar clapboards

and stainless steel nails.

We used Western Red Cedar clapboards for this project. Cedar clapboards contain natural oils and resins that protect the wood from insects and rot. Cedar is known for its durability and ability to withstand weather. (Problems that arise on homes are not usually attributed to the type of siding but to the installation and lack of proper flashing and drainage planes.)

Tip: If your siding is not already primed then prime it. Prime all cut ends and edges of the clapboards. The end grain of all wood products absorbs liquids up to 250 times more rapidly than other wood surfaces. Also, avoid finger-jointed clapboards for a high-quality job.

Before installing the siding, properly prepare the home exterior walls: Install building paper or a vapor barrier.

Make sure that flashings are installed to prevent moisture from entering wall and roof spaces.

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The roof sheathing was protected by Ice & Water Shield.

The new roofing shingles matched the existing house roof.



Flashings are important in controlling moisture in wall assemblies. Flashing intercepts and directs the flow of water away from the building to designed drainage paths. Seal doors, windows and other joints with rubber flashing, sill pans and special tapes. Use high-performance acrylic-latex caulk to seal gaps around windows, doors, corners and other exterior joints that are exposed to potential water intrusion. Caulking will eventually fail and need maintenance. Caulking can never replace proper flashing.

Spacing for the siding should be laid out beforehand. Many builders install at 5-1/2 inches with a 4-in. exposure to the weather. Spacing can be changed or tweaked in order to get the siding to land on top of doors and windows.

For fastening, stainless steel nails are the best quality. Use No. 304 stainless for general siding applications and No. 316 for sea-coast exposures. Hand-nailing is better than using a pneumatic nailer because it allows you to determine if you're nailing into the studs, making it easier to control the depth of the fastener.

Install clapboards by face-nailing them to the house studs with 1-1/4-in. penetration into solid wood using one ring-shank nail per stud spaced at a maximum of 24 in. on center. Place the nail just above the overlap. Take care not to nail through the overlap of two pieces. Keep nails 1 inch inward from the edges.

Clapboards are installed with butt joints. I suggest using tar paper roll tape to flash behind all vertical butt joints. Make sure your tar paper overlaps the clapboard installed below so water or moisture can drain out and on top of the lower clapboard. Butt joints between boards should be staggered and made on studs. Install siding snugly to other clapboard



The walls were then sided with pre-primed Western Red Cedar clapboard.

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BUILDING A WOOD STORAGE SHED

pieces and trim, and make sure the clapboards are level.

Keep the siding a minimum of 6 or more inches off the ground and 3/4 to 2 inches off roofs to prevent moisture from wicking into the end grain.

THE FINAL PRODUCT

This project took two carpenters 1-1/2 days to complete. The half day, Day 1, was for gathering materials and digging and pouring the concrete footing. Day 2 was a full day of construction from frame to finish. The cost of the materials was approximately \$1,200.00.

The result was a simple and effective open wood storage shed that is easily accessible and keeps everything out but the wind-driven rain. The open floor plan and the



fact that these folks do not lean the wood against the back wall allows 360-deg. air flow to keep the firewood dry and ready to use at a minute's notice—with not a piece of tarp in sight! **EHT**

Editor's Note: Robert Robillard is a remodeling contractor based in Concord, MA. He is also the editor of www.AConcordCarpenter.com.

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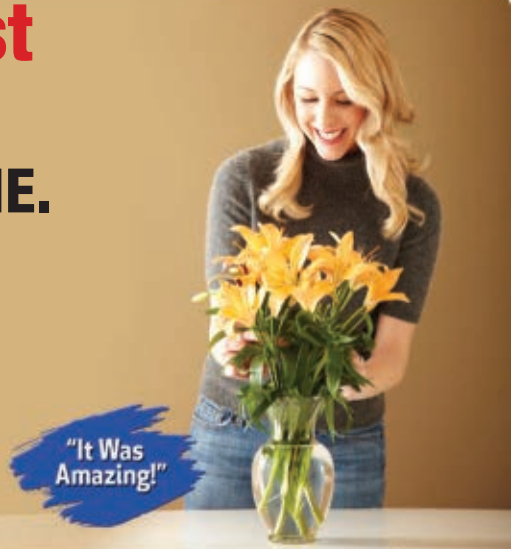
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The Writings on THE WALL

Building a Built-in Bookcase

By Matt Weber

I've been a big fan of built-in bookshelves for a long time. I'm a guy who reads a lot and writes a lot, plus I've got all sorts of reference books for work that I need to store. A built-in bookcase provides a triple-duty solution to my storage needs—it looks good, it adds to the salability of the home and, by removing the studs and using the depth of a partition wall, it occupies limited space within the room. Storage shelves can be built of many different materials and designed in all sorts of styles. This article will touch on some basic techniques for opening a wall and constructing a basic shelf case from paint-grade materials outfitted with wood-stained shelves.

This particular case was built in a partition wall located in a finished basement and adjacent to a split-level staircase. Before removing any wall studs, make sure the wall is not load-bearing. Exterior load-bearing walls are not appropriate for built-in cases because removal of the wall eliminates insulation (and would require construction of a load-bearing header). If you want to locate shelves over a load-bearing wall, then build the case over the studs like a piece of furniture.

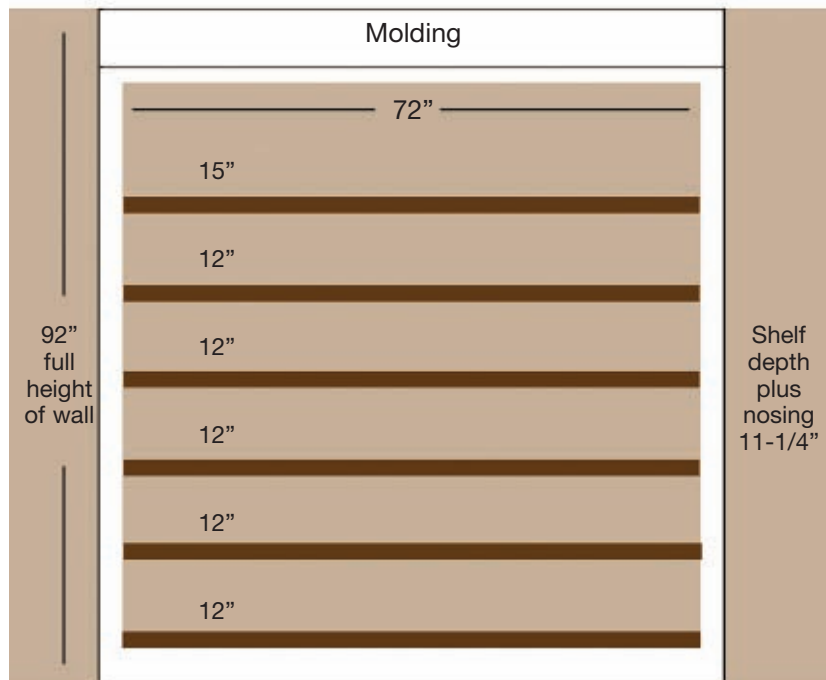
I decided to center the case on the wall and plotted my design on paper for a quick visual reference. I wanted a large case, so I designed it 6 feet wide and extending the

The Writings on THE WALL



full wall height from floor to ceiling. I had some large books, so I went for 12-in. deep shelves and planned for roughly 14-in. of space between each. Some of these measurements would "evolve" slightly throughout the project based on what what obstacles I encountered during construction.

By the way, I'd like to thank Lowe's Home Improvement Store (www.lowes.com) for sponsoring this project. I'm lucky enough to have a Lowe's within two miles of mi casa, and that's where I picked up all the necessary materials:



- 4x8 1/2" plywood for back
- 12" edge-glued side panels
- 4x8 stain-grade 3/4" birch plywood for shelves
- 1x oak hardwood for the shelf edging
- 1x No. 1 pine for the face-frames

- 2x4 studs for the bottom
- Baseboard, cove and stop molding
- Wire molding
- Minwax wood stain and wood putty
- Valspar Signature Paint/Primer
- Kreg pocket screws



WALL DEMOLITION

I outlined my case area on the wall with painter's tape, a T-square and a pencil. I would be removing a large square of wall paneling, plus molding at the top and bottom.

I knew this would be a dusty job, so I enveloped my work area with large vinyl sheeting held tightly to the ceiling with a couple of T-Jaks. The vinyl membrane kept most of the airborne demolition dust contained to my immediate vicinity and not circulating throughout the house.

Also, before cutting into a wall, always disconnect electrical power in case you accidentally cut into a wire.

My tool for slicing into the paneling was the new Rotosaw from

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Rotozip. With its small 3-5/8-in. wood-cutting wheel I was able to control the cut while penetrating quickly through the depth of material.

When it comes to demolition, it's

smart to work gingerly. People on remodeling TV shows like to swing a lot of sledge-hammers, but you can bet some other crew member is responsible for cleaning up the dusty mess. On our project the

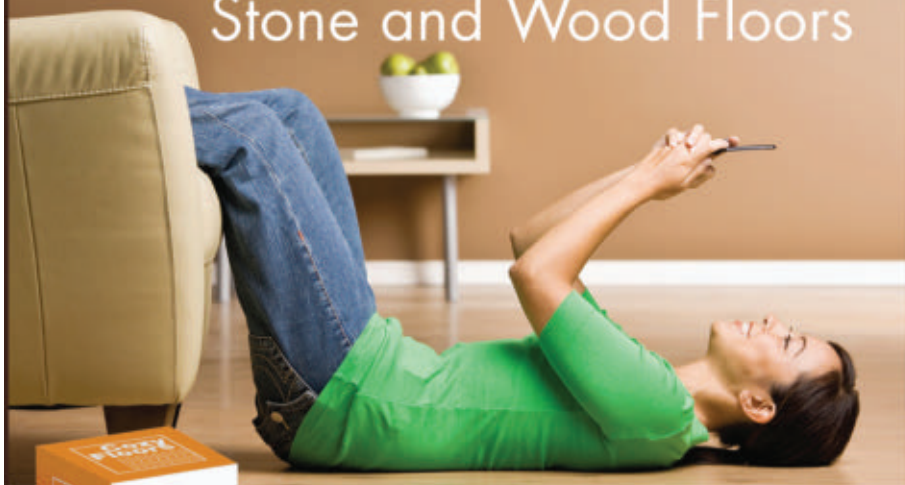


paneling concealed 5/8-in. drywall and, to keep the jobsite as tidy as possible, you should make surgical cuts and remove it in as large of sections as possible. Use a flat bar to pry it away from the fasteners whenever possible.



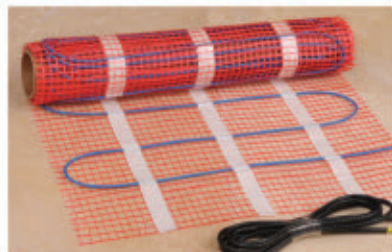
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I then used a Bosch Multi-X with a flush-cut blade to slice through the nails that fastened the studs to the drywall on the opposite wall. The opposite wall was finished and painted, so I had to be careful when removing the framing.



CASE CONSTRUCTION

I then repurposed a couple of the old studs to use as trimmer studs, which frame the new book case. I was able to relocate one of the electrical lines to the top of the bookcase area, but another line ran right through the center, which required me to drill access holes through the new trimmer studs. Make sure to install the studs perfectly plumb.



The lower section of the wall beneath the staircase was unfinished, and the stair stringers were not framed flush with the rest of the wall. Hopefully your project won't have the same substrate

problems, but this required me to add all sorts of creative shims and blocks to create a flush, plumb nailing surface for the plywood backing.

I laminated sheets of 1/2-in.

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plywood over the exposed drywall and blocking using a combination of Liquid Nails construction adhesive, plus some strategically placed drywall screws.

A little bit of forward planning was important at this phase of the project. I knew had to conceal both the seam of the plywood panels plus the electrical line which was

routed through the bookcase to a light switch. Therefore, I routed the wire along the plywood seam so I could eventually conceal them both using a single shelf.

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Note: When securing the panels I wanted to use as few screws as possible to minimize wood-putty repairs. So, to help hold the plywood in place while the adhesive dried, I tacked on a frame of temporary scrap 2x4 cleats along the edges.



I then screwed together a simple rectangular box for the case foundation made of 2x4 stud material and strengthened with blocking. This "toe-kick" box would raise the bottom shelf a few inches off the floor and provide room for some decorative base molding at the bottom. The box was screwed into the lower plywood panel.



Because I planned to build the shelves with a 1-1/4-in. nosing overhang (1/2 in. taller than the 3/4-in. shelves), I installed 1/2-in. plywood over the toe-kick box to serve as a shim for the bottom shelf.



The next step is installation of the side panels. Since I planned to paint the case, I used some economical edge-glued panels cut to fit over the toe-kick and flush with the ceiling. These required a little wood-filler and sanding prior to installation. The sides were mounted into the trimmer studs with 3-in. self-countersinking R4 screws from GRK Fasteners (excellent fasteners if you can find 'em). The sides must be perfectly plumb and square to the back.



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At this point I puttied and sanded all fastener holes. I then primed everything with a coat of semi-gloss Valspar Signature, which serves as both primer and paint in a single product. For the plywood carcass I painted with a foam roller, which achieves thorough coverage without leaving brush marks or the stippling effect of a roller nap.

MAKING SHELVES

The shelves were made of stain-grade 3/4-in. birch plywood that I ripped to width and length in my shop. A nice, big table saw will do the trick of keeping the cuts straight and smooth, but I cut mine with a Festool plunge-cut saw equipped with a ripping guide. I ripped the shelves 3/4-in. narrower than the sides of the case to leave room for the nosing.



When it comes to drilling pilot holes for the pocket screws, you must decide if they'll go on the top or bottom of the shelves. If the holes go on the top, you'll need wood plugs to hide the screws. If they go on the bottom, the shelves won't have as much holding power with the screw

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heads angled downward. I decided to hide the screws on the bottom, which would still cinch the shelves tightly to the cabinet case. Then, once installed, I would install addi-

tional support from the sides and below to bolster the shelves' holding power. I used the General E-Z Pro Pocket Jig to guide the holes for the pocket screws, spacing

them 12 to 18 in. apart along the sides and back.



Next, finish-sand the shelves in the direction of the wood grain, progressing to finer paper to at least 220-grit. Dust with a tack cloth, then apply wood stain and polyurethane until your heart is content.



I ripped the 1x oak nosing on my table saw to 1-1/2 in. and then cut at length to match the shelves. Note: Leave the nosing off the shelves at this time. I installed the first two shelves with the nosing pre-attached, and the extra material made it difficult to position the shelves when fastening. From that point forward I found it much easier to mount the shelves first, and then attach the nosing later.

SHELF INSTALLATION

Start at the bottom. The first shelf rests on the toe-kick box. Instead of using pocket screws,

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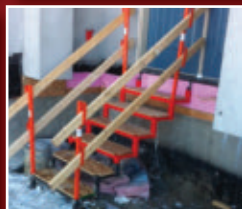
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it's fastened through the face to the plywood shim and 2x4 box using countersunk trim-head screws. The tiny screw heads are easy to hide with wood filler.



The next shelf must conceal the joint between the plywood panels in the rear of the case. To help guide the layout I used the Acculine Pro laser-line generator from Johnson Level to cast a guideline over the case and show exactly where to locate the shelf so the seam was hidden behind its edge. Once this critical shelf was mounted, I used it as a control point to install the remaining shelves at an equal distance apart from each other. (Note: The top shelf has extra overhead space—roughly 14 inches between the fascia board—to leave room for larger decorative items.)

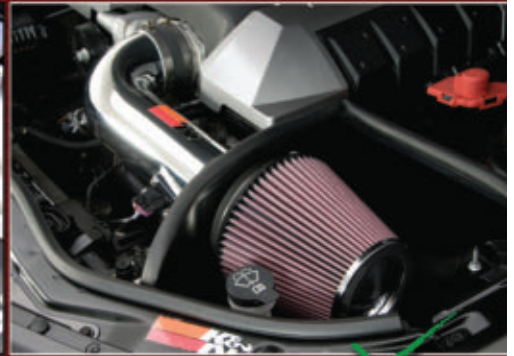
When installing, make sure the shelves are level in every



direction. It helps to have an assistant, but since I was working alone I had to stabilize the shelves with a variety of Bessey clamps and supports, such as a Mini T-Jak.



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Fasten the shelves tightly along the edges using pocket screws and a pocket driver bit. (Later during construction the shelves will be strengthened with additional

fasteners and support strips.)

Note: When locating the shelves, remember that if your shelf nosing is taller than the shelves, then the vertical midpoint



of the completed shelf will not be the same as the center point of the plywood shelf. You must account for this during layout or your measurements will be off.



Once all the shelves were mounted I installed the nosing, which I had stained and varnished in my workshop. Make sure the upper edge of the nosing is flush with the shelf surface so it doesn't snag your books.



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I fastened the nosing with a combination of wood glue and finish nails.



Finally, I supported each shelf with a full-length horizontal support strip or "cleat" measuring roughly 1 by 3/8-in. I ripped this strip from some No. 1 pine and fastened it flush against the underside of the shelf with a combination of wood glue and pin nails.



TRIM WORK

I covered the edges of the side panels with vertical face-frames ripped to 2 inches wide. These face-frames were nailed to the case sides as well as to the nosing of the shelves, with their outer edges flush with the sides. The face-frames gave some visual weight to the case for a more substantial look.

I wrapped the 2x4 toe-kick box with baseboard molding mitered at the outside corners. The new trim matched the room's existing baseboard profile and intersected with cope joints.

At the top, I nailed and glued a "cap" panel of plywood flush inside the case to hide the ceiling. I then wrapped the top of the case with 1x6 pre-primed MDF stock that was mitered at the corners. The MDF was installed flush with the ceiling and served as fascia for the case.

My original design called for crown molding at the top. However, the existing crown that lined the room

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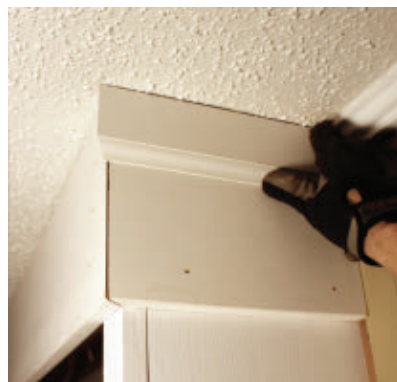
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posed a problem. It had a small profile that seemed disproportionate to the size of the cabinet. However, a new larger crown profile for the case would not intersect with the smaller crown in a fluid manner. The junction would look mismatched. So, I opted to install an inverted base molding that had a flat face to intersect

the crown at a square joint, which looked much more organic. Combined with the added girth of the fascia, the inverted base gave a "crown" impression. I added a smaller strip of inverted stop molding at the lower edge of the fascia, and the double-decker design seemed to pull the installation into a cohesive whole.



I chose a pre-primed cove molding to line the edges of the sides and conceal the small gap where I originally sawed through the wall-board.



After assessing my progress I found the 1x6 fascia to have a slight bend in the middle. To keep the fascia square without bowing,

I installed a 1x4 block at the mid-point flush between it and the back of the case. On each side of the block I then installed a small crown molding profile to conceal the joint between the back and cap panel.



Once all the trim was installed, I puttied all fastener holes and caulked all joints. I used Lexel sealant, which is a very adhesive and paintable product with excellent elasticity to resist cracking at the joints. I then sanded the repairs and added another coat of finish paint.



Lastly, I had to address the cable that ran right beneath one of my shelves. The "corner wire molding" I purchased at Lowe's is a two-piece plastic channel with a right-angle strip that tucks beneath the rear of the shelf and fastens with adhesive strips. I ran the wire along the channel and snapped the face-piece over it to conceal the wires in an orderly manner. The plastic channels took a little massaging to connect, but

once they were locked together they stayed that way, keeping the ugly wires out of sight while satisfying electrical codes in my area.

Finally my wall for reading was complete. As an

afterthought, I ran a 6-ft. string of LED rope lighting through the top of the case, fastened with clips and concealed behind the fascia for a soft, ambient effect. I think it was a nice touch. **EHT**



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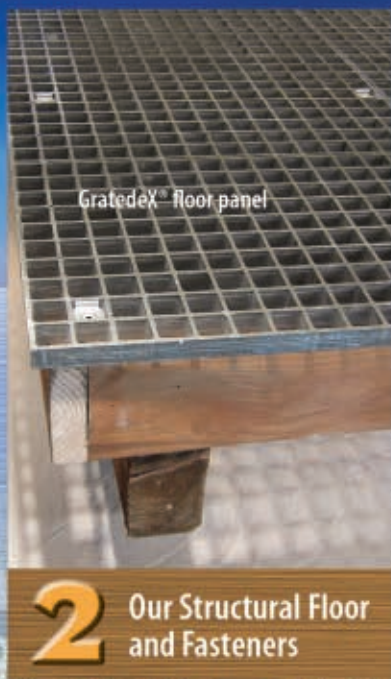
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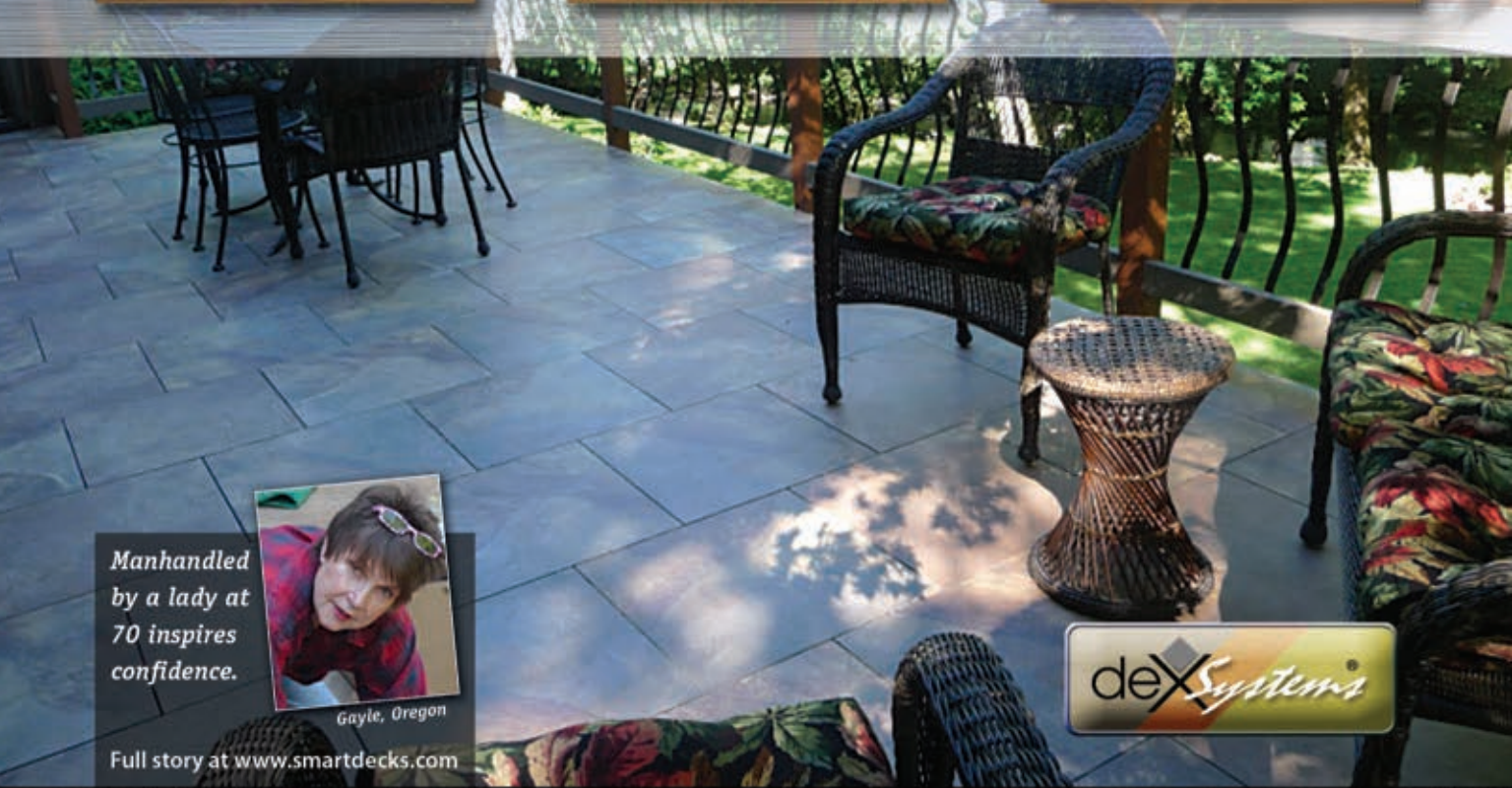
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