



How to paint metal

Have a metal surface to paint? Follow these steps to get the best results.

First off, get rid of any traces of rust. To do this you can use a steel brush, an emery board or a file. If unsightly welds are revealed in the process, sand them down until the metal is smooth. Certain household chemicals and products, such as phosphorus and oven cleaners, are also useful for getting rid of rust.

Next, clean the metal using a damp sponge, and then dry the surface with a clean cloth. As soon as you're done cleaning — don't wait too long, as bare metal is quick to rust — apply a coat of primer designed for metal and compatible with the paint you'll be using. Once the base coat is dry (refer to the manu-

facturer's instructions for drying time), apply as many coats of paint as necessary. You can use a regular paintbrush, but spraying the paint on (either with a spray gun or a can of spray paint) will prevent visible brush strokes.

There you have it: all that's left is to admire the result.

Glossy paint dries more slowly than other finishes and makes fingerprints quite noticeable.



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How to remove stains from leather furniture

Did your kids scribble all over your leather sofas with markers? Has the blue dye from your new pair of jeans bled onto your couch? Did someone spill a glass of red wine on your favourite armchair? Don't panic! There are several ways to remove stains from leather furniture.

First and foremost, it's important to note that most non-greasy stains easily disappear when lightly dabbed at with a moist cloth. Act quickly and make sure to use a light-coloured fabric to clean with — certain colours bleed, which would only make things worse.

Still seeing the stain? Trade in your cloth for a cotton ball dipped in makeup remover and lightly dab that pesky spot. If you're trying to get rid of an alcohol or a soot stain, add a few drops of vinegar to your cotton ball. As for coffee, tea, dye

and ink, a drop of rubbing alcohol should do the trick.

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID
Leather reacts poorly to moisture. For this reason, don't let it get too wet during the stain removal process, and make sure to dry the surface thoroughly with a clean cloth after you've dealt with the stain. It's also important to avoid scrubbing at all costs, opting instead for a delicate dabbing technique. Lastly, always spot test stain removal products on a non-visible area before using them to avoid accidental damage.

When in doubt, call upon a professional cleaner who'll know how to remove even the most stubborn of stains from your leather furniture. What's more, you can always contact the manufacturer for personalized cleaning advice.

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HOME & GARDEN 2018

Four easy-to-grow outdoor plants

Are you a gardening novice looking for some easy-to-grow plant varieties to get started with? Here are a few foolproof options for you to try this summer.

1. Marigolds

Deep golden yellow marigolds grow easily and require little maintenance: all you'll need to do is remove wilted flowers as they appear and water when the weather gets really hot. Their pungent smell acts as a natural repellent against aphids, among other pests.

2. Tuberos Begonias

Tuberos begonias grow to be about 30 centimetres tall and wide. These bulb plants grow in full sun or partial shade, in fresh, well-drained soil. They come in all sorts of shapes and colours, from yellow to pink to bright red and even white.

3. Cosmos

These large flowers are perfect for flowerbeds. They bloom throughout the summer and attract butterflies. Plant them in full sun and don't over water, as they prefer a drier soil. Using compost is not recommended for cosmos, which would become

too big and require a tutor.

4. Geraniums

Colourful and easy to care for, geraniums only require a little bit of effort. You'll need to regularly remove wilted flowers and yellow leaves to stimulate healthy growth. Water them with fertilizer-enriched water once the surface of the soil is dry.

Ready to get your hands dirty? For sure-fire success in the garden, ask the experts at your local plant nursery or garden centre for advice.



In addition to being easy to grow, marigolds act as a repellent against certain insects like aphids.

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Design the perfect outdoor lounge area!

Oh, how great it feels to relax around a cozy fire. Do you own an outdoor fireplace? Perhaps you're thinking of investing in one? First of all, make sure that your fireplace complies with your local bylaws. All set? Here are several tips for designing the perfect outdoor lounge area.

can set down glasses, plates, phones and any other objects you prefer to keep close at hand.

Finally, hang garlands of twinkling lights in your trees, and line the path between your house and your lounge area with decorative lanterns. This way, you'll create a space that's not only warm but also safe to enjoy

First, make sure you've dedicated enough space for your guests to relax comfortably. Adirondack chairs, swings, wooden benches, wicker loungers, hammocks — opt for variety! And don't forget to include enough blankets and cushions to create a soft, cozy environment.

A FESTIVE TOUCH

To create lasting memories under a starlit sky, don't forget to buy plenty of skewers for roasting sausages and marshmallows. And why not bring out your bongo drums, harmonica or guitar to sing around the crackling fire?

Next, place one or more side tables around the seating area so that you and your guests



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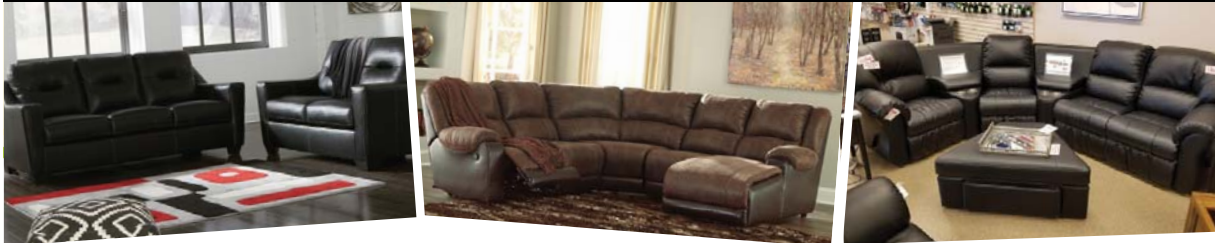
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Refresh your kitchen with the right hardware

A simple, cost-effective way to give your kitchen a mini-makeover is by changing the knobs or handles on your cupboards and drawers. You'd be surprised how much of a difference this simple upgrade can make! But with so many styles to choose from, how do you pick the right one?



PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before you purchase your new handles, measure the distance between the holes used to secure the current ones so that you can avoid drilling again. If your cabinet doors open back-to-back, make sure that the handles won't knock together if you open two cabinets at once. It's also a good idea to test various knob, handle and pull options, as some are easier to

Outfit your kitchen cabinets and drawers with knobs, handles or pulls that match the finish of your appliances and plumbing.

manipulate than others, especially for people with larger hands.

ESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS

A copper finish for country decor, wide handles for a modern kitchen — the hardware you choose should

complement your kitchen's colours and style. Make sure that their finish matches that of your plumbing fixtures, appliances and door hinges. As for the visual impact of your new pulls, the choice is yours: should they blend in or stand out?



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Build your own backyard bar this summer

Do you basically live on your patio during the summer? Then why not set up a bar area to have everything you need to prepare refreshing cocktails — and tasty snacks — close at hand? Tempted? Here are some things to consider.

First off, determine how you'll be using your bar. For instance, would you like to be able to enjoy it on rainy days or late in the season? You'll also need to think about how you'll shield the area from the sun, wind and rain (you could use an awning, for example). Furthermore, to choose the right location for your bar, consider the logistical aspect of water and

electrical hook-ups.

Are you looking to build a temporary setup (adding a counter during the summer, for example) or a permanent bar area that can weather the winter? In either case, choose materials that are resistant to weather damage and UV light. Wood (teak or cedar), braided resin, composite, stainless steel, stone and brick, are all good choices. Just make sure the materials you choose match the look of your home.

Finally, don't neglect the safety aspect. As you'll likely be using your bar during the evening, you'll need adequate lighting

both for the area itself and the path leading up to it. For the rest, it's all a matter of taste: exotic or modern; chic or rustic; what does your dream



With a bar area in your yard, you'll have everything you need to whip up fun evenings in good company.

Three golden rules for garden walkways

Walkways can serve several purposes in the garden: they let you move around freely throughout the different parts of the yard; they confer visual structure to the overall landscape; and they constitute an essential aesthetic component. Follow these three rules to make your walkways both beautiful and functional.

1. Adequate width

Your main walkway (the one leading to your front door) should be at least 1.5 metres wide to allow people to cross paths without difficulty. For secondary walkways, a width between 80 centimetres and

1.2 metres is sufficient for foot traffic and wheelbarrows.

2. Harmonious materials

Brick, gravel, natural stone — there are all kinds of materials in all shapes and sizes you could use for your walkway. To make the right choice, consider not only your budget but also the style of your home and your garden. Concrete, for instance, is perfect for an urban garden, while natural stone is ideal for a more rural landscape.

3. A solid base

For stable, durable walkways, dig up the ground,

put down a geotextile tarp to prevent weed growth, and then add a layer of sand before laying down your covering of choice. Your walkways should ideally sit slightly below grass level to make it easier

to mow the lawn. They should also be built on a slight incline to prevent water accumulation. Furthermore, make sure that the surface you choose isn't too smooth to prevent falls.

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HOME & GARDEN 2018

Relax, You're at the Cabin



The last thing you want to do when you are spending time at the cabin is worry about keeping it clean. This is a place where you should have leisure time. So to achieve a low maintenance but still appealing look, you have to make furniture choices that are resilient and have easy upkeep qualities. There are lots of ways to achieve this.

Find durable, wipeable fabrics in variegated earthy tones or bright and flashy—whichever your style is more suited to! There is a fabric company called Sunbrella that has been revolutionary... it gives us so many durable choices that don't limit our creativity.

This product is indoor/outdoor, high performance, very durable and offers styles in solids and patterns in all colours of the rainbow. This fabric can be used on sofas, chairs, dining chairs, and benches to keep with that low maintenance theme for all of your furniture.

Ideal cabin furniture has the style and comfort you'd like inside along with the durability to also be used outside. Incorporate some fun, recycled plastic furniture for a dining table or bench that you can pull out on the deck and add to your outdoor living space without concern for the elements and fading when

you have extra guests.

It's always great to have a fire at the cabin but sometimes with fire bans, it's just not an option. By introducing an outdoor fireplace you can still comfortably sit around enjoying the heat and ambience while listening to all of the fish stories good old uncle Dan has to offer! There always seems to be an adventure or two he wants to share. I love your stories Uncle Danny, just bugging you!

So choose a theme... whether it be coastal, rustic cabin or chic and modern. Choose some great fabrics to enhance your choices and then throw pillows and blankets to make it all pop.

Don't forget to visit some local garage sales to pick up those treasures, vintage pieces and some interesting local artifacts that will complete your relaxing space.

Until next time it's That Girl Shannon saying "Fill your cabin with furniture, family and friends that you know will stand the test of time!"



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Rediscover the decorative appeal of room dividers

Whether you're looking to create a bit of privacy, reconfigure a space or even add a decorative touch to a room, you just might find that the solution lies in a good old room divider.

Room dividers are making a comeback on the interior decor front, as is apparent with the multitude of materials (bamboo, wood, metal, felt) and designs available on the market. This versatile element can be either discreet or imposing; sober or extravagant; rounded or square; massive or minimal. It can be cushioned, mirrored, equipped with storage or as basic as can be, equally able to blend in or stand out according to your needs.

A multipurpose accessory

Room dividers are a perfect, portable solution for adapting a space to your needs, whether that means separating areas in an open-plan loft or creating an office space in the living room. In addition, they can help reduce drafts and maintain heat in a room. Easy as pie to set up and move around, these handy faux walls can also be used to hide the not-so-nice parts of a room.

Practical or decorative — or both — the room divider is making a comeback.



Add a summery touch to your home decor

Have the warm days of summer inspired you to add a splash of sun to your interior? Here are some tips.

Summer goes hand in hand with sunny weather. Let as much natural light as possible into your home by replacing heavy curtains with light, flowy materials. Add some greenery to the mix by placing houseplants and cut flowers throughout your interior.

In the living room, add some

throw cushions featuring bright, warm colours (orange, yellow, coral) or summery prints (tropical flowers, birds, nautical patterns, seashells). You could also display some photos of your latest beach vacation.

Use various accessories to give your kitchen and bathrooms a summery feel. Floral centrepieces, colourful tableware, a bright shower curtain, citrus-scented candles — the options are endless!

Avoid these four mistakes when buying furniture

Have a room to furnish? For a final result that's as practical as it is pretty, avoid making these four common mistakes.

1. BUYING WITHOUT MEASURING FIRST

In store, your perception of size can play tricks on you. It's hard to accurately picture what a given object will look like in a different space. That's why it's crucial that you measure the room you'll be putting the piece of furniture in as well as the width of the doorways it'll have to pass through. This will allow you to determine whether that couch you're eyeing is the right fit for your family room. Keep in mind that just because it can fit

doesn't mean it should — massive furniture in a small space creates an oppressive atmosphere.

2. ONLY CONSIDERING THE LOOKS

Gorgeous chairs that stop being comfortable when you sit on them for more than 20 seconds. An impossible-to-clean designer couch in a household with young children. A beautiful bookcase that's too delicate to hold your encyclopedia collection. Avoid disappointment by carefully considering the function of each piece of furniture before you break out your wallet.

3. THINKING SHORT-TERM

Does your son have his heart set on a race car shaped bed? Kids grow up fast — you'll likely end up having to buy new furniture before you know it. For a design that stands the test of time, go with neutral furniture and personalize the room with accessories, which are a lot easier to replace as trends change.

4. OVER-FURNISHING

It's easy to feel claustrophobic in a cluttered room. Instead of packing too many pieces of furniture into one space, choose items with multiple uses such as futons or tables that double as storage.



Have your room measurements on hand when shopping for furniture.

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How to choose your herbs

Fresh and fragrant, herbs are great for adding flavour and colour to your favourite summer dishes. Featured in countless warm-weather recipes, such as mint lemonade, tomato and basil salad and grilled coriander fish, these leafy delights are an easy way to spice up any meal.

If you'd like to try your hand at growing your own herbs, choose

common varieties that are sure to please your palate. Three or four varieties to start should be plenty to add depth and diversity to your home-cooked meals.

Make sure you do your research beforehand to know how to properly pick and grow your herbs of choice. Certain varieties grow profusely — like mint, for example — which can affect the

healthy growth of more delicate herbs. To avoid making rookie mistakes, always consult a horticulturist for advice!

You can find everything you need to grow your parsley, thyme, rosemary, dill and virtually any other type of herb at your local nursery or garden centre.

Have fun cooking up a storm!



Check your garage door's seals



Even a well-insulated garage door can be a source of major heat loss. When's the last time you had a look at your garage door's seals? To avoid inflating your wintertime heating bills, make sure the seals around the outside and at the bottom of your garage door are in good condition (not bro-

ken, torn or otherwise damaged). Seals that have become too rigid should also be replaced.

If, after taking a closer look, you suspect that your garage door's seals should indeed be replaced, ask an expert about your options before buying new ones.

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HOME & GARDEN 2018

ORNAMENTAL GRASS

Eye-catching and easy to grow

Ornamental grass is increasingly popular among homeowners looking to embellish their outdoor space. Graceful and light, these plants — characterized by thin, long foliage — complement every style of landscape. Ornamental grasses traditionally border water gardens and Zen centers; however, more and more gardeners are making the bold move of planting them in the heart of their flowerbeds mixed with various annuals and perennials.

Resistant to drought, illness and destructive insects, ornamental grass is extremely easy to maintain. The majority of varieties only require a 10-centimetre trim every spring, while evergreen varieties like blue oat grass don't require any trimming at all. Furthermore, ornamental grass grows vigorously in poor (anemic) soil, as long as it's well drained. Add a bit of fertilizer upon planting and you're set!

Are you afraid that ornamental grass will take over your garden? Visit your local garden centre or plant nursery to find varieties that remain compact as they grow, such as silver grass (*Miscanthus*), red grass (*Calamagrostis*) and greater

wood-rush (*Lucula sylvatica*), the latter of which is perfect for shaded areas.

Boasting feathery spikes and green, red, yellow or blue foliage, ornamental grass is sure to embellish your property and attract the eye of passers-by all season long!



When is the best time to water your plants?

Do you usually water your plants in the middle of the day when the sun is at its zenith? If so, you should rethink that habit! Midday is actually the worst time to accomplish this task. Ecologically speaking, you risk wasting more water due to the strong sunlight prompting rapid evaporation.

The solution? Take out the hose either in the early hours of the morning or when the sun starts to set. At daybreak the sun is still cool, which means water won't evaporate as swiftly. Furthermore, it's actually healthy for a plant's foliage to dry out gradually

throughout the day. A drier foliage protects your flowers and shrubs from disease related to high levels of humidity.

Consequently, when watering at dusk, aim for the ground rather than the foliage. If not, humidity will cling to your plants throughout the long hours of the night, which can cause spores or other harmful bacteria to grow.

For more practical advice regarding the proper maintenance of your flowers, trees and shrubs, make your way down to your local nursery or garden centre today!

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