



# HOME

# IMPROVEMENT

*Fall 2018*

# Refresh your home's appeal with furniture paint

Furniture, bookcases, cabinets, and doors present opportunities to add or change color throughout a home. Woodcraft offers an extensive line of furniture paint, tools and supplies necessary for successful painting projects. In addition, Woodcraft retail store associates are always ready to help customers, and extensive how-to material is a click away at woodcraft.com.

Lori Harper, Woodcraft public relations manager and blogger, offers some advice about updating a kitchen: "Painting kitchen cabinets is a big job, but it can transform the look of your kitchen at a fraction of the cost of new cabinets. It may sound daunting, but breaking it down into bite-size steps can take away the fear factor."

To read her project blog, visit Woodworking Adventures on Woodcraft.com and search for "Kitchen Cabinet Conundrum."

## Paint & Color Selection

Three easy-to-use and easy-to-mix paints are:

- Black Dog Salvage Furniture Paint is a water-based, low-VOC, matte finish paint for indoor use that requires only cleanup before painting, except in the case of chips and scratches, and adheres to wood, metal, glass, ceramics, and plastic.
- General Finishes Milk Paints are premixed water-based acrylic paints suitable for a variety of interior or exterior applications from furniture to crafts.
- General Finishes Gel Stains are heavy-bodied gels formulated to flow evenly for consistent color control.

Before you pick up a paint brush, consider which colors are best for the area you plan to refresh. Choices will need to complement wall color and colors of other pieces or accents in a room. Two handy color guides are the 36-page General Finishes Milk Paint Fan Deck and the Black Dog Salvage Furniture Paint Color Recipes (available for download as a free PDF on Woodcraft.com).

For more than just a change of color, consider creating decorative effects, such as distressing, antiquing, faux marble, or rag rolling. Choose General Finishes Pearl Effects to make it easier to create specialty finishes.



## Repair

If furniture, cabinets and other surfaces need repair prior to painting, the Mohawk PermaFill Wood Touch-Up and Repair System is an easy answer. Just pop in a color cartridge (six color families available), power on the battery-operated dispenser, aim, fill and level this durable repair. Briwax ChairRX is perfect to fix loose

parts in chairs. Drill a small hole, inject ChairRX, and in 12 hours the thin unique formulation will penetrate the wood cells and permanently swell the joints and bond them together.

For more extensive repairs, use the Kreg Jig R3 Kit to reinforce weak parts with pocket holes and avoid complete disassembly of your project.

## Clean and Prep

Use Krud Kutter TSP Substitute to remove dirt, grease, smoke, mildew, food stains, crayon, wax, and more from surfaces to be painted so paint will adhere better. For sanding chores associated with painting, consider the Porter-Cable Restorer Handheld Drum Sander with attachments, which is designed to remove paint and finish from wood, brick and fiberglass, as well as remove rust and polish metal. The Porter-Cable 382 5" Random Orbital Sander and the Norton 5" Random Orbital Sander are other good choices. For sanding with hand power, the Preppin' Weapon Sanding Block Kit and Norton 41/2" x 51/2" SoftTouch Sanding Sponges are handy helpers.

## Application & Topcoat

If spraying is your preference, HOMERIGHT Finish Max Fine Finish and HOMERIGHT Super Finish Max HVLP Sprayers are easy to use on everything from furniture to fences with oil- and water-based products such as chalk-style paint, latex paint, milk paint, enamels, primers, polyurethanes, stains, and varnishes. Large and Small Spray Shelters make painting furniture easier.

For painting by hand, Black Dog Salvage Furniture Paint Round Brushes, made from both natural and synthetic bristles, and Redtree Matey Synthetic Bristle Brushes work well.

Give paint extra protection with Black Dog Salvage Guard Dog and Show Dog Topcoats and General Finishes Gel and High Performance Polyurethane Topcoats.

To learn more about these and other products, visit your local Woodcraft store, call (800) 535-4482 or visit [www.Woodcraft.com](http://www.Woodcraft.com).



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# Save energy this winter

Conserving energy is not just an eco-friendly endeavor, but a potentially lucrative one as well. Homeowners and apartment dwellers alike who attempt to conserve energy may do so to promote the long-term health of the planet, but such efforts also greatly reduce energy bills.

Thanks to air conditioning systems, energy bills might spike in summer. But winter utility bills also can be costly, especially in homes that have not been winterized or audited to ensure energy is not being wasted. Winterizing a home involves taking steps to conserve resources and save a little money along the way.

## Air conditioners

Homeowners who cool their homes with window air conditioning units may benefit by removing these units from windows before the arrival of winter. Window units left in windows may be allowing cold air into a home, leading to more energy consumption and higher



energy bills. If removing the units is too difficult or impossible, purchase window unit covers that can be wrapped around the outside of the unit to prevent cold air from entering the home.

## Windows

A home's windows can be a great place

to start when winterizing a home. If the residents of a home feel cold when sitting near certain windows even though the windows are closed, the windows likely have drafts. Feel around the edges of the window and frame to determine if any cold air is coming in. If so, seal the leaks immediately. Unsealed leaks can make air inside homes cold, prompting

many to turn up the temperatures on their thermostats, which can lead to the unnecessary consumption of energy and contribute to high energy bills.

## Water heater

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, heating water accounts for roughly 18 percent of the energy consumed in a typical home. The DOE recommends setting water heater temperatures to 120 F. Doing so will save energy and money while still providing plenty of warm water when residents need to bathe.

## Fireplace

Homeowners who have fireplaces in their homes should make sure dampers are closed whenever fires are not burning. Open dampers are akin to open windows, allowing plenty of cold air to enter a home. The DOE recommends opening dampers in the bottom of the firebox when using the fireplace. Doing so can reduce heat loss and allow homeowners to lower their thermostats while the fireplace is being used.

Homeowners who take steps to conserve energy in winter can save money while protecting the planet.



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# Falling into Autumn

**B**y the time autumn hits full swing, many trees will have shed their leaves for the season, and the last vestiges of red, yellow and orange magic will have faded to brown. Raking, blowing and collecting leaves becomes the primary chores of lawn and yard maintenance, and presents most homeowners with large piles of gathered leaves to tend to.

It is impossible to count just how many leaves fall to the ground each year, or just how many pounds of leaves get collected curbside, but the numbers are substantial. Cleaning up leaves is considerable work, but not all of those leaves need to be carted away. In fact, there are several different uses of leaves that can be beneficial.

1. Spread leaves as a protective mulch to cover tender perennials or root crops/bulbs in the ground. The leaves will form a natural insulating cover that keeps the soil and the plants within a bit warmer over winter.

2. Create a pile of leaves that will break down and form a crumbly, compost-like material called leaf mold. Even though leaf mold may sound like a blight, it's actually a good amendment to garden soil, improving its structure and ability to hold water. Leaf mold also attracts beneficial organisms that are vital in healthy soil.

3. Brown leaves can be added to green materials in compost piles to improve the health of the compost being formed. According to the healthy living resource Care2, the ideal ratio is 75 percent brown to 25 percent green materials in compost. Turn compost piles regularly to aerate them.

4. Store dried, mulched leaves in a dry spot so they can be used in the spring as a weed barrier for spring plantings. They will keep weeds at bay and help retain soil moisture to ensure small sprouts have the resources to grow.

5. Use shredded leaves as a lawn supplement. Pass a lawn mower over leaves left on the lawn to break them down into pieces too small to rake. This will help keep the lawn healthy throughout the winter without blocking out needed sunlight.

6. Bag dried leaves and pack them tightly together in cold areas of the home, such as basements or garages. They can act as added insulation. Bags of leaves also can be placed around planting containers to protect them from frost.

7. Gather a few of the best-looking leaves and preserve them. Use an iron on a low setting and press leaves between two pieces of waxed paper until the waxed paper seals together. Or use clear contact paper to achieve the same effect.

# Defining hardscape



Curb appeal is beneficial in various ways. Curb appeal can make a home more attractive to prospective buyers and give existing homeowners a place they want to come home to. In its study of the worth of outdoor remodeling projects, the National Association of Realtors found standard lawn care and overall landscape upgrades were most appealing to buyers, as well as the most likely to add value to a home.

Although plants, grass and other items can improve curb appeal, homeowners should not overlook hardscaping.

Hardscaping is an industry term that refers to the non-living features of a landscape. These features can include everything from decks to walkways to ornamental boulders. Introducing paths or paver walls to a property helps develop that home's hardscape. Hardscape and soft elements often work in concert to create inspiring landscape designs.

DIY landscape designers can heed certain tips to make the most of hardscape features on their properties.

**Choose materials.** As with many landscaping projects, homeowners must first determine what types of additions they would like on their properties. Common hardscape features include patios, decks, walkways of pavers or bricks, and retaining walls. Hardscape elements can be functional or simply decorative features that add whimsy to the yard.

**Choose a theme.** The right style allows hardscaping and softscaping materials to work

together. For example, homeowners may want to give their yards an eastern feel, complete with a koi pond and decorative bridge or trellis. A formal English garden, however, may include manicured paths with stepping stones and ornate topiaries. Mixing too many styles together can take away from the overall appeal.

The pros suggest looking at the overall plan of the design, even if all of the work can't be completed at once. This way the eventual finished project will be cohesive.

**Think about the purpose.** Hardscaping can look good but also serve key purposes. Pebbles or gravel can mitigate trouble areas that don't grow grass or plant life well. Retaining walls hold back soil in yards with sharply inclined hills. Mulch can set perimeters around trees and shrubs, as well as planting beds. Fencing, another form of hardscaping, is essential for establishing property boundaries and adding privacy.

**Consult a professional.** While many hardscaping additions can be handled by novices, large-scale projects, such as patios and decking, can change the grading of the yard. Professionals can map out how to handle drainage issues and meet building codes. In addition, professional installation can ensure hardscaping features last for years to come.

Hardscaping should blend with the nature around it and take its cues from the surrounding environment. This can help softscaping and hardscaping work as one.

# Weatherize!

Weatherization is one of the ways to make a home more comfortable while also saving money and energy. Some weatherization projects may be best left to the professionals, while others can be tackled by homeowners themselves. The following are some projects homeowners can expect to encounter as they weatherize their homes or work with professional weatherization services.

- **Home energy audit:** The U.S. Department of Energy notes that the purpose of a home energy audit is to give homeowners a complete picture of how they consume energy. Audits can shed light on how much energy is being consumed and if there is anywhere in the home where energy might be going to waste. Audits should be conducted before beginning any weatherization projects. Professional auditors may give advice on which areas of the home should be addressed first, while DIYers who conduct their own audits can make a list of issues before determining where to start.

- **Leakage:** Homeowners may think leakage only poses a problem in winter, when cold air can creep in through cracks around doors and windows and

make residents cold, forcing them to raise the temperature on the thermostat. But leaks can affect comfort levels and energy bills during the summer, too, forcing homeowners to adjust their air conditioners to ensure a home is cool on hot days. Choose a cool, windy day to inspect for drafts around doors and windows. The DOE notes that air leakage can adversely affect indoor air quality and contribute to moisture problems that can affect occupants' health.

- **Insulation:** A poorly insulated home will cost more to heat in winter and more to keep cool in summer. The DOE notes that heat flows from warmer to cooler until there is no longer a temperature difference. So during winter, heat will flow from heated living spaces to unheated areas of the home, including attics and garages. In summer, heat will flow from the outdoors into the home. Properly insulating a home will decrease this flow of heat, ensuring homeowners aren't paying to heat rooms they don't use in winter or paying more to keep rooms cool in summer because heat is flowing in from the exterior of the home.

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# Feeding feathered friends



Cold weather can be particularly taxing on many of the birds individuals discover in their backyards throughout the year. Although some species migrate to warmer climates each winter, many stay put and attempt to ride out winter in their normal habitats. Birds that tend to stay put include finches, sparrows, titmice, jays, woodpeckers, chickadees, and cardinals.

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology says that, in much of North America, winter days can be windy and cold for birds, and nights are even more challenging. In winter, birds no longer have berries and lush vegetation to consume and insects have died or gone underground. Since finding food can be especially difficult, and shelter may be scarce, many birds can benefit from a little help from their human friends.

## Shelter

Wild Birds Unlimited says shelter for birds is hard to come by in winter. Trees have shed their leaves, and evergreens may not be as abundant or protective. As

a result, birds frequently seek man-made structures that can provide refuge from the elements.

People can provide shelters for birds, which may include traditional birdhouses, windbreaks and snow shields. Even a brush pile can simulate the natural shelters of trees and shrubs that birds prefer. Roost boxes are another option and one that can accommodate small flocks that will group together and share their body heat.

Use leaves and branches to provide natural camouflage and help attract birds to the shelter. Offer yarn, fabric scraps, cotton, and other insulating materials that birds can use to help make their shelters more comfortable.

## Food

Birds require high-calorie and high-fat foods in the winter so they can keep up their metabolism to generate warmth. Also, since birds' feeding habits vary depending on the type of bird, it may be necessary to place feeders at varying heights to maximize access.

Feeders should be located out of the wind and in an area that offers safe refuge from predators. The National Wildlife Federation also says individuals should put out sizable feeders and/or use multiple feeders to provide ample food during snow and ice storms. Feeders should be checked regularly and kept full.

Consistency is also important because birds will grow accustomed to being supplemented with food and may depend on such supplements to survive.

Bird Watcher's Digest suggests a variety of foods for birds. Black-oil sunflower seeds, peanuts, suet, cracked corn, millet, thistle seed, safflower, and various fruits can help many birds thrive. It's also suggested to include mealworms, which can be purchased at bait stores or pet stores. These larvae of beetles can be presented in a shallow dish with slippery sides so the worms cannot crawl out.

Birds typically need extra support to survive harsh winters. Offering food and shelter with a feeder on your deck can often be viewed from inside- offering arm-chair bird watching for the whole family.

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# Coping with fewer hours of daylight

Daylight saving time comes to an end each fall, when the hours of available sunlight already are beginning to decline.

Some people are more accustomed to darkness than others. Norwegians, Swedes

and people living in Alaska and the upper reaches of Canada near or above the Arctic Circle may go through a period when winters can be especially dark. Fairbanks, Alaska, gets just three hours and 42

minutes of sunlight on the winter solstice. Those in Barrow, Alaska, will endure a period of 67 days of darkness, according to Alaska.org. Residents of Seattle, which is even further north than cities such as Fargo, North Dakota, or Portland, Maine, deal with more darkness than those living outside the city may know.

Although much of the rest of North America doesn't experience such profound periods of darkness, when the darkness of fall and winter arrives, it can be difficult to maintain a positive outlook. Borrowing some of the coping mechanisms relied on in northern latitudes can help many people to see the dark in a different light.

- Seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, is defined by the Mayo Clinic as a type of depression that's related to changes in seasons, beginning and ending at about the same times each year. Symptoms tend to start in the fall and continue into the winter, sapping energy and making a person feel moody. As with other types of depression, SAD can get worse and lead to severe problems if left untreated. Light treatment, talk therapy and medication can help people who are susceptible to SAD.

- Spend time outdoors while the sun is bright in the sky. Make an effort to switch your schedule if work interferes with getting outdoors, even if all that can be managed is an outdoor walk at lunch. Sit by a bright window and soak up rays whenever possible.

- Go skiing, snowboarding, outdoor ice skating, or snowshoeing. Look forward to what can be done, rather than what can't.

- Instead of holing up indoors alone, frequent the places that become indoor gathering spots for locals. These can include coffee houses, breweries, restaurants, or even the local church. Plan more social occasions with friends and families so everyone can collectively shoo away the winter blues.

- Use the darker hours as an excuse to exercise more, be it at the gym or outside. The Mayo Clinic says that exercise and other types of physical activity can relieve anxiety and depression, lifting an individual's mood as a result.

- Set the kindling ablaze in a fire pit, fireplace or woodburning stove, or just light a handful of candles. Flames can be soothing and less harsh on the eyes than artificial light.

## Choosing window treatments



Plantation shutters? Mini-blinds? Cafe curtains? Formal draperies? Homeowners' options to window treatments for their homes are extensive. Not paying a lot of attention to window treatments is failing to realize just how great an impact the right window treatments can have on a space. According to the design experts at Hunter Douglas, window treatments are often an afterthought because residents may not consider them necessities. As a result, homeowners may install whatever is on hand or accept window treatments that came with a house or apartment. But ignoring window treatments, especially when they can fulfill certain needs, is a missed design opportunity.

A first step is determining your end goal. Is privacy your main goal? Are you seeking more natural light? Do you need to darken the room?

### Semi-sheer window treatments

Semi-sheer window treatments are often fabric and can help brighten rooms with natural light but offer little privacy. They're usually appropriate for spaces where people gather, such as living rooms, dens or dining rooms. Semi-sheer curtains may be paired with another complementary window treatment so privacy can be customized as needed. For example, sheer curtains let light into a bedroom, but shades can be drawn at night.

### Maximum privacy

Bedrooms, work spaces or bathrooms can benefit from extra privacy. While some

people may think that privacy comes at the cost of light, that's not always the case.

Functional curtain panels can be drawn closed when privacy is desired and then opened to let in light. The thickness of the fabric will also dictate the amount of privacy the panels create.

Tiers are hung on a short rod-pocket panel and usually cover the lower one-third of a window. They're popular choices to let light in from the top, but obscure views from the bottom portion of the window.

Cellular shades are another option that provide privacy but still let light in. Cellular shades come in many varieties. Many cellular shades are constructed with a honeycomb design, offers the design resource Houzz, so they can insulate as well as decorate windows.

### Blackout shades/shutters

Perfect for babies rooms, or where shift workers rest during daylight hours - wherever daylight needs to be blocked out, blackout shades do just what their name implies. A dense fabric lining helps keep light out entirely.

Shutters also can block out light but add to the character of the room. They can be painted a bright color to make a statement or match wall colors to blend in seamlessly.

When selecting window treatments, shoppers can choose retail options or custom treatments. Many designers recommend custom window treatments because they are measured, manufactured and installed specifically for homeowners' windows.

## Enjoy the Distinctive Look



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