

Home & Garden

S U M M E R 2 0 1 2



More Bedroom Space

SIMPLE CHANGES CAN ADD UP TO A BIG DIFFERENCE IN ROOM

Does your bedroom feel tight and cluttered? Small rooms are usually quick to feel cramped, but even larger spaces can feel too small when they are not fully utilized.

If you optimize the space you have, there is no reason for bedrooms of any size to feel overcrowded. Here are some tips on how to create space in even the tiniest of bedrooms.

BED SIZE

Reconsider the size of your bed. Your bed is probably the bulkiest, most space-consuming part of your room. You do spend a lot of time there, so don't part from your king-size bed if it's the only thing that guarantees you a good night sleep.

However, if you can get by with something smaller, you should consider downsizing. The smaller addition will immediately free up a lot of space.

STORAGE

Store things under your bed. Whatever size bed you decide on, the space beneath it should be used as much as possible.

One way to do this is to include an under-bed curtain so that you can tuck storage containers away



PHOTO: BSHIPPEE / YAYMICRO.COM

This bedroom uses carefully selected furniture, a lack of clutter and neutral colored curtains to hide storage space. The result is a small bedroom that looks and feels more spacious than it is.

without detection. Another option might be to get a bed with built-in storage space.

FURNISHINGS

Unnecessary furniture can crowd a room. Stick to items that you will use regularly, not just pieces primarily for display.

The furniture you do buy can be very space effective if

it accomplishes more than one thing. Multifunctional furniture includes beds with built-in storage, side tables with recessed shelves, and chairs that can quickly fold out into loungers or beds.

SHELVING

Corners are often overlooked parts of the room, but they shouldn't be. They

are perfect for storage and display.

Corner shelves are typically less bulky than other shelving alternatives, like bookcases, so they offer an understated way to keep things organized and, if desired, on display.

Having a lot of shelves in a room, even if they are organized, though, can contrib-

ute to a feeling of clutter. There is a simple solution to this: curtains.

Drape curtains over your shelves – the more neutral the shades, the less attention they will draw – to conceal shelves that line your walls.

For an added boost of space, attach the curtains to the ceiling, not the top of the shelves. That can create the illusion of additional height, which opens the room up.

YOUR CLOSET

Use closet space to its full potential. The better you use closet space, the less space you will need to use for storage outside of your closet.

People often underuse all the vertical space in their closets, hanging up clothes until they are packed tight. Instead, opt for storage devices, whether standing or hanging, that allow for additional vertical storage.

Optimize the room you have through space-saving storage techniques and space-savvy furniture. In doing so, your bedroom can feel spacious, no matter its size.

New Cabinet Hardware

AN ATTRACTIVE, AFFORDABLE OPTION FOR YOUR KITCHEN

If you're tired of looking at your old kitchen cabinets, you may be tempted to simply replace them or even remodel the entire room.

The problem with that alternative, of course, is that it can be quite costly. Remodeling a kitchen can also be time-consuming, requiring several weeks of work and hassle.

Fortunately there is a way to avoid the hassle and expense of remodeling your entire kitchen. If your kitchen cabinets are still structurally sound, you may be able to give your kitchen a facelift for less than the cost of a single new cabinet.

A NEW LOOK

Adding new hardware to your existing cabinets is one of the most cost-effective remodeling projects you will ever do. If your kitchen was put in more than a decade or so back, chances are the hardware on the cabinet doors is in need of a new look.

You can give your kitchen that bright new style with an assortment of modern drawer pulls, knobs and other hardware.

THINK RETRO

You can give your kitchen a

retro look by shopping for new cabinet hardware designed to give your cabinets an antique appearance.

Whether you choose genuine antique cabinet hardware from the local antiques store or replicas from the local hardware store, you can give your kitchen a whole new look — and classic, timeless style — for a surprisingly affordable price.

MODERN, CLEAN

If you want to give your old kitchen a modern look, you

can update it several decades simply by choosing the right cabinet hardware.

Hardware stores have a wide variety of new cabinet hardware available — from large handles to simple spool knobs — and you can find an even wider selection on the web.

Be cautious about buying online, though, because it's hard to understand the look, feel, weight and finish of hardware without actually

seeing it in person first.

If you love the idea of a brand-new kitchen but have been dreading the inconvenience and high cost of a complete remodel, it may be time to consider swapping out your existing drawer pulls, handles and other cabinet hardware.

Replacing the existing hardware that came with your kitchen cabinets can make a huge difference, and save you a lot of money in the process.



PHOTO: RONYZMBOW / YAYMICRO.COM

Door pulls come in a wide variety of shapes, finishes and sizes that can suit any design. The small change can make a big visual difference.

The Taste of Summer

TRY THIS RECIPE FOR HOMEMADE BLACKBERRY COBBLER

Blackberry cobbler is a gooey, tasty desert. It is delicious served warm with ice cream or sweetened cream, or cold with a dusting of powdered sugar.

When you make blackberry cobbler you can use frozen blackberries, but it tastes the best if you harvest the berries yourself. This makes a wonderful summer treat.

HARVEST

The best time to pick blackberries is in the morning before the day becomes warm. Berries harvested when they are warm do not last as long as cool berries.

Pick berries that are black and firm to the touch. Do not bruise or crush the blackberries when handling them. Refrigerate or freeze the blackberries right away for the freshest taste later.

BISCUIT TOPPER

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Mix together 1 cup flour, 2 tbsp. sugar, 1½ tsp. baking powder, ¼ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. cinnamon.

Cut ¼ cup butter into small pieces. Use a fork to smash the butter and dry ingredients together until they form small crumbs.

Beat ¼ cup milk and 1 egg together. Add dry ingredients and

stir until moistened. Set the biscuit topping to the side.

BLACKBERRY FILLING

Combine 1 cup of sugar, 2 tbsp. cornstarch and a dash of salt.

Pour 4 cups fresh blackberries into a bowl. If you are using frozen blackberries, thaw them out before using.

Sprinkle the sugar mixture over the berries. Gently toss together so that each berry is coated with the sugar mixture.

BAKING

Pour the blackberry filling into an 8¼-inch by 1¾-inch round baking dish. Gently shake the dish to level out the filling.

Spoon the biscuit topping on top of the filling in six mounds. Spread the topping out gently with the back of a spoon.

Bake in the oven for 20 to 25 minutes until the biscuit topping has browned. Let your blackberry cobbler cool for 10 minutes before serving.

This recipe makes 6 servings.



EPA Rules: What to Know

PLAN AHEAD TO KEEP FROM PAINTING YOURSELF INTO A CORNER

In April of 2010, the Environmental Protection Agency instituted new rules for dealing with remodeling being done on homes that were built prior to 1978.

The new rules are designed to deal with the health hazards involved in disturbing the lead-based paint that was commonly used at that time.

This ruling mandates new training and certification be obtained by contractors hoping to do work on any of the 38 million homes affected by the new rules.

HEALTH HAZARD

Lead is known to have many negative health affects, especially for children, and the most common way for lead to be ingested is in the form of dust. Most renovation activities raise significant amounts of dust.

There are a couple of small exceptions to the rules, but as a practical matter virtually all remodeling of older homes will be affected.

The new rules cover the way that contractors must deal with three specific areas regarding the containment of any potential contamination. These three areas involve containing the work area to prevent dust traveling to the rest of the house, minimizing dust while work is being done, and performing thorough clean up both daily and



PHOTO: GEMENACOM / YAYMICRO.COM

when the job is done.

CERTIFICATIONS

If you are thinking of hiring a contractor to perform work on your home, you will need to make sure that the contrac-

tor has the proper certification.

The EPA is serious about these new rules. Contractors performing work on pre-1978 homes who do not have the proper certification are liable for fines of up to \$37,500 per

day.

You can verify the contractor's certification by visiting the EPA's website.

ACCESS

The first thing to be aware of as a homeowner is that the area being remodeled will not be accessible while the work is being performed. The area in question will have to be sealed to contain any dust that is generated.

If you have been around a construction project of this nature, you are already aware of how renovation dust travels.

You will not be allowed into the area until the work is completed, the area has been thoroughly cleaned, and the contaminants have been dealt with.

PREPARATION

There will need to be a separate way for construction workers and materials to get into the house. They should not travel through the same entrance the family uses.

Furniture will need to be removed or covered. The dust can embed itself in upholstered furniture and be

extremely difficult to remove.

Any forced air heating or air conditioning needs to be turned off, or the ductwork sealed, while work is being done in order to prevent dust from traveling through the air ducts and contaminating the rest of the house.

ALLOT EXTRA TIME

When planning for dealing with the disruption in your living arrangements that having to move out of parts of your home during construction will bring, you should keep in mind that it is not uncommon for remodeling projects to take more time than is originally planned for them.

Be honest with yourself about how much the new living arrangements will affect you. It might even be best to arrange to move out of your home while it undergoes renovation, depending on the size of your project.

You can read more about dealing with the new lead rules by reading the pamphlet "The Lead-Safe Certified Guide To Renovate Right" at the EPA's website.

Take it Easy This Year

BASIC MAINTENANCE CAN MAKE LAWN CARE A BREEZE

Summer has arrived, which means it's time for hitting the beach, driving off to the mountains or setting out on that cross-country adventure.

Oh yes, and taking care of the lawn.

Maybe it doesn't sound like a Disney-like world of fun, but you can turn working in your yard into one of those low-cost stay-cations with just a little preparation.

Making those neat patterns in the grass and looking out over a manicured lawn can bring on that feeling of satisfaction — and even if it isn't as exciting a vacation to Yellowstone, at least you'll get a workout.

But as we noted, preparation is the key.

For example, pushing the mower and the edger might be a workout, but trying to start a balky one — or trying to keep a balky one running — is just drudgery.

A gas-powered lawn mower that has sat unused for months more than likely is in need of a professional tune-up. Sometimes, all it takes is a little cleaning and a new spark plug. But, especially in the case of mowers that have had gasoline in them for long periods, a little more work usually is in order.

Rebuilding the carburetor usually will solve a world of problems, since it has parts that are most susceptible to the corrosive effects of gasoline. A cleaned-up and rebuilt carburetor, combined with a new spark plug, will make a mower much easier to start — and much more economical to operate.

Gasoline also has a nasty effect on the rubber hoses used for fuel lines in most yard equipment. If the hoses don't fail, they might lose enough gunk to clog the rest of the engine.

There are a few parts on pieces of power equipment that also may need maintenance, chief among them the rope-pull system for starting. Rewinding a broken rope on a lot of power tools is a job best left to the people who do it all the time, and so is adjusting the throttle linkage/speed control.

Even though they don't use a lot of it, it doesn't hurt to have the motor oil changed regularly. Just like in cars, nothing wears out engines quicker than dirty oil.

So even if working in the yard isn't your idea of the perfect vacation, at least the weekends can be a little more enjoyable with properly maintained equipment.



Install Your Own Putting Green

If you've ever wanted to practice your putt, but you didn't have time to drive to the golf course, then you're not alone. As much as golfers love to hit the links, sometimes it's more convenient to practice at home.

While most backyards aren't big enough for even a par-three hole, many can accommodate a sizable green with plenty of room to spare. Synthetic greens are ideal because they don't require maintenance. You can roll them out and forget them.

PREPARING THE SITE

After choosing your green's location, outline the area with spray paint. Using a garden shovel, remove the soil to a depth of about four inches, and replace it with crushed gravel.

To ensure a smooth putting surface, drag a board across the gravel and spray the area with a hose. Compact the gravel, and repeat until the surface reaches its original height.

DIGGING THE HOLE

To make a hole for your putting green, you'll need a post-hole digger, concrete, gravel and a cup. Using your post-hole digger, dig a 10-inch-deep hole. Next, fill the hole with four inches of gravel. Place the cup in the hole. Level it, and prepare a bag of

concrete.

Make sure the cup is about one-fourth inch higher than the surrounding surface, and pour the concrete around it. Re-level the cup while the mix is still wet.

Remember to pour your concrete in a sufficiently wide area to ensure a gradual approach to the hole with no bumps or abrupt changes in the surface. Finally, smooth the concrete around the hole, and allow it to dry.

LAYING THE TURF

After rolling out your artificial turf and cutting it to match the excavated area, cut out around the cup, and stake the edges of the green with long nails.

To avoid matting, spread an infill of fine sand over the turf and sweep it in with a push broom. Remember to leave about an inch of turf above the sand.

A properly installed putting green is something that will give you years of enjoyment. If you haven't installed one yet, then what are you waiting for?



5 Steps To Hosting a Yard Sale

Yard sales are a sign summer has arrived. If you're thinking of having your own yard sale this summer, there are some tips you can use to have the best one possible.

1. PRE-PLAN

While you could probably pull off holding a yard sale in just a few days, preplanning will make it successful.

There is a lot to think about when planning a yard sale, such as how you will display items, how you will price them and how you'll get the word out. If you take the time to plan everything out, you're sure to have the best results and less stress.

2. TALK TO NEIGHBORS

If you're planning to have a yard sale in two weeks, it's a good idea to let your neighbors know. If you let them know what you are planning they can plan to hold their own yard sale.

There is nothing more attractive to people who shop yard sales than a neighborhood full of them. Your yard sale will suddenly become more popular and you'll likely see more customers.

3. ADVERTISE

If you want people from outside of your neighborhood to stop by your yard sale they have to know about it. One way to attract people who live just outside the neighborhood is to put up posters.



PHOTO: RONYZMBOW / YAYMICRO.COM

By planning ahead, it's not hard to turn your unwanted knick-knacks into cash with a yard sale.

The way to get the attention of people farther away would be to put an ad in the local newspaper. Run an ad for the weekend of your yard sale. That section of the newspaper is very popular with yard sale shoppers and if they happen to see a neighborhood with a few yard sales, you're sure to see plenty of people.

But in order for people to stop by, they have to know about it. Don't be shy about letting family and friends who live in the city know about it as well. They might pass on the

info to people they know. We all know yard sale shoppers!

4. ORGANIZE

Organizing your yard sale is going to take time. You're not just going to lay everything outside on the lawn or on a table or throw random items into boxes. You want your customers to be able to look at items and not become overwhelmed or confused.

Before you even arrive at the day of the yard sale begin collecting items and deciding how

you will display them. Display them in a way that will work for your customer. Books, for example, would be best displayed so that customers can skim through the titles. A milk crate or box is a handy way to keep them tidy.

Clothes are best displayed on a rack, but if you don't have one, maybe you can tie a sturdy string between two trees and hang the clothes (on hangers) along it.

If you will be selling small toys, it's okay to put them in a box for children to sift through. Have

everything in their groups before your garage sale so that you're not racing around deciding where to put what when the time comes to put everything out.

5. LABEL CLEARLY

In addition to customers appreciating organization, they will also enjoy knowing how much things cost without having to ask about every single item.

Have the prices listed with the items. Also list deals. For example, if you are selling books 1 for 50 cents, offer 2 books for 75 cents. Buyers love deals!

Customers will appreciate knowing what things cost and will be more likely to buy if they don't have to chase someone down to find out the price.

Whoever is collecting money should also have a list of what everything costs with them so that they don't have to run around checking on it. Of course, you will still have customers who will haggle, but that's alright. They need to know what price they are haggling with.

Having a yard sale doesn't have to be a stressful or last-minute project. You can have a successful yard sale if you're willing to put in the time and energy it deserves.