

HOME IMPROVEMENT & DECOR





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Shades of yellow are increasingly popular in home decorating and can bring a welcome burst of warmth to cooler, neutral spaces, as seen in this tabletop decorated with a vibrant yellow floral arrangement by interior designer Young Huh.

BY MELISSA RAYWORTH
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gorgeous shades of yellow have become increasingly popular in home decor, a trend that seems set to continue in the coming year. Yellow is prominent in the Sherwin-Williams color forecast for 2017, while Pantone describes its new “color of the year,” called Greenery, as “a fresh and zesty yellow-green.”

“We haven’t seen yellow this popular since the ‘80s,” says New York-based interior designer Young Huh. And in the months to come, she says, “we will see more and more of it as accent colors and as whole room colors.”

But while yellow is having a moment, many shades of it can be challenging to use

successfully. We’ve asked Huh and two other design experts — Florida-based interior designer Andrew Howard and Kayla Kitts, managing editor of special projects for HGTV.com — to share tips on using this sunny, cheerful color.

WHERE TO USE IT

A recent report by Zillow Digs found that homes with white-painted kitchens sell for \$1,400 less than homes with yellow kitchens. If yellow walls seem like too big a leap, Howard suggests using yellow for upholstery and pillows or for kitchen cabinets. In addition to kitchens, Huh says yellow is catching on for entries and hallways “because it makes these utilitarian spaces cheerful.” In hallways, it adds a sense of sunshine in a space with

little natural light.

Kitts suggests using yellow in “small, more compact spaces that you’re looking to make larger,” like a powder room. She also says you might want to reject some conventional wisdom that yellow is too bright and busy for a bedroom, especially if it doubles as a home office. A warm yellow can energize the space, while still feeling relaxing.

“The trick with yellow is that most people don’t even know they like it until they see it in a space,” says Howard. “Don’t be afraid to go big. I once painted an entire laundry room yellow and everyone that sees it loves it.”

FAVORITE SHADES

Yellow is “such a fresh color, and instantly adds life

to any space you use it in,” says Howard. He suggests starting with a primary yellow and then bringing in other colors for balance: “A room that is yellow by itself will get overwhelming. It needs a blue or green or even a lavender to cool it down a bit.”

Kitts and Huh are both fans of more citrusy yellows, and even chartreuse.

“I especially like Pantone’s primrose yellow because, like the color of the year, Greenery, there is an acid element which makes the color more exciting and edgy,” says Huh. “It’s a color we see in nature, but in an electric way. This is not your grandma’s yellow. It’s fashion forward and forward thinking.”

These colors look great paired with gray or blue

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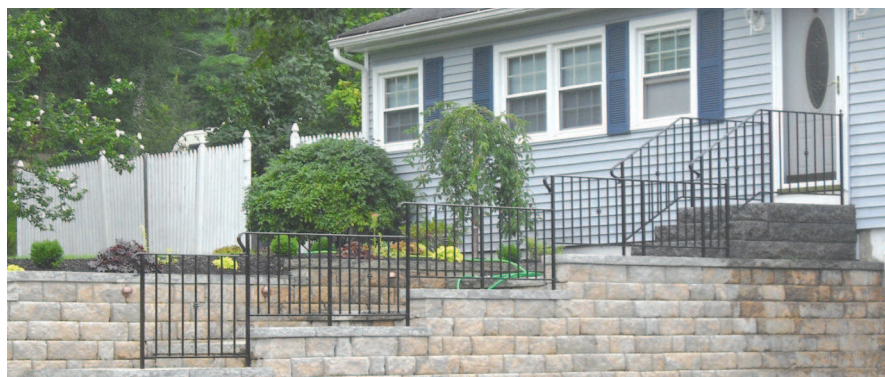
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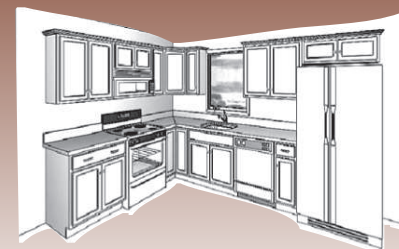
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shades. "Pale yellow is also a wonderful ground color for extravagant colorful prints," says Huh. Even in its softer incarnations, "it evokes hope, sunshine and brightness."

Kitts agrees: "Buttery shades are really great for adding a warm glow and making a space feel cozy." In rooms that get a lot of natural sunlight, she says, even more neutral yellows like cornsilk will offer that optimistic energy that characterizes yellow.

CHALLENGES

No shade of yellow is impossible to use, but do choose with care. Kitts says that if you'll be painting walls yellow, test out a shade and view it throughout the day to see how it changes in different types of natural light and with different lamps.

You might have to live with a sample of a bright, lemon yellow for a few weeks to make sure it's something you want long-term. Yet going with paler yellows isn't always a safer bet.

"Yellow can be tricky, because if it is too pale and the room it is in is relatively dark or gets cool, north-facing light, the color will look dingy rather than cheerful or calming," says Huh. "In England, where the weather can be drab, period rooms are painted bright yellows. Nancy Lancaster's famous yellow drawing room is perhaps the greatest and most popular example of a striking yellow room."

Contrast can also help: "Yellow needs to be paired with a cooler color to have it work effectively," says Howard. "It cannot be the only color in a room."

So take time to choose shades that delight you.

"The yellows that are trending now are the ones that are not pure yellows, but tertiary colors," says Huh. "These are not classic yellows that you may have seen in the past. They're either refreshing or deep moody yellow, and will inspire more emotion than



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Dramatic touches of yellow bring warmth and energy to contrast with the crisp whites and soft, natural wood tones in this relaxing sunroom, designed by interior designer Young Huh.

a pure yellow. Because of this, we'll see these yellows in smaller moments, accents such as contrast pillows or on one upholstered chair in a room."

Despite its challenges, yellow is an easy color to love, says Howard.

"In the last couple of years, we remembered how much we always loved it," he says. "I am really excited to see it popping up more and more, and hope that it's not a trend but a permanent fixture in how we decorate."

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From thrift-store find to
showstopper in a day:

A DIY pro shows how

BY SAMANTHA MELAMED
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Inside the warehouse-size furniture thrift store, the first thing you see is lots and lots of brown — huge beige couches, vintage wooden dressers, tables and chairs in hues ranging from beige to ochre to umber.

But when Theresa Clements — the designer, DIY expert, and blogger at My Fix It Up Life — walks through, she sees past the drab, old and worn.

To her, there are potential showstoppers waiting to be revealed, with a few simple — or radical — tweaks and some bold color choices.

That unassuming, boxy little nightstand could be flipped on its side, with a drawer removed, and topped with pallet wood to make a modern coffee table. Take two office chairs, face them toward each other, saw off the arms, and add a new seat: You have a stylish bench with high, curved arms.

Clements always loved making things as a kid, then she studied architecture and design and began working as a contractor



YONG KIM/TNS

Theresa Clement of MyFixitUpLife spray paints a stencil inside a cabinet she is refreshing after discovering it at a thrift store.

with her husband and collaborator, Mark. But she noticed a scarcity of women on job sites (people often took her for a bookkeeper), and she found many of her friends were afraid to pick up a circular saw.

"A lot of people do a lot of Pinterest, but not a lot of projects," she said.

She's on a mission to change that. She got involved with her area Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Philadelphia three years

ago, running DIY workshops. Recently, she became a national brand ambassador for the chain.

"It's amazing: I get to help inspire people to make stuff, and then it helps people have a place to live," she said. (The Philadelphia branch raises about \$1 million a year, enough to build two houses and fund seven renovations last year, according to Habitat Philadelphia associate executive director Corinne O'Connell.)

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SOME SPRAY PAINT, TLC AND VOILA!

Clements walks us through the process of turning a \$35 thrift store china cabinet into a stylish, yet functional bookshelf:

1. Find a piece with good bones: something sturdy that's made of solid wood that won't fall apart if you tinker with it. Clements selected a mission-style china cabinet (ReStore's price: \$35) that was missing the glass on its door and all its shelves and had a door that was permanently locked. But it had sweet simple lines. "A lot of people would walk by that and shrug, but it's well-built," she said. Her vision: With a few adjustments and a lot of paint, it could be a stylish bookshelf.

2. Gather the supplies you'll need. For this project, Clements used a drill/screwdriver, a saw (she likes a portable saw called the BladeRunner that costs about \$100, but a miter saw also would work), painter's tape, fine-grit sandpaper, pallet

wood, stain, a drop cloth, cardboard, a tape measure, a level, and screws. She uses spray paint and spray primer, the keys to making a DIY project like this doable in six to eight hours.

3. Clements lightly sanded the cabinet, going with the grain, making it just rough enough to catch the paint. Then she wiped it with a cloth to remove the dust. She spray-painted the entire cabinet with primer. (The key is using quick strokes to lightly dust the surface with paint.) She waited a few minutes and applied a second coat. If she got too close and paint started to pool or drip, she blotted the excess away with a clean cloth.

4. She lined the back edges of the cabinet with painter's tape to protect them from paint. Then she used scrap cardboard to shield the interior of the cabinet and gave the exterior a coat of cobalt blue. Again, she spray-painted in quick, light coats. Be sure to read the label on the spray paint to know how

long you have to wait before applying a second coat. "If you didn't use the whole bottle, turn it upside down and spray until it's clean, and that clears the nozzle. Then, when you go back to it a year later, you can use it again."

5. While the paint dried, she made shelves out of planks liberated with a saw from old wooden pallets. First, she measured the interior of the cabinet so she could make the planks just a bit shorter and narrower. "Measure in a couple places, because with old pieces of furniture, things can move. It's always better to go big than small, since you can't make the material grow." She cut small scraps of wood into cleats that would hold three planks together and used screws to attach them, turning them into a single shelf. Disposable wood-finishing wipes, newly available at hardware stores, allow you to apply stain quickly and neatly.

6. She spray-painted the interior of the cabinet, too, in

a contrasting pale green. Because a piece of decorative scrolled wood from the missing glass cabinet front was lying inside the cabinet, Clements used it to make a quick stencil, creating a wallpaper effect in the back of the cabinet with contrasting spray paint in metallic rose gold.

7. Finally, she cut small blocks of wood to serve as brackets supporting the shelves. She put two screws in each, then attached them to the sides of the interior of the cabinet, using a tape measure to place the shelves equidistant, then a level to make sure they were straight.

8. She styled the bookshelf with finds from the ReStore, all transformed with a few quick coats of spray paint. She used metallic rose-gold paint to transform a couple baskets, and used a newer product called seaglass spray paint to upgrade a few glass pieces. "It turns something cheap — this is a 50-cent vase here — into something really cool."



YONG KIM/TNS

Theresa Clements of MyFixitUpLife shows off a cabinet she refreshed at one of Habitat for Humanity's ReStore locations. Clements is on a mission to turn old, discarded items into eye-catching pieces.



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Versatility is key in the modern rec room

By MELISSA KOSSLER DUTTON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

When asked to build a luxury home for a house tour this year, designer Kenyon Woods opted to include a rec room — but not the rec room of his childhood.

Unlike old-time rec rooms with their wood paneling, ceiling tiles, box TVs and cast-off furniture, this one measures about 800 square feet on the main floor, with space for watching TV, shooting pool, rock climbing and more.

“Media rooms used to be off by themselves,” say Woods, owner of Authentic Custom Homes. “I’m tired of the theater or game room being separated. Today, families want to be together,” even if they’re doing different activities.”

Recreation rooms of all shapes and sizes are popular in new homes, according to a recent survey by U.S. Houzz and Home, an online source of interior design photos and decor ideas. Gaming and entertainment spaces, gyms and playrooms were among the top uses for rec rooms, it said.



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOS

Clients often want “several different areas in one large, open space,” says Kristen DuChemin, design director for the homebuilder Romanelli & Hughes.

Clients often want “several different areas in one large, open space,” agrees Kristen DuChemin, a design director for a national homebuilder.

For some, that means adding game tables like foosball, shuffleboard, air hockey and billiards. Chance Pack, spokesman for

game manufacturer Valley Dynamo, said sales of game tables, which dipped during the recession, have seen an uptick as the home-building industry rebounds.

Parents and grandparents like gaming tables, he said, because they are interactive and intergenerational, luring kids away from

electronics and into family activities.

“People are really focused on the entertainment aspect of their home,” Pack says.

Furniture makers have responded with multi-functional pieces that aim to get the most out of a space, says Patricia Bowling, a spokeswoman for the American



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Gaming and entertainment spaces, gyms and playrooms are among the top uses for rec rooms, according to a recent survey by U.S. Houzz and Home.



Rec rooms of all shapes and sizes are popular in the construction of new homes.

Home Furnishings Alliance. Portable bars and high-top tables with stools have become popular, she says.

“Whether entertaining means kids birthday parties or adult cocktail parties, bar furniture is an affordable alternative to the expense of built-ins,” she says. “A portable bar provides a serving counter, sitting/dining space, storage and more.”

Kitchen islands also are playing a role in rec rooms, she said. They can provide seating or a flat surface for serving food, and have space to store games or dishes. If there isn’t space for an island or a bar, a

beverage cart can be useful, Bowling says.

“You can use them as a nightstand next to a bed or in the kitchen or outfitted as a bar. You move it around as needed,” she says.

Interior designer Billy Beson also recommends tables with built-in game boards, and beanbag chairs, which are great for TV viewing and can easily be moved when not in use. Keeping a space flexible is a priority, he says.

“The rec room is back and definitely here to stay,” he says. “There’s a need for that space to watch a movie, play a game or have a party.”

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Hygge: This winter's hottest trend has its heart in the home

BY KIM COOK
ASSOCIATED PRESS

Search the term online and nearly 10 million results roll in. It's being touted by this winter's shelter magazines, decor retailers and lifestyle mavens.

What's so huge? It's hygge.

Often mispronounced "higgy," it's actually more like "hewgah." To understand the term's meaning, just burrow into a big comfy pile of phrases synonymous with "well-being." Coziness, ease, conviviality and, above all, a warm glow.

According to author Meik Wiking in "The Little Book of Hygge: The Danish Way to Live Well" (Penguin 2016), hygge originated from a Norwegian word. The Danes appropriated the term to some extent, but it's common throughout Scandinavia, as well as a good bit of the United Kingdom.

In the truest expression of hygge, the warm glow should come from a candle.

"No recipe for hygge is complete without candles. When Danes are asked what they most associate with hygge, an overwhelming 85 percent mention candles," says Wiking, who also leads Copenhagen's Happiness Research Institute, a think tank studying societal satisfaction. And forget scented candles, he says.

If you don't have a candle, go with a low-wattage lamp, Wiking suggests. Harsh,



BIRCH LANE VIA AP

Shelter magazines, decor retailers and lifestyle mavens this year are touting "hygge," Scandinavian-style coziness, ease, conviviality and a warm glow. These teak candleholders keep with the trend.

bright lighting is anathema to the hygge vibe.

There are a few other decor elements that bring hygge home.

"A warm, neutral color palette is best," said Kayleigh Tanner, a writer in Brighton, England, who hosts a blog called Hello Hygge.

Think beige, "greige," terracotta, tan, warm white, orange and copper.

Textures are important for hygge, too, she says, "so I like to go for very tactile fabrics like velvet, chunky knits, silk and faux fur. These can be mixed and matched to help create a cozy nest in the home.

"For fragrances, I think

familiar, homey scents work well. Comforting, food-based aromas like spices, vanilla or cocoa."

In warmer months, even outdoor spaces can be hygge-worthy, says Tanner, who has fond memories of childhood evenings watching the sunset with friends.

"Lighting can completely transform a garden, so think about solar lights and outdoor lanterns," she says. "These can be placed down paths for a magical journey through the garden, or clustered in areas in which you'll be entertaining, to maintain an inviting cozy glow."

She suggests gathering simple flower bouquets, and displaying collections of pebbles or shells. Hygge's appeal is firmly tied to the natural world.

"In my mind, hygge is about ambience, intimacy and the right setting," says Kirsten Maclean, a Dane now living in a hygge-rich rural seaside town in western Nova Scotia. She finds that a day spent reading with a cup of tea and a cat is as hygge-inducing as a friendly get-together. Sometimes there are candles, sometimes not.

Birte Lillholt Aret, who lives in Sydney, Australia, grew up just outside Copenhagen.

"As a child, I remember visiting my grandparents, who lived in a thatched

roof house. We'd be woken up during lightning storms because of the fire danger,

and we'd sit in the kitchen in our pajamas, with coffee and candles, while the

storm lasted. Making the situation 'hyggelig' by being together," she says.



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