Beautify your HOME

When to use OSB or plywood

Oriented strand board (OSB) and plywood are similar materials used for many construction and renovation projects. Here's a guide on when to use each one.

ORIENTED STRAND BOARD

OSB is made of small rectangular wood chips pressed together with wax and resin to create a solid end-product. OSB is ideal for the following projects:

- Roofing, if the installation is done properly and during a dry period
- Furniture, by leaving the textured wood exposed or covering it
- Decorative walls, like in a studio or workshop
- Kiosks and booths to display merchandise

PLYWOOD

Plywood is created from thin sheets of wood glued together perpendicularly. It comes in several varieties and can be used indoors and outdoors if sealed and painted. Here are some projects that are well-suited to plywood:

- Subfloors, walls and exterior siding because of the material's rigidity
- Furniture, like kitchen cabinets and desks
- Bus and trailer floors for a durable, long-lasting finished product
- Storage spaces, by making various box sizes

Visit your local home improvement store to stock up on everything you need for your project.

RENOVATIONS

3 tips for reducing renovation costs

If you're planning a renovation project, here are three tips to help keep costs to a minimum.

1. **Pick the right time of year.** Fall and winter are typically less busy for most contractors. During these times, you may be able to negotiate a lower price.
2. **Get several quotes.** Contacting several contractors will give you a good idea of the average price to complete the project. Shopping around may also help you get a better rate.
3. **Be specific.** Clearly explain what you want upfront to avoid unnecessarily driving up the bill.

Always ensure the contractor you choose has the required experience and certifications.

Beautify your HOME

The benefits of vinyl flooring

Are you renovating your home or building a new abode? When it comes to flooring, keep in mind the undeniable advantages of vinyl.

MULTIPLE QUALITIES

This versatile material has been gaining popularity in the world of interior design. Modern vinyl flooring has the following benefits.

- It's cost-effective compared to other floor coverings
- It's easy to maintain
- It's scratch- and scuff-resistant, making it suitable for high-traffic areas
- It's waterproof, making it practical for bathrooms and kitchens
- It can be made to look like natural stone and wood
- It's warmer underfoot than other types of flooring materials like tile
- It's available in several formats, including rolls, tiles and strips

Visit a flooring retailer near you to discover the versatility of vinyl flooring.

5 ways to add a tropical twist to your decor

Does the cold winter make you dream of a sunny getaway? These five decorating tips will make you want to throw on a bathing suit, sandals and sarong despite the sub-zero temperatures.

1. **Choose evocative materials and textiles.** Transport yourself to a picturesque fishing town on the coast by decorating your space with furniture and rugs made of materials like rattan, driftwood, linen and bamboo.

2. **Dress your walls and windows in summer colours**. Purchase artwork and window coverings in tropical colours like pure white, azure blue, bright yellow, fuchsia pink, emerald green and turquoise.

3. **Use outdoor furniture in your home.** Turn your home into a beachside resort with outdoor lounge chairs, picnic tables and hammocks. You can also use your prettiest beach towels as throws.

4. **Accessorize your space.** Utilize ocean-inspired accent pieces like buoys, fins, surfboards, anchors, lobster cages and seashells to create a vacation-like atmosphere.

5. **Arrange a variety of plants.** Create a beachy vibe with natural or artificial tropical plants and flowers like palms, cacti and hibiscus. Arrange a basket of exotic fruits as a centrepiece.

Visit your local stores to find summer vacation decor.

What to consider when replacing your kitchen cabinets

Are your kitchen cabinets 20 or 30 years old? Are they showing signs of deterioration? Replacing them is a significant project that requires careful planning. Here are a few things to consider for the best results.

CHOOSE A STYLE AND MATERIAL

Consult an interior designer to help you choose new cabinets that complement your home. They'll create mock-ups using 3D design software to show you various cabinets that fit your space, style and budget.

Cabinet materials include medium density fibreboard (MDF), hardwood, melamine and acrylic. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. Browse several samples to find your preference. On top of how the material looks, consider how easy it is to clean and maintain.

Once you know which cabinets you want to buy, place your order and determine when you can have them installed, whether you're hiring a professional or doing it yourself.

REMOVE THE OLD CABINETS

First, empty your old cabinets and remove them from the walls. To avoid injuring yourself, entrust this task to a professional. They'll also dispose of unusable materials correctly.

INSTALL THE NEW CABINETS

Before installing your new kitchen cabinets, prepare the room. For example, clear and protect the floor, remove your appliances and disconnect the plumbing. Depending on the project's complexity, you may need to find an alternative space to prepare your meals.

Replacing the cabinets is a sure way to make your kitchen look great and increase the value of your home. Visit your local kitchen design store for more ideas.

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Beautify your HOME

2023 trend: arches

Keep an eye out for arches when planning home design and decorating projects for 2023. Their smooth lines, evocative of eastern ideals of space organization, promote inner balance and elevate your mood. Here are some ways to incorporate arches into your space.

LARGE SCALE REMODEL

If you're planning a major renovation, consider including arches in the structure of your home. Turn boring thresholds into elegant arched entryways or install half-moon windows. For added drama, install curved wooden ceiling beams.

SMALL DESIGN FEATURES

Update the focal points in your rooms. For example, give your fireplace mantle a new look with an arch-shaped art piece. You could also create a curved headboard with backlighting to evoke the feeling of a romantic sunset.

LITTLE TOUCHES

You don't have to invest in an extensive remodel to bring arches into your decor. Use curved moulding to create a DIY wall feature. Explore yard sales and second-hand shops for vintage mirrors and furniture with arch details. You could also experiment with an eye-catching paint colour by adding a geometric arch shape on an accent wall.

Talk to a design adviser at your local home improvement store for more ideas.

4 smart ideas for decorating your home on a budget

Most people dream about creating a welcoming, tidy and attractive home. However, creating a magazine-worthy space can be pricey. Fortunately, there are several inexpensive ways to make a stylish residence. Here are four smart ideas.

1. DISPLAY YOUR FASHION ACCESSORIES

Use nails, hooks, shelves or pegboard to artistically display your most beautiful, eccentric or elegant accessories like hats, evening bags, stilettos, watches and ties.

2. CREATE A BOLD ACCENT WALL

Transform the end of a hallway or large wall into a statement piece. For example, you can use a contrasting paint colour or apply a uniquely patterned wallpaper. Using recycled paint or liquidation wallpaper is even better.

3. MULTIPLY THE PLANTS

Walking into a room full of plants instantly makes you feel good. Fortunately, you can find beautiful, affordable and easy-to-care-for plants at local stores. If your friends have green thumbs, ask them for a few cuttings.

4. CHOOSE USED ACCESSORIES

With some research, you can find one-of-a-kind decor in classified ads, thrift stores, second-hand stores and garage sales. For example, you can pick up mirrors, knick-knacks, frames, lamps and vases in good condition at ridiculously low prices.

With a bit of imagination and resourcefulness, decorating your home can be affordable and fun.

How to replace your kitchen countertop in 3 steps

With the right tools, the average homeowner can install a new countertop over the weekend. Here's how to do it in three easy steps.

1. **Remove.** Shut off your home's water supply and disconnect the sink. Then, remove the old countertop.

2. **Cut.** Determine the dimensions of the new countertop. Allow an extra 2.5 centimetres for islands and overhangs. Use a scribe to cut the sides that touch an uneven wall surface.

3. **Install.** Depending on the material of your countertop, you may need to apply a protective sealant and use special adhesives or screws. Ensure the countertop is secure and stable before re-connecting the plumbing and replacing the sink.

Look for a professional in your area if you'd rather leave this task to an expert.

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