



Tips and trends for homeowners, buyers and sellers

What Tools Should You Keep in Your Toolbox?

A well-stocked toolbox will help homeowners tackle basic repairs and home improvement projects. Here's a list of essential tools that will prepare you for most household tasks:

1 Hammer: A claw hammer (with a split back to help with prying) is versatile for driving nails, removing them and general demolition. Choose one with a comfortable grip for better control.

2 Screwdrivers: A set of screwdrivers with flat and Phillips heads in various sizes is crucial. Consider investing in a magnetic set to hold screws while driving.

3 Tape measure: A 25-foot tape measure accurately measures spaces, furniture and materials. Look for one with a locking mechanism and clear markings.

4 Pliers: A set of pliers, including needle-nose, slip-joint and locking pliers, can handle gripping, bending and cutting tasks. They are essential for working with wires and small objects.

5 Adjustable wrench: An adjustable wrench is used to loosen or tighten nuts and bolts of various sizes. It can adapt to different tasks, saving space in your toolbox.

6 Utility knife: A sharp utility knife is perfect for cutting materials like cardboard, plastic and carpet. Choose one with a retractable blade for safety.

7 Level: A 24-inch level ensures your pictures, shelves and projects are perfectly horizontal or vertical. Digital levels offer added precision.

8 Cordless drill: A cordless drill with a set of drill and screw bits is essential for drilling holes and driving screws quickly and efficiently. Opt for one with adjustable speed settings and a rechargeable battery.

9 Allen wrenches: Also known as hex keys, these are necessary for assembling furniture and working on bikes or appliances. A set of various sizes will cover most needs.

10 Safety gear: Never overlook safety in your DIY projects. Safety goggles, work gloves and ear protection are crucial for protecting yourself during home improvement.



Creating a Meditation Space in Your Home

A meditation space in your home provides a sanctuary for relaxation and mental clarity. Here are some tips to help you create your own serene experience.

Find peace and quiet. Begin by selecting a calm area where you can retreat without interruptions. This space doesn't need to be large; a corner of a room, an alcove or even a closet can suffice.

Minimize distractions. Remove clutter and unnecessary items to create a sense of calm and simplicity. Soft lighting is essential; consider using candles or string lights. Natural light is also beneficial, so position your space near a window if possible.

Make it comfortable. Add a plush cushion, yoga mat or a comfortable chair for your meditation sessions. Use soft fabrics and textures to enhance the coziness of the space.

Embrace nature. Incorporate natural elements to connect with nature and promote tranquility. Plants, stones or a small water fountain can create a soothing atmosphere.

Bring in soothing scents. Consider incorporating calming smells with essential oils, incense or candles. Lavender, sandalwood and chamomile are excellent choices for promoting relaxation.

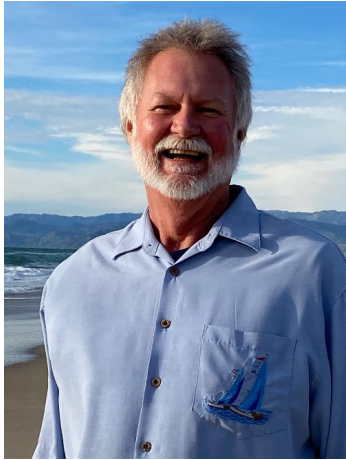


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How to Build a Raised Planter in Your Backyard

Creating a raised planter or garden in your backyard is an excellent way to grow vegetables, herbs or flowers with better control over soil quality and drainage. Here's a step-by-step guide to building your own.



- 1 Choose a location:** Select a sunny spot in your backyard with at least 6-8 hours of direct sunlight daily. Ensure the area is level and has good drainage.
- 2 Gather materials:** You'll need untreated wood boards (cedar or redwood are ideal due to their resistance to rot), screws, a drill, a tape measure, a level, landscape fabric and quality soil.
- 3 Build the frame:** Cut the wood boards to your desired length and height. A common size is 4 feet by 8 feet and 12-18 inches high. Assemble the frame by attaching the corners with screws, ensuring it's square and level.
- 4 Prepare the ground:** Clear the area of grass and weeds. Lay down landscape fabric to prevent weed growth and improve drainage.
- 5 Position the frame:** Place the frame on the prepared ground. Check that it's level and adjust if necessary.
- 6 Fill with soil:** Fill the planter with a mix of topsoil, compost and other organic matter. Ensure the soil will be well-drained.
- 7 Plant your garden:** Choose and arrange your plants in the planter according to their spacing requirements. Water thoroughly after planting.

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