

HOMESTYLE

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Plant a garden that's easy on time and resources

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► Get an Organic Night's Sleep

Why you may want to consider eco-friendly bedding



Comfort OUTSIDE

MAKE IT A COZY, INVITING SUMMER

Trends in Backyard Lights & Grills Laundry Room Redo Brit Morin, Modern Homemaker

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6 Secrets to a Stunning Laundry Room

By Carley Lintz
CTW Features

The humble laundry room – although vital to the function of a household – has a reputation for being bland, dingy and tucked away in a basement or closet.

You don’t have to settle for an area that’s simply where you keep the washer and dryer, though. Your laundry room can be as comfort-

able as your living room and as welcoming as your kitchen. Try these six tips from professional interior designers to make your laundry room beautiful and efficient.

1. Double Duty

The top priority of any laundry room is to launder your family’s clothing. However, to get the most

out of the space you want to make it multifunctional. “A laundry is best if it can kill two birds with one stone. So I always

like to put my laundry rooms in mudrooms,” says Shane Inman, president and senior principal designer of The Inman Company in New



The Inman Company

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York City. “It’s really nice if you have a lot of kids. All of those dirty clothes, shoes, everything can be stripped off and put right in the wash.”

Other double-duty ideas for your laundry room include a dog-washing station, crafting room, pantry or just an extra storage area.

2. Find the Best Washer & Dryer To Suit Your Needs

Your washer and dryer are the crown jewels of your laundry room, so don’t settle for second best. When shopping for the perfect pair keep in mind factors such as performance, energy efficiency, noise and capacity. Front-loading machines are popular choices for saving space (they’re stackable) and easing body strain (you don’t have to dive for your clothes).

Consumer Report’s 2015 top picks for washers and dryers pairs included models from Samsung, LG and



Make sure to measure not only the physical space the washer and dryer take up but also the clearance needed for opening the doors.

Kenmore.

If you want to keep your laundry room environmentally friendly and keep utilities in check, look for models with the Energy Star mark, which signifies certification by the EPA.

3. Make it Motivating

Between washing, drying, hanging and ironing, you spend a lot of time in your laundry room so why not make the experience as scenic and enjoyable as possible?

“I believe that you can make a laundry room fun and inviting,” says

Feather Nolan, designer for Daft Interiors and Design Quartet at Ravinia in Highland Park, Illinois.

“Make the space inviting and the task with be performed with more enthusiasm.”

Nolan suggests brightening a room with a cheerful coat of paint or bold colored cabinets. Whether it’s a sleek modern, sunny cottage or calming beach aesthetic, pick a design that turns laundry from a daunting task to a pleasant one.

4. Leave No Space Unused

Since laundry rooms come in all kinds of sizes from cavernous basements to hall closets that you have to squeeze your washer and dryer into, it’s crucial to make the most of your space.

Both Inman and Nolan stress the importance of storage to help your laundry room live up to its full potential.

“Use every inch of the space. You can customize storage to be built-to size for the space,” Nolan says.

“Spaces such, as the sides of the washer and dryer can have small skinny shelves for things such as dryer sheet boxes.”

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The Inman Company

Make the space motivate you to take care of the oft-neglected chores, such as ironing, by making them easy to and quick to accomplish.

Nolan also recommends putting rods over sinks to drip dry clothes.

5. Splurge for Durability

It's the nature of laundry rooms to cause messes. Between dirty laundry, cleaning products and plenty of water you want to protect the surfaces of your beautifully designed laundry room.

When choosing the materials to create your dream laundry room, pay special attention to surfaces like the countertops, floor and surface finishes. The key is finding the right style that will last for years to come and stand up to wear and tear.

"There are many materials that look similar, but vary in cost. However don't sacrifice easy maintenance or durability for cost," Nolan says. "In the long run you will save more if you spend properly the 1st time around."

6. Don't Forget These Must-Have's

Although the washer and dryer are the stars, other details can really make or break the function of your laundry room.

Inman's must-have item is a deep sink that allows you to properly soak garments without splashing water all over the counter. He also suggests finding an ironing board you can easily store to avoid cluttering the room.

Other necessities include baskets for easy storage or sorting, a place for hangers and roll-away shelves.

"Homeowners should consider space relevance for tasks being performed," Nolan says. "You want to make sure there is ample room for folding, hanging, and storage for everyday use items, such as soap containers and dryer sheets. Baskets or roll-out shelves are a great way to remove items."

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Bold & Brassy



Designer Tobi Fairley added brass accents throughout this modern penthouse to add class and warmth.

Crave metal with a little less shine and bit more depth? Brass is big in modern interior design. Here's how to incorporate it into your home

By MARLA R. MILLER

CTW Features

As a living material, brass adds warmth, richness and sophistication to the home. Yet, it also offers a lived-in, earthy quality as it oxidizes and wears, especially in the kitchen.

It's a nice change after years of sleek, modern design and decorating the home with stainless, chrome and other cold metals. The copper in brass also makes it antibacterial and great for germ rooms such as the kitchen and bath.

"Brass has such a wonderful quality in regards to the fact you find that it changes over time, things are telling a story," says Courtney Lake, a 2015 High Point Market Style Spotter and owner of Monogram

Décor, an interior design firm in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The metal, an alloy of copper and zinc, is strong; it won't rust; and it's relatively inexpensive. Brass making dates back ancient times for utensils, jewelry, vases and decorative pieces.

Today's brass is tasteful and elegant, adding a glow to interiors and a changing look as it patinas. Designers and trend spotters are seeing brass in hardware, furniture, faucets, light fixtures and home accents. It's being used in the kitchen on doorknobs and pulls, faucets, range hoods and lighting.

Designer Tobi Fairley recently complete a penthouse with a brass-filled kitchen and other brass elements throughout. She also debuted

new product lines at the spring High Point Market.

"It's a natural progression from the cooler metal shades that have been prevalent for so long," says Fairley, of Tobi Fairley & Associates in Little Rock, Arkansas. "Now the trend is to go with warmer metal finishes, or even to mix cool and warm metals. And it is a great trend that is happening throughout the home."

Changing out cabinetry hardware or a light are easy DIY projects.

"Or by adding a brass light fixture, bowls for fruit, or other accessories," Fairley says. "If you want to go bolder, you can also pull in brass with a range hood or by switching out your faucets and fixtures."

In other rooms, brass is making its way back to beds, ornate light fixtures and wallpaper, Lake says.

"Lighting is one of the easiest ways to swap something out," he says. "More and more furniture makers are using it in tables and accent pieces."

Depending on the look, there are three main finishes: shiny brass, burnished brass and a tarnished, or patina, finish.

In its newly cast state, brass has a golden hue that can be polished to a shiny glow. Over time, without regular polishing or a protective lacquer coating, brass will darken as copper molecules are exposed to oxygen.

Brass is fairly easy to care for, especially if you want a more worn

look. Brass also can take a lot of wear of tear and holds up better than nickel and chrome.

It depends on the look you’re going for – old world and lived in, or warm yet rich – as to which finish to choose, Lake says.

“It all depends on what finish you like,” he says. “It’s a living material, so it will patina over time. If you want it to darken, leave it alone and let nature take its course. There’s not a lot of maintenance association with it. You know it’s going to age, so it can be used for exactly what it’s meant to be used for.”

Some brass products are knockoffs or coated with a tarnish-resistant finish that cleans up with a soft damp cloth – no polishing required.

Fairley recommends determining if you’re working with real brass or something that’s brass-plated. An easy test is to use a magnet and see if it sticks; a magnet will not stick to real brass. Brass-plated products can be cleaned with soap and water.

For solid brass, use a polish or



Tobi Fairley

Brass accents in the kitchen are a surging trend. Pulls, light fixtures and faucets are popular choices for adding a splash of brass.

commercial cleaners like Brasso, or simply a mixture of salt and lemon juice. Just buff it with a half lemon coated in salt and then rinse and dry, Fairley says.

In vintage homes, original brass fixtures such as doorknobs and door knockers take on subtle changes in color as the oxidation process occurs. A patina finish is the natural result of aging or can be done deliberately to create an aged, distressed look.

Fairley says brass never really went away.

It’s been used in home building and decorating for a long time – sometimes in a matte or patina finish, which is popular now, and sometimes in a shiny finish. People may remember its popularity the 1980s – really shiny and more like gold.

Homeowners can experiment with brass by adding a new chandelier in a dining room or foyer or buying a serving tray, picture frame or accent table.

“I think you should use a metal like that if it appeals to you, rather than because it’s a trend,” Fairley said. “If you like it, then you should use it. If you just want to update your kitchen with a few newer trends, then think carefully about where you use it and how much you spend.”

Fairley’s other decorating tip:

“As with anything else, too much of a good thing is no longer a good thing,” she says. “So don’t cover everything in your kitchen with brass and overdo it. Balance is the key to any great design.”

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All About the Brass? Mix and Match with Caution

So you want to bring in brass, but what if you have a stainless kitchen sink or appliances?

It's OK to mix metals among appliances and decorative hardware and accessories – all in moderation, says designer Tobi Fairley.

“There are some gorgeous and sophisticated kitchen designs that have a gorgeous balance of silver tones and matte brass tones or even copper with nickel,” she says.

Fairley says it's fine to have a stainless sink in a kitchen and also bring in brass through accents and lighting without it looking tacky. It's all about the mix and spacing.

Homeowners should avoid mixing brass faucets and fixtures with a stainless sink bowl. For that, it's best to use an enamel white sink, or maybe a stone or marble apron sink.

There's also been a rise in colorful kitchen sinks



that pair well with brass hardware.

For total kitchen remodels, brass goes with

wood or cutting-board countertops and a farmhouse or porcelain sink, says Courtney Lake,

owner of Monogram Décor, an interior design firm in the San Francisco bay area.

“It's just this really great way of bringing in unexpected warmth,” Lake says. “You can find great brass knobs or a faucet and it brings in that living quality don't get it when you're looking at a higher-end countertop.”

It's trickier trying to make brass work in an ultra-modern kitchen. You may have to switch to matte black appliances or work with a designer to add in a few whimsical, antique or balancing elements.

“It's figuring out what your balance is going to be,” Lake says. “If you have all stainless steel, you may need to reconsider because it's not going to have the proper background to really pop against the other metallic finishes in the space. The one trick I use, if there's a lot of metallic, is to do accent tiles or cement tile on the wall or a great geometric pattern as a way to tone down a fairly modern kitchen.”

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Backyards Ablaze

Light up with the latest in grills, fire pits and outdoor lighting

By KELLY LEE-CREEL
CTW Features

Homeowners eager for an escape are retreating to their own backyards. The latest trends in backyard design go beyond basic landscaping and now are upgrading the standard patio for an oasis complete with fire pits, custom lighting and outdoor kitchens.

Rich Young of Outdoor Lighting Perspectives, a lighting company with franchises across the United States and Ontario, says, “Over the past 3 or 4 years, people are staying more in their homes and improving their homes.” Instead of saving up for vacations, people are taking that money and investing it in a space they can enjoy again and again. Young says this is part of a larger “cocooning trend.”

One of the ways people extend their home’s footprint is by remodeling their yards. “You need effective lighting in order to spend more time outdoors,” Young says. In addition to improving curb appeal, properly lit pathways and entrances improve safety and security.

However, outdoor lighting is about more than just function. “Right now, it’s not even about lighting,” Young says. “It’s more about creating outdoor living spaces.”

More homeowners are using lights for ambience. “When you’re sitting around a fire pit or a bar area, it’s all about subtle, soft lighting,” Young says. “None of the lights should be glaring or hitting you in the eye.”

To create an environment that is relaxing, Young recommends downlighting around fire pits and grilling areas, “pushing light down onto a surface rather than uplighting.”

Young uses this strategy in his own yard. “For example, around my fire pit, I have three small lights under the cap of the stone. For the lights underneath my stone bar area, I use light that emits down.” He uses the same technique in the natural areas of the yard as well, mixing soft lighting in with the bushes to create a gentle glow.

This type of subtle lighting is an art form. Fortunately, technology makes it easier for homeowners to visualize how lighting might improve their yard. Young’s company offers a nighttime consultation to get it right.

After discussing the homeowner’s needs and wants, the lighting designers will send the client inside and use temporary, wireless fixtures to create the look they discussed.

“We set up a portable lighting system, and [the homeowners] can see what their outdoor living space would look like before they buy it. We can move lights around, take lights away, or add lights,” Young says. “They

will see their design that night through the nighttime demonstration.”



Weber

Today's grill offers more than just a flame, including wraparound work spaces with mini-fridges, smokers and warming trays.



Unutia

Book a nighttime consultation to ensure an outdoor lighting solution suits your needs.



What better way to enjoy that newly created atmosphere than with a meal cooked outside? The perfect companion to the outdoor living room is the alfresco kitchen. Even if custom stonework and masonry are out of the question, homeowners can still enjoy a deluxe backyard kitchen with the latest in barbecue.

Kim Lefko, chief marketing office for Weber Grills in Rolling Meadows, Illinois, says that all an outdoor grilling space really needs is a grill. However, “many homeowners are opting for a second kitchen or living room atmosphere and are decking out their spaces with not only a grill but, stovetop-style burners, griddles, roasting spits, sinks, refrigerators, storage space for dishes and other cooking gear, counters for prep work, bar space for guests, stereo systems and more.”

Lefko cites several reasons why grilling continues to gain in popularity. According to Weber’s 26th annual GrillWatch Survey, 48 percent of people would rather grill than cook

inside. “Grilling offers people an escape,” Lefko says. “Weather is not really a factor, as 51 percent of grillers grill year-round.”

People shopping for a new grill will find that charcoal grills are nearly as popular as gas. Grills are also available in a wider range of colors than ever before.

“Consumers are continuing to experiment with smokers, and of course, portable grills are always popular, as grillers take their game on the road – whether that’s a tailgate party, the park, the beach, or camping,” Lefko says.

For the griller who is looking to be king or queen of the backyard, the Summit Grill centers, which Lefko calls “the ‘crown jewels’ of the Weber family,” may be just the thing. “The Summit series gas grills boast six main stainless steel burners, a smoker box, a sear station, a rotisserie, infrared burner and a dedicated side burner,” Lefko says. “These grills can complete one’s backyard barbecue oasis.”

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All the Comforts of Home...Outside

Crave a little coziness under the stars? Turn any outdoors space into a retreat that's just as comfortable as your living room



Hayneedle

By ERIN CHAN DING

CTW Features

Kerrie Kelly held a string of get-togethers at her home on a recent weekend, but she entertained friends and neighbors in her outdoor rooms – as in her side patio, her driveway and her backyard.

She gathered them around a communal table, under bistro lights and around a fireplace. On the fence hung a sign that said “friendship.”

She brought the intimacy of her

home into the open air.

These days, with the popularity of performance fabrics, woods and finishes, Kelly, an interior designer based in Sacramento, says “anything you have indoors is now spilling outdoors.”

She says the staying power of “staycations,” or taking vacations at home instead of traveling elsewhere, has cultivated a desire for people to bring resort-like aesthetics and comfort into their outdoor spaces.

Edyta Czajkowska, owner of design firm Edyta & Co. in suburban Chicago, says the options in outdoor furniture have exploded.

“Outdoor furniture has come a long way, and I think it’s just so interesting how some of the outdoor furniture nowadays looks just as good as the indoor furniture,” Czajkowska says. “You can create a beautiful outdoor space.”

A paramount example of indoor-type furniture coming outdoors has been the advent of beds and

daybeds under the open skies.

“It’s almost like we’re taking our whole house outside, right?” says Joanne Kamppinen, senior director and divisional merchandise manager over outdoor and pets for hayneedle.com, an online furniture store based in Omaha, Nebraska.

She adds that being outdoors is “all about comfort,” and daybeds allow people to sprawl out.

They also add a different aesthetic to the backyard.

With outdoor beds, “you have

Outdoor patterned throw pillows are on-trend and provide added comfort and seating options.



Hayneedle

almost this Bohemian look or something super sleek that provides a range of styles,” says Kelly, owner of Kerrie Kelly Design Lab.

The beds often come with canopies that provide shade or intimacy for smaller or one-on-one conversations. Kamppinen adds umbrellas also have started coming in 11-foot sizing for more extensive shade.

Seating with silhouettes and shapes that stay lower to the ground have also risen in popularity, Czajkowska says.

She points, for instance, to the Ibiza Lounge Chair

sold by Restoration Hardware that’s essentially an elegant take on a beanbag, curving up without a solid aluminum or wood frame.

Kamppinen says sectionals are as popular as ever, but especially the kind that can be easily configured and adapted to a variety of seating situations.

A sectional set called the Belham Living Monticello on hayneedle.com, for example, comes with ottomans that can be arranged as stools around an all-weather wicker table or that can be used as side tables.

Sectionals with frames made of resin wicker, she says, are especially easy to clean; other structural materials, like cast aluminum and woods like teak,

When setting up outdoor seating, arrange the same conversational set-ups employed in dining and living rooms.



Hayneedle

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eucalyptus and acacia also hold up well to weathering.

This is particularly important to surface elements like tables, which Kelly says have become more communal in outdoor yards, mimicking a trend in restaurants because of their versatility and practicality.

“There are so many things that we can do in that larger communal table,” Kelly says. “Kids can have their iPads on one side, parents can have their wine on the other, a person can be on an end reading a newspaper, but we’re all together in a type of way.”

She points to tables with integrated benches that serve sleek takes on traditional picnic tables.

“To have everyone together regardless of what the activity is, I think that table really allows for that.”

Coffee tables with built-in fire pits in the center also encourage togetherness, Czajkowska says. Those tables bring in the intimacy

and elegance of a flame while still allowing surfaces for drinks and food.

“For ambience, (fire pits) set the mood for outdoor entertaining,” Kamppinen says.

In addition to the natural light from a fire, think about illuminating an area by hanging lanterns around outdoor spaces. Kamppinen says lights often also come in sets of three different heights for variance.

Czajkowska points to battery-powered lighting that can sit on the ground, as well as lamps that come in shapes like cubes or globes.

“You can have them scattered throughout the patio or pool area, and it adds a really beautiful ambience,” she says. “It’s not really harsh, and it gives you a glow.”

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Use an umbrella large enough to shield all guest around the table from the sun.



Hayneedle

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Hands Off the Garden

Eco-friendly and low-maintenance, drought-tolerant gardens could not be more timely. From landscaping to maintenance, here's what a savvy gardener needs to know before planting

By **ANNE BURKLEY**

CTW Features

Some gardeners spend hours upon hours a week in the garden – enriching, pinching, pruning, planning. There is a therapeutic quality to getting your hands dirty. But if you are more results-oriented and less excited about the process, there is no shame in that either.

Experts say that if you spend a little time planning, preparing and establishing your garden, you can create a relaxing space that only looks high maintenance.

PLAN

Creating a low-maintenance garden starts with planting the right plant in the right place so that it can thrive with as little intervention as possible.

“Before you do a thing, get to know every corner of your yard,” says Melinda Myers, a Wisconsin-based gardening expert, TV host, author and columnist. Take note of where you walk, socialize and relax. When inside, what parts of the yard do you see as you look out? These are ideal spots to plant.

Once you choose where to plant, take note of the conditions. How is the soil drainage? Is it sunny or shady? Also, take the time to test your soil.

Make a sketch of how you envision the bed. You don't have to know what you will plant, but you should have an idea of the shape, size and purpose the plants will serve.

Containers are a great addition to the landscape. “Containers are so much fun because they are versatile and you can change them easily,” says



When selecting plants, plan for the future. Take note of the information on the tag and make sure to give plants enough room to grow to mature size.

Kathy Quarles, assistant general manager of Stauffers of Kissel Hill garden center in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Think beyond an annual container at the front door. Edibles and perennials work equally well and can be placed by the kitchen door or in a traditional bed to add interest. Perennials are a lower-maintenance choice as they don't need planted every year.

PREPARE

Most likely, you will need to remove grass or weeds to create a new bed. To remove grass, use a shovel or edger to define the bed. Rent a sod cutter to remove the grass and use it to fill in patchy spots in the yard. If your soil is

in good shape, mow the edged grass where the bed will be, cover with newspaper and add several inches of quality topsoil.

If your future garden is full of weeds, dig them out by the roots and dispose of them. A weed killer could be used, but it could be several weeks before the area can be planted.

Next, amend the soil. Proceed based on the results of your soil test. Didn't get tested? Lay 2 inches of organic matter (compost, aged manure, mulched leaves) on your bed and work it into the top 12 inches of soil. This improves drainage in heavy soils, retains moisture in lighter soils and

adds nutrients.

When it comes to successful container gardening, good soil is vital. Find a good potting mix, Quarles says. If it's too heavy, it will hold too much moisture, and if it's too light, it will dry out.

PLANT

Research plants on the Internet, ask the staff at a garden center for recommendations, visit a local botanical garden or nature center to determine what will fill your needs and thrive in your garden. Native plants are a good place to start.

Take your list and sketch to a garden center with a knowledgeable staff. Aside from a helpful salesperson, tags are a great ally when choosing plants. Take note of plants' mature size, light and moisture requirements. For a low-maintenance garden, they should be a perfect match. Tags often include information such as drought and disease resistance and wildlife attraction (or repellent), which may make a plant more desirable.

When selecting plants for containers, choose ones that are compatible for the amount of water and light needed. Get a container that is a minimum of 12 inches, but preferably at least 18 inches, Quarles says. "Otherwise, you will be watering twice a day in the heat of the summer." Using non-porous containers will help the soil retain water.

MAINTAIN

At first, you may find yourself watering every other day, depend-

ing on the soil and weather, Myers says. Once established, if you have the right plant in the right spot, maintenance will be minimal.

Watering, once plants are established (a few weeks for annuals, a season for perennials and a couple years for shrubs and trees), can generally be limited to one soaking watering a



For ease of use, try planting herb containers. They can be kept indoors or out and require very little maintenance or water – and they upgrade dinner in a flash.

week. Mulch beds to help retain moisture, improve soil, keep weeds at bay and complete the look of a garden. It is up-front work that pays off with less watering and weeding down the road.

Maintaining containers isn't difficult, Quarles says. Since frequent watering is necessary, nutrients leach out of the soil quickly. To ensure healthy plants, fertilize with a slow-release fertilizer every other week. Quarles recommends topping off the top few inches of soil each year and switching soil completely every two to three years.

Once your garden is established, relax and enjoy! And if you find in a year that something doesn't look good, move it. "Gardening is an adventure," Myers says, "it isn't meant to be static."

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Eat What You Sow

Edible plants have a reputation as the homely workhorse of the home garden, raised up and tucked into a corner where they won't detract from the aesthetics of the rest of the landscape. But it doesn't have to be that way, said Leslie Bennett, owner of Pine House Edible Gardens in Oakland, California, and co-author of "The Beautiful Edible Garden" (Ten Speed Press, 2013).

"If you can actually incorporate the edibles into your garden aesthetically using hardscape, you can really build it in as a beautiful part of your entire garden," said Bennett.

Rather than uninspiring rows or 4-by-4-squares of dirt, a vegetable garden can be a pretty bed set along manicured pathways and raised and contained with food-safe wood or stone to tie together other elements in the landscape – in plain sight! Ugly tomato cages and wire stakes can be replaced with bamboo ladders or vibrant spirals and trellises that offer the same function but add to the design of the garden.

If your edibles are a part of the lawn and garden, they will be easier to access and care for and you'll notice any fruit or vegetables ready to harvest, Bennett says.

Try planting these four flavorful favorites – start small with pantry staples and edible flowers that are multi-functional in the garden:

CELERY

Celery is a compact, tidy plant that offers pretty color in garden



beds. Grow your own and harvest only what you need for a meal.

ONION

Green onions, chives and shallots are fairly easy to grow, look nice and – like celery – you can harvest what you need for meal preparation.

HERBS

Enjoy fresh thyme, sage, basil and oregano in the kitchen and as a fragrant and beautiful addition to garden beds or in containers.

EDIBLE FLOWERS

Look for flowers that have edible leaves and blooms. Not only are they pretty and tasty, they triple as pollinators.

—Anne Burkley

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Ask the Designer: Homemaking 2.0

Modern domesticity expert and author, Brit Morin

By **LISA IANNUCCI**
CTW Features

It's obvious that technology has changed so many industries and has completely revolutionized how we live our lives, especially in the kitchen. Thanks to apps, websites and 3-D printing, it isn't your grandmother's homemaking anymore, according to Brit Morin, author of "Homemakers: A Domestic Handbook for the Digital Generation" (William Morrow Paperbacks, 2015).

"Our generation uses technology in very different ways than our mothers and grandmothers," Morin says. "This has fundamentally impacted how we run our households. Before we know it, technology will literally change how we 'make' at home. When our generation is looking for a new recipe, we're going straight to apps and sites on our phones instead of pulling cookbooks off the shelf."

According to a NextMarket Insights survey of U.S. consumers in October 2014, approximately a quarter of those who have partial or full responsibility for cooking and food preparation in the home say they use a tablet or smartphone in the kitchen "all the time" to assist them with the cooking process. The report also showed that more than a third indicated they use a tablet or smartphone "sometimes" to help them during the food preparation and cooking process.

In addition, the survey showed that the growing impact of this new technology and the resulting "smart kitchen" will result in a \$10.1 billion market explosion opportunity by 2020.

These innovations have even changed the definition of the word

homemaker, which back in the 1800s until roughly the 1970s was 'one who manages a household.' "Redefining the word homemaker means using old-school and new-school technologies to unlock our creativity," she says. "For example, I'm taking a calligraphy class online so that I can address the invitations to a friend's baby shower. My generation missed out on the basics of home economic and shop classes, but that doesn't mean we don't want to get creative and make and we use the web as a place to get inspired and learn."

In her book, Morin writes about her favorite hobbies using modern technology, "I'm designing a 3-D necklace on my computer to print in real life, using apps that taught me how to letterpress, or scouring the web for delicious recipes to recreate." She writes that she was using the virtual world to help her to make stuff in the physical one.

Morin is especially excited about 3-D printing, today's newest technology in homemaking. "As technologies like 3-D printing become available, the possibilities for creativity and customization are endless," she says. "Technology is unlocking countless possibilities in the design world, especially when it comes to customization and personalization. With tools like 3-D printers and laser cutters you can turn a custom digital file into real, physical products."

Last year, Morin utilized the technology to create and send printed ornaments as holiday cards to their friends last year. "Using a free 3-D design software, we were able to customize the ornament to say Happy Holidays! Love, The Morins," she says.

Although smart technology has



'Redefining the word homemaker means using old school and new school technologies to unlock our creativity.'

William Morrow

significantly changed how we take care of and manage our house, especially in the kitchen, Morin says that our grandmothers have still enjoyed their own advancements throughout the years.

"For our grandmothers' generation, contact paper and boxed cake mix were two of the biggest innovations, then it was the microwave for our mothers," she says. "As the digital generation, we're getting information faster than ever before. I can find a recipe, order groceries and learn a new baking technique

all on my phone."

Unfortunately, while technology has advanced us in many ways, Morin sees the down falls it creates. "We have access to an incredible amount of information very quickly," she said. "That said, unplugging and taking 'analog' time is also incredibly important. I make sure to carve out time each week to completely disconnect. I'll usually spend that time with my husband and son, or learning a new skill."

Morin says that being a modern homemaker also is part of a larger

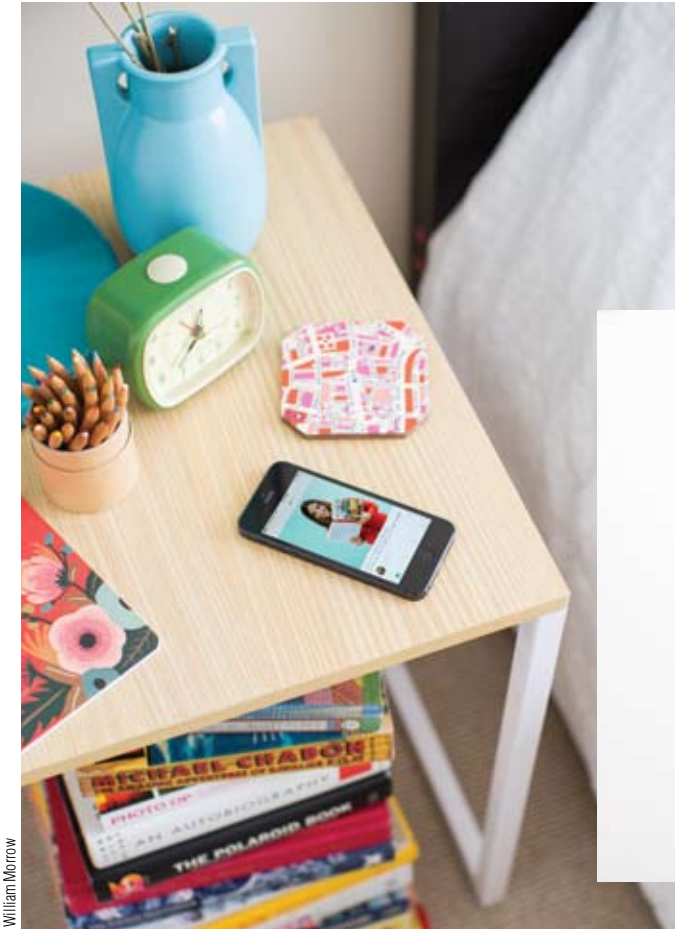
conversation about feminism. “It’s about choice,” she explains. “We’re rewriting the rules. You can have a career during the day and go home and knit or sew at night. There’s no shame in loving what you do at work and what you do at home.”

In her book, Morin walks the reader through each room of the home, catching the reader up on the new digital skills and showing how the digital age has inspired modern trends throughout the home.

“Just like with design, I believe the digital age will inspire more customization and personalization than ever before,” she said.

With the advent of 3-D technology, apps and other technologies, Morin says that this is just the beginning.

“New technologies are now democratizing skills that were previously specialized,” she says. “You don’t need to have a design degree to turn that digital pattern you into



William Morrow

Avoid bedside table technology clutter by affixing charging stations and cables to the underside with the adhesive material of your choosing.

a fabric you love. Then you have access to tons of resources that can show you how to take that same fabric and reupholster your favorite chair.”

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Get Crafty: Britt Morin’s Custom-Etched Glassware

Excerpted from ‘Homemakers: A Domestic Handbook for the Digital Generation’ (William Morrow Paperbacks, 2015)

MATERIALS

- Glass Etching Cream
- Contact Paper
- Vinyl Letters

TOOLS

- Scissors
- Paint Brush

I know what you’re thinking. Etching glassware sounds like it could result in someone losing an eye. But the truth is, etching is super simple, takes only a few minutes, and can yield totally chic and customizable results. It’s basically a way of frosting small-scale pieces of glass. For this project, I used contact paper to create custom designs or stencils. It’s much more durable than painter’s tape and allows for more creativity in terms of shapes and pat-



terns. You can also use vinyl letters to etch labels into your jars and canisters for flour, sugar, rice and so on.

STEP 1: Cut your contact paper into small shapes to create a pattern. I went with our sig-

nature triangle pattern on a glass carafe.

STEP 2: Wash and dry your glass carafe or pitcher to start out with a clean surface. Peel off the backing of your contact paper and attach each piece to the glass. Be sure to

press firmly so that you get a clean edge when you start etching.

STEP 3: Use a paintbrush to apply a heavy layer of etching cream all over your carafe. Dab it on evenly, but don’t brush too firmly, as that tends to thin out the cream. The thicker the layer of etching cream the better.

STEP 4: Let the etching cream sit for 30 minutes, and then rinse it off with water. Be sure to clean your sink thoroughly after this rinse, as the etching cream is toxic.

STEP 5: Peel off your contact paper pattern and wipe with a damp towel or rag to remove any remaining traces of etching cream. Fill up with your favorite beverage and marvel at your handiwork. I created a striped carafe, labeled a pitcher with the word PUNCH, and decorated a large Mason jar with the same triangle pattern. It’s a great way to turn a bunch of mismatched glassware into a custom collection.

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Sleep with a Clear Conscience

Organic bedding proponents say the natural fibers aren't just better for the planet – but for your health, too

By Carley Lintz
CTW Features

You already know that you can go organic in the kitchen, but what about in the bedroom? Organic bedding may be the answer for people who want to be more environmentally conscious in every aspect of

their life.
Since the term organic is applied liberally to everything from apples to cleaning fluid, the meaning can get a little murky.
“When you’re dealing with textiles, there are varying grades of truthfulness,” says Scott Tannen, founder/CEO Boll & Branch, a luxu-

ry organic bedding company. “The question is if you walked into the grocery store and bought something organic, what do you really know about it?”
The U.S. currently is the only country in the world with a policy regarding organic textile claims. In order for a finished textile product

to call itself “organic” it must meet the organic regulations set by the USDA’s National Organic Policy or the Global Organic Textile Standard.
“For fabric to be considered organic under GOTS, the growing of the fiber must be certified organic, then all stages post-harvest must be certified to our standards,” says

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Sandra Marquardt, North American representative for GOTS. “That includes the spinners, weavers, knitters, and traders – all the stages of the business to business chain must be certified for transparency.”

For a product to gain a GOTS “organic” label, at least 95 percent of the fiber used has to meet its high standards.

This means from the soil to the packaged product, the use of pesticides, harmful chemicals, genetically modified organisms – GMOs – and toxic dyes all are prohibited. Other key provisions include a ban on child or coerced labor and strict wastewater treatment.

“GOTS is truly the standard,” Tannen says. “If it doesn’t have a GOTS label, I would be extremely suspect.”

Not only should you make sure the fabric is NOP- or GOTS-certified, Marci Zaroff, founder of Under the Canopy and board member for the

Organic Trade Association, also recommends taking a closer look at the company’s behavior.

“In terms of brands and what kinds of companies are people supporting – pull the curtain back and look at the missions and value systems that of the companies you’re supporting to make sure that you’re not supporting some sort of green washing story,” Zaroff says.

Besides the environmental and social justice benefits of organic textiles, covering yourself in organic sheets at night may benefit your health, too. According to Zaroff, sheets made of non-organic fibers can be saturated in up to two pounds of chemicals like pesticides, formaldehyde and chlorine bleaches, which can be a major skin irritant.

“Your face is against your pillowcase or you’re wrapped with bedding around you, if you think about it your skin is the largest organ in your body and the primary organ for absorp-

tion,” Zaroff says. “So it’s not just about what you put in your body, it’s also what you put on your body that makes a difference.”

Organic proponents also claim the fabric promotes better sleeping habits due to breathability and comfort. It’s important to note, though, that this claim has not yet been confirmed by a scientific study.

“Your sleep is crucially important, so having something that gives you that much more comfort and you start sleeping better, it’s really an easy investment to make,” Tannen says.

Prices of organic home fabrics are comparable to conventional bedding prices – Boll & Branch sheet sets start at \$200 – but the lack of excess chemicals also leads to higher quality, softer and longer lasting products.

“Cotton is an incredibly strong fiber, but when you apply a lot of these chemicals, they’re actually eating away at it,” Tannen says. “You’re weakening the product and that

means over time it’s not going to last as long.”

Don’t think you have to compromise great style to be eco-friendly either. There are numerous companies with products online or department stores that can satisfy your love of the planet and design. GOTS website even has an online database to find organic fabric companies.

Like organic foods, organic bedding seems to support a lot of contemporary ideals about bettering the environment, society and your health through conscious consumption.

“If we don’t think about the products that we’re choosing and the companies we’re supporting, what kind of world are we leaving for our children and our children’s children?” Zaroff says.

If you’re still not sold on going organic, some companies even allow you to try products for a trial period with so you can judge for yourself.

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