

Backyard Makeover in an Afternoon

COUNTRY

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makeover *magic*



By Kathryn Bechen

These dollarwise D-I-Y projects will instantly spruce up your home.

When money was tight after buying our condo, my husband, Steve, and I put our creative heads together and came up with these thrifty projects to turn our little “plain-Jane” white box into a colorful and cozy beach cottage retreat. You can do the same with some good old-fashioned elbow grease, a lot of determination, plus a few new and used materials—some of which you may already have around your house!

It's curtains for your headboard

As frequent travelers to bed and breakfasts, we decided to re-create a “B&B look” in our bedroom at home using inexpensive drapes, bed linens and collected treasures.

cost **\$100, plus extras**
 ■ Drapes, drapery rod, tieback holders from Target **\$100**

Optional Extras:

- Planter from consignment store **\$28**
- Silk greenery from Michaels crafts **\$12**
- Hooks and hardware to hang planter and painting **\$15**
- Painting from thrift shop **\$100**
- Coordinating bed linens and pillows from Marshalls, Target and eBay approx. **\$120**

You Need:

- Two pairs of 84"-length drapes
- Decorative drapery rod that extends the width of bed, plus tiebacks
- Ladder, drill, screwdriver, level, clear packing tape

Optional

- Decorative bed linens and pillows coordinating with drapes
- Painting for wall space between drapes that complements linens
- Lightweight wall planter and silk greenery
- Hooks and hardware to hang planter and painting

To Create:

- 1.** Drill holes and hang curtain rod brackets close to ceiling or so that bottom of drapes will fall about 4" above top of bed and so that rod is extended to the width of the bed. Use level to make sure rod is even.
- 2.** Iron drapes, thread on rod and then place rod on brackets. Secure as needed. Tape center of drapes to rod to keep them in place, making sure tape is not showing.
- 3.** Mount drapery tiebacks to wall on both sides of bed about 3' above bed and approximately 6" outside bed edges. Gather drapes and gently place in tieback holders.
- 4.** Mount a painting or mirror on the wall inside the bed drapes so that bottom of painting is about 2' above bed. Finish by mounting a planter holding greenery above the painting, if desired.



faux brick flooring

When the estimate for purchasing and installing hardwood floors for our 920-square-foot condo came in at \$10,000, we figured a more economical solution was to paint our concrete floor in an "aged brick" pattern to complement our cottage-style décor. This treatment worked even in our kitchen, bathroom and high-traffic areas.

cost \$700 for paint, sealer and painting supplies (for 900 square feet)

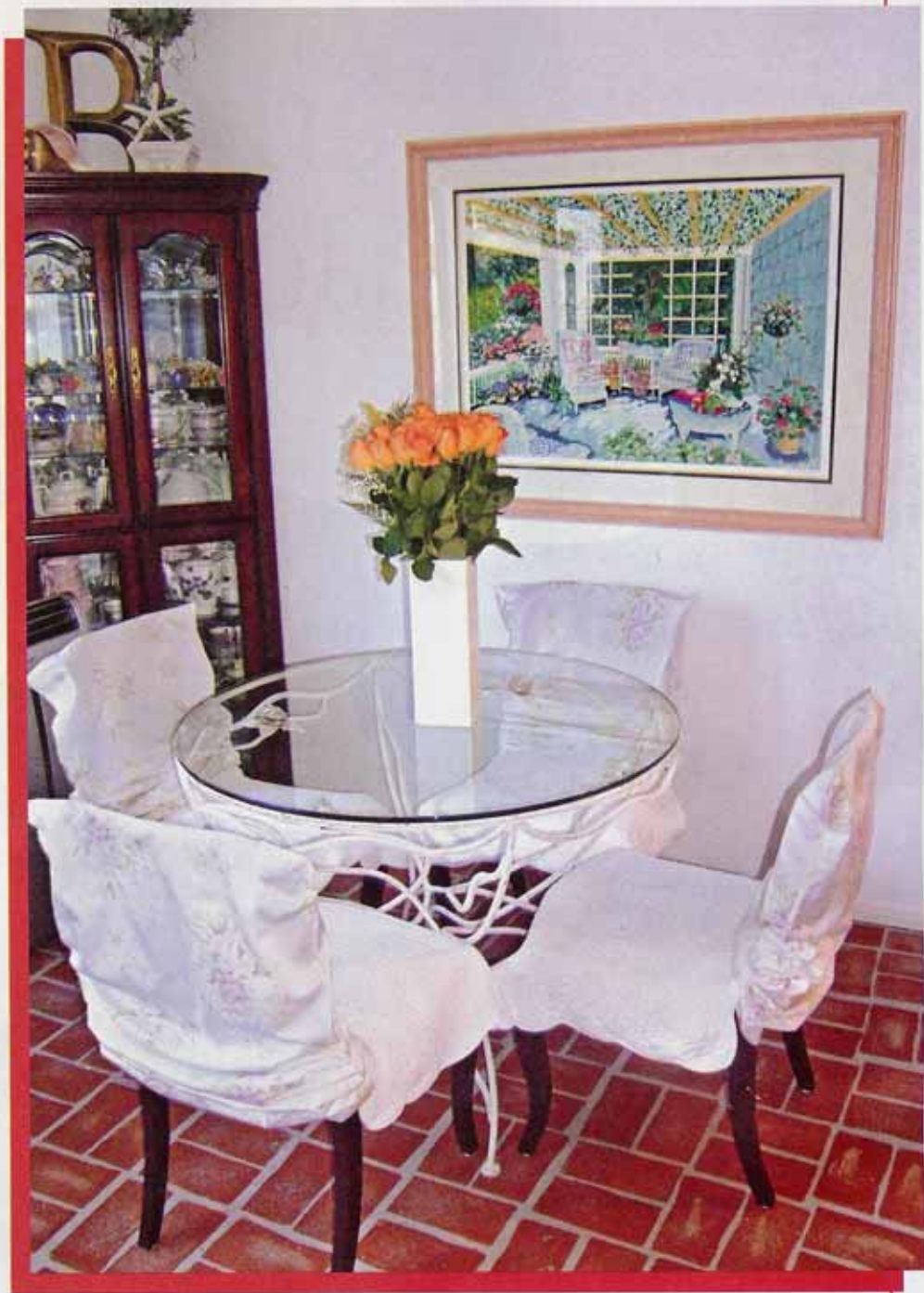
You Need:

- **Paint** (We used BioShield non-toxic clay paint, bioshield.com)
 - **Gray** (for base coat on floor and to dab on sponge to create "aged brick" look)
 - **Brick color** (for bricks)
 - **White** (to dab on sponge to create "aged brick" look)
- **Clear sealer for top coat** (We used AFM Safecoat Polyureseal BP Interior Clear Gloss from centerfor-greenbuilding.com for a non-toxic finish.)
- **Two paint rollers** (one for gray paint and one for sealer)
- **Three paint pans for the different colored paints**
- **Several 2"-thick cellulose household sponges, cut with scissors to the size of a real brick**
- **Putty knife**
- **Disposable rubber gloves**
- **Kneepads**



dry, wash floor by hand with clear water, making sure any adhesive from former floor covering is fully removed and no dirt or dust remain. Let floor dry thoroughly.

2. Coat entire floor with a layer of gray paint and let dry according to manufacturer's instructions. Apply second coat of gray paint and let dry fully. This will create the color that will look like "mortar" between the "bricks."



To Create:

1. Clean the floor and repair all cracks with caulking compound or concrete filler, smoothing it with putty knife. Follow drying time listed on caulking product. Once it's

3. When gray paint is dry, start in a corner of the room and dip flat side of sponge into brick-colored paint so it's lightly coated (keep a rag handy for dabbing and catching drips). Dab some white and gray paint onto sponge with a putty knife; be sure to swirl it into the brick-colored paint to create an "aged brick" look. No two bricks will look the same. If a "new brick" look is desired, omit gray and white paint dabs. Repeat desired brick pattern with the sponge until the job is complete. Concentrate on keeping rows of bricks straight, but perfection is not mandatory as no "aged brick" floor looks perfect, which is part of the charm of this look!

4. When paint is dry, apply a coat of sealer and let dry according to manufacturer's instructions. Reapply second coat of sealer and let dry. Sealer is necessary to protect floor paint from spills, stains, fading and wear. Reapply sealer as needed.