On The House

The high cost of everything these days not only prods householders into learning how to take care of many home repairs, but it is proving to be a big incentive to woodworking hobbyists bitten by the make-it-yourself bug.

Hardware stores report that they have been selling more hand tools and power tools than ever before. The paint industry admits that only about 25 per cent of its output is used by professional painters. The unfinished furniture business has boomed in recent years. We all seem to be puttering around making everything from bird houses and window boxes to fancy paneled rooms in basement or attic.

This activity has created a widespread demand for materials easy to work with. Fiberboards, made from pressed wood fibers in large thin sheets that can be sawed in any direction because of their lack of grain, have been meeting needs ranging from partitions to cabinet making. Plywood, finished or unfinished with rare hardwood veneers, has enabled the home craftsman to turn out attractive work more economically than a professional could have done some years ago.

One of the most interesting new materials is a striated plywood tile developed by Armand Sussman, a woodworking expert of Allentown, Pa. Faced with various woods including Philippine mahogany, these tiles have the corrugated surface of weldtex plywood from which they are cut and beveled to precision sizes.

Shaped in squares, rectangles and hexagons with corrugations straight or diagonal, this striatile, as the inventor calls it, can be alternated for a variety of patterns in highlights and shadows. It can be nailed, or glued with the same plastic resin that is used to hold plywood together on boats. This glue, by the way, is mixed with cold water, sets quickly and makes a bond that proves stronger than the wood itself.

You can take an old desk, glue these tiles in attractive checkerboard pattern to its sides and legs, polish the top, and come up with a handsome piece of furniture. Combinations of rectangular or hexagonal tiles surrounded by narrow trim modernize the appearance of the headboards of beds, the face of a door or bar, or as a rejuvenating covering for an old screen.

Have you ever seen your house looking as pretty as it does this season with all the flowers in bloom? Robert A. Wands, Wide-World photographer, suggests that this is a smart time for home owners to take color pictures of their property. "You can never tell," says Bob, "when such pictures might come in handy for possible future sales use when the general appearance of the property may not be as good as it is now—such as on a bleak midwinter day." (Or in any rainstorm, Bob, when smart buyers take a second look at a house to see it at its worst.)

Mrs. N.M.G. of Sunderand, Mass., raises a question that is of interest to many. "Why," she asks "is it impossible to get outside paint that won't peel in a year or so? We see it around everywhere."

That's far from impossible. Any good quality house paint will stick to wood if the wood has been seasoned and primed, providing moisture does not seep in to push the paint off.

Peeling paint is almost invariably caused by some form of moisture. If it isn't the resin in green lumber, it's rain leaking in around improperly calked windows or doors or under eaves, or humidity pushing through the walls from the inside.

The outward pressure of indoor moisture from bathing, cooking, laundering and other normal household activities, cannot be over-estimated. Lots of people worry about sweating windows, which is the first evidence of excess humidity. But they do nothing about controlling the sources of such moisture. Then when the paint is pushed off the outside of the house, they blame the paint.

To get people to learn how to live in houses is the biggest housing problem in this country, says Alan Brockbank of Salt Lake City, president of the National Association of Home Builders.

Recipe

QUICK SLICED PICKLES

3 quarts sliced cucumbers
3 onions sliced
5½ cups vinegar
3 cups brown sugar
1 pod hot red pepper
1 teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon ginger
2 tablespoon mustard seed
1 teaspoon turmeric
½ tablespoon celery seed
1 piece horseradish
1-3 teaspoon alum

Soak cucumbers and onions (separately) 3 to 10 hours in brine made by dissolving ½ cup salt in ½ gallon cool water. Drain well. Add onions, 2½ cups vinegar, and 2½ cups of water to the cucumbers. Simmer about 10 minutes. Do not cook until soft. Drain. Discard liquid in which scalded. Make sirup by boiling the sugar and spices with 3 cups of vinegar and 1 cup of water for 10 minutes. Then add alum. Pack well drained cucumbers with onions in hot fruit jars. Cover with boiling sirup. Seal at once with lids and bands.

SALAD HINT

Try this for a refreshing summer salad. Dissolve a package of lemon-flavored gelatin in a 12-ounce can of apricot whole fruit nectar that has been heated to just below boiling. Then add 2 tablespoons lemon juice and ½ cup undrained crushed pineapple. When almost set add 1 slice banana. Turn into molds and chill until serving time.

PICNIC FARE

Here's a wonderful tasting sandwich spread that goes well with fruit plates, on a picnic or in the lunch box. Blend together a 3-ounce package of cream cheese, about three slices of cooked bacon, crumbled into bits, and ¼ cup chopped ripe olives.

EASY TO BAKE

Good-tasting muffins are easy to make with packaged mixes. Even the simplest muffins taste like party fare when you stir some plump seedless raisins and chopped walnuts into the batter just before baking. Serve the muffins hot even though the weather is hot, too.

SURE FIRE

There's a brand new package of angel food cake mix on the market that makes the equivalent of a 12-egg white cake. All you add is water and flavoring. This is a delicious summer cake to serve with whipped cream and toasted slivered almonds.

TRY IT

Cool and refreshing minted fruit cocktail tastes wonderful with crisp almond cookies. Drain the syrup from a No. 2½ size can of fruit cocktail and heat to boiling. Pour over 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint, cover and cool. Strain syrup, add juice of 1 lemon and combine with fruit cocktail. Garnish with fresh mint sprigs if you like.

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