

## Home Help: Break out of your color comfort zone

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By ARA (for use with rail item only)

Reddish purple can be vivacious and exciting. Slightly bluer hues can be restful.

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### Home Improvements: Warm up with color

Winter might not conjure up words like spicy, bold or sunny. But while it might be gray and dreary outside, infusing color into interior decor is one of the quickest ways to create a cozy, inviting living area. And winter is the ideal time to do it.

Adding a shot of color to a space can be done quickly, but it can sometimes be confusing. In fact, mastering the ins and outs of decorating with color can be downright daunting.

"Although people love the idea of incorporating color into their homes, mixing and matching colors, patterns and textures can be an intimidating and overwhelming process," says Donna Schroeder, color marketing and

design manager for Martin-Senour Paints. "Whether it's wall paint, new furniture or accessories, consumers might not have the confidence to step outside of their 'color comfort zone' and experiment with shades they might not normally gravitate toward."

If you're thinking about warming up your home this winter and are contemplating using a paint color that you've always wanted to try, but weren't sure how or where to use it, these tips can help steer you in the right direction:

### Red

As the strongest color in the spectrum, red has the greatest emotional impact. Depending on the hue and shade, red resonates with passion, romance, energy and courage.

In recent years, it's become a popular color choice for dining room walls, but the drama of red is also ideal for entryways, living rooms and even bathrooms. The color combination of red with neutrals, such as tans and browns, results in warmth that is certain to carry you through those cold months.

### Orange

Orange has evolved throughout the years; think terracotta and copper tones. It enlivens any space and can easily take center stage as a primary wall color, or as an accent color to give a refreshed decor a bit of much-needed punch. When paired with blues or purples, a spicier orange can be very powerful. For a more subdued effect, combine it with warmer colors like reds and deep, welcoming greens.

### Yellow

There is no better color to radiate warmth in your home than yellow, but don't underestimate the intensity of this color. Bright, strong yellows on walls are almost always best saved for an area like the kitchen because they are said to increase attentiveness and have "wake up" qualities. Creamier yellows -- think the paleness of fresh butter -- are popular in living rooms and can even translate well into bedrooms when joined with a classic red or blue.

### Purple

Purples have a powerful connection with our spiritual and introspective side. Because purple has varying degrees of red and blue in it, it's easily paired with many complementary colors such as yellow, orange and softer greens.

When slightly redder, purple can be vivacious and exciting; when slightly bluer it can be restful. If you're using purple for a room, decide whether the room is designed to entice drama, as with an eggplant-hued purple, or cast an air of relaxation and reflection, as found in a hydrangea shade.

-- ARA

### **Decorating Tip: Aim for warmer wood**

For this year's floor and furniture trends, words such as "hand-made," "authentic" and "comfort" come to mind, with an emphasis on value.

According to Elaine Griffin, interior designer and author "Design Rules: The Insider's Guide to Becoming Your Own Decorator," dark wood is no longer the only option.

Consumers are turning toward honey-brown walnut and midtone finishes rather than to wenge and espresso looks as they diverge away from the cold accents and into the warm and welcoming ones.

-- Hunter Douglas, [www.hunterdouglas.com](http://www.hunterdouglas.com)

### **Home-Selling Tip: It can never be too clean**

Your home can never be too clean for a potential buyer. Make sure even the little things are clean, such as ceiling fans, light fixtures and blinds. Even extension rooms such as the garage or laundry room should be organized.

-- [www.housebuyernetwork.com](http://www.housebuyernetwork.com)

### **How To: Maximize your closet space**

It seems like a daunting task, but an organized closet will help you prevent clutter and make the most of your wardrobe. Here are a few tips:

- The best way to maximize closet space is to use two rods, one above the other, to eliminate wasted space. Measure the rods to make sure clothing does not drag on the ground. Men's pants will likely need to be folded.
- Built-in drawers, shelves and pullout baskets can all provide more convenient storage in any size closet.
- Over-the-door shoe hangers and floor units are two common ways to sort footwear. You can also organize your shoes in cubbyholes or shelves.

-- [lowes.com](http://lowes.com)

### **Did You Know ...**

For granite countertops, put a few drops of water on the stone in high-use areas, such as around the sink and range or cooktop, and let the water stand for 15 minutes. The water should bead up. If it doesn't, it's time to get the granite resealed. – *Consumer Reports*

### **Garden Guide: Plants that thrive in hanging baskets**

Looking for plant that looks and grows great in a hanging basket? Here are a few good choices:

- Sweet potato vine (*Ipomoea*): This plant is a cascading annual with foliage that can be green, black or variegated green with pink leaves.
- Nasturtiums (*Tropaeolum*): Another cascading annual, this plant produces bright and cheery flowers.
- Wave petunia: These cascading or spreading annuals have large 3-inch flowers that are bright pink, purple and red.
- Sweet alyssum (*Lobularia*): This annual is a low-growing plant that is highly fragrant and attracts honeybees, butterflies and hummingbirds. It produces sprawling clumps of flowers from spring through fall.

-- [www.homedepotgardenclub.com](http://www.homedepotgardenclub.com)

### **Backyard Buddies: Learn to identify owls**

It can be hard to spot an owl, as they're typically nocturnal. But in winter, you might be able to hear or see one as it searches for food.

To help with identification, separate owls into two categories: those with ear tufts or horns called "tufts" and those with round heads. In addition to head shape, look at eye and bill color, plumage color and markings, size and habitat details.

There are 19 breeding species of owls in the U.S. and Canada. Visit [www.owlinstitute.org/owlguidehomepage.html](http://www.owlinstitute.org/owlguidehomepage.html) to learn more about the different types of owls and how you can identify them properly.

-- *Owl Research Institute*

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