

# Make a living room a more comfortable space

A kitchen is widely recognized as the most popular room in a home. Though it might be true that the hustle and bustle of home life runs through the kitchen, many a memory is made in the living room as well.

Living rooms tend to be go-to spaces for family movie nights, game watches with fellow fans and places to gather during holiday celebrations. That's a lot of quality time spent in the living room, and those moments can be more enjoyable if the space is as comfortable as possible.

With that in mind, people can consider various ways to make living rooms more comfortable.

- **Prioritize comfort over aesthetics.** In an era of Instagram, it's easy to fall head over heels with images when designing a living room. Aesthetic appeal certainly has its place in a living room, but it's important to remember how much living will be done in these rooms when designing them. Comfortable couches and furnishings like ottomans can make it easier to relax in the living room whether you're watching a movie, cheering on your favorite

team or reading a book.

- **Ensure there's ample seating.** It can be hard to feel comfortable in cramped quarters whether you're welcoming friends and family into your home or simply lounging around on Sunday mornings. If comfort is your top priority, arrange the room so there's ample seating throughout and people don't feel like they're sitting on top of one another when spending time in the room.
- **Consider neutral paint colors.** Furnishings are not the only things that can affect

how comfortable people feel in a living room. The home improvement experts at The Spruce note that neutral paint colors with warm undertones help to establish a cozy feel in a living room. Various shades of white, beige, tan, or even gray can help to establish a warm, comfortable vibe in a living room.

- **Incorporate the outdoors into the room.** The great outdoors can have a calming effect on anyone, so it makes sense that incorporating the outdoors into a living room

can make the space feel more comfortable. Furnish the room with plants and look for items with earth-toned furnishings to create a calm and comfortable vibe in the space. In addition, new windows that allow for more natural light and offer views into a yard can help lift spirits and make the room feel more comfortable.

A comfortable living room is a space where people will want to spend their time. A few simple strategies can help create an inviting and comfortable vibe in any living room.

## The basics of window replacement projects

Windows in a home are easily taken for granted. Even though residents look through their windows every day, it's only when issues arise that people tend to give the windows much thought.

Even if windows may not be foremost on the minds of homeowners, they are a notable component of every home. New windows also can be an expensive addition to a home, so it benefits all homeowners to gain an understanding of window replacement projects before they start shopping around for new windows.

- Windows are more complex than new homeowners may realize. Homeowners will need to choose between three commonly available window materials when picking new windows for their homes. Vinyl windows typically are the most affordable option, and opinions vary considerably regarding these products. Some tout their resistance to moisture, but others feel they lack the aesthetic appeal of costlier alternatives like fiberglass. Vinyl windows also can't be painted, which some homeowners may find problematic. Fiberglass windows can be painted and are known for their strength and durability. Aluminum windows are strong and durable as well, but they may not provide as much thermal protection as some other options. Each window type has its own unique pros and cons, and homeowners are urged to do their homework to determine the best fit for them.
- Consider variables unique to your home. Climate is an important consideration when choosing windows, and that of course is unique to each homeowner. How hot or cold the local climate can be will affect how well windows insulate a home, so a window that's best for one particular region may not be ideal for

another. Homeowners are urged to investigate which window materials are best suited to their local climates. All windows protect against the elements, but some might provide more adequate insulation, which can help keep utility bills low and everyone inside a home more comfortable.

- Homeowners may need to decide between replacement windows or new construction windows. The window experts at Pella note that new construction windows are the primary option for newly constructed homes or room additions. Replacement windows are typically installed when homeowners need new windows but do not want or need to remove existing exterior cladding or trim. Replacement windows tend to be considerably less expensive than new construction windows, but the latter option merits consideration before making a final decision.
- It can be budget-friendly to replace more than one window at a time. Some, though not all, window installation companies charge a non-negotiable project fee, so it can be more financially savvy to replace more than one window at a time. Replacing windows piecemeal may require homeowners to pay the project fee for each installation, whereas homeowners who replace multiple windows at the same time will only incur that fee once. If homeowners know many windows in their home are in need of replacement, it can be financially advantageous to replace all that need it at once rather than breaking the project up and paying multiple project fees.

Window replacement projects require careful consideration so homeowners identify the best products for their home.

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**COMPOSTING**

Composting can be a great way to improve the soil in your garden. You can turn your yard waste and food scraps into a valued addition to your soil.

Composting food scraps reduces waste going to landfills.

**WHAT IS COMPOSTING?**

Composting is the controlled breakdown of materials such as leaves, grass clippings, and food scraps, also called organic matter. During composting, tiny microorganisms feed on these leftovers. Once the microorganisms are done eating, compost will be all that remains.

**WHY COMPOST?**

Adding finished compost to your garden helps the soil and gives nutrients to the plants. Compost helps you grow more fruitful plants and use less store-bought fertilizers.

Also, materials you compost will not go to landfills. Less trash in landfills saves money and reduces air pollution.

**COMPOST CARE**

You can think of your compost pile as a living thing; it needs food, oxygen, and water. If you give the microorganisms what they need to break down the materials, they will make compost more quickly.

**COMPOST "FOOD"**

Compost ingredients can be divided into browns and greens. Brown materials add bulk to the pile and have lots of carbon. Green materials add energy and moisture to the compost and are rich in nitrogen. Keeping a balance of three parts of brown material for every one part of green material can help your compost break down more quickly.

If you use food scraps in your pile, it can be helpful to bury them in the middle of the pile to discourage pests from visiting your compost pile.

- COMPOST INGREDIENTS**
- Browns**
- Dry leaves
  - Straw and hay
  - Shredded paper
  - Shredded cardboard
  - Wood chips
- Greens**
- Fresh grass clippings
  - Leafy plant clippings
  - Fruit and vegetable scraps
  - Eggshells
  - Coffee grounds and paper filters
  - Tea bags
  - Feathers

so air can flow through the canes and leaves will dry quickly. Harvest fruit as soon as they are ripe. Remove any overripe fruit as they can attract pests. Cover with insect netting when the berries start to show color to prevent problems with insects and birds. Remove wild brambles nearby. If your bramble leaves become oddly shaped or colored, the plant may have a virus or fungal infection. If cankers appear on canes or if the canes swell, this may be a disease such as cane blight or anthracnose.

Remove any diseased plant parts and trash or burn them. If you find a lot of berries that are very soft and mushy, place them in the refrigerator or freezer right after picking. Spotted wing drosophila is a fruit fly that lays eggs in soft fruit and will make the berries watery.

For more tips on taking care of pests and diseases, check the UK Cooperative Extension publication Growing Blackberries and Raspberries in Kentucky (HO-15). If you need help identifying problems, contact your county Extension agent.

**HARVESTING**

Ripe fruit will come off the plant when you pull it gently. You should pick daily or every other day. Pick fruit with care and gently place in a container. Put fresh raspberries in the refrigerator right after picking.

**SERVING**

Raspberries are tasty fresh or cooked. Gently wash fruit before eating. They make great jams, pies, sauces, muffins, cakes, and other desserts. You can strain cooked

raspberry products to remove seeds.

**STORING**

Ripe fruit will keep for a day or two in the refrigerator. Do not wash until you are ready to eat or cook them. You can also freeze raspberries for future use. Be sure to wash and dry fruit well before freezing.

**CLEAN UP**

In late winter, cut all remaining canes down to the ground. Throw away or burn any plant material to avoid the spread of disease.

## Composting

**MORE INFO**

If you are looking for more information about home composting, see Home Composting: A Guide to Managing Yard Waste (HO-75) at <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/ho/ho75/ho75.pdf>. If you have more questions about composting, contact your local county Extension office.

- Don't Add**
- Diseased plant material
  - Weeds with seeds
  - Meat, bones, whole eggs, or dairy products

**MANURE**

Some animal manures can be added to your compost, but it must be done safely. You don't want to introduce harmful microorganisms to the garden. Your home compost does not need animal manures to be helpful for your garden. If you want to compost animal manures, please refer to the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension publication Home Composting: A Guide to Managing Yard Waste (HO-75) and contact your county agent for more information.

**INGREDIENT SIZE**

Chop materials into half-inch to one-and-a-half-inch pieces to speed up the process. Shred leaves with your lawnmower or quickly chop fruit peels with a knife or the blender. Crush eggshells to slash the time it takes to break them down.

**TURNING TO ADD OXYGEN**

Just as oxygen fuels a fire, oxygen also speeds up the breakdown of your compost. Turning compost gives it oxygen and lets the compost breathe.

Turn compost with a shovel or pitchfork. Move the contents from side to side and from inside to outside. Alternatively, move it from one pile or bin to another.

Turn a new compost pile weekly for the first month to speed up the process. After that, turn it once every two to four weeks.

Any bad smells are a sign that there may not be enough oxygen in the compost pile. It probably needs to be turned.

**WATER**

The compost process needs water to quickly break down the materials. If you add large amounts of dry browns, like fallen leaves, you may need to add water. Food scraps, fresh plant parts, and coffee grounds already contain water.

While turning your compost pile, look for dry spots and add more water if needed. Each section should be fully damp but not wet. If you squeeze a handful, it should feel damp, but no drops of water should come out.

**THREE-STAGE COMPOSTING**

To compost larger amounts, you can use three bins or piles, side by side.

Add new material to Bin 1. When Bin 1 is full, move the

contents to Bin 2 to continue its breakdown. When the Bin 2 compost is ready to use, move it to Bin 3.

**A THREE-BIN COMPOST SYSTEM:**

1. New pile
2. Partly broken-down compost
3. Finished compost

**COMPOST CONTAINERS**

There are many ways to store compost. You can simply choose a spot to mound your compost. Try to build a pile at least a cubic yard in size (three feet in height, width, and depth).

Compost bins discourage animal pests and keep the yard tidy. Wooden slat or wire bins are simple and cheap to build. Tumbling bins cost more but simplify turning your compost.

**BUILDING A COMPOST PILE**

You can add materials in layers:

1. Six to 12 inches of browns, such as dry leaves, straw, etc.
2. Two to four inches of greens, such as food scraps or grass clippings
3. A shovelful of garden soil or finished compost

Next, mix the compost, and add a little water if it is dry.

Repeat this process until the pile is three to five feet high.

**USING YOUR COMPOST**

Your compost is ready when it is reduced to almost half of its original volume. Finished compost is dark brown or black and crumbly, with an earthy smell. There should not be large pieces of food, yard waste, or other organic matter in the finished compost.

Compost can be a great addition to any garden. It is a useful soil amendment. Mixing in compost makes clay soils lighter and helps sandy soils hold more water.

Mix one to two inches of compost into the top four to six inches of soil as a good start for your garden beds. Compost serves as a source of slow-release nutrients for growing plants. Even if you use compost, you may still need to add fertilizer. Your county Extension agent can give guidance on testing your soil to see if you need to add fertilizer.

Compost is also great as mulch, both in the garden and around landscaping plants.

If you are looking for more information about home composting, see Home Composting: A Guide to Managing Yard Waste (HO-75) at <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/ho/ho75/ho75.pdf>. If you have more questions about composting, contact your local county Extension office.

## GUIDE

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**WINTER PRUNING**

Pruning is cutting a plant to change its shape, improve its growth, or remove dead canes. You need to prune raspberries in the winter or early spring. For primocane raspberries, cut all canes down to the ground after they are dormant but before new growth starts. This is usually between December and February.

This will produce one larger fall crop.

As the new canes grow in the spring, cut out canes that grow outside your base row. If needed, thin to the recommended spacing (see Raspberry Pruning chart). To thin, cut the skinniest canes down to ground level to allow enough space between each cane.

**PESTS AND DISEASES**

Many pests and diseases can affect brambles. To lessen problems, keep your raspberry bed clean. Pick up dead leaves and canes. Keep your rows narrow and thinned out