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Budget-Friendly Paint Projects To Spruce Up Your Home This Fall

(MS) — Given the sluggish economy, now is not the time most of us want to spring for a costly remodeling project. But you don't have to spend a lot of money to spruce up your home with paint.

The nation's number one do-it-yourself project holds that title for a reason (two reasons, actually): Painting is easy and it's inexpensive, making it just right for budget-minded consumers.

What's more, even small paint projects can greatly enhance the appearance of your home. Here are some quick ways to get a lot of mileage out of a little paint, according to Debbie Zimmer, spokesperson for the Paint Quality Institute:

Paint just an interior accent wall. Don't have the time or energy to paint an entire room? Give the space an exciting new look by painting just one wall in a different color. A so-called accent wall can add visual interest to a room and introduce another hue into your color scheme.

Paint the area above (or below) a chair rail. According to Zimmer, if your home is blessed with chair rails, you don't have to paint the entire wall. "You can choose to repaint only the wall area above the rail, or the area below it," says Zimmer. "It's a simple project that can dramatically change the appearance of the room."

Paint the interior windows and trim. Love your wall color, but still yearn for a new look? Give the room a makeover by painting your windows, molding, and trim. You'll be surprised how different a room can look when you change the intensity of color there.

Paint a room's standout feature. Play up what's special about a room by painting it a different color. This could be a fireplace surround, a curved archway, the backs of built-in bookshelves or cabinets, or something else. Using a strong "punch" color will draw immediate attention to your standout feature.

Paint the front door. Studies have shown that visitors get their first impression about a home from the condition of the front entrance, according to Zimmer. A freshly painted door helps ensure that first impression will be favorable.

Paint just a few exterior architectural details. Even if you don't have to paint your home exterior for maintenance reasons, consider changing the appearance of your home by painting a few architectural details. Shutters are good candidates. "But if you're lucky enough to own a house with ornamental fretwork, call attention to the trim by painting it a strong or vibrant color that contrasts with your walls," Zimmer recommends.

Whether you try one of these quick and easy do-it-yourself projects, or take on more ambitious home painting, Zimmer advises that you always use a top quality 100 percent acrylic latex paint. These paints have superior "hiding" capability when painting over dark colors, they are stain- and mildew-resistant, many function as both primer and paint, and best of all ... they offer tremendous durability, so your paint job will continue to look great for years to come!

For more ideas on budget-friendly do-it-yourself painting projects, visit www.paintquality.com.

Autumn Leaf Clean-Up

The autumn foliage can be beautiful to admire. However, once the trees are past their peak and begin to drop their leaves, autumn can mean lots of yard work for homeowners.

A mature tree can have more than 200,000 leaves, most of which will fall to the ground when the cooler weather arrives. Multiply that amount by the number of trees on the property, and one can see what a task removing leaves can be.

Depending on the size of a person's property, leaf removal can be an all-day project. However, when done right, one ensures the lawn underneath the leaves continues to thrive and will be in a better position to ride out the winter.

For most, a human-powered rake is the best tool for removing leaves. While blowers might seem quicker, they can simply disperse the leaves instead of congregating them for easier disposal. What's more, blowers can be noisy and distribute fuel emissions into the air.

It is important to rake deep enough to disturb the thatch or dried up grass and other debris that can form in the lawn. This



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Come the cooler weather, leaf removal becomes a chore for homeowners. Learn the ways to make the work go more smoothly.

helps prevent the lawn from suffocation or discoloration.

Leaves can be gathered and packed into biodegradable bags and brought to the local recycling center. They also can be broken down and used in compost. Leaves on their own do not make ideal organic material, so it's best if they're mixed into a compost pile to generate that "black gold" plants love.

If there are not many leaves on the property, a lawnmower can be pushed over the leaves to break them up into food for the lawn. However, large quantities of leaves should be raked and removed.



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A bold-colored accent wall can add visual interest.

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