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Churchill, William Shakespeare and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Love hits you with practical information, such as when to use a shaver rather than a plane, and he also provides thumbnail descriptions of every tool you will likely find use for in your workshop.

If you're going to get your hands dirty and try to build or fix something, Love says, you should possess the basics, including: hammers, saws, pliers, screwdrivers, wrenches, drills, marking equipment, a level and a container for all these different tools. Love also lists scenarios in which more advanced tools are required.

This sort of equipment — the handle hacksaw blade, the stud sensor, the plumb bob, etc. — is also explained and cataloged in a clear fashion.

In "Bob Vila's Workshop: The Ultimate Illustrated Handbook For the Home Workshop" (Morrow), the celebrated home repair expert and television star places an emphasis on the overall tool environment — in particular the "tool" known as the workbench.

"The workbench is to the workshop as bases are to the game of baseball," he writes. "Without a proper bench at which to work, you'll be like a base runner with no place to go."

Vila contends that the number of tools you own and the size and style of workbench you use should reflect the type of work you are doing. For general usage, he recommends a bench 5 to 7 feet long and 2 to 3 feet wide.

Of course, Vila observes, a workbench

is more than just a table with a flat surface that holds tools. It is a tool. Further, outfitting the bench with the right clamps, vises and bench dogs helps give your work space functionality, and defines which tasks you are capable of doing.

Unlike the short-and-sweet "Chic Simple," Vila's guide is big and bold and full of details. It's also busy with photographs, and the visual aids help simplify the surprisingly complex task of creating and outfitting a workplace with the proper tools and equipment.

Of course many folks already have a well-stocked toolbox and a comfortable workbench environment. For those hardware aficionados and veteran do-it-yourselfers, there are new gadgets and tools coming out each year.

Generac, (414) 544-4811, for instance, has just introduced a new line of pressure washers designed to give do-it-yourselfers more chores to do.

Generac power washers take ordinary hose water — typically flowing at 20 pounds to 70 pounds per square inch — and boosts the water pressure upward of 3,000 PSI. The powerful flow of water will clean surfaces you never thought you'd be able to tidy up, and the high-pressure stream will even strip paint.

Generac pressure washers — ranging in price from \$300 for a small electric model to \$1,670 for a burly gas-powered machine — work on greasy engine blocks, soiled pet cages or pens, barbecue grills, driveway stains and most other tough-to-remove exterior blemishes.

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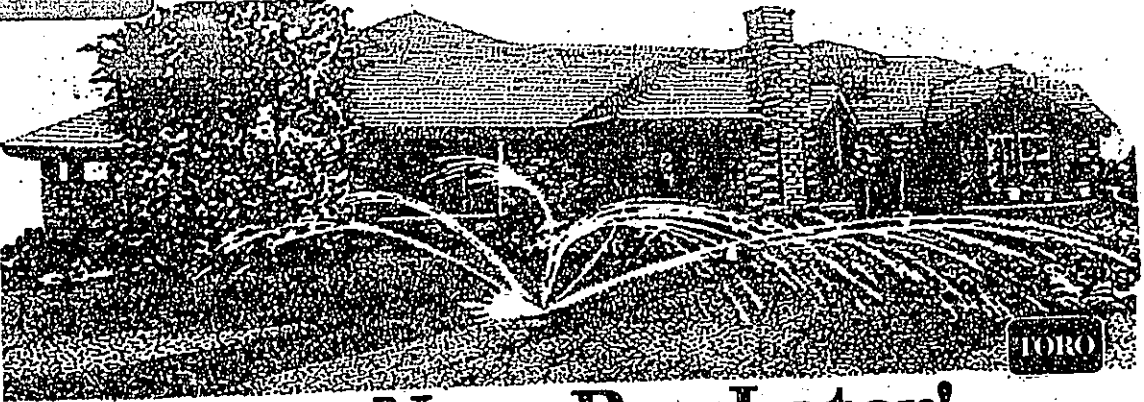


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