

# Fool The Eye With Vinyl Tile

Most homes have a "problem" room: one too long, too narrow, too small, or an odd shape.

An easy way to minimize this is to install a "corrective" flooring of vinyl asbestos tile. It is astonishing how a simple fool-the-eye trick can normalize a badly designed room. The Better Floors Council

suggests the following, with one cautionary word: be very careful about using more than three colors in a room.

For narrow rooms: Lay tile across the narrow width in diagonal rows or in parallel bands of alternating colors. You can fool the eye with feature strips of contrasting color.

For large rooms: here you can go all out with lots of color and elaborate patterns. Or divide the room into several areas with big blocks of tile in various colors. You could install borders, inset panels, a bold plaid, scatter a contrasting color of tile across the floor at random, or create odd-shaped geometric designs. Be sure one pattern dominates; it is a good idea to allot at least

50 per cent of the floor area to the basic tile color.

For small rooms: Avoid dark colors. A plain field is best, but a small, simple pattern can add zest without clutter.

For broken rooms: Use small patterns of harmonizing colors and avoid geometrically complicated designs.



Pruning shrubs: Few things are more baffling than the subject of pruning trees and shrubs.

Here are a few guidelines to go by: Don't hesitate to trim out any branches or stems that are weak, sickly or dead. Cut them back flush with the main stem. Never leave a stub sticking out.

Don't worry about painting the cuts with a tree compound. Orchardists trim their trees every year and never bother to cover the wounds. Keep in mind that most spring flowering shrubs can be pruned any time after flowering, and these include forsythia, deutzia, beauty bush, shrub honeysuckle, viburnum, weigela, spirea, lilac, rhododendron, to name a few.

Prune forsythias by cutting out old stems, back to the ground. Take out this wood. If the entire bush is overgrown with half naked stalks, I'd cut the entire bush back to the ground and let all new growth come up. Don't shear forsythias as these plants are not adapted to shearing. They are "weepers" with long shoots.

Mock orange can be thinned out now, if you think they are overgrown. You can even cut the top back a bit if it's too high.

Deutzia has clusters of double white, drooping flowers. Cut out a few of the oldest branches at ground level. Strong side shoots can be headed back.

Beauty bush (Kolkwitzia) has masses of small pink flowers. Usually pruning is not needed. This plant seems to flower best on older stems. Any heavy pruning usually means loss of flowers for at least one season.

SHRUB honeysuckle need occasional thinning, perhaps every three or four years. Cut out old shoots at the base. Viburnums seldom need much pruning. If they become too large they may be cut back to strong buds. Healthy plants recover well from a severe pruning.

Weigela produces arching branches of pink or red flowers. Occasionally cut some of the oldest stems back to the base. The shrub will sucker a great deal after pruning. Thin to allow only some of the vigorous shoots to remain.

Spiraea should be pruned immediately after flowering although the world won't fall on if you do it later. Cut all flowering wood back to vigorous young shoots. Most folks don't bother trimming spiraea and get plenty of blooms.

NOTE: If your bush is full of tall, woody growth, cut it back completely to the ground. These overgrown bushes like a good hatchet job.

GREEN THUMB CLINIC: A reader writes: "Our garden mums have tiny brown spots on the leaves. What causes it?"

Answer: Work of the tarnished plant bug. Spray with malathion or Sevin to check it.

"Please tell us if it's OK to use newspapers on the compost pile."

No reason why shredded newspapers can be recycled and used as compost material or for much. They are of organic origin (wood) and will break down into useful materials. Fortify the compost with additional plant nutrients, some lime and make sure it's kept moist, since composts hastens decomposition.

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