

# Colonial Floor Stenciling Revived



COLONIAL ART OF FLOOR STENCILING was the inspiration for this colorful design with a border of oak flooring.

Stenciling a beautifully grained oak floor may seem like gilding the lily, but it can be practical as well as decorative.

Carpeting, after all, can strain a limited decorating budget. And there are those who prefer the natural look and feel of polished hardwood floors.

Stenciling, which covers part of a hardwood floor with a cut-out design applied with water base or enamel paint, is an early American craft that survives to remind us of the colonists' love for bright colors and cheerful patterns.

Many original floor stencils in early American homes have come to light under heavy cupboards or protected floor areas, and have been carefully restored in museums such as the Farmer's Museum in Cooperstown, N.Y.

Some early floor stencils were intricate combinations of colors and patterns meant to substitute for costly imported rugs.

Today's stencils are light and playful in mood, often geometric designs that pick up colors of draperies and upholstery in the room.

Interior designer Kay DePhillips designed a stenciled "rug" to brighten her windowless dining room in an historic section of Washington, D.C.

Using a stencil pattern of her own design, she brushed the pattern on in three shades of deck enamel.

"Since each coat had to dry thoroughly, the dining room was off limits for several weeks," said Mrs. DePhillips.

"But now the rug adds pattern and light to the room. And the border of oak flooring acts like a beautiful wood

frame for the stenciled design."

Floor stenciling is an exciting process that you may have to teach yourself, according to the National Oak Flooring Manufacturers' Assn.

Basically, the floor should be freshly sanded before work begins, and the exact center of the floor should be marked as a reference point for the design.

To make the design come out evenly, the stencil positions can be outlined with chalk before paint is applied. Avoid covering large areas with enamel paint as it will chip.

Once finished and well-dried, the entire floor should be finished with two or more coats of polyurethane varnish.

For help in cutting and using stencils you may be able to enlist the help of an expert on decoupage in your community.

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**The Green Thumb**  
By GEORGE ABRAHAM

Two popular garden flowers that benefit most from fall seeding are larkspur and bachelor buttons (also known as cornflower).

Spikes of larkspur are useful for cut flowers and for drying. Since they grow about four feet tall, they provide a good garden background. The cornflower or bachelor button grows about three feet tall and makes a bushy plant. Both larkspur and cornflowers are available in shades of blue, pink, white that blend well together.

Almost all poppies benefit from fall seeding. The Shirley poppies provide beautiful single and double flowers in late spring. Colors are mainly red, pink, and white.

Other poppies for fall seeding are the Iceland Poppy, and Oriental poppy which are perennial plants. The California poppy can also be seeded in fall. Its flowers are in shades of yellow and orange. It's a fairly low plant, suitable for edging.

Prepare the soil well for fall-seeded flowers. Add liberal amounts of organic matter and a small amount of ordinary garden fertilizer, just as you would the spring garden. Many seeds will germinate and grow this fall, but most of them will not germinate until early spring.

Right now your cyclamen plant held over from last spring has some nice leaves on it. No need for repotting the plant each year. Just scrape off an inch or so of

soil and add new soil, without disturbing the bulb or roots. Many people flower their cyclamen over year after year without ever changing the soil. Give your cyclamen a uniform supply of water and keep it in a sunny window.

ANSWER: Yes, sawdust is fine for protecting roses. Take a piece of hardware cloth (wire screen) about 18 inches high. Place it around the rose bush and then put the sawdust inside the wire screen. Next spring remove the screen and spread the sawdust around the rose bed. Wood chips also can be used.

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And—very important in kitchens—vinyl asbestos tile has an excellent flammability rating; it does not support combustion or contribute to flame spread.

These are all important factors in a kitchen flooring. Yet the main reason for the continued popularity of vinyl asbestos tile is style and color choice, which have been greatly upgraded in recent years.

Indeed, this tile has achieved the status of a couture flooring and is appearing in more and more decorator-planned living rooms.

It is easy to install—with adhesive-back tile you can do the job yourself in a few hours. And it is also one of the least expensive floor coverings and yet one of the longest wearing—easily 20 years under heavy household traffic.

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