



posh porches

Add to your garden repertoire with fresh ideas for your patio or porch

Story by Troy W. Rhone

Does your front porch need a mighty makeover? I know mine did...but, if you're on a budget and not careful, the mighty makeover might become a mini makeover. My front porch left much to be desired. Mine still had old furniture that came with the house, fading fabric on the chair and loveseat, a dead fern in a copper hose pot and an old 1950s tile floor. Although I couldn't afford a new floor, I did come up with a few ideas to convert my old-style front porch into a posh, relaxing space. Come back with me on a tour through time of the home makeover my neighborhood porch received.

The very first thing I did was decide on the space as a whole. How would I use the space? What was my purpose for having the space? What style should I use and what feel should the space have? I decided that for me, it would be a gathering place for greeting friends and neighbors; along with becoming a haven for relaxation after a long day's work. I also wanted to make sure the porch blended with the interior of my home. So, I used a relaxed, sophisticated style, which was the same as my interior. With these things in mind, I was ready to go right to work.

I really wanted to soften the tile floor with Pennsylvania bluestone. But since I couldn't afford a new floor, I settled on an outdoor rug. I found a beautiful one that worked with the colors of my interiors. An extension of the inside of my home was now pulled to the front porch. It totally softened my old orange tile porch...amazing what a rug will do!

Next, I had to purchase and place furniture. I shopped at Summer Classics and found a great chair and loveseat that would fit the scale of the space and give me seating for three.

I decided that the floor plan of the porch would force me to keep the outdoor furniture placement the same. But at least I had something new with fluffy cushions. No matter how big your space is, always remember to keep the scale of the furniture in mind. I happen to choose furniture that was a little larger than I normally would have wanted for the space, but comfort was a must. Even still, the furniture fit the scale of the space. In other words, it didn't appear too large or too small compared to its surroundings. The furniture I choose

The old front porch was hardly anything to jump up and down about. A renovation was desperately needed. ▸

Opposite page:
The remodeled posh porch boasts a new rug, furniture, outdoor lamp container planting and accessories.



The inside and the outside now become seamless through the windows of the front door.



This outdoor lamp from Summer Classics adds a homey feel to the porch.



These outdoor cushions bring a pop of color to the once drab porch.



style

There are almost as many garden styles as there are gardeners. When getting ready to spruce up your porch or patio, inspiration can be found anywhere.



△ With the use of fabric seats and pillows, any outdoor space can look and feel like it is part of your home.

Colorful planters always add a warm welcome to any environment. In this case the homeowner used the foliage of *Coleus blumei* to give a huge pop of color to the container. ▷



The arrangement of furniture on this porch gives easy access from the garden or the inside of the house. The homeowners could easily sip tea on a lazy afternoon with neighbors or take a break from working in the garden.



△ Shoes and garden tools are stored in this antique cranberry box by the front door.

was a resin wicker. It allowed me to keep the comfortable Southern front porch feel, while keeping with my interior furniture. I choose cushions that were on clearance. So even though I didn't get to choose the colors that I loved, they still worked with the color scheme of the space. Best of all, I saved big bucks!

The third thing I did was find an outdoor lamp. I love to sit outside in the evenings and enjoy the cool air. It is one of the only times I'm truly comfortable being outside. Having a water resistant lamp, bulb housing and lamp shade enabled me not to worry with even the worst of storms! It would now allow me to enjoy a special ambience at dusk without being in darkness or having a bright overhead light. And, as a bonus, it complements the style of lighting that I use inside of my home. So once again I am bringing the indoors out.

Next, it was time to accessorize the space. I needed to put a few finishing touches to really make it feel like the retreat I desired. Finding an antique urn was a great start to help bring height to a tall corner by the front door. I used a spiral *Thuja occidentalis* 'Emerald Green' from Leaf & Petal. Instead of bark that would blow out and make the porch messy, I decided to wrap the top of the root ball with burlap. It gave the pot a finished look while helping keep the area clean. Best of all, you can water through the burlap!

I found an old cranberry box at a flea market and put it by the door to house our garden shoes, pruners and miscellaneous gardening supplies. This box is used more for storing tools and supplies that my wife and I are currently using in a project. Otherwise they would be put up in the tool shed for proper storing. But, it makes a wonderful overnight storage place while tending to a specific task.

Finely, adding colorful plants on my steps completed my front porch makeover. I choose yellow and chartreuse colored *Heuchera* from Plant Odyssey to help bring out the colors in the fabrics. With all these new furnishings and accessories, I now have a posh porch to enjoy with my friends and neighbors. 🌿

Troy Rhone is the principal of Troy Rhone Garden Design in Birmingham, Alabama and Rosemary Beach, Florida. His work is seen in such public areas as The University of Alabama at Birmingham and in numerous private residences. More examples of his work may be seen at www.troyrhonegardens.com.

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