

If you are like many people these days, you are trying to find ways to do more with less. However, when it comes to home updates, it's not always easy to find economical ways to spruce up your living space.

St. Louis County Environmental Services has a few easy and free tips to make noticeable changes around the home with something most of us have collecting dust in our basements or garages – paint.

There is nothing like a fresh coat of paint to brighten up a room.

However, there are other ways to reuse paint, such as:

- Give an old piece of furniture a fresh look.
- Create a flow in your home by carrying a color from one room into the next with painted accessories like picture frames, outlet covers, pots or planters.
- Use old paint as primer for a new painted project.

Once you have figured out your painting projects, think about the left-over paint products you have around the house such as used cans from previous paint jobs, leftover stain or varnish from your deck or fence or modeling paint. If the paint you have stored is not what you are looking for, take a trip to your local **FREEstore** at the Household Hazardous Waste near Virginia.

Inside the **FREEstore** you will find a variety of paint that is ready to find a new home. All the paint at the center is perfectly good and it's free. When you find the color, or colors that suit your project, it's yours for the taking.

Keep in mind your local household hazardous waste center will take any unwanted paint, varnish or stain; so if the paint you have stored at home is of no use to you, it could be useful for someone else!

Tips for storing paint.

Leftover paint can last for years, if it is well-sealed and stored in an appropriate location. Here are a few tips:

- Cover the opening of the paint can with plastic wrap before closing the lid. This will help create an additional seal when the can is closed.
- Use a mallet to close the can for a better seal. Hammers can dent and bend the rim of the paint can; mallets are gentler. Use a small towel over the lid to help absorb impact.
- Store the paint can upside down to prevent air from drying out the paint.
- Store paint away from extreme heat and cold to avoid unusable spoiled paint. Avoid fluctuating temperatures, especially storage near furnaces and direct sunlight. Store in a cool, dry area.
- Write on the lid of each can for future identification:
 - Date opened
 - Color
 - Brand
 - Room it is for
 - Leave the original label on the paint can. This will you'll know what type/color of paint is inside for disposal purposes.
 - Keep contaminants out of paint cans. Pretty much anything will contaminate your paint, making it difficult to donate or dispose of properly.

Free paint.

Previously owned. Perfectly good.

When you bring in your hazardous household products for environmentally safe recycling and disposal, check out our **FREEstore** reuse and exchange room stocked with paint, cleaners, lawn and automotive products, all pre-owned but perfectly usable and free for the taking.

Visit the FREEstore

St. Louis County Household Hazardous Waste Facility

5345 Regional Landfill Road, Virginia, MN

Tuesdays and Saturdays 8am—1pm

www.stlouiscounty.org/HW or call 800.450.9278

