



## Do ceilings have to be white?



We asked Amy Lau, an interior designer in New York City, to weigh in.

Lau, a fan of ceiling colors drawn from nature (sky blue, leaf green), offers tips on how to enrich that fifth wall.

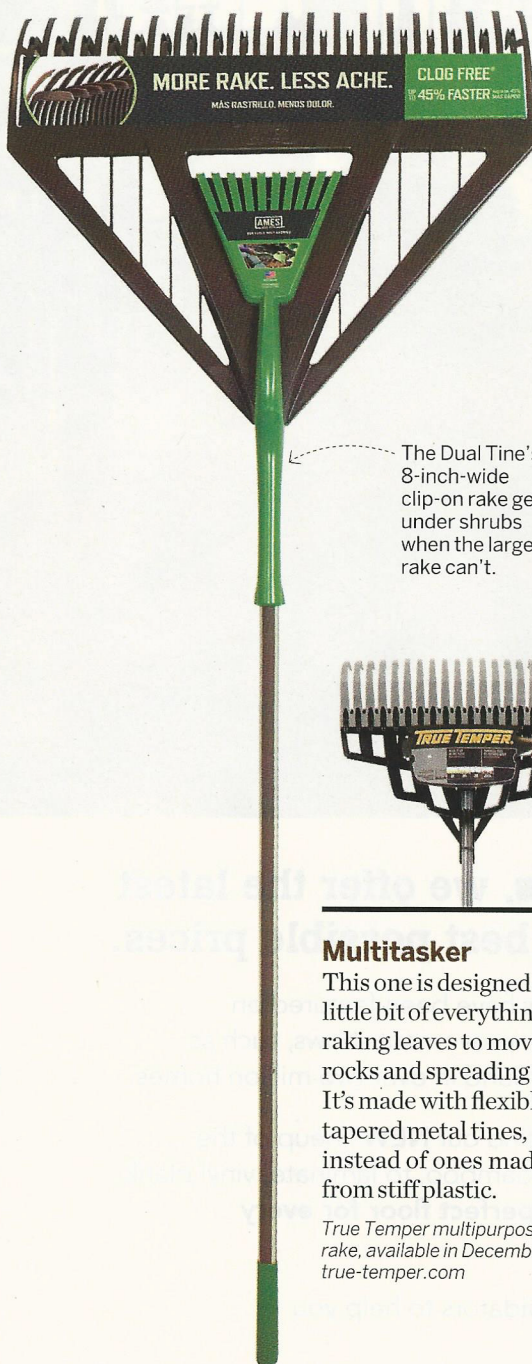
► **DO THE CEILING LAST.** I like to choose a color for the ceiling only after I know the wall color. Colorful ceilings often work best with neutral walls.

► **GO SOFT.** Paler hues work best on ceilings in bedrooms and living spaces—save brightly colored ceilings for kids' rooms. I love a very pale blue, especially if the rug is also blue, or a pale green. If the wall color is a medium neutral, like some grays and beiges, I like to cut the wall color in half and add 50% white for the ceiling—it's enveloping and draws the eye up.

► **CONSIDER HIGH GLOSS.** A lacquer-like finish, such as the oil-based high gloss I used in the room shown above (Benjamin Moore's Wythe Blue), has a liquid quality that reflects light and adds a sense of spaciousness. But the surface has to be perfect; a glossy finish shows every flaw. That's one reason ceilings are so often matte white.

## Cool rakes that stack up

Whether you're gathering leaves into a pile or leveling soil to prep for grass seed, a rake is an important part of fall yard maintenance. While they all require that trademark push-pull motion, many are task-specific. Here are three worth storing in your shed.



The Dual Tine's 8-inch-wide clip-on rake gets under shrubs when the larger rake can't.

### Leaf hauler

A 26-inch-wide head pulls in a big pile all at once, and double the usual number of tines means less clogging while raking 45% faster. The durable plastic head and steel handle keep the heft down to a lightweight 3 pounds.

Dual Tine Poly Leaf Rake, \$25; [ames.com](http://ames.com)



### Multitasker

This one is designed to do a little bit of everything, from raking leaves to moving rocks and spreading mulch. It's made with flexible, tapered metal tines, instead of ones made from stiff plastic.

True Temper multipurpose lawn rake, available in December, \$20; [true-temper.com](http://true-temper.com)



### Classic heavyweight

This design, often called a bow rake, hasn't changed much over the years. The latest version has two sets of tines in two sizes: a full-size set to pull and level soil, and a row of stubbier ones to help with grading.

Garden rake, \$18; [ames.com](http://ames.com)

—S.V.