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Decorating for the Holidays When Short on Time & Money

By Susan Dunn

Decorating for the Holidays When Short on Time & Money by Susan Dunn, MA, Personal

Life & EQ Coach

Lucky you if you live in the north (of the US). Lucky all of us that nature is plentiful in providing free supplies for decorating our homes for Thanksgiving no matter where we live.

Even in South Texas at this time of year I can wander outside and clip off some branches from my yellow-berried pyracantha (I planted some with yellow berries as well as red just for this occasion), and grab a handful of at least brown leaves.

If you live in the north and can garner pine cones, seed pods, pine branches and fallen leaves in all their glorious colors, use these as the basis for your color scheme.

I'm also lucky to have a garden full of chrysanthemums in bloom ready to be put around in vases in the house. Since they're perennials (down here), I can always count on having them come back this time of year.

Check your yard and garden for blooms in keeping with your color scheme (and next year, consider planting accordingly).

You also have an array of decorating materials available in the produce department of your grocery. All those squashes lend themselves beautifully to the fall color scheme. It's nature's way. Go for it!

Arrange some greenery branches across the mantle and place fruits and vegetables around and there you have it. We're celebrating the harvest, after all.

Now here's the trick. We have two major celebrations coming up: Thanksgiving and then Christmas. Here at my house I need to make a quick transition and I'm short on time, like everyone else. I'm having guests for Thanksgiving, but then my grandchildren will be coming here the Friday after. I'm giving a Christmas Cookie Baking Party for Kids on Friday, and will need to switch rapidly from

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Thanksgiving to Christmas, so I've planned my decorating accordingly.

I'll be using only greens, yellows, golds and whites for Thanksgiving. Then, for instance, I can remove the white, green and yellow gourds and squashes from the greenery on the mantle, add some white lights and gold stars, gold jingle bells, and gold ornaments and I'm set to go.

The white, yellow and gold candles and tealights for Thanksgiving can remain. See how easy it can be!

Cheap tip for a real glow? Buy a fair-sized mirror, place it on your dining room table, buffet or mantel and cover it with tea lights. Beautiful!

You could achieve this same easy transition keeping green and brown for basic background and using accents of burgundy and rust. This is a more subtle look for Christmas than the bright primary red, but

it works just as well.

Also make some trips to your local Goodwill and Thrift Stores and visit some garage sales. People give away the most amazing holiday decorations that can be yours for pennies. I've found everything - hand towels, wreaths, pillows, stuffed animals, wall pictures, water globes and statuettes. Since they're used only for a short time, you hate to spend too much on them.

And here's a neat tip. My Goodwill store has a selection of lamp shades and I have the lamps, don't you? You can change out your lampshades to fit your decorating scheme. Did you ever think of that? It only takes a minute. Just make sure before you go that you know which kind of lampshades you have, and match them.

Oh and don't forget to check out the picture frames at the resale shop. You could move a favorite photo to a holiday frame and place that up on the mantel as well.

In fact if you don't already have some great holiday photos, take some this year. I have a great photo of my grand-daughter sitting with a pumpkin I move to a central location at Thanksgiving, and then a collage of my own children at former Christmases I bring out in December. I bought an ugly print at a garage sale that had a beautiful forest green frame, threw away the print and substituted with the collage. It's such a dear reminder.

And while you're decorating, don't forget yourself! Most thrift stores set up displays of holiday apparel you'll want to take advantage of for you and the kids.

Some planning ahead can help you save time and money and still allow for a festively decorated home for the holidays.

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Christmas Decorating That Will Make Your Holidays Special

By Angela Tyler

If you are like the majority of people, you do not have a lot of time during the holidays to make special decorations. You can make your holiday decorating quick and easy and create a festive atmosphere in your home without spending a lot of time and money, leaving you more time to enjoy the holiday season with your family. Here are some holiday decorating tips that are free and inexpensive that will require very little effort:

Tableware:

Use festive tableware for every meal during the month of December. Search your cupboards and drawers and get out anything that looks remotely festive. You can also shop discount and one-dollar stores and find many items for the holidays that you can use every year. You can add to your collection of holiday tableware each year and soon you will have many types of dishes that will make your holidays special.

Bows:

Try decorating with bows. Ribbons tied around chairs, plants, candlesticks, drapes, stairs and doorknobs make wonderful decorations. Place bows and ribbons in many locations throughout your home for a festive look that is quick and easy. The bows and ribbons do not have to be green and red. You can try many colors or match the bows and ribbons to the colors you have in your home. Choose ribbons that you can reuse each year. When the holidays are over, pack the bows and ribbons carefully so that you can use them again and again.

Wreaths:

Put a holiday wreath on every door in your home. Use real pine, holly, and grapevine and decorate with berries, fruit and pinecones. If you purchase artificial wreaths you will be able to use them year after year.

Candles:

Arrange many candles around the room and turn the lights off during holiday meals. You will create a special, festive atmosphere that will be remembered and anticipated by your family each year. A fire in the fireplace each night will add to the holiday spirit. You can also arrange candles in your bathroom and around your bathtub. Watch small children carefully when you decorate with candles.

Holiday decorating does not have to be difficult or expensive. Simple decorations throughout your house will make fond memories for your family and will be anticipated year after year. Make sure to put out plenty of scented potpourri and scented oils in various locations throughout your home.

Angela Tyler invites you to explore

a free resource filled with

ideas to organize and decorate your home on a budget. For frugal meal ideas, she recommends



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