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**Nature's Decor for Fall, on a Budget**

**By Kathleen Wilson**

**Nature's Decor for Fall, on a Budget by Kathleen Wilson**

Fall is my favorite time of year for decorating. Well, ok, so maybe it's just behind the holidays, but you know what I mean! I think it's because it represents a time of coming home and cuddling in, preparing for the long cold days of winter. Cacooning in a home filled with warmth and personality...mmm, no better feeling, especially in times when life doesn't feel as secure as it once did for many of us. How do you decorate your home for the winding down of autumn when the money's tight? Read this article, and you're on your way!

Fall is the best time for decorating organically; that is, with natural elements. Natural ornaments for the home are abundantly available this time of year, are extremely cheap or free, and give us a good feeling of grounded goodness from Mother Earth. So get the kids, and go on a nature walk! Make sure to take a bag with you, and be sure only to collect fallen items that are not protected, or on private land. (Don't worry, I'm going to tell you what to do with all this in a minute!) Everything that appeals to you is fair game here, and remember to look at texture, color, or even memories an item brings back for you. Acorns, pinecones, seed pods, sticks or branches, driftwood, shells, empty wasp nests, bird nests, or cocoons, pressed and dried flowers, bark chunks, even pretty rocks! And of course, cut and bring in those fall wildflowers! Sunflowers, zinnias, cosmos, chrysanthemums, even roses all bloom in the fall and make terrific bouquets. Even dried grasses displayed in a pretty pitcher invoke those great feelings of autumn on it's way.

Now you're back home with all your treasures, you've started a big pot of soup on the stove...and you can't figure out for the life of you what you are going to do with all this stuff? For starters, consider setting out simple ceramic or wooden bowls lined with a pretty cloth napkin or scrap, and fill with some of your goods. Texture abounds with natural elements, and will warm up a tablescape, a coffee table, a fireplace hearth. Try getting out the hot glue gun and affixing your items to the candles you packed away at the first sign of summer. Small glass jars make great votive holders when dressed up with a few pressed leaves and acorns. Fill a bowl or plate with goodies around large pillar candles and use as a centerpiece. If you can't find enough natural material near your home, check out the bulk grain section at your supermarket. Fall is about harvest, so any grain can be used to add that element to your home. Even cracked corn meant for the bird feeder can look great in a jar as a base for a candle.

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Lastly, don't forget the front porch when adding the element of fall! After all, Halloween and Thanksgiving are on the way, it's time to think about adding joy to our neighborhoods and communities. Ask a local farmer or produce stand owner if you can get some corn stalks, and display them on your porch with a homemade scarecrow. My kids have been making scarecrows each year since they were little, and they have a great time! Use old clothing, a little muslin or an old pillowcase for the face, stuff most of the body with newspaper or stuffing, then add a little raffia or straw at the sleeve and neck cuffs. Make the scarecrows representative of someone you know for fun...one year my kids made our whole family, and if you know anything about the size of my family, you'll understand it was quite a job! Draw on the face with permanent markers and craft paint, and have a great time!

Lastly, don't forget to preserve some of this magical time. Press fall leaves, take pictures of your kids,

and make some really great new comfort foods to warm your family. Set the stage for a wonderful place for your family to be this winter!

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Kathleen Wilson is the editor of The Budget Decorator, a free ezine dedicated to the "budget impaired" home decorator. Please visit her at <http://www.thebudgetdecorator.com> for more free projects and ideas, and for information on her upcoming book, "Quick Decorating Ideas Under \$20: The Budget Decorator's Bible".

### **Decorating For Thanksgiving – Budget Friendly Decor For The Holiday**

#### **By Home Decorating Digest**

Decorating for Thanksgiving on a tight budget can be simple when using elements found around your home or apartment. Here are a few tips for adding that special Thanksgiving flavor to your decor for little or no money.

**THINK FALL COLORS.** Thanksgiving decorating requires a harvest color scheme of warm yellows, golds, burnt reds, browns and greens. Think in terms of these colors when selecting ribbons and fabrics to be used with your projects.

**START GATHERING.** Go outdoors and start gathering colorful fallen leaves, acorns, pinecones, sticks, twigs and large branches. Use the large branches to anchor a display on or inside shelves, counter tops or bookcases. Fill the display with the items you gathered until you have a collage of color. Also consider stacking logs on your porch or inside your space...even if you don't have a fireplace!

**CREATING A CENTERPIECE** All you need to create this budget piece are your outdoor supplies and a hot glue gun. Using a large attractively shaped branch, start gluing your leaves and branches in a natural pattern in and around the branch. You can buy attractive Indian corn and gourds at your local grocery store to place next to this centerpiece to complete your Thanksgiving table. Use your harvest colored ribbons as accents.

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**REUSE PUMPKINS.** Don't think that pumpkins are only for Halloween. Some vendors largely discount pumpkins after October 31st. **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT.** Decorate with pumpkins of all sizes by adding them to your porch or indoor displays. Just before your Thanksgiving dinner use them to create homemade pumpkin soup or pie. No waste here!

**ILLUMINATION.** Candles are the obvious choice for bringing warmth to your Thanksgiving festivities. Select a variety of sizes and shapes to add contrast. A good rule of thumb when on a budget is to think multiple uses. White candles can be used for both Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Tea candles work well when displayed in glasses and are also a little more budget friendly. The least expensive illumination tips are to use your old white Christmas tree lights on top of bookcases or draped around your room. Get a jumpstart on Christmas.

You can create an atmosphere that exudes the warmth and welcome you feel for your guest by adding special touches to your decor. Just by using what you have, a little elbow grease and some imagination you can create a holiday atmosphere...for little to no money!

Home Decorating Digest,

is an online publication offering

home decorating ideas and feature articles on style, color, and interior design. Get decorating basics, do-it-yourself projects, organizing, and outdoor garden design tips.

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