

Add sparkle to your holiday décor

By Melinda Myers

Liven up your holiday décor with lights, a bit of glitz and some colorful blossoms this season.

Start by gathering greenery from your landscape. Use needled evergreens like pines and firs, broadleaf evergreens like boxwood, holly and evergreen magnolia as well as junipers and arborvitae to create wreaths, swags, centerpieces and garland. And don't forget to include cones, holly berries, crabapples and the bluish-colored fruit of junipers.

Be selective as you prune your trees and shrubs when collecting these materials. Use sharp bypass pruners that have two sharp blades and will make a clean cut that closes more quickly. Make your cuts above a healthy bud, where the branches join another branch, or back to the main trunk. Take only a few branches from each tree or shrub to maintain the plants' beauty.

Place freshly cut greens in a cool location away from heaters, fireplaces and open flames. Set them on colorful fabric or paper to catch the sap and avoid damaging your woodwork and furnishings.



Greenery combined with

decorative LED lights can
brighten holiday displays.
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Company

Check your greenery for freshness every few days. The needles, leaves and stems should bend, but not break. Replace dried greens with fresh materials.

Then brighten up the display with some cool burning LED lights. Create a mantle display or centerpiece with the help of LED pillar lights. Or add a string of LEDs to your garland. Look for something unusual like pinecone string lights to add sparkle and charm to your display.

If you have artificial greens that could use a facelift, add fresh berries, cones and seedpods for a more natural look. Increase the glitz with the help of silver and gold metallic paint or glitter. Paint milkweed, lotus and other pods and then tuck them into the greens. Painting allium seedheads white will add the appearance of flowery snowflakes in your indoor arrangements and outdoor container gardens.

And don't forget the fresh flowers and flowering plants. Poinsettias are a long-time favorite, but you may want to change things up with Amaryllis, spring flowering bulbs and lily of the valley. Look for unusual varieties or combinations to increase your enjoyment. Combine large flowered amaryllis with small flowering bulbs like star of Bethlehem. Or go for a unique size shape or flower color like that of the Honeybee Amaryllis with its beautiful yellow flowers that are sure to brighten your days.

Add a few flowers to your greenery and houseplants for some instant color. Stick your greenery and flowers in dampened floral foam to create a long-lasting holiday centerpiece. Or place cut flowers in floral picks and set them in dish gardens and houseplants to brighten things up. Then swap out the

flowers as they fade.

And consider making a few extra planters or centerpieces to give as holiday and hostess gifts this year.

Now is the time to put on your gardening shoes, grab the pruners and get started decorating for the holiday season ahead.

Melinda Myers has a master's degree in horticulture and has written more than 20 gardening books.