

Decorate naturally for the holidays

BY CHARLOTTE KENNEDY
Special Writer

The holidays are here, and we're decorating our homes. As a designer, I am always trying to use things that I can get from my garden for a natural look at holiday time.

I love the process of going on walks in the fresh air and gathering the things I can use. This is a great time to get the children involved and make some lasting memories. We look for pine cones, big and small, grapevine branches, hydrangeas, different berry branches and unused birds' nests. The pine cones, birds' nests and branches can be sprayed or tipped in gold for that wonderful holiday sparkle.

One of my favorite things to use is green moss. I buy it by the bag from my local craft store. You can cover Styrofoam balls with it for the tree or mantel, or just nestle the moss loose to decorate a table top. It's the basis for a very natural look. Being inexpensive, it goes a long way, but gives a professional look.

I usually do a "groaning" table for the holidays when I entertain. I have used moss to cover the table, piling up oranges, tangerines and chestnuts. Then I add pillar candles in different sizes. Weave ribbon throughout and place a florist's vial with a fresh rose in it and slip between the oranges and tangerines. This makes a spectacular presentation where I place my hors d'oeuvres. Make an impression on your guests

with one special table in lieu of several little decorations.

Think about filling glass globes with nuts, cranberries and different greens, adding a pillar candle for a warm, inviting look. Add roping or garland around arches and doorways. It gives you a sense of the garden. Remember, when removing, you will have to touch up nail holes.

Ribbons tend to be expensive. Why not make your own wired ribbon? Look for beautiful fabrics on sale. You then have the advantage of making your ribbons as wide as you want. Just sew florist wire on each side, and bend and shape ribbons to your liking. Use on gifts or for a lavish look on your tree. Tulle in gold or white also goes a long

way for a beautiful look, as well as burlap. The choices are endless.

Use your imagination and gather things from your yard, and you will find each year to be more and more fulfilling as you decorate for the holidays. Neighbors and friends are more than eager to let you cut. Just ask ahead.

There is a certain sense of looking at natural things that brings us home and is guaranteed to bring back a flood of childhood memories.

Charlotte Kennedy is an interior designer from Northville. She is a member of the "Designer On Call" program of Michigan Design Center in Troy. For a complimentary, one-hour consultation with a designer such as Kennedy, call toll-free (888) DIAL-MDC.

Figley from page D7

(call (206) 455-0568) is made of stainless steel with a birch handle. Unlike a trowel, it acts as a natural extension of the hand, so that the soil can be worked while reducing bending stress on the wrist. In the shape of a large spoon, the edges are serrated and the point is sharp. The gardener will find lots of uses for this tool.

Craftsman products by Sears, Roebuck & Co. are always a welcome addition to a

tool collection. The new 3-7/8-inch Handi-Cut Utility Cutters (No. 37201) has a special offset pivot design and will cut through tough stuff such as carpet, rope, wood trim, shrubs, tile and much more.

TIMELY GARDEN TIPS

- Dig a generous hole for your live Christmas tree before the ground freezes solid.
- Run your fingers down a branch of

your chosen cut Christmas tree before purchase to be sure the needles aren't brittle.

- Cut the butt of the tree an inch above the original cut at an angle and store in a container of water before bringing it indoors. Saw the butt straight across when it's time to bring it indoors.
- Fertilize house plants that are still actively growing, then discontinue until

early March. There are a few exceptions to this rule; look at the care tag.

- Dig clumps of lily of the valley this month and keep them in a cool spot (60 degrees), water to keep from drying out. In February I'll explain how to force them.

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