



Natural Decoration Displays: More Projects

Here are more ways to bring the beauty of nature's decorations into your home.

(Natural Decoration by Maureen Blaney Flietner continued, page 2 of 2)

Project: Centerpieces/displays

When it comes to table centerpieces, those who live in the country have endless choices! No matter what the season, just look around and see what you can come up with.

Here are some possibilities: Snip off evergreen branches, cut several deep red stems of redosier dogwood, and add a bow and battery-operated tiny lights for a holiday swag. Or dig an old tray out of the cupboard, add the branches and stems, a candle, and you've got a holiday centerpiece.

Carve out a pumpkin, put a small candle in a glass holder inside, center the pumpkin on a large plate and surround it with colorful fall leaves and a few cones.

Arrange a selection of colorful dried gourds, grown on your farm, and surround it with colorful fall leaves.

Place a bunch of tulips or a spray of lilacs in a hand-me-down vase.

Use summer's endless parade of flowers to keep bouquets of fresh blooms on country tables.

Float blossoms in a pretty bowl or other container filled of water.

Arrange selections of dried plants, herbs or flowers such as canary grass, statice, teasels, bittersweet or wheat in pretty baskets or vases.

Here's one simple centerpiece that can work for a variety of occasions; be careful with the candle. In our farmhouse, for example, candles are for short-term use only. Pets and the frequent movement of family and friends indoors and out increase the chance of a fire with a candle left unattended.

Project: Candle centerpiece

Materials:

- * Dried flowers or leaves
- * A candle
- * A tray or plate
- * Cones, evergreen branches, nuts, colorful stones or shells
- * A hot glue gun

For this arrangement, I used a large, white candle that was on hand. (Those skilled in candlemaking are ahead of the game.) Colorful fall leaves collected last year and preserved with clear lacquer were selected. I picked through my dried statice, grown in a variety of colors, and found white flowers for this special-occasion centerpiece. The cone collection was raided and a few nuts were spray painted gold for a formal accent.

Hold up the leaves and statice against the candle to determine best placement. After deciding how the arrangement will look, ready the hot glue gun and go to work.

Place the leaves first since they will be nearly impossible to rearrange without tearing. The statice goes next. Because this dried flower is a bit sturdier than a leaf, it can be rearranged when the glue is cool if you decide to change the design.

The candle is centered on an old tray sprayed gold. Cones have been placed around the candle. Your area may have other suitable materials--nuts, leaves, shells, dried herbs, colorful stones--in abundance to use. Light the candle and enjoy!

Project: Decorative frame

While there seems to be no end to the variety of frames and matting available in stores AND catalogs, there's one way to individualize the frame of an artwork or photo print that you'll find no where else. Decorate the frame with found items.



Even if you follow this basic example, your frame will be different because you will choose the materials and decide where to place them.

Seashells, stones, woven sisal baling twine, tiny cones, bark and twigs are all potential materials. Study your print to see what complements your artwork. To make this example, twigs were used to echo the trees shown in the print. Gather several "interesting" branches from bushes or small trees. Small branches from an old honeysuckle bush were used here. First, place them on the frame to determine the look you want. Clip branches that are too long or heading in the wrong direction. Wash and air dry the selected branches.

The first two branches were attached with hot glue and the look was reviewed. A few more branches were added and, for variety, three gold-sprayed nuts were attached as accents. It's an easy project, but one that adds interest to a simple framed print.

Project: Indoor rustic birdhouse

While our fine-feathered friends are just outside, you can keep a nice indoor reminder of them. This simple birdhouse uses several items found around the hobby farm. Here's how this example was assembled.

One of the old cedar fence posts that had seen better days and was pulled up for replacement and a section was sawed off. A black electric fence wire holder was left attached. The post section was placed securely in a vice and an appropriate hole was drilled with an electric screwdriver equipped with a spade bit (don't forget the safety glasses). A hand auger can be used, as well. An old oil can with character but no use was cleaned and pressed into service as the roof.

Tuck some dried sphagnum moss or--perhaps even more available around the farm--a bit of clean, chopped straw into the birdhouse entrance. It helps to use a bit of hot glue to hold the nest material in place. The rustic indoor birdhouse is ready.

Unusual, one-of-a-kind and attractive country décor is at your doorstep. And, best of all, it's nearly free.

About the Author: Maureen Blaney Flietner is a freelance writer, photographer and hobby farmer in Wisconsin.

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