

NURTURING *nature*

BRING THE OUTSIDE INDOORS TO SPRUCE UP YOUR HOME FOR THE SEASON

by JEFFERSON GEIGER

THE HOLIDAYS have arrived and its time to make your home look the part. Living in, or visiting, the mountainous region of Summit County means it's not too difficult to find inspiration when it comes to sourcing wintry decorations.

Christy Rost, television chef, entertaining guru and Breckenridge resident, enjoys taking elements from the outside world and transporting them indoors.

"I capitalize on the fact that we live surrounded by nature and essentially bring that beautiful, snowy vista inside," Rost said. This can translate to pinecones, snowflakes, berries, aspens and other motifs.

HOW TO DECORATE FOR WINTER

No matter the season or occasion, make your time decorating easier by focusing on major areas that receive the most traffic, such as the dining room table or entryways. Less is more, and creating that cozy feeling can happen with a few slices of wood or pine boughs placed strategically throughout the house.

"If you give a little attention to the table, it makes any celebration more enjoyable," said Rost, who is known for her table settings. "It makes people linger around the table for good conversation." Put smaller items on a china cabinet or bookshelf and the room will be effortlessly tied together.

Rost is a big fan of battery-powered

miniature string lights that can wrap around banisters or be placed in a glass vase with shredded paper. Pin-sized LEDs embedded in a thin wire are versatile and come in a variety of lengths and colors. "They are just one of my favorite new decorating accessories," Rost said. "A couple of those on a table or on a mantle and you have this incredible flair."

Similar to Rost, Carolann McGregor, a decorator with the concierge service At Your Breck And Call, suggests going on a hike to find leaves and an eye-catching piece of wood that can be combined into an interesting centerpiece. Glue the parts together, spray the leaves with hairspray to preserve them, and your table is ready for guests. Feel free to mix up the look with branches, ferns, moss or whatever else you can find.

"The hairspray doesn't work for your hair out here, but it works for the leaves," McGregor said.

HOW TO DECORATE FOR THE HOLIDAYS

Keep it simple and swap out color palettes — such as blue and silver for Hanukkah or red, green and black for Kwanzaa — when incorporating holiday décor into a living space to save both time and money.

For Thanksgiving, McGregor said you could fill a glass bowl with small pinecones, cattails, pumpkins and other woody materials. If you don't feel like collecting objects out in the wild, or want your greenery to stay green, Lilli's Lighting & Décor carries an array various faux foliage.

"Around Thanksgiving we're seeing more of the brown and wheat colors, the yellow aspen and the orange bittersweet being

used," said Lilli's Lighting & Décor owner Denise Roberts.

Those neutral earth tones can carry into other holidays or the entire winter season. According to Lisa Yates, lead interior designer at Collective Design + Furnishings, browns and hunter green are back in fashion. Additionally, she says to have white pumpkins that blend both the end of Halloween and the start of Thanksgiving while simultaneously giving the room a more modern aesthetic.

"I'm not saying gray has run its course," Yates said, "it's definitely still there, but the warmer tones are something we were very happy to see, as designers, making their way back. If you try to not stick with the obvious Christmas color palette, you can kind of keep it going a little bit longer."

Another trend is velvet. Rost recommends using a copper version of the material for ribbons, pillows or runners during Thanksgiving. Simply make minor adjustments and you'll be ready for Christmas in no time. Spray those fall pinecones with fake snow, replace hay and gourds on the banisters with ribbon and Christmas garland, and add touches of gold and silver to the copper velvet.

If the High Country isn't your home year-round, be efficient when injecting in some holiday spirit. There's no need to stuff ornaments in your suitcase or fruitlessly force a tree in the same trunk holding the presents. Many local stores will offer small trinkets and baubles that can liven up a rental.

"Just buy a package of pretty Christmas balls and hang them from twine or fishing line at different intervals from a mantle, a rod of a curtain, a chandelier, and all of a sudden you have a little holiday cheer there," Rost said. She knows about decorating on a crunch from experience, having previously lived in a two-bedroom condo for four in Dillon. Back then, simple ribbons were used frequently and didn't get stale.

"We didn't have a lot, but it was festive, it was fun, and we looked forward to doing it," Rost said.

Sight is obviously important when it comes to design, but don't neglect your nose. Yates proposes replacing the pumpkin pie candles from Thanksgiving for mint or pine as the calendar shifts. "The scent affects you subconsciously, too, so it's cool to play into that a little bit," Yates said.

HOW TO DECORATE FOR FESTIVE PARTIES

Similar to changing the decorations for different holidays, reuse as much as possible if you're hosting a special event. Take those pinecones from the centerpiece and spray them with silver or white so they fit in at a wintry wedding. Or, change the colors on the miniature LED lights to fit any theme.

"We have limited sources out here to shop compared to Denver, so you really do have to get creative," McGregor said.

A tip from Roberts is to incorporate your passions into the home's style and focus on functional art. Go rustic with images of antique skis, deer heads or other North American wildlife on serving platters, dishtowels or candlesticks.

Layering can have a strong impact and both Rost and Roberts like matching colors such as gold found on placemats and dinnerware. If hosting a buffet, turn those wine glasses upside down to hold the food and wrap garland around the bottom rather than placing a tray right on the kitchen island.

"Having those different layers makes a big difference," Roberts said. "A lot of it is the presentation and how you set that up."

Don't forget to decorate the restroom nearest the action during a party, too. "Throw a little something in there like a candle or a special hand towel," Yates said. "It doesn't have to be anything huge or obvious, but the small touches and the little details definitely go a long way."