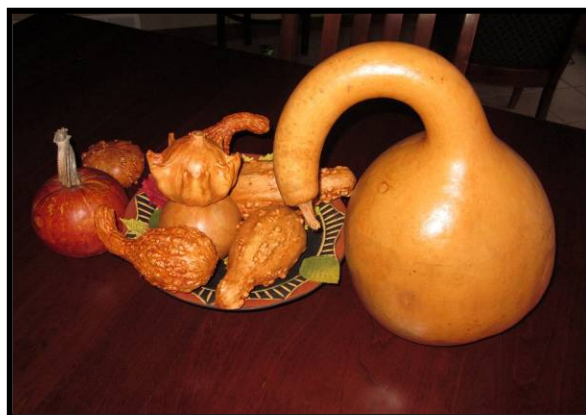


Thanksgiving Decorating Ideas

Running out of time for making extravagant holiday decorations? Well, here are a few ideas to help keep you sane this Thanksgiving while still reaping the compliments you work so hard for!

Make it Natural!

Indian corn, gourd pumpkins, and squashes can provide a touch of fall to any table. They can be placed in a basket or used as candleholders. To create a gourd candle holder insert a sharp knife into the center of the gourd near the stem. Be very careful not to let the knife slip, as the gourds tend to have a very hard surface. Wedge the knife back and forth until you've created an opening about an inch in length. Use a grapefruit knife or an apple corer to create a circular hole about one inch deep and the same diameter as your taper candle. To hold the candle in place, drizzle a few drops of candle wax in the hole and insert a taper or votive candle.

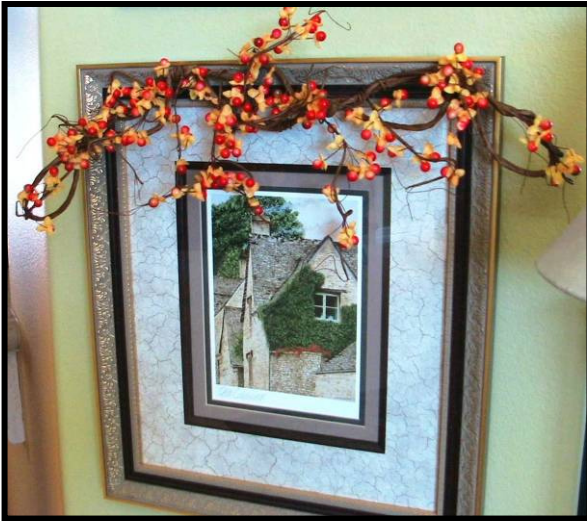


Make garlands of nuts, berries, and autumn leaves to hang on mantles or railings - anywhere you would hang a Christmas garland.

I really like this pinecone garland from Country Home magazine. You only need a small collection of pinecones, some rope, neutral ribbon and wire. They painted gold on the tops of the pinecones, but I like it natural. Just wrap wire around the wide end of the pinecones hiding it as best you can. Wrap the wire around the rope and add a simple ribbon to hide the connection.



Or, go out and purchase one of hundreds of gorgeous autumn garlands to dress up your staircase, fireplace, arched doorways, armoire tops, kitchen cabinetry and more!



And when I say more I mean, picture frames, table top vignettes, wrap columns, add around tablecloths, put into china cabinets, hang on headboards, and probably even more!

Don't forget about the beauty of autumn leaves. And, you probably have a ton of them right in your back yard! Sprinkle them on tables throughout your house, add them to centerpieces, write on them to make place cards – the ideas are endless!



For even more autumn decorations, try these table setting ideas:



You don't have to have expensive table linens to create a pretty holiday table. Visit your local fabric store and purchase some inexpensive fabric in an earth tone color to cover your table. While you are there, consider purchasing some fabric pens. On Thanksgiving, encourage your family and guests to record their feelings of gratitude. This tablecloth can be stored until next year, when everyone can add a new sentiment. It is sure to become a family heirloom.

We've all seen the traditional cornucopia. This year, instead of filling the cornucopia with fruit, try filling it with rolled silverware. Use colored or decorative paper napkins and tie the napkins with a bit of coordinating ribbon or raffia.

Or make lunch bag cornucopias as place cards. Better yet, get the kids to help you with these, they're a snap and it will keep them busy!



Surprise your guests with some unusual serving pieces. Use items with a fall theme. Line a wicker apple basket with plastic wrap, and use it to serve the mashed potatoes. A new terracotta pot can be used to serve the dinner rolls. Hollow out loaves of bread to use for serving cheeses or dips. You won't be

wasting any bread because you can use the extra bread in your stuffing.

Here's something to consider, order a floral centerpiece or two for you. I did this two years ago and it was a wonderful way to add beautiful seasonal color to my appetizer table and the dining table. The arrangements arrived the day before and looked beautiful for the entire holiday weekend!



Something else that always looks impressive is “items in bulk”. For instance, pull out all your pillar candles, put them in a grouping and add a few colored leaves and you're done.



Here's another bulk item that is near and dear to my heart....fall candy!! See doesn't it look great? Just pick up a couple bags of your favorites when you are shopping for the holiday meal. Spread confectionary joy (along with autumn color) all through your home!

Don't forget the children's table. Top their table with butcher paper. Let the kids create their own holiday table cloth by decorating it with crayons and markers – a perfect way to keep little hands busy while you're completing the last minute preparations.

You can even quickly change out some of your artwork for pictures that have an autumn feeling to them. I find that I have some artwork that is in just the right tones for fall and I have a collection of framed pieces that you would call my "summer" pieces. I change them around from room to room as the seasons change.



Another quickie is pillow slipcovers. You can certainly purchase these from all sorts of stores and catalogs, but they are pretty easy to make as well. Just swap out your summer covers for something with a little fall flair!

The idea is to surround yourself with autumn colors and motifs in the easiest way possible. I hope some of these ideas have given you a jumping off point and that you'll share anything you do at home with the rest of us!

Shari

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