

# Bring the Outdoors Inside for Holiday Decorating

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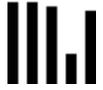
This year, why not showcase nature's seasonal gifts by creating a jolly holiday milieu with natural materials? It may be as simple as stepping outside your front door. Think natural pine, lithe branches and berry-laden vines to accent your [holiday decorating](#).

## Gather the Basics

You might be planning to entertain a crowd or even preparing to [sell your house](#). Either way, your plate is probably full—so you'll be surprised at how easy it is to shine a spotlight on nature's beauty to create brilliant holiday cheer.



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Here's how to gather your materials to get started:

## Check If You Own It

Look in your cupboards and cabinets for a glue gun, small glass ornaments or petite decorative birds.

## Collect It

Next time you're out, bring home some [fallen branches](#) from trees—dogwood or birch, dried berry plants such as bittersweet or winterberry, and wilt-resistant greenery and leaves like magnolia, holly and evergreens. Bring along a small bag for little pebbles or interesting stones.

## Buy It

If you don't already have a collection of bowls and vases, keep your eye out for them at craft stores and flea markets.

Not sure what to buy? Irene Lovett, founder of the Los Angeles-based [decorating firm designstiles](#), advises, "I look for varying heights and shapes. I like to mix groupings of tall or short, clean modern vases with curvy footed ones."

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A versatile collection of glass or crystal bowls, a column vase, a footed cake plate and a spherical fish-bowl vase are extremely versatile pieces.

## Pick a color

As you navigate through the virtual world of decorating divas on Etsy, consider what color scheme you'd like to capture this holiday season. Go traditional with silver, gold or red, or stay ahead of the trends by incorporating [Pantone's 2015 color of the year](#): marsala.

“Mix emerald and marsala-colored decorative items for a fresh take on the classic red and green holiday colors,” suggests San Diego designer Kelly Hinchman, Design Principal and Owner of Studio H Design Group.

To make your chosen color palette come to life, pick up a can of spray paint and a few spools of ribbon in varying widths in your chosen color.

## **Pull It All Together**

### **10 Minutes or Less?**

Invite in a little peace while adding elegance to your side table with a visually simple but stunning display. Fill a round fish bowl abundantly with clusters of winterberry or brightly accented, bittersweet vines artistically curled inside. For a color punch, jumble a ribbon strand amongst the branches or clip on a tiny artificial bird.

Looking for even more contrast? Colorblock your bowl by arranging boxwood or pine trimmings with one type of brightly colored fruit: Persimmons, lemons and pomegranates all stand out distinctly against dark greenery.

## **The Tree That Keeps On Giving**

Create a versatile mini-tree by securing a small branch with lots of shoots into a mason jar with pebbles. Leave the base jar visible for a clean look—or cluster fabric or bunches of fiberfill “snow” to conceal the base. Complete the look with a few small birds and glue on dried or artificial red berries. For a sharper look, consider spray painting the branch in your accent color before assembling.

Want to take it further? The sky’s the limit for this little tree! Try trimming the tree with antique glass balls, decorative birds, paper snowflakes, small candies or even gingerbread cookies baked with holes for easy ribbon-hanging.

## **Keep It Simple**

Sometimes, more is less, especially when it comes to the holidays. Using a straight column vase, capture a winterscape by simply inserting a single artistically angled branch from a birch or dogwood tree. To go warmer, pour in a few inches of small garden pebbles or fresh cranberries and set a candle inside.

For a whimsical look, alternate layers of glass balls (in your accent color of course) with bands of greenery.

## **Add a Spray of Color**

Mix it up a bit by spray-painting interesting branches, magnolia leaves or a small collection of rocks or pine greenery. While you’re at it, go to town freshening old vases, tacky sleigh displays, artificial greenery and

fruit—incorporating them into your color theme.

Painted items may need a few days to breathe before being introduced into living spaces, as they may emit fumes for a day or two.

## **Go Vertical**

Who says mistletoe is the only thing you can hang from above? It's easy to create an eye-popping design for a coat hook in the foyer, the back of a dining chair or the chandelier.

Decorate to your heart's content with one- to two-inch wide grosgrain ribbon or go rustic with twine and one-inch, pencil-curved paper grocery bag strips.

Wind ribbons or twine around individual pieces of a collection of similar items such as pine cones or holly clusters, attaching each dangle to a central large bow or cluster of bows. For fullness, leave a few ribbons with longer tails.

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