

# HOME - decorating

## Deck the Halls

### Making a home for the holidays

by Kimberly Mack - November 2005

The holidays are for celebrating old family traditions or starting new ones.

Trimming your home can be fun and make your pad look unique.

Whether you go for classic, contemporary, elegant or whimsical decorations, make sure you chose a style that reflects your personality.

Here are some general tips from the Interior Design Society, Triangle East Chapter, to make your home sparkle this season and in those to come:

- Invest in items that will last for many years, which you can pass down as valuable heirlooms.
- Arrange similar decorations in groups. By grouping things together, collections can better complement one another. If you have old family pieces that just don't work with your new style, you may want to have different holiday-themed rooms. Many homeowners have more than one Christmas tree in their home just to accommodate the different themes of ornaments. For example, a tree wrapped in colorful lights and sprinkled with unbreakable ornaments is always a big hit with kids and keeps little hands from damaging your fancy decorations.
- Tie together all your spaces. Front doors, fireplace mantles, china hutches and trees are spots that beg for adornment. To pull together all these areas, bedeck them with the same holiday ribbon throughout your home. The average house will use 100 yards of ribbon for interior decorating. A 2-1/2-to3-inch-wide, wired ribbon works best. Look for ribbons with a high content of polyester. These will hold their color and texture for many years. The prettiest ribbons are often the most expensive, but you can mix pricier versions with less expensive coordinating ones to make your decorating go farther.
- Place garland and bows on top of large, framed pieces or artwork and mirrors. Or, dress up a staircase by draping greenery (not wrapping it) along the banister and securing it with your chosen ribbon and large bows. Also, a group of three to five tapered 12-inch candles nestled in fresh sprigs of greenery and sprinkled with holiday ornaments makes for a simple, elegant centerpiece for the dining room table.
- Choose a good tree. Get the tallest one you can fit into your home. Make sure to keep real trees away from air vents and sunlight, and remember to water them every day for the first two weeks to keep them fresh. Also, today's faux trees look very real and are easy to assemble. When setting one up, take special care to properly fluff the tree limbs for a more natural appearance.

- Illuminate the exterior with flood lights shooting toward the front of your house. To add a welcoming touch, hang a 30-inch wreath, complete with a big bow and sparkling ornaments, on your front door. Place large bows with streamers on outdoor lamp posts and lights. Don't forget the details. Add garland and a bow with streamers to dress up your mailbox.
- Group together any yard decorations. A tight collection makes a bigger impact than several scattered pieces. Showcase scenes with flood lights. The outside of your home is large in scale, so choose decorations that are big enough to be seen easily from the street. Many small items on the lawn tend to look messy and chaotic. Your front yard should have a happy coordinated look that says, "Happy Holidays" and "Welcome Home."

An average American household spent \$10 on holiday decorations in 1940. A tree cost 75 cents.