



# Holiday DECORATING

# Shiny and Bright

If a rustic woodland look isn't your style, glam up the holidays with some shiny metal tones. It's easy to use silver and gold in your holiday décor, from the mantel to the tabletop to the Christmas tree.

## THE MANTEL

Add some sparkle to even the most classic mantel with pine garland and red ribbon by adding shiny silver stocking hangers. Choose shapes such as reindeer, stars or wreaths. Another option for adding shine is metal-tone figural Christmas trees. Why not start a collection of gleaming metal trees on your mantel?



Of course, if you really want to go all in with shine, replace your stockings with new ones heavy on gold fabric and details, and tie it together with gold ribbon dotted with gold-tone ornaments.

Don't be afraid to mix gold and silver elements for a unique look that lets you jingle and shine all the way.

## THE TABLETOP

The tabletop is an easy place to let your holidays sparkle. Stemware with silver-tone stems, plates with metal details, and napkin holders made of miniature glittery silver or gold garland. Silver-dipped pine cones and branches, gold wire-wrapped reindeer figurines — there really are hundreds of ways to make the holiday table bright.

For a simple centerpiece, layer metal-tone ornaments

in a tall vase or arrange various sizes of them on a fancy serving dish. They will reflect the light nicely and attract attention. If your holiday meal isn't the talk of the table, the centerpieces certainly will be.

## THE TREE

Glitter-covered figural snowflake ornaments have long been an inexpensive way to add sparkle to the tree. For a modern twist, pair silver details with pale teal accents.

Silver beaded garland is another way to add a layer of glam.

Gold pairs well with red, so pull out your red Christmas décor and put it to use in a new color scheme. Deep,

warm red tones work especially well.

Under the tree, use foil-accented wrapping paper to carry on your chosen theme, or simply choose

## GET CRAFTY

No matter the metal tone you're looking to employ, mirror-finish spray paints are the crafter's friend. Visit your local craft store to check out their offerings, then spend some time at home practicing with the paint. It doesn't go on as smoothly as flat colors, and keeping the can moving while applying is key. Paint the inside of glass items so the smooth, mirror-like finish is visible on the outside.

Use the paint to add shine to just about anything: ornaments, glass candleholders and vases, mirrors, stemware, even pine cones. A trendy finish is the mercury glass effect. To achieve this look, spray a layer of mirror-finish spray paint in your chosen tone (silver is popular) on glass and then distress the look with a mixture of vinegar and water. A mist of the right consistency will leave small areas of the finish missing, and when you wipe away the spray after letting it sit for a few minutes, the distressed look will be as good as any you buy in a home décor store.





# Shades of the Season

Of course red and green are the old standbys, but if you're looking to shake up your Christmas decor palette, Behr offers help.

The paint maker's Trends 2016 palette provides a range of tones that are suited for the holidays.

Whether your style is classic or trendy, you can find ways to put Behr's color combinations into your decor.

## HOLIDAYS AT SEA

You can change up your Christmas decor colors without making a total departure from tradition. If you'd like to stick close to greens and reds, consider coral and sea glass-green shades. Behr's Trends 2016 palette

includes variations on these colors, including Celadon, a deep teal called Emperor's Silk, Coralette and Bowstring, a light gray reminiscent of driftwood.

## A TOUCH OF NATURE

If the shades of green and brown you see on your annual trip to the Christmas tree farm inspire you, why not bring those colors into your holiday theme? Tones of tree bark, from pine to aspen, provide a versatile natural backdrop that you can dress up or down.

## JEWEL TONES

If none of Behr's swatches strike your fancy, consider a more classic decor color scheme. Sapphires, emeralds and rubies are the inspiration for jewel tones.

This palette is perfectly suited for getting colorful with ornaments, and you should have no trouble assembling a rainbow of options from your own collection or by making a quick trip to your local craft store.

A good way to start collecting a wide range of decor in the same jewel

tones is to visit a craft or department store that offers collections of a wide variety of holiday decor in the same color. Roam the aisles and gather select decor in coordinating shades of just about any bold color.



Less traditional reds and greens can retain a holiday feel.



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# Rustic Crafts

**A** rustic Christmas theme lends itself to homemade crafts made from easy-to-find materials, such as pine cones and branches, twigs and cuttings from the bottom of your live tree.

To top it all off, all these materials come with the added bonus of being environmentally friendly. If you're feeling crafty this Christmas, here are a few projects for homemade rustic décor.

## RUSTIC ORNAMENTS

Turn pine cones or decorative wrapped twig balls into ornaments by tying burlap ribbon into bows and attaching to the top with hot glue. Then, loop a 6-inch length of twine or raffia through the knot of the bow on the back of the ornament and tie a double knot at the top.

## TWIG CHRISTMAS TREE

Round cutting from the bottom of a tree  
Five types of Christmas ribbon, all about ¼ inch thick, in lengths of 5 ½ inches, 4 ½ inches, 3 ½ inches, 2 ½ inches and 1 ½ inch  
1 twig, about 6 inches tall and ¼ inch in diameter  
low-temperature hot glue gun  
low-temperature hot glue sticks  
Construction paper or craft paper  
Glitter  
School glue  
Twine

Place the bottom of the twig in the center of the round piece of wood and attach using a 1-inch brad-type nail and hammer. Stand the tree up on its round wood base and begin tying the center of the longest ribbon around the twig, about ¼ inch from the bottom. Secure the center of the knot to the branch with a dab of hot glue. Do the same with each smaller size ribbon, spacing them evenly along the twig so that the shortest length of ribbon

is tied near the top of the twig. Make a star for the top of the tree by cutting a shape from brown or yellow construction paper or brown craft paper. Add a thin layer of school glue and sprinkle glitter to cover the star, then shake off the excess. Once the school glue has dried, attach the star to the top of the tree with hot glue. If you'd like, you can glue each end of a 4-inch length of twine to the back of the star to turn the decoration into an ornament.

## BURLAP CANDLEHOLDER

1 glass hurricane vase, about 4 inches in diameter and 6 inches tall  
1 white pillar candle  
Spare branches from the Christmas tree, with foliage  
Strip of burlap fabric, the same diameter as the candleholder and about 2 inches tall  
Mod Podge  
Sponge brush  
Twine  
Plate-style candleholder

Place the vase in the center of the plate and place the pillar candle inside. Arrange branches around the base of the candle to a height of about 3 inches. Add a thin layer of Mod Podge to the back of the burlap fabric using the sponge brush. Press the burlap flat around the base of the candleholder, with the sticky side facing the glass. Tie a length of twine around the middle of the burlap fabric with a simple bow. For a snowy effect, sprinkle faux snow on the branches. For a touch of elegance, replace the twine with lace ribbon. For a simpler, quicker version, wrap twine around the middle of a pillar candle and secure with a bow in the middle.



# Beyond Garland

**W**e've all seen garlands of berries, leaves or flowers, but there are many more unconventional options that can add a layer of the unexpected to your décor. Whether you're going glam or sticking with the basics, continue your theme with a unique garland.

## NEW IDEAS FOR MATERIALS

Pair lace with burlap for contrast, attach silver-plated metal ornaments to picture wire for a touch of the past, or string woodland creatures and pine cones on thick twine for a woody vibe. Get your other hobbies into the mix with crocheted ornaments hung from yarn, or if you've got some brightly colored paint samples lying around from home improvement projects, why not cut them into the shape of Christmas lights and attach them with string?

## EDIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

If you're as handy in the kitchen as you are with decorating, edible garlands are calling your name. Gingerbread or cinnamon applesauce dough can become gingerbread man-shaped décor strung together with string, burlap or Christmas ribbon. String store-bought Christmas cookies or spice drops on ribbon or arrange candy canes into hearts spaced evenly along strands of red and white yarn.

Of course the wild birds outside your window always appreciate a garland of popcorn and cranberries, but why not offer them some variety this year? Add birdseed to plain gelatin and let it set, then press into cookie cutters sprayed with non-stick spray. Don't forget to use a stick to make a hole for stringing, then once they're firm, string the edible ornaments with twine and wrap around a tree where the birds are sure to find their special treat. Another option is to offer the birds a garland of sliced apples and peanuts (shells on).

## HANG IT

Who says garland is only for the tree or banister? There are many more ways to incorporate your creations into your holiday celebrations. Wrap garland around gifts for a personal touch, or make a curtain of nearly-invisible fishing line strung with various sizes of white Styrofoam balls for an instant winter wonderland. Dress up a light fixture or architectural column in your home, or drape several strands of garland along a wall as a décor accent.



# Shake Up Stockings

**A**re your family's stockings as simple as homemade felt creations or random socks from Dad's drawer, or as elaborate as personalized garments featuring family members' names in gold lettering?

We all know they're supposed to be hung by the chimney with care, but if you're looking to freshen up your family's stocking tradition, consider some twists on the classic.

## IDEAS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

Shoes, boots and wooden clogs: You don't have to hang stockings to collect goodies from Santa Claus, according to traditions from around the world. From Ecuador to the Netherlands, all kinds of holiday legends inspire people to leave their footwear where St. Nick is sure to find them. To inject your holidays with some international flair, read up on the traditions of other countries and choose one that resonates. Perhaps choose a country from which your ancestors hail to celebrate your family's unique heritage along with the season.

## MATCH YOUR THEME

Are you harking back to the days of old? Choose stockings that enhance the vintage vibe by combing thrift shops for originals or looking to your local craft store for reproductions. If you're handy with knitting needles, make your own homemade versions.

For a rustic holiday setting, replace stockings with brown paper bags or custom-printed sacks made

of burlap. "Special Delivery for Luke" or "For Sally: Do Not Open Until December 25" are some ideas. Fashion a gift bucket by attaching burlap fabric to an empty paint can with Mod Podge and wrapping the handle with candy-cane-striped Christmas ribbon.

## LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Who says stockings have to go on the mantel? If you'd like to try something different above the fireplace this year, other good places to hang stockings include an indoor stair banister or balcony, strung from a rope attached to a wall in decorative fashion or hanging from a wrought iron floor-standing stocking hanger. Repurpose a wall-hanging coat rack into a stocking hanger with a coat of red paint and your family's name in white letters. Arrange stockings on a section of faux rustic fence made from wood scraps or a decorative ladder to make them a piece of conversation-starting decor. Keep children

entertained until everyone in the house is awake and ready to rip into the presents under the tree by hanging a pair of knitted mittens stuffed with small treats on their

bedposts.

When we open our stockings each Christmas morning, one theme remains the same: Our traditions are the real gift.



Your holidays may not be the same without the aroma of pine, cedar or fir. These plants make great wreaths, garlands and trees for your décor but need extra care to weather the holidays.

### FRESH OR FAUX?

If you're choosing between fresh and faux, ask yourself if the unique look and smell of live greenery is worth the extra expense and work. Fresh greenery can be two to three times more expensive than its artificial counterparts and can't be reused from year to year. Live greenery can last from three weeks indoors to several months when kept outdoors in cold climates. If you buy your greenery too early in the season or don't care for it properly, you could find yourself having to replace it, doubling your costs.

On the other hand, you can spend less and buy pre-lit faux greenery that will save you some decorating time each year. As lighting technology makes our décor smarter, the ability to easily program your greenery to light up with the rest of your decorations might be appealing.

Live greenery also requires some specific care that you might not be up to handling during the busy holiday season. Watering, trimming and cleaning up dropped needles could become an unnecessary bother while you're busy shopping for gifts, attending or hosting parties and otherwise preparing for holiday festivities.

### TYPES

There is much to consider about the specific type of live plant you choose for your décor. For example, white pine is soft and may droop under the weight of heavy ornaments, while a Virginia pine will thrive in a warmer environment and drop few needles. Noble fir has all-around appeal as a whole tree or cutting, while you might be surprised to



# Using Fresh Greenery

learn that white spruce needles give off an unpleasant odor. Do some research about the type of tree that will work best for the intended purpose. The National Christmas Tree Association offers profiles of each type of tree on its website at [www.realchristmastrees.org/dnn/Education/Tree-Varieties](http://www.realchristmastrees.org/dnn/Education/Tree-Varieties).

### CARE

Fresh greenery hung in warm or dry

areas should be watered every couple of days, either by spraying with water from a bottle or by laying it in a few inches of water. A cool outdoor place is the best option for longevity and minimal care.

When hanging fresh greenery indoors, avoid areas near heat sources or direct sunlight to extend its life.

Martha Stewart recommends “conditioning” live cuttings by trimming the

branches at a 45-degree angle and gently crushing the end of the stem with a small hammer, then letting them rest in water for a few hours. She also recommends spraying with an anti-desiccant spray found at nurseries to keep in moisture by sealing the plant's pores. If you plan to place the greenery in water, re-cut the branches at a 45-degree angle to help them better absorb water.

# Christmas Is in the Air

**O**ur sense of smell is more strongly tied to memories than any other sense. Mom's apple pie baking in the oven, the cologne of a long-forgotten first boyfriend, and yes, the freshly cut Balsam fir in the living room that makes the holidays complete.

These smells invoke powerful connections to the people and things we love. According to Psychology Today, that's because smells are first processed in the brain by the olfactory bulb, which is directly connected to the areas of the brain that deal with emotion and memory.

All that science and sentimentality mean that what your family and guests smell in your home will likely stick with them over the years even more than what they see. So what's a holiday hostess to do? Sprinkle your holiday décor with a few treats for the senses — especially smell.

## CANDLES

Scented candles are an old standby but can only take you so far. For truly powerful aromas, burn candles with wooden wicks or those made with soybean oil, or place a quality wax warmer on each level of your home.

Don't forget a candle in the bathroom, and continue the theme with scented hand soaps and lotions on the vanity. To keep guests triggering those olfactory connections to your party for months to come, send them home with party favors of travel-size holiday-scented lotion or hand sanitizer.

## WHAT'S COOKING?

Many of the smells that make us hark to the holidays involve food —

cinnamon, apple, pumpkin pie spice, the vanilla we toss into the sugar cookie dough. Why not throw a pot of Christmas on the stove? Teen blogger Tieghan Gerard, the force behind Half-Baked Harvest, offers this recipe for a Christmas potpourri that you can simmer on the stove during a day of baking cookies or a party with friends and family. It will not only overload your nose with the smells of Christmas but also is a great homemade gift idea.

### Holiday Potpourri

- 1 1/2 cups fresh cranberries
  - 3 tangerines, halved
  - 3 whole cinnamon sticks
  - 2 star anise (optional) gives a strong black licorice smell.
  - 1 teaspoon whole cloves
  - 1 inch piece fresh ginger
  - 1 vanilla bean + 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
  - 1 small branch fresh pine
  - 1 cup apple cider, pomegranate or cranberry juice
  - water
- Combine all the ingredients in a medium size sauce pot. Fill the pot with water until it reaches 3/4 the way full. Place the pot on the stove and bring to a gentle boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer, adding more water as needed. I let mine simmer for close to 4 hours and then let it cool over night and simmer again the next day. Just be sure to keep adding more water.

