

Five savvy home decorating tips eco-style



As spring rounds the corner, so does the desire to lighten the mood in life and home. Whether you choose to de-clutter or add a splash of spring color, simple eco-friendly changes to home decor set the tone for a much lighter, and brighter, season.

Follow these five tips to affordable eco-friendly home decorating.

Let color lift the mood

Color has long been credited for its mood-changing qualities. “Color really makes things more upbeat and changes the energy in a space,” says Mary Ann Thornam, interior design academic department chair at The Art Institute of Colorado.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) accredited professional-certified designer and instructor from Miami International University of Art & Design, Jorge A. Pernas, suggests not just going out and buying any old type of paint, but “request to see their line of Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) free products - they are very eco-friendly; these paints don't emit any toxic fumes and are completely odorless, making it possible to literally paint a bedroom and be able to sleep in it that same evening.”

Lighten the landscape, lighten the mood

Lighting is another simple, affordable and eco-friendly way of sprucing up the home. Pernas suggests converting all task lighting to compact fluorescent bulbs. The reduction in energy consumption translates into a lower monthly bill and an overall reduction in your carbon footprint.

You've heard of feng shui. Furniture placement plays a major role in the ergonomic quality of your living space. Developing a more flexible floor plan by angling and shifting pieces can often help give the area the appearance of more space - making it feel less cluttered.

Another easy way to update the overall look of a room is by replacing curtains/tapestries, slipcovers and bedding with organic sheets and materials, giving the space an updated look that is both affordable and eco-friendly.

Delight in de-cluttering

With the new season comes the inspiration to cleanse and purge items that you no longer need. Replace heavier accent objects, such as ceramics, with lighter pieces, like baskets. Reposition artwork and add mirrors whenever possible as they open up a room and give the illusion of more space. Of course, when in doubt, recycle it out.

Shop and swap

As the focus on sustainability becomes more widespread, so do your options for eco-friendly products that do not deplete the earth or your pocketbook. Some options include swapping with a group of friends to changing out items that no longer fit your space, or shopping in thrift stores and consignment shops. Of course, when those options won't do, Pernas suggests purchasing eco-friendly, simple selections such as bamboo rugs, organic cotton sheets or recycled glass.

Bring the outside in

With spring comes the urge to open windows and breathe in the fresh air. Bring the natural goodness of the outside into your home with the addition of potted flowers and plants or window boxes.

Visit the local farmers market to find your favorite plants or flowers and place them in locations where you spend time daily. Vegetation not only adds oxygen, but also brightens the backdrop.

The key to savvy decorating is not overpowering the existing elements. "Small changes can make a dramatic difference in the personality of a room," says Thornam.

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