

# Tips for brightening a home during winter

By **JADE McDOWELL**  
Staff Writer

Shorter days and colder weather can put a damper on anyone's mood, but brightening your living space can help counteract that gloomy feeling.

Debbie Westwood, owner of the Hermiston home decor shop Indulge, said she always adjusts the decorations in her own home to reflect the time of year.

"With the change of season, if you change things up in your house it will make you feel better," she said.

During the fall months she said she uses warm colors, like gold and orange, as she puts up new curtains and pictures around her home, then switches to Christmas decorations as the holiday season approaches.

She said colorful throw pillows and blankets in your living room that complement the decor can brighten the room, make it feel cozier and help keep you warm and comfortable.

The important thing, she said, is to make your living space feel "homier" during the months you spend more time inside.

One thing that helps with that is using scented candles and other items to make your home smell "like fall." "How a house smells



Decorative candles and lanterns can add extra light to a room during short winter days.

STAFF PHOTO BY JADE McDOWELL

affects how you feel," she said.

Increased lighting to make up for a decrease of natural light can also help.

That includes decorative candles and lanterns, and Westwood said she has her lights in her home on dimmers so that she can add

just a little extra light to supplement the natural light coming through her windows on cloudy days.

Other tips to brighten

your home during the winter can include:

1) If the view outside isn't very cheery, add some colorful curtains to help

brighten the view. Then keep those curtains open whenever there is any natural light to be had.

2) Add house plants around your home. Not only will they provide a bit of that greenery you miss about spring, they have also been shown to increase air quality inside a building and help counteract the drying-out effect of running a heater.

3) Add mirrors to your walls. They amplify light and make a room appear more spacious, helping counteract the "cooped up" feeling from spending more time indoors during the winter.

4) Do some fall cleaning. A layer of dust and grime on windows and light fixtures can dull the light shining through, dimming the room. Make sure those surfaces, as well as hard surfaces that might reflect light, are clean and shiny going into the winter months.

5) Rearrange your furniture to optimize the amount of natural light you're exposed to. That might mean moving a couch so it faces a window, or moving an entertainment center from where it is blocking light from reaching the rest of the room.

# Fall leaves can be fun, even for adults

Growing up, I often was excused from home and garden tasks.

I conveniently used the excuse of my allergies and asthma to get out of doing things I didn't enjoy. However, as I've gotten older I've learned that fall leaves can be fun.

So, before you get set to rake 'em and bag 'em, have some fun with the colorful and crisp leaves that are blowing across your lawn like a snowdrift.

A number of years ago, Suzanne Tosten and I felt bad for Terri Dorran because she didn't have any trees in her yard. Terri was missing out on the joys that fall leaves ultimately bring.

Dressed incognito for a Halloween party as Wayne and Garth of Saturday Night Live, Suzy and I set out to enrich Terri's life with a blessing of leaves. Oh sure, we could have gone across the street to the park and raked and gathered leaves, but that would have taken too much effort. Instead, we went to then Hermiston Mayor Frank Harkenrider's house and removed several of his large decorative lawn leaf bags.

Back at Terri's house we emptied the bags, creating a blizzard of leaves. It was awesome fun.

Terri's son, Mitch, was thrilled with the colorful blanket in their front lawn.

"Look mom, look at all the leaves," he exclaimed with the innocence of youth. "They must have blown over from the park."



**Tammy Malgesini**  
INSIDE MY SHOES

Of course, we couldn't just steal Harkie's leaves and call it good. So, a few nights later, we collected the leaves from Terri's place.

Then, on the way to Harkie's house, we had another bright idea — let's collect additional lawn leaf bags and set them up in a football formation. (Note: I'm sure the statute of limita-

tions has passed regarding the theft of said leaves, but just in case I want to remind you about something called creative license.)

Anyway, along with the three bags we had snagged from Harkie's lawn earlier, we gathered an additional eight bags between Hermiston and Highland avenues. Back at Harkie's place, we set up a basic T formation.

With my husband's gimpy foot and fall in full swing with the leaves starting to fill our yard, I'm likely going to be

the one raking and bagging this year. By the way, can someone tell me where Mayor Dave Drotzmann lives?

(Many area cities provide its residents with a card or coupon to dispose of yard debris, including fall leaves, free of charge at local landfills. Contact your city hall for details.)

Tammy Malgesini is the community editor. Her column, Inside my Shoes, runs every other week in the Hermiston Herald. Contact her at [tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com](mailto:tmalgesini@eastoregonian.com) or 541-564-4539.



Carol Greene and Deana Cordell play among the leaves during a fall golf game.

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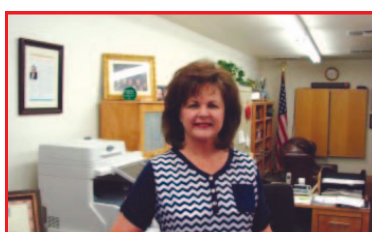
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