



DECK THE DOORS

By Annie Sherman
Photographed by Maaike Bernstrom

A simple evergreen wreath hung from your front door can make all the difference in your holiday spirit. But where to begin? Just clip a few sprigs of greenery from your garden, cover your kitchen table in newspaper, then follow these quick Do-It-Yourself tips from Barbara Chaves of Chaves' Gardens. Your home will be decorated faster than you can say *Merry Christmas*.

WHAT YOU NEED

- 12-inch Wreath frame
- Sphagnum moss
- Plastic wreath wrap
- A garbage bag full of various types of greenery (or buy from Chaves pre-mixed)
- Wire
- Knife
- Scissors
- 2 Greening pins
- 3 Pine cones
- 4 Wooden wire picks
- Decorative wire ribbon
- Pipe cleaner (to hang)





STEP-BY-STEP

FILL

Empty a bag of sphagnum moss into a bucket of warm water – enough to cover the moss completely. Soak 20 minutes.

Squeeze a fistful of moss until it's just damp (not dripping) and fit it into the wreath frame. Fill the frame until it's tightly packed with moss.

WRAP

Secure one end of the plastic wreath wrap into the wreath with a greening pin.

Wind the wreath wrap around the frame, overlapping slightly. It will stretch, so pull tightly, making sure the moss is covered. "It shouldn't be too tight, as you have to pierce it with the greenery later," Chaves says.

Once you've wrapped the frame, cut the end of the wreath wrap, fold over and secure in place with another greening pin. "The wreath wrap keeps everything in place and allows the whole wreath to retain its moisture," says Chaves.

GREEN

Cut clippings from the plants in your yard. What works best: fir, spruce, cypress, holly, white pine, rhododendron. Look for various types of texture and color, needles and leaves. Pieces can be quite large (up to 18 inches) as you'll cut them apart (4 to 6 inches).

Start with the larger greens first (Chaves started with fir). Scrape ends of stem to create a sharp exposed point, and to allow greenery to absorb the moisture from moss. Lay it flat against the wreath (not upright). Piercing the wreath wrap, insert the stem 1 inch into the moss. Alternating front, inside and outside, insert additional pieces, 3 inches apart in the same direction, working your way around. "Don't be concerned with filling each space now, as you'll go back to fill in the holes later," Chaves says. "You can even use the uneven pieces because they'll eventually get covered."

Take another type of green (spruce), and repeat, leaving space. Then add fernleaf cypress, holly, rhododendron and white pine clippings randomly spaced for additional texture and pops of color. Keep rotating the wreath to ensure it stays evenly covered. "You can also use a Lazy Susan to make that easier," recommends Chaves.

Once it's full, put the wreath on the ground for a bird's eye view and fill in any holes.

DECORATE

Place 6-inch piece of wire evenly around the bottom of the pine cone, pull tightly, and twist. Fold wire in half, place on wooden wire pick, and wrap remaining wire around the wooden pick. Place pick in wreath and repeat.

To make a bow: Leave 18 inches for tail. Gather material between thumb and fingers, make a 5-inch loop, and gather again. Repeat until you have 3 to 4 loops on each side of the gathered ribbon. Wrap 10 to 12 inches of wire around the middle of the bow to secure, then twist. Cut ends evenly. Secure on wooden pick, and place on wreath.

Get creative with decorations like ornaments, jingle bells, fruit, pods and berries, feathers, bead garland, lights.

Wrap pipe cleaner around top of wreath, twist into place, and secure to hang. Wreath should last through January if kept out of direct sunlight.



FOR A GOOD CAUSE

For those with little time or less than a green thumb, stop by the annual Lucy's Hearth wreath sale. Wreaths, centerpieces and more are for sale to benefit the local women's shelter.
Dec. 3 | 9am-12pm | Easton's Beach Rotunda

DO IT YOURSELF

For the hands-on learner, Barbara's holiday workshops take you through the process step by step, and leave you with a holiday centerpiece or wreath worthy of the Vanderbilts.
Nov. 19 | 10am | holiday centerpiece
Nov. 19 | 1pm | Advent wreath
Nov. 26 | 10am | kissing ball
Nov. 26 | 1pm | boxwood tree
Dec. 3 | 10am | wreaths