

Cobwebs and Decorations for Halloween

By Julie Silva

Has it been so long since the last time you opened your front door that it looks like the cobwebbed set from a scary movie? Life during a pandemic is strange. The holidays are quickly approaching and normal is an achievement we should all try to grab. Halloween and fall décor are a “two-fer” where you may decorate two for the price of one. Decorations are a solid reminder of our traditions and community involvement. Even without the little ghosts and goblins with candy breath, your home may still provide a picturesque look for Halloween night.

Pumpkins are the number one fall or Halloween decoration. Removing the slimy orange goo and carving faces has been a childhood treat since Ichabod Crane borrowed one as a replacement for his noggin – even long before that in Ireland. Pumpkins have evolved from the orange slimy stuff. If they are not sliced open, they have an amazingly long shelf life. Pumpkins may be painted, bedazzled, dressed in ribbons or buttons, stacked, and congregated on steps like census takers. Pumpkins now come in many colors, even more shapes, and have warts on tops of warts. For gardeners, pumpkins represent the belief of hope just because they take a long time to grow and need lots of garden space. If last spring you opted for hope then you probably grew Cinderellas (Rouge Vif d’Estampes) or the green striped Carnival. Your choice in pumpkins says a lot about your Halloween spirit.

Pruning wild, uncontrollable trees and shrubs will provide excellent materials for wreaths and yard decorations. A branch with a downward droop will remind everyone of that night when the wind was howling and ghosts were whispering your name as you ran past the cemetery. Manzanita branches are perfect for this look. After finding the right shape and pruning, the next step is to grab a can of spray paint to give them a black, sinister hue. Add a little gold or silver paint and your droopy limbs will glitter in the light of the moon. Tree or shrub prunings may be used other ways than upright. Horizontal across your porch or hanging from the rafters you may add lighted plastic pumpkins to set the mood. Plastic pumpkins are perfect to add a glo-stick to the interior if there are no plugs available.

Search around your yard for dead plants that black (or any other color choice) paint will enhance. Large mums in a pot that have given up the ghost look amazing when painted black then adorned with back lighting and mini squash. Check your pruning for a small branch with a “y” form or two opposite branches that are long enough to shape into a circular form. Weave or wire those opposing branches into a wreath form. Grab that spray paint can and you have a basic wreath for the next three holidays. Using a fresh pruned branch makes the circular molding easier.

Grasses make great holiday landscaping. Most ornamental grasses are preparing for winter by changing color and dying back. The plumes are dried and no longer being used by the plant. They are like a blank canvas: ready for lights, color, dark colored ribbons braided into the

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plumes or an assortment of pumpkins or gourds around the base. The plumes may be used like dried corn by cutting them off, tying them together, and putting them in pots.

Yards are perfect for holiday decorating. Choosing spring annuals with colors that apply to fall will make a great backdrop in your fall design. Oversized yellow, red and orange zinnias will provide color to your blue Lakota heirloom pumpkin fall design. Many flowers will continue or hold a bloom until your first frost.

Scary is the world's middle name today. A neighborhood filled with joyful holiday decorated homes will bring smiles and happy hearts throughout town.

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