

Take a look at your landscape for decorating ideas

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It's time for my annual column on using your landscape to decorate for the holidays. I will share this with you, I write the column fresh each year so you might find different information below. However, I also have my very favorite plants that I always use so you may also find the same old stuff!

However, if you are like me, you forget from year to year so a reminder column is helpful!

I love searching my landscape for plants that can be used to decorate my home for the holidays. I have actually been intentionally planting the shrubs that I really like to use for decorating.

For instance, one of my favorites, though not usually a favorite for others, is Juniper. I have planted two different varieties in the past four years in order to get different colors of greenery.

Junipers come in a wide array of foliage colors including yellow, bluish, and green and make excellent accent plants for arrangements and wreaths.

They are still quite small, however, but I managed to get a few cuttings from them this year. Junipers can be cut just about anywhere on the stem.

However, if you want to retain the natural, arching shape the best cuts are those made near the ends of the branches, making the cut down into the plant, back behind outside growth.

If you trim your Junipers each year to a tight shrub, you won't be able to use them for greens. You may not like them anyway because they tend to have prickly foliage. I, however, love the fragrance!

Another favorite green that I desperately need is a concolor fir. I absolutely love this coniferous (cone-bearing) tree and its shape and foliage color.

Firs are typically soft-needled and extremely fragrant. One of the identification characteristics we use is to scratch the stem – if it smells citrusy, it's a fir.

Firs have needles attached directly to the stem and usually have a white stripe down the back of the soft needle. Concolor fir needles are approximately two inches long.

There is a person down the street who has a beautiful 20 foot concolor fir in their front yard. It has a perfect shape and is a pretty incredible specimen. You don't see a lot of these plants in the Miami Valley so if you have one, I am envious!

Another great plant to add color to your arrangement is Chamaecyparis. There are several different varieties that can be used but I like those cultivars with yellow or bluish color.

One of my favorites is also the deciduous holly. I planted three of these two years ago but unfortunately they succumbed to dogs digging for moles. I didn't realize they were uprooted until it was too late.

These provide beautiful berries; don't forget you need a male and female plant in order to have any holly berries.

Enjoy selecting a variety of plants to try out in your holiday decorations!



Ilex verticillata or deciduous hollies are excellent for berry production



Dried hydrangea flowers are excellent for adding to holiday arrangements