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HOMEOWNER'S UPDATE

Light & Breezy Decor

After you've packed away your winter decor in storage, your home might seem a little sparse. But warmer weather provides a chance to brighten up your space with cheerful accents. Consider these ideas.

Nautical themes: Bring the beach home with nautical decor, such as seashells, wicker furniture, knotted ropes, jute rugs, and blue-and-white decorative items.

Shades of green: Nothing says spring like nature's favorite color. Incorporate shades of green by painting an accent table, scattering live plants throughout the house or adding patterned decorative pillows to a couch or chair.

Outdoor accents: Spruce up your outdoor living space with a bright area rug and strings of lights to encourage pleasant evenings outside. Create a space for a fire pit or chiminea to enjoy on chilly nights. Consider installing a hanging garden from an arbor or pergola to liven up your gathering space.

Florals: Easy to incorporate in throw pillows, shower curtains and artwork, floral patterns are a timeless way to bring the outdoors in. Brighten up your front door, dining table and shelves with fresh or artificial flowers.

Lightened-up textiles: Swap out heavy comforters for light-colored linen bedding, and add pops of color with pillow shams. Replace thick sherpa blankets on beds and couches with lightweight throws.

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Maximizing Sunlight in Your House

Natural light adds warmth and beauty to a home, as well as providing a free mood booster. Here are four ways to maximize the amount of sunlight in your space.

Choose lighter paint colors. Walls painted in creamy whites or light grays with a satin finish will brighten up a room and reflect more light. You can also paint the ceiling a lighter shade than the walls to give the illusion of more height and airiness. Painting the window trim white will also give the appearance of larger windows and a brighter room.

Create reflection. Large mirrors can magnify the incoming light to further brighten a room. If an area receives little direct sun, try hanging a mirror in the hallway to reflect light into the room. Installing glass tile or another type of glossy backsplash in the kitchen can also reflect the sun's rays throughout the space.

Minimize window treatments. If privacy isn't a concern, skip the blinds and curtains to let in as much light as

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possible. If coverings are a must, choose a style of blinds that's easy to open and close, and opt for breezy white curtains.

Install more windows. If your budget allows, install bigger windows or add skylights to increase the amount of sunlight coming into a room. Adding a front door with a frosted glass window or French doors leading to a patio can also flood rooms with extra light.

Here Comes the Sun

Get outdoors to enjoy the sun's full benefits. A moderate amount of sunlight is proven to:

- Naturally regulate your circadian rhythm, helping you get better sleep at night.
- Promote production of vitamin D, which aids bone strength as well as your immune system.
- Improve emotional health by increasing serotonin, which provides energy and helps you stay positive.

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4 Tips To Create a Stylish, Kid-Friendly Space

Think being a parent means living in a cluttered kids' zone? Think again! The following tips can help make your home inviting for adults and children alike.

- **Storage, storage, storage.** The best way to declutter your home is to create a place for everything. Encourage your kids to put their belongings away by hanging hooks at their level and offering designated bins to hold their backpacks, shoes and sports equipment as they come through the door. Closed storage, such as kid-height cupboards, is great for hiding toys and board games.
- **Pick neutral colors.** Instead of buying play kitchens and kid-size tables in bright primary colors, search for options that come in neutral shades that complement the rest of your decor.
- **Incorporate patterns.** An area rug or throw blanket with an eye-catching pattern adds interest to your living space while also serving to hide crumbs and spills. Choose machine-washable options whenever possible.
- **Use a bench.** If you want to keep your upholstered dining chairs pristine, consider adding a bench to your dining set. Benches can be quickly cleaned, are easy for little ones to access and provide room for multiple kids to sit comfortably.

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Plant a Bee Garden This Summer

Update your yard and help out the planet by planting a colorful bee garden this summer.

Do your research. Start by researching bee-friendly plants that will grow well in your area, and choose organic solutions over chemical pesticides. If you're new to gardening, select flowers that are easy to grow and maintain. Try making a DIY bee hotel or nest to keep the pollinators safe and dry.

Mind the seasons. Choose plants that have long flowering seasons or include varieties that bloom at different times to provide pollen and nectar for as long as possible. At the end of the season, resist the urge to trim off dead flowers and stems – bees use these as shelter during the winter months.

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Blue Cheese & Pear Salad

Ingredients

¼ cup apple cider vinegar
1 tsp. Dijon mustard
1½ Tbsp. maple syrup
¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
2 Tbsp. finely chopped shallots
2 large pears

8 cups spring lettuce mix
½ cup walnut pieces
¼ cup dried cranberries
¼ cup Blue cheese crumbles

Directions

In a small bowl, whisk together vinegar, mustard and maple syrup. Set aside. Heat oil in a skillet over medium high. Add shallots and cook for 3 minutes, or until softened. Reduce heat to low and slowly add vinegar mixture. Simmer for 2 minutes, whisking frequently. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and set aside to cool.

Core pears and cut into ¼-inch slices. In a large bowl, toss spring mix with pears, walnuts and half of cooled dressing. Sprinkle cranberries and Blue cheese on top, and serve with remaining dressing on the side.

Serves 4



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