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HOMEOWNER'S UPDATE

Natural Elements in Interior Designs

Interior designers understand that people feel grounded and calm when surrounded by organic elements. Natural materials can add a touch of organic beauty and create a serene, refreshing atmosphere in your home.

To bring a bit of outdoor magic into your living space, choose furnishings, surfaces and colors that echo nature's beauty. Natural materials lend a sense of comfort and familiarity whether you prefer modern, rustic or minimalist style.

Stone and brick are timeless, and interior designers keep these fresh by combining them with new colors, textures and shapes. Consider a stone or brick hearth if you prefer a classic look that projects warmth and coziness.

Live plants are the ultimate natural decor choice. They lend color and vibrancy with the added benefit of cleaning the air you breathe. Try creating a living wall with moss or other plants for a serious oxygen boost and a literal twist to the idea of a "living" room.

Warm up your space even more with wood flooring, furniture and accents. Find pieces and textures that coordinate with your decor — they can be as traditional or as modern as you like. Exposed beams, stained window frames and wall paneling can transform an ordinary room into a one-of-a-kind retreat. Personalize with wood accent pieces like artistic carvings or bowls.

If you want to add character along with a nod to sustainability, try repurposing old wood or choose materials like bamboo and rattan. Versatile and stylish, these natural materials make great design choices for unique furnishings, durable flooring, elegant storage baskets, and chic decor.

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Maximize a Small Bedroom

Furnishing a small bedroom can be challenging, especially if there's not enough space for your belongings. But you don't have to live in clutter just because your bedroom is small. The right solutions can provide the breathing room you deserve.

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Downsizing your bed can give you more usable square footage. If the room doubles as an office, consider a convertible sofa for a more spacious workspace and a nice visual transition.

Some platform beds include drawers for extra storage, and a loft bed can free up considerable space underneath. Maximize your floor space by selecting narrow furniture and installing floating shelves to use as bedside tables.

Choose lighting that enhances the sense of spaciousness. Hang mirrors to reflect natural light, and strategically place stylish lamps to add elegance and ambience to your cozy bedroom.

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Blue Skies, Green Roofs

Green roof systems have spiked in popularity due to their aesthetic appeal and eco-friendly advantages. In many cases, green roofs can be integrated into existing structures, including residential houses, commercial offices, apartment buildings, and community centers. Their natural beauty, vibrant colors and diverse plant life contribute to the ecological impact of a rooftop by providing a habitat for birds and other pollinators.

One of the core benefits of a green roof, also called a living roof, is its insulating properties, which reduce energy consumption for both heating and cooling. Green roofs also provide efficient water management as the plants absorb precipitation and filter runoff. They purify the air by converting carbon dioxide to oxygen and might even help lower temperatures in the surrounding community.

If you're considering a green roof, you have three options. An **extensive green roof** requires the least amount of maintenance. It's shallow, requires no irrigation and holds small plants. A **semi-intensive green roof** is deeper and requires some irrigation. The deepest of the three options, an **intensive green roof**, holds larger plants and requires irrigation to maintain their impact.

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Bathroom Storage Ideas

The cabinet under a bathroom sink is notorious for becoming a mess of miscellaneous items. But you can transform this area into a functional space by implementing some smart storage solutions.

Coordinate

If you have open shelving beneath your sink, use coordinating containers or baskets to hold necessities. Pick neutral colors or fun patterns that complement the room's color scheme.

Maximize

Increase vertical storage space under your sink by installing multi-tiered drawers. Place items like toilet paper and towels in bigger drawers and bottles of shampoo or cleaning supplies in smaller sections.

Organize

Use drawer organizers for the items you reach for daily. Adding putty to the bottom corners will keep the organizer from moving as you open and close the drawers.

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Blackened Mahi-Mahi Tacos

Ingredients

1½ tsp. smoked paprika
½ tsp. garlic powder
½ tsp. onion powder
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. ground cumin
¼ tsp. chili powder
1½ tsp. dark brown sugar
1½ lbs. mahi-mahi fillets
1 Tbsp. grapeseed oil
8 (6-inch) whole wheat tortillas
1 cup tricolor coleslaw
Pico de gallo
Lime wedges
Fresh cilantro

Directions



Heat oil in large skillet over medium-high. Cook fillets for 2-3 minutes per side until cooked through (145° F). Place fillets on plate and set aside.

Heat tortillas on both sides in skillet until lightly charred. Chop fillets into bite-size pieces. Assemble tacos with coleslaw, mahi-mahi and pico de gallo. Garnish with lime wedges and cilantro.

Serves 4

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