



Smithsonian Gardens

Let's Talk Gardens – Holiday Wreaths & Evergreen Decorations

with Horticulturist Sarah Dickert

Wreath Style

- Take into account your own personal taste
- Consider your home's style & aesthetic
- Do you want to coordinate with the style of your other holiday décor?
- Or try a themed wreath! Possible themes could be:
 - Naturals
 - Traditional
 - Whimsical
 - Monochromatic
 - Rustic or modern
 - Regional – nautical/beachy, southwest, tropical, etc.
 - Simple or extravagant

Suggested Supplies

- 12-14 in. diameter wreath – live or artificial (diameter measurement refers to the wreath frame size not the overall dimensions of the wreath)
- 22-24 gauge floral wire- stick or spool
- Wire cutters
- Hot glue gun
- Extra glue sticks
- Spray paint
- Glitter
- Pruners
- Covering for work surface
- Wreath stand
- Gloves
- Apron
- Decorations!

Possible Decorations

- Bow or artificial flowers for the focal point
 - Bow video tutorial plus lots more on YouTube – <https://fb.watch/25-IdY7XgN/>
- Additional ribbon (wired)
- Pine cones, seed pods, dried flowers, & cinnamon sticks

- Artificial picks – limitless!, shop your favorite craft store
- Shatter-proof ornaments
- Berries (real or artificial)
- Dried/preserved/artificial fruit
- Additional greens- holly, cypress, magnolia
- “Found” items- pieces of other holiday décor, mementos, toys, thematic elements

Color Theory

- Choose colors that coordinate with each other for uniformity & design coherence
- Possible color combos
 - Analogous/Monochromatic – ex. shades of reds & purples, gold & creams/champagnes, blues & silvers
 - Complimentary – ex. reds & greens, blues & orange or red, golds & purples
- Even if doing a mostly monochromatic color palette, add a few items of its complimentary color to make the dominate color really pop

Design Tips

- **Start with the placement of the bow/focal point** - choose this item(s) first when shopping as it will help guide the colors, style, and textures of the remaining decorative items
- **Try to use odd numbers** of larger/sub-focal items (i.e. large pinecones, ornaments, unique décor pieces, etc.) – odd numbers are always visually appealing
- **Repeat every décor element** evenly the entire way around the wreath – consistency is another factor that contributes to overall visual appeal
- **Add one décor element at a time** so they can be evenly spaced around the wreath and you can gauge how full the wreath is becoming – start with the largest items and work down to the smallest pieces
- **Add at least one glittery element** – glitter catches the sun and draws in the eye especially when viewed from a distance
- **Incorporate different sizes and textures**
- **Don't neglect the outer & inner edges** of the wreath and around the bow – try to go for full and even coverage of the wreath surface area
- **Tuck and nestle décor pieces into the branches** so they look naturally placed on the wreath (vs. just attached to the surface) and to hide the ugly bits (the cut edges of picks, ornament hangers, chips in paint, etc.)
- **KNOW WHEN TO STOP** – more is NOT always better!but this is highly subjective
 - If it is too cluttered, you (and others) won't know what to look at when viewing the wreath – aka too visually confusing
 - Need to maintain some view of the wreath itself because it acts as negative space between the décor items.
 - The beauty of the individual pieces will get lost

- If you think the next décor element will be too much, then don't add it – you can always save it to use next year!
- Weight could be a factor – depending on your wreath hanger, if the wreath has too many décor items it may be too heavy
- Get a second opinion – phone/text a friend and ask if they think it looks full enough, sometimes a fresh set of eyes can lend a more objective opinion

Wreath & Evergreen Care

- Keep out of direct sunlight
- Treat with an antitranspirant
- Soak or mist with water regularly
- Avoid hanging between a door & storm door
- Opt for artificial décor indoors or acknowledge that live greens will not last long inside