

With All the TRIMMINGS

AT CHRISTMASTIME, A VINTAGE TEXTILE COLLECTOR'S LOVE OF FABRICS, RIBBONS, BUTTONS, AND ORNAMENTS SHINES THROUGH

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"I've always been fascinated by fabrics," says homeowner Mary Jane McCarty. "I've always loved to sew." A decade ago, she and her husband, Stephen Lebowitz, an architect and artist, decided they wanted to lead a quieter life that would give them more time to spend with their daughter. They left their Manhattan apartment behind for the tranquil countryside of Bucks County, Pa. The 100-year-old clapboard house the young family discovered had been recently renovated by previous owners, and only needed to be decorated. In her years spent working as a costume designer in New York City, Mary Jane had amassed an impressive array of new, vintage, and antique fabrics and trim, and she used these velvets, toiles, buttons, and tassels to dress her new home. Her valuable talent for combining colors and patterns extends beyond the realm of textiles, and at the holidays guests can marvel at the array of greenery, flowers, glassware, silver,

Above: A scattering of actual pine needles at their bases gives these pinecone-shaped candles an extra touch of natural realism. *Right:* Mosaics by artist Harvey Silverman add new zest to a pair of weathered wrought-iron chairs. Atop the chimney cupboard, salvaged wooden finials prop up Stephen's collection of hats.



If you're one of the many people whose stock of ornaments has gradually grown beyond what your Christmas tree can accommodate, one way to keep those glittering glass balls out of storage boxes and on display is to create a wreath: Use a hot-glue gun to secure ornaments of all sizes and colors to a polystyrene wreath form (available at craft stores), then hang with ribbon.



NO ROOM LEFT ON THE TREE? YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND CREATIVE WAYS TO DISPLAY YOUR FAVORITE HOLIDAY DECORATIONS



"I BUY A SET OF FORKS, A SET OF SPOONS, A SET OF KNIVES, AND USE THEM ALL TOGETHER," SAYS HOMEOWNER MARY JANE MCCARTY

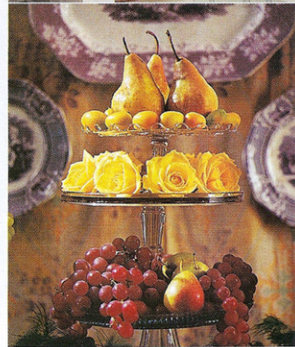


and ceramics she puts to use at the table and throughout the house.

"I don't need things to match," says Mary Jane, and the dining-room table (opposite) shows how successful such an attitude can be. At each place setting, tinted and clear crystal goblets mix with flatware made of both antique sterling and coin silver. "I buy a set of forks, a set of spoons, a set of knives and use them all together," Mary Jane says. The dining room's English oak refectory table is surrounded by mismatched Victorian chairs, their seats all done up in different fabrics. Ticking stripes make the oversized upholstered chair at the head of the table seem less fussy. "I suspect I'm attracted to transference because it reminds me of printed

Tabletop decorations can range from a simple candle centerpiece (top right) to a stack of pressed-glass cake plates (bottom right) to a collection of miniature evergreens (opposite). A procession of cut flowers, miniature standards, and forced blooms lead upstairs (middle right), where an iron bed is draped with an evergreen garland (above).

fabric," says Mary Jane, who uses her collection to great effect at the table, even going so far as to employ teacups as cachepots for greenery. In the master bedroom (above), her love of fabrics in all of their textures is made obvious by the variety of layered bedding and throw pillows—including one she crafted using an antique remnant of neutral-toned toile.





To make some glittering twig stars (bottom left and opposite) for your own Christmas tree, you'll need:

- a large plastic drop cloth to protect your work area
- a shallow tin to hold paint
- yellow acrylic paint
- twig stars (available at some craft stores, or create your own: For each star, collect and cut five twigs of the same length, lay out flat in the shape of a star, and tie corners together with embroidery thread)
- a medium sponge brush
- glitter
- ribbon

1. Cover your work area with the plastic drop cloth.
2. Fill the tin with yellow paint.
3. Dip a twig star into the paint—one generous coat should be about all that's needed to cover it.
4. Using the sponge brush, touch up any unpainted areas. Set the star aside on the plastic drop cloth to dry.
5. Continue dipping and painting stars until you have as many as you wish. To keep things manageable, limit yourself to no more than a dozen stars per batch.
6. While the paint on the stars is still wet or tacky, sprinkle on glitter. Allow to dry completely, then tie onto tree with ribbon.



Mary Jane's careful organization of her textiles and buttons (opposite, top and middle left) makes it far easier to piece together ingenious creations such as these silk-lined stockings (opposite, right). Glittering twig stars suspended from checked ribbons (opposite, bottom left) are a charming decoration for a more rustic or casual space, like the screened porch pictured here. To make your own stars, see the instructions opposite.

WHETHER FORMAL OR CASUAL, YOUR HOLIDAY DECORATIONS SHOULD REFLECT THE SPIRIT OF THE ROOM IN WHICH THEY ARE PLACED