



## Garden Club's holiday house tour offers food for thought

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By **Lee Gugliada/Get Growing**

The Rake and Hoe Garden Club of Westfield, N.J., recently hosted "Deck the Halls," a holiday house tour featuring homes decorated for the holidays emphasizing the use of fresh and dried plant material. Visitors easily came away with ideas for decking their own halls.

At the DeBrueys' home, visitors were greeted by a pair of "tuteurs" (a French trellis shaped like an obelisk) decorated with ropes of greenery. Fresh floral designs on the back of each chair in the dining room added to the festive décor, while sugared fruits and iced vegetables glistened in the kitchen, and a gold-and-copper-trimmed swag of fresh greens festooned the mantel in the living room.

At the entrance to the Shields' home, visitors were greeted with candlelit glass cylinders filled with cranberries nestled in evergreen-draped pedestal urns on either side of the walkway.



On a shelf above an oven, a quintet of dried alliums soars above a row of orchids.

The black Colonial front door sported a large wreath ringed with blue spruce and circled with strands of strung cranberries (coordinating with the urns) and Granny Smith apples. Variegated aucuba, large pine cones and juniper added color and texture to this welcoming entry.

In the dining room, miniature fresh green trees and moss-covered boxwood wreaths adorned the windowsills, while the butler's pantry was brightened with an ice bucket overflowing with red tulips and a display of rosemary wreaths suspended in tall glass cylinders.

In the kitchen, the Shields' theme of "A Bountiful Christmas" was evident in the edible designs, where a trio of green candles, each inserted into a large artichoke was surrounded with red cranberries and green ivy.

**View full size**

Pinky-red hypericum berries star in this festive centerpiece.

Assorted fruits and vegetables, including Portobello mushrooms, red cabbage, tomatoes, kiwi, grapes and oranges, were used with broad leaf evergreen and conifers to brighten up a corner of the countertop.

**SOARING ALLIUMS**

On a shelf above an oven, a quintet of dried alliums soared above a row of orchids, drawing the eye upward, while on the kitchen table, a large red tray encompassing a group of hollowed-out cauliflowers bursting with white carnations wowed visitors.

Beneath an oval gold and glass table in the living room a tray was used as a container for a large centerpiece of blue spruce, boxwood, pine, arborvitae, red, blooming Christmas cactus and oversized decorative gold balls. Placing the arrangement on the floor allowed plenty of room for guests to place their wine glasses on the table and still be able to enjoy the design.

In the family room, three tree forms were covered with wooly lamb's ear leaves and placed in the center of wreaths of white pine, vines and red roses.

On exiting the home, tour goers were treated to a patio table decorated with large ears of corn and several containers of flowering kale, and chairs decorated with swags of white pine branches tied with strings of cranberries. The grand finale of the theme of "A Bountiful Christmas" was a holiday tree of bare branches placed in a red watering can.

White pine branches enhanced the design, which featured an edible feast for the birds. Peeled apples, oranges made into baskets and dried slices of oranges all were hung above an assortment of flat tins of a variety of bird seed.

**SIZE DOESN'T MATTER**

Eastern white pine branches and a ring of pine cones at the base circled a pedestal urn planted with a dwarf Alberta spruce tree at a townhouse on Cowperthwaite Square. The residents of the Perley family adopted "Great Things Come in Small Packages" as their theme and proved that even smaller residences can make room for holiday decorations.

A delicate small arrangement of mixed greens and red carnations decorated a secretary, while wrapped packages decorated with gold-sprayed sweet gum balls and another with golden pine cones sat waiting for the "giftees" to open. A small, flat circle of bay leaves served as a resting place for some gold-sprayed acorns.

**View full size**

Photos/Lee  
Gugliada

ree forms are covered with wooly lamb's ear leaves and set within wreaths of white pine, vines and red roses to create a decidedly different display.

The centerpiece on the dining room table was created with a cone-shaped, wet oasis on which several hundred pinky-red hypericum berries were inserted with their leaves placed behind them serving as a background. This hypericum tree was placed in the center of a fresh boxwood wreath decorated with dried heather, red carnations and roses.



**View full size**

A candlelit glass cylinder is filled with cranberries and nestled in an evergreen-draped pedestal urn.

A small nest arrangement of white roses, juniper berries, and assorted small-leaved evergreens featured gilded egg ornaments and a votive candle. A row of white lighted glass cubes rose above a swag of white pine and magnolia leaves on the mantel and white poinsettias brightened the hearth below.

Before departing, a peek at the elegant powder room revealed a festive stone wall hanging of a woman's head creatively decorated with fresh eucalyptus leaves, red carnations and white freesias.

**CONTEMPORARY  
CHRISTMAS**

"A Contemporary Christmas" was the inspiration for the contemporary home of the Huber family where a large green pear was suspended by a red ribbon from a group of cinnamon sticks placed across the rim of a cylindrical glass container on the kitchen table. Clear glass pebbles and variegated holly with red berries added interest and color to the base.

**GARDEN NOTES**



**View full size**

A stone wall hanging of a woman's head is decorated with fresh eucalyptus leaves, red carnations and white freesias.

December 21 marks the end of fall and the beginning of winter. Examine your landscape now when trees are bare to think about what new features, such as a new path or possibly a new shade tree, you might want to add to next year's garden.

*Lee Gugliada is past president of the Great Kills Garden Club and past director of First District Federated Garden Clubs of New York State.*

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