

## Holiday Landscape

The last of the leaves have fallen off the trees and the northern NV landscape is now accentuated by the surrounding mountains glistening from the first dusting of snow. The winter season is once again upon us and it's time to prepare our landscapes for festive gatherings and colorful holiday events.

There are numerous ways to begin planning your landscape for the coming months. Many people associate this season with the addition of evergreens to their home and surroundings. This can be as simple adding a wreath. A beautiful accent in our cold climate, the wreath adds bright color to any home. These often round shaped decorations come in an abundance of sizes and are made using many types of materials. From evergreen cuttings to deciduous branches a wreath can be made simply or somewhat elaborately using berries, pine cones, ornaments, ribbon, feathers, etc. These warming accents will make any outside space welcoming and inviting in the harsh winter months ahead.

For something a little different you can spruce up your yard by placing potted evergreens in the landscape. Almost all evergreen plants will grow well when potted and they can be moved around the landscape or introduced to the ground at a later date. There are a variety of evergreen shapes and sizes that will add texture, form and diverse effects to a yard. The use of pots will create an opportunity for you to add dimension, color, and interest to the surroundings. However, make sure your pottery is frost proof!

If a potted evergreen isn't for you, you can still make use of your pottery and planters. Instead of storing pots in your garage till the next growing season try placing some around your entry as if they were large vases. You can fill them with bright colored branches, twigs with berries, and evergreen branches. Don't stop with pots; use your imagination and decorate with objects like bird cages, urns, and baskets. The arrangements can be decorated with lights and changed throughout the season for special occasions or everyday splendor.

Lights are a welcome sight throughout the cold, dark winter months -- not just during the holidays. They can brighten a landscape and bring life to your yard. There are many types, shapes, colors and sizes of lights that can be used in your landscape. They don't have to be confined to the branches of trees and evergreen shrubs. Patio furniture, posts, and sculptures can be used as accent pieces in the yard. For a more energy conscious choice, take a look at windproof outdoor candles and use them to light a path or visible outdoor space.

Northern Nevada is well known for its strong winds. Don't let this deter you from decorating your trees and shrubs outside. From bows to trinkets there are many sparkling and eye catching ornaments that can be placed, safely, on tree

branches outside. It is important to anchor them carefully to the plant material so that they won't blow off or rub the tree's branches.

For many, the winter months offer a time to focus on their inside landscape -- making the space within their home a more comfortable and relaxing environment. Many people choose to give holiday plants such as poinsettias, cyclamen, Christmas cactus, flowering azaleas, amaryllis, ivy topiaries and table top Christmas trees, as gifts. For the best selection of unique, quality blooming plants, visit your local garden center. These brightly colored plants set the mood for the holiday season and add vibrant hues to the inside living space. Indoor plants will also benefit your surroundings by increasing the humidity and improving the air quality in your home year round.

From the simple addition of evergreens to rows of sparkling lights, your landscape can be a welcome sight for the shorter and colder days to come. With the last warm days upon us, now is the time to prepare your landscape for the holiday season and winter months ahead. A little time now will create a yard that's ready for the spirit of the season and inviting through the winter months.