

TORONTO SUN NEW HOMES & CONDOS

Brighten up winter with greenery!


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As most of us start to reach our limit on cold weather, dreary days and limited sunlight, you can change your space, and even your life, by adding greenery. After all, Pantone declared that very colour, Greenery the colour of the year for 2017, so let's bring it home.

Plants were once an item for the home with little thought given to their impact on decor. They were either placed here and there randomly in leaky green spots or, like the standard Benjamin, placed in the corner "to fill space".

Another way natural green-

ery was introduced into the home — and against all odds lives on today, is with Chia Pets, a popular novelty item. There is even a Donald Trump version available, in case that's your thing.

Thankfully greenery has undergone a transformation and is morphing with the times. Plant growers are offering multiple new and modern ways to include plants into your decor that are both easy to care for and architectural in feel.

I recently attended the Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition in Florida, where all the grow-

ers from Canada, the U.S. and countries around the world meet to share trends, product and knowledge. It's remarkable to see the latest innovations in plant material for home decor today.

Orchids are still popular and succulents of all kinds were everywhere. Petite variations of these forms of greenery can be integrated into all sorts of containers.

Glass terrariums, a major contemporary trend, are a great way to house this type of greenery keeping them tidy, while making a big, artistic statement. The green spiky Sanseveria plants with long, tall leaves (also known as Mother-in-Law's tongue) are a strong design element this season fitting nicely into today's modern interiors. Containers for these include all shades of metallics as well as rustic wood designs that would blend perfectly with industrial and vintage styles popular with condo dwellers.

Another amazing plant direction is where and how plants are being integrated into home decor. Plants that hang (no, not your 1970s spider plant in macramé) in cool pots were hanging by leather straps with fashionable metallic buckle details. It makes these new tropical indoor plants look super luxe.

In addition to this, wall mounted decorative frames called, Live Picture by Devron Live Solutions (devronltd.com) have exchangeable cassettes that hold various plants make perfect living wall art that allows natural plants to be added to any space.

A living wall covered in full greenery contributes to a healthy indoor environment and is easy to maintain for a spectacular room statement.

For those who want an easy to maintain plant, try an "air" plant. It requires no watering or attention for at least five weeks.

This opens the design door to a new world of adding plants



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as décor throughout out the home. They were displayed in round, metal balls, cages for table top display and within unique pots but the most eye-catching was the small geometric pendants with leather cord making a unique necklace! A great gift for the nature lover from Live Trends Design Group (livetrenddesign.com)!

Whimsy, architecture, geo-

metrics and vintage looks all prevailed in the container category, making the once bland house plant a stunning addition to any interior.

— Award-winning designer and TV personality Jane Lockhart is one of Canada's leading experts in the world of design. For more information, visit www.janelockhart.com.

Bring your Chinese New Year celebrations home


NATALIE DEANE
DECOR
AND MORE

One of the things I love so much about Canada is our diversity. We celebrate everyone's heritage and that includes the amazing cultural festivals.

Chinese New Year (Spring Festival) has to be one of my favourites. Dazzling lanterns, decorations and envelopes of red and gold brighten up the dreary winter.

Noodles, dumplings, seafood and sweets all the delicious traditional foods of the Spring Festival promise to bring good luck, wealth and prosperity.

For Susur Lee one of Canada's premiere chefs and owner of the hippest Chinese restaurant in Toronto, 'Luckee' Chinese New Year brings back memories of his childhood in Hong Kong.

"There was a lot of excitement in my house as a child around Chinese New Year. I have memories of fire crackers, going to the food markets, decorating

cherry blossoms with lai see (red money envelopes for good fortune), going to fun fairs, and eating all of the traditional good fortune Chinese New Year dishes."

Chef Lee will be hosting the Year of the Rooster celebration from January 27 to February 9 at Luckee with a special menu, decorations and gifts. You can use some of his tips to host your own party at home.

Chinese New Year Menu. "Chinese people prefer a menu with forms, colours, and names that bear auspicious significance," says Chef Lee. "Never is this tradition more important during Chinese New Year, when everyone is keen to celebrate a new beginning."

Chinese New Year menus at Luckee are enhanced with fat choy (black moss) and oysters — symbols of prosperity and good fortune. The addition of abalone signifies plenitude and wealth.

At your own celebration, you can have an oyster shucking bar to welcome guests. Back moss may not be your thing but mushrooms are a symbol for making wishes come true, so why not try some stuffed mushroom hors d'oeuvres.

This year is the year of the rooster. The chicken dish on Luckee's menu is representative of this. It is drizzled with Grand Mariner and flambéed table side.

You may not be daring enough to flambé chicken at home but you can make your favourite Chinese chicken dish — perhaps a Lemon chicken, General Tso or Cashew chicken.

As guests leave Luckee they can enjoy Chinese New Year 'Friandise' — a candy platter with delectable such as lotus seed, for good fertility and chocolate bullions for good fortune.

Have your guests leave with a pouch of gold coins - you can find them at Purdy's or Bulk Barn.

Don't forget a cocktail to toast with! In Chinese, the word for tangerine sounds like 'luck' and orange sounds like 'wealth' so the bitter orange flavoured cognac brandy — Grand Marnier, Matinee Marnier cocktail will hit the spot.

Chinese New Year Décor. Chinese New year will have you

seeing red! Red is associated with good fortune and happiness.

The entrance of Luckee Restaurant will be decorated with red lanterns. You can do this at home in your own foyer, etsy.ca has vintage style Chinese honeycomb paper lanterns with tassels from Red Ginger Party supply as well as big red round lanterns from Evescrafts.

Paper cuttings are used for decorating doors and windows. The cutting of designs and patterns began thousands of years ago as a way to worship the gods and symbolizes luck and happiness.

Chinese New Year, marks the beginning of spring, so it's fitting that blooming plants like plum blossoms, orchids and peonies decorate homes with wishes for a prosperous new year.

Red Envelopes are highly coveted during the festivities. Traditionally they had a lucky coin. Today they are filled with money for children and young adults. You can give your guests a lucky red envelope that has a coin as well as lucky crystals from etsy.ca's Empowering Products co.

— Natalie Deane is a lifestyle connoisseur who shares tips for everyday living through decor, entertaining and household trends.



For Luckee Restaurant head chef and owner Susur Lee, Chinese New Year celebrations bring back warm childhood memories.