

STATE-BY-STATE  
GARDENING

# ARKANSAS GARDENER

ARKANSAS' OWN GUIDE TO GREAT GARDENING & LANDSCAPING

**TAKE THE  
WORK OUT OF  
LANDSCAPE  
MAINTENANCE**

**SUSTAINABLE  
GARDENING  
CAPTURE YOUR  
OWN WATER!**

**DECK YOUR HALLS!  
CREATE YOUR OWN  
WILLIAMSBURG WREATH**

\$3.95  
November/December 2012  
arkansasgardener.com



## FALL INTO CHRISTMAS

**Use Your Autumn Décor  
As Holiday Decorations**



# Fall into Christmas

Story by Chris Olsen Photos by Janet Warlick, Camera Work

THESE DAYS, MOST OF US ARE TRYING TO GET THE MOST OUT OF EACH DOLLAR WE SPEND. I WISH I LIVED ON AN UNLIMITED BUDGET, BUT REALITY CAN BE HARSH AND THIS IS UNFORTUNATELY NOT THE CASE. ONE WAY TO GET A LOT OF BANG FOR YOUR BUCK IS BY REUSING YOUR AUTUMN DECOR AS CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS. WHY NOT? THE TREND IN 2012 IS A MORE NATURAL LOOK WITH LESS CHRISTMAS NETTING AND OVERSIZED, GAUDY DECORATIONS. SO YOUR FALL PUMPKINS, GOURDS AND EVEN SPOOKY BRANCHES CAN BECOME A WINTER WONDERLAND.

When decorating outdoors for the holidays, use an abundance of pumpkins and gourds. Their rich hues of orange, yellow, green and even white are perfect complements to the traditional Christmas red and gold. Add a few planted terra-cotta pots bursting full of lush conifers, English ivy and even different varieties of euonymus for balance and softness. Containers planted with paper whites and white pansies will give the illusion of white snow. Better yet, add sprigs of pine, cedar and fresh spruce for scent and texture. Even recycled empty wine bottles can become holiday décor. Talk about a fun project. Even your friends will want to help decorate if wine is involved. The more the merrier... right?

When decorating interior tabletops with natural fall produce, add some old-fashioned glass ornaments for that holiday detail. Flea markets are an ideal source for boxed antique ornaments. Decorating with silk berry branches, aged gardening tools, an old watering can or two and, of course, scented candles will only increase the holiday cheer.



◀ Here is a fun project: Incorporate empty wine bottles into your Christmas decorations! Mixing fall pumpkins, gourds and natural Christmas wreaths gives you a natural look along with a little bling.

Facing page: A fresh take and new look using traditional ideas on some old ideas: Mix autumn elements with your Christmas decor for a blended-holiday, breathtaking display. Two identical wreaths on each door will enhance any entrance during the holiday season, and their linear arrangement lifts the eye. String your old-fashioned Christmas lights, as we did, as if they were drizzling down from the eaves of your roof. Believe it or not, at night, it looks like the 4th of July in December!



**USE YOUR IMAGINATION TO CREATE A PERFECT HOLIDAY DISPLAY THAT CARRIES FROM ONE SEASON INTO THE NEXT.**



Artificial Christmas trees, undecorated, but covered with red and white low-voltage lights become the center of attention when accessorized with pumpkins, gourds, and plump, red berries.

A simple bowl full of antique ornaments, accompanied by a striped pumpkin, creates a Christmas wonderland still life!

**Facing page:** Branches found in a neighbor's trash pile have now become center-stage attractions. Drenched in miniature red lights, the hickory branches cast a warm, sublime glow on a cold winter's night.

Don't forget to take advantage of organic items that are free. For example, my neighbor trimmed his hickory tree last fall. Since hickory trees have unique and gnarly branches, not to mention colorful bark, they became a very important part of my Christmas décor. I loaded up my pickup truck as high I could, brought the branches home, drenched each branch in miniature red lights, and hung them from my ceiling.

Again, with the theme of being different, I used these branches as if they were growing out of my family room's ceiling. The branches completely consumed the open space above. Since my house is not very large, I suspended the twigs so my guests would see them, but the house would not look crowded. If you have small spaces, decorate above eye level. Your decorations will stand out and have more impact. I also mixed in large, plastic (you would never know)

ornaments in apple green, silver and red for additional Christmas flavor. Breakage was zero! Talk about making an impression on my guests — their expressions said it all. No words had to be spoken. Adults became children, and their faces beamed with holiday cheer. Goal accomplished.

This year when you decorate for both autumn and Christmas, challenge yourself and outdo your decorations from last year. Use your imagination to create a perfect holiday display that carries from one season into the next. Minimize your use of décor netting, reuse your pumpkins and opt for simplicity and a more natural look. The end result will be a winter wonderland.

Happy decorating!  
*Chris Olsen is the owner and landscape designer of Botanica Gardens in Little Rock. For more information on Chris, visit [christolsen.com](http://christolsen.com).*