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do-it-yourself ideas • decorating strategies • favorite finds

## natural instinct

You don't need a house by the beach to decorate with driftwood. "The neutral colors work easily in almost any decor," says California-based interior designer Sandra Espinet. Bring weathered accents into family rooms, bedrooms or any other informal space for a relaxed look all year long. Weathered wood mirror, \$129, West Elm stores

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A mix of colorful glass goblets and bowls lends a festive feel to even a casual gathering.



Add another layer of texture with a table lamp in a faux-hammered-metal finish.

Asher bronze lamp and CFL bulb, \$35, [walmart.com](http://walmart.com)

**GET CRAFTY**

Freshen up plain terracotta containers with a coat of chalkboard paint. Write the name of the plant on the outside or just scribble a few decorative doodles. For more info and project ideas, pick up *The Homemade Home* by Sania Pell (Cico Books).



Give new life to old, faded planters.



**PRO POINTERS**

Interior designer and event planner **Joe Nye**, author of *Flair* (Rizzoli), believes the key to a successful party is creating a welcoming atmosphere. He shares simple ideas for easy entertaining:

**Floral underdogs** » Inexpensive and long lasting, carnations are a quick way to add color. Just cut stems short and place in a pretty container.

**Decorator's trick** » Always group in threes, whether you've got candlesticks, frames or other small objects.

**Finishing touch** » Shortly before guests arrive, light a scented candle in the bathroom.

**grime busters**

Consider including these three new tools in your cleaning regime.

- ① Reaches tricky spots in the bathroom, like shower door tracks. **Nook & Cranny scrubber, Scotch-Brite, \$3.50, Target stores**
- ② Dusts furniture and ceiling fan blades with a swipe of the hand. **Barbara's Way cleaning gloves, Isotoner, \$15, homedepot.com**
- ③ Partners with the cleanser of your choice, plus no batteries required. **ProMist mop, \$22, ocedar.com**



Find out how long before a programmable thermostat, compact fluorescent lightbulb or other eco improvement starts **recouping its cost** by checking out the handy Return on Investment Tables at [greenandsave.com](http://greenandsave.com).