

Simplify the Holiday Décor Chore

Holiday season brings the fun & excitement of pulling out the decorations to celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas. But that excitement can quickly turn to despair as we try to dig out those decorations. If decorating your house seems more like a marathon than a celebration, this article is for you.

For many of us, we set ourselves up for this year's struggle last year, the year before and more. When it came time to clean up, we threw everything in a box and hid it in the garage, attic or shed. While we can't undo last year's damage, we can start now to keep the same thing from happening next year!

Planning for next year's organization starts with this year's decorating. To do this, I like to create what some of organizers refer to as "zones". For example, your front door and entry way could be one zone, the Christmas tree another and the table decorations yet another zone. So before you get started, make a list of the different zones that you want to decorate. Then decide what is most important and start with that zone, finish it and move on to the next and so on.

When setting out these decorations for the season, make notes for the different zones you are creating. Taking pictures of your zones allows you to duplicate the same effect in the following years. You can add these notes, labels and pictures to your storage boxes to make next year easier.

When you are taking down your everyday decorations to make room for your holiday décor, place them in the holiday storage box that you just emptied. Not only does this provide a convenient storage spot; if you store them in the boxes for the zone from which they came, your post-holiday decorating will be easier as well. When you take down your holiday decorations, your everyday decorations will already be organized for the right zones!

Having the different zones also allows you to decorate at a pace that doesn't exhaust you or your family. For example, use one night to decorate the Christmas tree. The following night, maybe you have time to decorate the front of the house, and so on and so forth. Focusing on just one zone at a time can keep you from getting overwhelmed by the whole house at once. As you get more organized, you'll be able to simply grab the boxes for each zone as you need them, minimizing the boxes of decorations spread out within your home as you decorate.

When you are done decorating, you will probably have left-over decorations. Instead of just throwing them back into storage boxes, ask yourself these questions. Why am I keeping these items? If they are keepsakes, perhaps you want to find a different place to store them. If your tastes have changed, consider donating these items to someone else as a way to share your holiday spirit. The economy has been hard on many folks this year and you could brighten their day. You could also give the left-over decorations to a newlywed couple or college student away from home or take the decorations to work to brighten the office or break room. By recycling your left-over decorations, you will simplify your storage for next year.

Next month, we'll talk more about making room for gifts and storing your decorations strategically for next year. Happy Holidays and Happy Organizing!

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Las Cruces Sun News
November 2009