

THE  
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# Globe

A HOLIDAY GUIDE

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SPECIAL ISSUE  
**YOUR HOME**

## Party in Style

How to dazzle your guests,  
make your home more inviting,  
and give the most unexpected gifts.



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**TRIMMING THE TREE**

in the foyer before a family party are the host's son, Tyler, 14, and his cousins (from left) Samantha, 12, and Tarah, 10. Facing page: The girls' mother, Cathy Sliney (bottom, at left), and homeowner Kimberly Sliney make decorations for the front doorstep; even the master bedroom (top) gets a holiday tree.



*With an abundance of greenery and ornament, a designer creates a Christmas scene that is both festive and formal. By Jill Connors*

# Natural High Style

**F**OR KIMBERLY A. SLINEY, ONE WORD SUMS UP her feelings about the holidays: magical. "I absolutely love Christmas," says the North Kingstown, Rhode Island, interior designer. "It's my favorite time of year." ✦ Her enthusiasm is apparent as she decorates her house with not one tree, but four. They occupy the entryway, dining room, library, and master bedroom, and each is at least 10 feet tall. Favoring slim fir trees, she decorates them by theme, trimming them with ornaments as well as berries, pine cones, and juniper right from her yard. ✦ "I think of the decorating in terms of natural flair," says Sliney, who is also influenced by her love of the early 19th-century Federal period. From a dining room tree adorned with ornaments resembling antique Chinese Export porcelain to the gold and turquoise ornaments on the master bedroom tree, Sliney's decorations enhance her house's grand style. The new house was designed with a symmetrical facade, a grand entry



stairway, formal dining and sitting rooms, and a paneled library, all of which harken to the Federal era. To further the effect, Sliney had antique chandeliers installed in many of the rooms.

In addition to the trees, decorations that attest to her 19th-century – and somewhat British – sensibilities include fir garlands strung along the banister, boxwood or fir wreaths hung on mirrors and in windows, and dried hydrangea from her yard tucked into wreaths and among Christmas tree branches.

The nature-inspired decorating starts right on the front doorstep, where fanciful moss-covered packages and giant initials created by Kimberly Sliney and sister-in-law Cathy Sliney, a floral-display specialist, are tied with vivid red ribbons. The choice of moss has an additional benefit: Left outdoors, the moss decorations will last up to two months, continuing the holiday feeling well into the new year.



**A TREE IN THE MASTER BEDROOM** reflects the room's palette of pale turquoise and gold. Kimberly Sliney's collection of ornaments is augmented with dried hydrangea from her yard, brass beads, gold netting,

**THE DINING ROOM** appears to be right out of the Federal era. Place settings are marked with bouquets and sedum moss, and the candelabra are finished with winterberry, blueberry, and juniper. Tree ornaments resemble Chinese Export porcelain.



# MAKING A MOSS SIGNATURE LETTER



## Supplies

- ✦ Tracing paper
- ✦ Plain white photocopying paper
- ✦ 1 sheet 24-by-36-inch poster board
- ✦ Pencil
- ✦ Transparent tape
- ✦ Scissors
- ✦ Straight pins
- ✦ Hot-wire foam cutter (available at craft stores), or a long craft or kitchen knife
- ✦ 1 piece 12-by-36-inch green styrofoam, 2 inches thick (or stack 2 1-inch-thick sheets)
- ✦ Moss (available in sheets from florists, or gather it yourself)
- ✦ 1 package of 100 U-shaped florist's pins
- ✦ Monofilament (fishing line)



First, make a template: Draw your letter at the desired size freehand on the poster board, or trace the letter out of a book or draw it freehand on a sheet of plain white paper and enlarge it to the desired size on a photocopier, using several pieces of paper, if necessary. (Our "S" is 18 inches tall, 12 inches across, and 1 inch wide.) Tape the paper letter to the poster board and, with the scissors, cut it out to make a template.

**1.** With the straight pins, securely attach the template to a sheet of styrofoam. With the hot-wire foam cutter or a knife, cut the letter out of the styrofoam. **2.** Wrap the moss around the letter, securing it with U-shaped florist's pins. **3.** When the letter is completely covered, wrap it with monofilament to hold the moss in place. You can leave the moss loose or, for a more tailored look, trim it evenly with scissors. Add berries and a ribbon if you like, using the florist's pins. **4.** Hang the letter on your front door, or prop it against your front steps. A "present" to go with it may be made using a box fashioned out of styrofoam, covered with moss secured with monofilament, and then tied with ribbon.

## GREENERY FROM YOUR OWN BACKYARD

Kimberly Sliney's love of Christmas and the Federal era merge when she gathers greenery from her yard to use for decorations. "Back then, they used all natural elements for their holiday decorating, lots of berries and greens, even vegetables and fruit," says Sliney, who tries to stay true to the period. Among her favorite homegrown materials are:

**Hydrangea blossoms**, which Sliney clips on 4-inch stems in late August or early September, just before they start to turn

brown. She removes the leaves, then ties blossoms in bunches of five with a rubber band. She hangs the flowers upside down from the rafters in a warm, dry area of her basement, near the furnace.

**Evergreens**, cut just before Sliney is going to decorate with them. She uses garden shears to clip branches, 1 to 2 feet long, from trees and shrubs.

**Winterberries** (*Ilex verticillata*), a deciduous holly that loses its leaves in autumn, leaving just brilliant red

berries on the branches. The berries can last four to six weeks before shriveling. Sliney clips 2-foot-long branches and then trims them for use in arrangements, on wreaths, or tucked into the branches of a Christmas tree.

**Moss**, which grows on the north side of rocks in a wooded section of Sliney's yard. She just peels off what she needs before decorating. The moss she harvests is preferable to that bought from florists. "It's so fresh," she says, "it will last a couple months." **BG**