

# Fall & Winter

## Home & Garden

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Section B

### Fall home décor ideas

**Dominique Simon**

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Fall is such a cozy time of year for home décor. Adding a few things here and there can completely transform your home from Summer to Fall.

Here are a few ways to decorate your home for the fall season.

1. Fall Decorate your Porch: Add a lot of pumpkins and some seasonal flowers, don't forget the scarecrow!

2. Decorate One Area: Pick one table to add a lot of décor to it. This is a great way to keep your Fall décor simple and minimal.

3. Fall Kitchen Décor: Add some pumpkins and twinkle lights to your kitchen shelf. Seasonal flowers also add color without adding clutter.

4. Add a Fall Seasonal Sign: You can easily make your own fall sign with the paint color of your choice, or you can print out a cute Fall saying, place it in frame and place it in your home.

5. Fall Wreaths: Fall wreaths are also an easy DIY project. Either collect Fall colored leaves and/or some mini pumpkins and add them to a wreath base.



6. Autumn Colored Pillow Covers: Add the feel of Autumn to your home by switching out your pillow covers and throw blankets.

7. Decorate a Side Table: Find one area in your home that is somewhat blank and add a wreath in orange and yellow. It doesn't take much to add the feel of Fall to your home.

8. Pumpkins: When all else fails just add some real pumpkins to your home. The great thing about real décor is you don't have to stare at it all year long.

9. Dried Leaves & Flowers: Adding some Fall colored natural dried leaves and branches is a great way to decorate without spending a lot of money.

10. Orange Garland: Add a simple garland to one area of your home. Just a small pop of orange or rust color can give you that Fall feels without going overboard.

Hopefully, some of these simple décor ideas will help you get into the Fall mood. A few pops of color can change the whole vibe of a room.

For more information about Family & Consumer Science topics contact the Franklin County Center at 919-496-3344 or Dominique Simon, Family and Consumer Science agent, at [dominique\\_simon@ncsu.edu](mailto:dominique_simon@ncsu.edu).

Reference: Shannon Torrens-Simple Living



### Eye-catching ways to update your home

(Family Features) Your home is a reflection of you, and your decor should match your tastes. With some simple home upgrades, you can create the perfect space for you and your family, even if your design preferences change over time.

"When we're designing our ideal home, too often we may only think about what we want others to see and enjoy when they visit," said Jack Goldman, president and CEO of the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA). "The reality is visitors account for less than 1% of your income time."

Consider these ideas to get started:

#### Add a Fresh Coat of Paint

One of the easiest home improvement projects, a fresh coat of paint can change the entire look of a room. Whether you choose to paint the entire space one new color, opt for an accent wall in a vibrant shade or simply freshen up the trim, paint can go a long way toward adding visual appeal and reflecting your personality. Patterned wallpaper, board and batten, stone and tile can also be added to create textured accents.

#### Bring Warmth and Ambience with a Fireplace

"A fireplace is for you and your family, a personal addition that serves you and your household in more ways than you may realize," Goldman said. "October is National Fireplace Month, a time to celebrate the warmth, comfort and ambience a fireplace or stove can bring to a home."

More than 3 in 5 homeowners have a fireplace or other hearth product in their homes, accord-

ing to the HPBA, and including a fireplace in your construction or renovation plans is a gift of warmth, comfort and ambience you can give yourself. Whether it's a centerpiece for your living



room or family room, or an accent to your bedroom, bathroom or study, a fireplace can provide an artful design element for your home and a safe, reliable heat source in the event of unexpected weather.

#### Update Lighting Fixtures

Proper lighting can bring rooms to life and

make spaces look larger and more welcoming. You can brighten up your home in a variety of ways, from strategically placing table and floor lamps that fit your design style to replacing older ceiling and wall-mounted fixtures with more modern styles.

#### Give Cabinetry a Fresh Look

There are numerous easy ways to update your kitchen and bathroom cabinets to create a more updated look. One of the easiest is swapping out older cabinet pulls and knobs for more modern options. With a variety of finishes – stainless, bronze, brushed nickel, black, copper and more – and styles available, you can match your cabinets to nearly any design style in a matter of minutes. Adding a coat of stain or paint is also a relatively quick and easy way to update some of the most-used spaces in your home without completely replacing the cabinets.

#### Upcycle Furniture

You can breathe new life into your current furniture by making simple changes. The easiest would be simply rearranging your pieces and moving some to different rooms to create an updated look. You can also add decorative covers to sofas, chairs, throw pillows and more, or take your upcycling a step further and refinish a bookshelf, table or other wooden furniture with a fresh coat of paint or stain, or give it a more weathered look with some sandpaper.

Find more ideas for upgrading your home at [HPBA.org/house-warming](http://HPBA.org/house-warming).

Photo courtesy of Getty Images



# How to pick paint for home interiors

Many components combine to define a home's interior. Some homeowners may be partial to certain styles, such as ultra modern or farmhouse, while others may opt for a more traditional look that cannot necessarily be categorized as one style or another. Though many homeowners may spend considerable time and devote a lot of energy to making their home embody a certain style, those who aren't willing to commit to a particular look can lean on one component to make a stylish statement all their own: paint.

Color can be a part of every homeowner's design arsenal. Bold colors can be used to create a stunning accent wall, while homes with open concepts often utilize color to define rooms. Homeowners who want to revitalize their home interiors can do so with paint, and this approach doesn't require homeowners to commit to a whole new design style.

Though paint may seem simple to novices, homeowners who have painted home interiors in the past recognize how complicated the process of picking paint can be. Paint retailers have a seemingly endless swatch of paint colors to choose from, and before long homeowners heads may be spinning as they try to narrow down their options. The following tips can help homeowners pick the perfect paint for their home interiors.

- Take stock, and photographs, of your current furnishings. Many interior designers rely on a simple



technique when recommending color schemes to their clients. Choose a stand-out color from existing furnishings, such as the dominant color from a patterned decorative pillow or piece of furniture, and then look for the same shade to paint the walls. A photograph of the item can be handy when visiting the paint store.

- Lighten colors as you go up. The home renovation and design experts at HGTV recommend picking darker color values for the floor, medium color values for the walls and light values for the ceiling. This approach mimics the look of the great outdoors, where the ground tends to be darker than the trees, and the trees are darker than the blue sky.
- Utilize paint to create the vibe you want. The home renovation experts at *This Old House* note that colors evoke an emotional response. Cool colors like blue and green give off a relaxing vibe, which makes them ideal for bedrooms and bathrooms. Red is an intense color that can up the energy ante in any room, which can make it an option for homeowners who want to spark debate around their dinner tables.
- Give personal preference its place at the table. Though interior designers may have years of experience picking paint colors for a home and researchers may have determined how certain colors can be utilized to create a desired ambiance in a given room, ultimately homeowners are the ones who will be living in the home. So it's important that homeowners pick colors they like for their home interiors.

Paint is an inexpensive way to transform a room. Homeowners can rely on a combination of color strategies and their personal preferences as they try to decide which colors they want on their interior walls.

# Freshen up your indoor spaces this winter

When cold winter days keep you inside, you may find yourself bored with your surroundings. Waiting for the sun to make its next appearance can provide the perfect opportunity to give your indoor spaces a fresh



and appealing mini makeover.

Even if your budget is tight, you can still make small changes to transform a room. Consider these ideas:

- Bring stylish flair to your space with a new color scheme. Rather than replacing all the furniture, which can be costly, focus on smaller accessory pieces such as pillows and decorative items. Create variety by using multiple hues of the same color or mixing two or more complementary colors.
- Introduce new accent furniture. Smaller and less cost-prohibitive than centerpieces like a couch, for example, accent pieces such as end tables or a coffee table can provide subtle changes to the look of a room. You could also opt to refinish a piece of furniture you have on-hand to create a look

that's all your own.

- Morph your room by simply rearranging what you already own. Adjusting the orientation of your furniture and decor can let you see your favorite room from a whole new perspective.
- Whether it's a flea market find, such as an old window frame that you paint and add a display shelf to the base, or a series of photos from your favorite vacation destination, adding some DIY art can not only update your room, but make it more personal, too.

A new look for your favorite room can go a long way toward chasing away those winter blahs, so find ways to update your space for a cozy retreat that you can enjoy despite the cold weather raging outdoors. Find more ideas at [eLiving-today.com](http://eLiving-today.com).

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*Source: Family Features*

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# Pruning is vital to improving the health of the plant

Pruning is the removal of plant parts to improve form and growth of plants. The reasons for pruning include: training, maintaining health, improving quality, and controlling growth.

The first pruning of young trees and shrubs always consists of removing broken, crossing, and weak-structured branches. Trees with a central leader (excurrent form), such as cedar, sweet gum, or pin oak, may need little or no pruning except to eliminate branches competing with the central leader. For greatest strength, branches selected for permanent scaffolds should

Colby Griffin

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have a wide angle of attachment with the trunk. Branch angles of less than 30 degrees from the main trunk result in a weak attachment, while those between 60 to 70 degrees have a very strong attachment.

If pruning to maintain health, consider removing the dead, dying and diseased wood (the three Ds). Any dy-

ing branch or stub can be the entry point for insects or disease that could spread to other parts of the tree. Thinning out branches will also help prevent disease and loss of vigor, while developing a sound framework for the plant. By thinning you will allow light and air to penetrate throughout the shrub, resulting in even growth of the foliage.

The more flowers and fruit a plant produces, the smaller they become, as can be seen on a rose bush or fruit tree that has not been pruned. By pruning you reduce the amount of wood and this diverts the energy into the production of larger, though possibly fewer, flowers or fruit or both. It is important to know if the plants you are pruning flower on one-year-old wood or new wood. This will help you determine when to prune in order to promote the production of wood that will bear flowers or fruit.

Over time, trees and shrubs will often out-grow

their boundaries. This is why it is extremely important for you to know what you are planting and the requirements for each species. Where space is limited, regular pruning will become necessary to maintain a plant that is too large for the space. Street trees for example are often deformed because they must be pruned to prevent damage to power lines. When street trees need to be planted care should be taken to only plant species with a mature height that will not interfere with power lines.

There are two pruning techniques that are used continuously when pruning: thinning and heading back. Thinning is the removal of an entire branch back to the main trunk or stem. Heading back is simply shortening the length of the branch. Problems do tend to result when either of these techniques is used continuously without the other.

Proper pruning should involve a combination of the techniques to keep a plant

at a chosen size, shape, and density. When a shrub gets completely out-of-hand, it



shears are good for branches up to ½ inch in diameter. There are two types of pruning shears: anvil and scissor action. The scissor style usually costs more, but makes cleaner, closer cuts. Loppers are pruning shears with long handles that tend to cut up to 2-inch branches, and they are good for hard-to-reach places. A small hand saw tends to work better for pruning larger branches, and it makes a clean cut.

When pruning twigs and small branches, always cut back to a vigorous bud or an intersecting branch. Large branches should be removed flush with the branch collar at the base of the branch not flush with the trunk. The collar is the swollen area at the base of the branch. This collar region allows for proper healing of the wound and protects against disease and decay organisms.

When to prune trees and shrubs depends on the particular plant, when it flowers or fruits, and the particular effect you are trying to create.



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# Pumpkins - health benefits and preserving tips

It wouldn't be fall without the bright orange sighting of pumpkins. Some pumpkins are for decorating, while others are for eating. Pumpkins are one of the most nutrient dense fruits that you can eat.

**Health Benefits of Pumpkins:**

Pumpkins are high in fiber: Pumpkin is a high fiber food with 2.7 grams of fiber per cup. Fiber is beneficial for removing "bad" cholesterol, regulating blood glucose levels, and helps you feel full longer. Over 60% of the fiber in pumpkin is soluble fiber, which swells with water in your gut to slow down how quickly your body absorbs glucose in your bloodstream. The remaining 40% of the fi-

ber in pumpkin is insoluble fiber which is essential for gut health.

**Pumpkin Facilitates Eye Health:**

Pumpkins are rich in beta carotene which is converted into vitamin A,

which is important for your eyesight. One of the most important benefits of vitamin A for your eyesight is that it reduces the risk of macular degeneration. A one-cup serving of pumpkin contains 9,875 IUs of vitamin A, which is the range of optimal amounts per day.

**Pumpkin Supports Your Immune System:**

Pumpkin is packed with vitamin C, which is so important for optimal health and your immune system. Vitamin C supports a healthy inflammatory response and fights free radicals.

Pumpkin is an Antioxidant: Due to high amounts of carotenoids in pumpkin, one of the health benefits of pumpkin is that it is an antioxidant. Carotenoids are compounds, that function as antioxidants, which fight free radicals that cause oxida-

tive damage.

**Preserving Pumpkins**

Pumpkins are a seasonal treat that you typically can only purchase during the fall season. If you are a pumpkin lover and you would like to be able to enjoy it for longer than one season here are ways that you can preserve pumpkin.

**Freezing Pumpkin:**

- Freezing is the fastest and best way to preserve pumpkin, this method changes the texture the least.
- Select mature pumpkins with smoothed-textured flesh; avoid stringy or dry pumpkins.
- Cut in to chunks and remove seeds. Boil, steam, pressure cook or bake until soft.
- Once cooked, scrape the flesh from the rinds and mash.
- Place the mashed pulp into a pan and set pan in cold water and stir. Once cool, package in freezer containers (leaving ½" headspace) or freezer bags (pressing out all of the air) and seal.

**Canning:**

- Pumpkin is a low acid food (pH > 4.6) that requires pressure canning for proper processing to reduce the risk of botulism.
- The form of the pumpkin is important, mashed or pureed pumpkin should not be canned, as there are no current tested recipes for pumpkin in this form.
- Slice or cube pumpkin no larger than 1" and boil for 2 minutes before filling jars, fill with the boiling water to the proper headspace.
- You can find tested home preserved pumpkin recipes at: [nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu).

**Drying:**

- To dry seeds, gently wash them to remove all of the pumpkin flesh and stringy matter.
- If using an electric dehydrator, dry at 115-120°F for 1-2 hours. Pumpkin seeds can also be dried in the oven on the lowest setting; it will take 3-4 hours. Check and stir often during oven-drying so they do not burn.
- To dry pumpkin flesh, cut into 1"x 1/8" strips and blanch. Use an electric dehydrator at 125°F for 8-10 hours until tough or brittle. Oven drying is not recommended.
- Make sure seeds or flesh are completely dry before storing. Once cool, place in a bag or jar and seal. If moisture accumulates in the bag or jar, remove and continue drying. Moist pumpkin will rot during storage.
- Store the seeds in a dry, cool, dark area. The cooler the area the longer the storage. Most dried foods are good for four months to a year.

References: [amymyersmd.com](http://amymyersmd.com), NC State Extension-Home Food Preservation

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# Must-have features in your bathroom remodel

Veteran homeowners recognize the value of remodeling their kitchens and bathrooms. Kitchens and baths tend to appear dated more quickly than other spaces, such as living rooms and bedrooms, which can always be revamped with some fresh paint and new furnishings.

The home improvement pricing resource Home Guide indicates an average bathroom remodel costs anywhere from \$5,500 to \$15,000 depending on the size and scope of the renovation. However, a bath redo can increase a home's resale value and can return as much as 68 percent of homeowners' investments.

As homeowners plan their bathroom renovations, it's a good time to consider improvements that will improve function and add design appeal for years to

come.

- Floating vanity: Add an airy feeling to the room by creating space between the vanity and the floor. A floating vanity can be a counter with a vessel sink or even have cabinets, as long as the vanity doesn't extend to the floor.
- Freestanding traditional sink or tub: There's something elegant about a freestanding tub or pedestal sink. Such features can lend a classic vibe to a space. However, freestanding fixtures also come in modern or eclectic forms, so there are options for any design style.
- Frameless showers: Switch to a walk-in shower option, which improves aesthetics and makes it easier to "age in place" in a home. Pair that frameless shower with clear glass shower doors so sightline



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materials. Nature-inspired colors on tiles, walls and vanities can add to the spa vibe.

- Dual sinks and vanities: With a double vanity, two people can share the space and easily use the bathroom without getting in each other's way. One vanity with two sinks works, but homeowners can create even more personal space by dividing vanities and mirrors.
- Small textured tile on shower floors: Small textures are appealing and add safety. The added texture and grouting will keep feet from slipping on wet floors. Also, opt for mold-resistant grout to make cleanup even easier.
- Special shower heads: Invest in shower heads that can run the gamut from creating steam showers to rainfall effects. Some

showers will have multiple shower jets to offer an invigorating experience.

- Improve drainage: Increase the diameter of the drain pipe in the bathroom from the standard to a two-inch drain pipe. This will reduce the risk of clogs and overflow leaks.
- Install a window: Natural light and air flow can reduce the risk for mold and mildew growth, and windows add some aesthetic appeal to a space. Just be sure to choose frosted privacy glass.

Additional considerations for a bath remodel include heated floors, well-placed and attractive storage options and a toilet enclosure (water closet) for added privacy. These and other bathroom renovation ideas can add value and improve the appeal of the room.

# Putting the "victory" back in gardening

On the home front during World War II, there was an interest in sustainability by reducing the need for fuel, materials such as leather and metals, and for families to grow their own food.



**Colby Griffin**  
NC Cooperative Extension Horticulture Agent

These gardens would become known throughout the United States as victory gardens and served to redirect commercially grown fruits and vegetables to the war effort in Europe and the Pacific.

The government rationed food items like sugar, butter, milk, cheese, eggs, coffee, meat, and canned goods. Labor and transportation shortages made it increasingly difficult to harvest and move commercially grown produce to market. With increased availability of fresh produce at home came the need to preserve and can the bounty to use into the future.

For example, in 1943, families bought 315,000 pressure cookers compared to 66,000 in 1942. It was encouraged throughout America to make gardening a family and community effort. According to the US Department of Agriculture, estimates of more than 20 million victory gardens were planted. Fruit and vegetables harvested were estimated to be 9-10 million tons, an amount equal to all commercial production of fresh vegetable at the time.

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garden also should be located near a source of water.

With proper planning, it's possible to grow two or three crops in a given area during the growing season. Using the same space for two or more crops is called succession planting. Other techniques, such as interplanting and companion planting, are other ways to make efficient use of garden space. The more efficiently you use garden space and resources the larger the potential savings. Do some research and start with a plan. Decide what you want to grow and determine what will be necessary to be successful. Plan your garden on paper first. Research and consider ways to reduce your inputs. Collect rainwater for irrigation, especially if you pay for water. Add compost and well-rotted manure to the garden to improve the soil and reduce the use of fertilizers. Be sure to take a soil sample for the area you'd like

to place the garden. Each Extension office in North Carolina has soil sampling boxes and forms for this.

succumb to defeat; embrace the victory in your garden!



Practice the principles of Integrated Pest Management to control insects and diseases, reducing your reliance on pesticides. Start with high quality seeds – most are relatively inexpensive, and most can be stored for at least one or two years. Find ways to reuse containers, flats, stakes, ties, etc. Remember that saving money with vegetables usually means keeping the costs as low as possible while still growing productive plants. Don't get discouraged and

about horticulture and other topics please contact the Franklin County Center at 919-496-3344 or Colby Griffin, Commercial and Consumer Horticulture Extension agent, at [colby\\_griffin@ncsu.edu](mailto:colby_griffin@ncsu.edu).

Photo courtesy of "Uncle Sam says - garden to cut food costs," Ask the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., for a free bulletin on gardening - it's food for thought / A. Hoen & Co., Baltimore. Photograph from the Library of Congress, <[www.loc.gov/item/00653180/](http://www.loc.gov/item/00653180/)>



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# Design ideas to give your home a farmhouse feel

Farmhouse style homes are having a moment. A 2020 survey from Homes.com asked more than 5,000 adults across the United States about their favorite house style from a list that included bohemian craftsman, mid-century modern ranch, French chateau, and Tudor, among others. Modern farmhouse was the runaway winner, as participants in 42 of the 50 states indicated this simple, cozy style was their favorite.

Home renovation projects can help homeowners put their own unique stamp on their homes, and such projects can be both aesthetic and functional in nature. The following are some farmhouse design elements homeowners can consider as they look to transform their home interiors with this popular style in mind.

- Exposed beams: Exposed beams instantly evoke images of a farm-



Farmhouse style homes are still popular today.

house. The home improvement experts at *BobVila.com* note that this rustic renovation project

can utilize real wood or faux beams that look like the real thing. Decorative beams that have nothing

to do with a home's structural integrity can be installed by skilled do-it-yourselfers. How-

ever, even faux beams are heavy, and *BobVila.com* recommends homeowners have an engineer assess their existing structure prior to installation.

- Distressed wood finishes: Distressing is designed to make something look less than perfect. Distressed wood finishes can be found throughout many farmhouse style homes. Furniture and picture frames can provide the distressed look farmhouse fans are looking for. This is a relatively inexpensive project that many homeowners can tackle on their own after watching some online tutorials that recommend the right tools and techniques to get the job done right.
- Kitchen sink: Many components combine to create a truly classic farmhouse kitchen. But perhaps no component is more essential than the classic farmhouse sink. The renovation ex-

perts at HGTV note that a classic farmhouse sink features a deep, wide basin. Farmhouse sinks are large enough to handle all the dishes that come after a big family meal. Old-fashioned porcelain sinks are worth consideration by homeowners who want their kitchen sinks to evoke a traditional farmhouse feel.

- Countertops: HGTV recommends butcher block countertops for homeowners who favor European farmhouse style. Homeowners overhauling their kitchens to create a farmhouse feel should consider installing a large island with a walnut butcher block countertop for an authentic farmhouse feel.

Farmhouse style homes are wildly popular. Some simple renovations can help homeowners with a fondness for farmhouse style bring this classic look into their homes.

# Making the best of a small dining space

Some homeowners may aspire to have expansive dining rooms replete with seating for 12 beneath a stunning chandelier. That kind of space certainly makes hosting dinner parties easier. However, modern homes typically have small dining rooms that require homeowners or renters to be resourceful when entertaining guests.

Hosts may not be able to expand their dining spaces, but there are some clever ways to maximize every inch of a small dining room and even some smart solutions for those who don't have dining rooms at all.

- Create the illusion of more space. Eating areas can be made to feel larger with a few tricks. A mirror on the wall will reflect light and make the room appear larger. In addition, a large-scale patterned floor or oversized artwork on the wall may make the room appear more spacious.
- Maximize seating. Chairs can take up a lot of room in a dining space. To maximize seating availability in smaller dining rooms — or in spaces where you need to create a seating area — look to built-in banquettes or bench seating. These ideas can help create an instant cozy nook and save on space in the process.
- Let space lead furniture choices. Depending on the size and shape of the room, select a table that will fit comfortably. A round, pedestal table may take up less real

estate in a smaller room than an oblong or rectangular one. Also, if you have a narrow, galley-type dining space, select a narrow table and low-profile chairs. Again, benches may work well in narrow spaces.

- Utilize the kitchen island. Many modern homes have no dedicated dining rooms but kitchens that open up to living rooms. Homeowners with kitchen islands can

utilize large islands as dining areas, and they're easy places to enjoy casual meals when stools are pulled up to the island.

- Install a drop-leaf table. Drop-leaf tables do for dining spaces what Murphy beds do for guest rooms. A wall-mounted drop-leaf table can be dropped down for entertaining and folded back up when the space needs to be repurposed.

- Lighten up the color palette. Make dining spaces seem larger with brighter colors. Brightly colored decor, furniture and flooring can do the trick.
- Invest in storage pieces. A simple buffet can store silverware, table cloths, wine glasses, and more, but also serve double-duty as a bar or server for a buffet.

Petite dining spaces can be functional when space is maximized and design tricks are called into action.



There are some clever ways to maximize every inch of a small dining room and even some smart solutions for those who don't have dining rooms at all.



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# Woodland autumn berries & flowers



Smooth sumac



Flowering dogwood



American beautyberry



Strawberry bush a.k.a. "Hearts-a'-Bustin"

Each year I watch in wonder as creation begins its annual adjustment from the summer swelter to the crispness of autumn. The near deafening sounds of cicadas and katydids in the evening gradually decrease as temperatures cool. This is also when birds begin their annual fall migration to their wintering grounds. Just like you need to stop at a gas station to refuel on a long car trip, birds stop to eat fruits along their migration path.

**Colby Griffin**

NC Cooperative Extension Horticulture Agent



name, Hearts-a-Bustin'. Although the orangish-red seeds are poisonous to humans, wild turkeys and many songbirds eat them with no ill effect. Don't get this one confused with its exotic cousin though, the invasive E. y. alatus.

If you're purchasing for your home landscape, be sure it's our native species. Rhus glabra, Smooth sumac is native to much of North America in roadsides, fields, and woodland edges. It often spreads by rhizomes (underground stems) into dense stands. The compound leaves have a long central stalk (rachis) that's pinkish and has a waxy coating. Although they are often not a preferred food source, many songbirds eat the red fruits of female plants during migration, including pine warblers and eastern phoebes.

Callicarpa americana, American beautyberry grows in sunny areas with moist soil that's sandy or rocky. It has large leaves with a long leaf stalk. The magenta fruits grow in clusters which hug the stem. These attractive fruits add color to yards and woodlands in late summer and are an excellent food source for birds. Numerous songbirds, including purple finches and gray catbirds, feed on the fruits.

In autumn, fields and roadsides across North Carolina are painted in a beautiful palette of Solidago spp

or Goldenrod. People tend to blame these common wildflowers for their allergies or hay fever, but goldenrods are not the problem. Rather, they likely stem from another less showy plant that often grows in similar habitats Ambrosia artemisiifolia, Common ragweed. Pollinators do not visit this plant. Common ragweed is wind pollinated and releases a huge amount of pollen to ensure a suc-

cessful seed set. This tiny pollen is what gets breathed in causing hay fever. Goldenrods, on the other hand, do not release pollen into the air for pollination. Rather, they produce nectar that attracts a tremendous variety of butterflies, moths, bees, and other pollinators. Given their abundance, goldenrod seeds provide a great food resource for birds and other wildlife during fall and winter.

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