

The top home decorating trend: Infusing natural elements into the decor

(BPT) - Nature is bringing a breath of freshness into home decorating, but it's more than just incorporating flowering pots or opening windows. The latest home decorating trend features natural elements in the textures and finishes of furniture and accessories, giving homeowners an elegant - and often calming-- result of blending nature and home living into a beautiful space.

"We really want to see the handprint of nature in our homes now," says Elaine Griffin, New York interior designer and author of Design Rules. "Organic in the home is huge. It's one of the biggest trends for the year, and it's going to stay with us for a while."

Bring this elegance into your own home with the following decorating sug-

gestions from Griffin:

- Bring exotic looks into your kitchen with new cabinets that go beyond the basic oak or cherry woods. Griffin suggests using rosewood or zebra wood - woods formerly reserved for custom furniture. And as both new construction and remodeling projects embrace the open floor plan concept, cabinets are visible from several rooms, which makes it a style upgrade not only for the kitchen, but for adjacent spaces, as well.

- The latest furniture design trends also reflect the growing popularity of organic materials and textures, Griffin says, whether it's a table tops left in the natural oak wood finish, or driftwood incorporated into furniture or accessories. The pale gray coloring of driftwood, combined



with honey or pale colors used on other furniture or the walls is opening up spaces - moving away from the darker colors.

- The natural look isn't just for the kitchen and living areas; it's also perfect for the bathroom. Robern

vanities and mirrors featuring Digital Wood harness the warmth of six different wood species using high-definition scans that are printed on the backside of the glass surface. The result: an easy-to-maintain material that won't be af-

ected by the humidity or heat commonly found in bathrooms.

"What's genius about these new finishes from Robern is that they used the best technology to create a convincing representation of real wood that you couldn't typically use in a bathroom," Griffin says. "Plus, the collection has so many wood prints that you can get one that matches your bathroom style."

- The era of matching all fabrics, styles and materials in a room has shifted into combining elements of all into a beautiful room setting, Griffin says.

"All great rooms need a mixture of finishes for furniture, with something that's painted, something that's wood, something that's a metallic gold leaf, something that's ceramic,"

she says. "That's the secret to professionally styled rooms."

A trend to consider: the Belgium-influenced neo-industrial style, which brings a softer, natural yet industrial touch to rooms. "It's a soft industrial. It means you've combined the wood elements with metal. And that metal could be gold leaf," Griffin advises.

Creating warm, comfortable surroundings infused with a sense of eco-elegance is why the natural elements trend has been so embraced. About to embark on your own remodel or home refresh? Be sure to explore how bringing natural elements-- whether they're salvaged materials or realistic pretenders-- into your decor can enhance the ambiance of the room.



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