



Add Cool, Breezy Touches to Your Home

With the record temperatures we have experienced lately in Calaveras County, many of us have been spending more of our time indoors. As a result, I asked myself: what are some things we can do to make our homes more comfortable, as well as appealing this summer?

First, let's discuss color, as it can make all the difference in the look and feel of any room. I recall working in a lovely home with an unusual paint color. Having recently moved from the Bay Area, the homeowners wanted to create a feeling of coolness in their new home's warm climate, so they painted the interior a pale light green. The color they chose accomplished that goal, and I have thought fondly of that cool tone in the past sweltering weeks.

When opting for a calm and cool color like blue, light green or lavender, consider the pieces of furniture, art and accessories you already have. Warm colors like red or gold may not work with cool colored walls. White is the perfect color to add to a room with cool tones, and it also feels light and fresh during these warm summer months. Imagine: a bedroom painted in a light blue could be filled with a bed dressed in crisp white linens and wicker or painted white furniture, and then accented with a piece of art or flower arrangement in light, cool tones. The look is simple, calm and refreshing.

As we have discussed before, changing out fabrics for the season is another way to lighten things up. Pack away all fabrics that are heavy in weight or texture, such as a chenille comforter or velvet drapes, and replace them with similar items in cotton or seersucker, for example. Remove any extra blankets, bedspreads or duvets from beds, as well as pillows and throws from couches. Consider leaving the windows bare, or simply covering them with sheer panels or light woven shades. Strip the room of rugs and all unnecessary accessories, which will leave you with a clean, clear and uncluttered look, which is a perfect backdrop for easy summer living.

With a plain, clutter-free environment, we now have a palette on which we may introduce decorative touches specific to summertime. Bright colors like hot pink, turquoise, orange and yellow are inherent in summer décor and can be seen in items such as pillows, throw rugs, and glassware. This is the time to highlight those kinds of brightly colored items, and enjoy them for these few short months. The textures seen in straw hats, sisal rugs, and colored glass are traditional summer touches, as well as smooth river rocks, seashells, sea glass, coral and anything nautical in nature. Palm fronds or daisies can add color as

well as a bit of nature to your family room or entry table. A bowl of limes and lemons feel fresh and look bright, so pile them in a bowl, the base of a clear vase filled with flowers, or a tall cylinder on the kitchen counter or dining table.

Other vignettes that evoke a feeling of summertime include a grouping of silver items, a collection of mirrors, a few paper lanterns, or a gurgling indoor fountain.

Rarely do we have the time, energy or inclination to change the décor of our home with each season, but sometimes just focusing on one area can make a difference in the way your living space works and feels. Consider the family entry area, for example, whether it is in the foyer or a separate part of your home. Clear the area of any jackets, umbrellas, or boots that may remain, and replace them with a straw hat, BBQ apron, beach bag or lightweight sweater. Flip flops can be gathered in a basket on the floor, a favorite vacation photo hung, and beach towels and sunscreen stored nearby. If neatly arranged, this small functional area can be considered decorative, while celebrating the best of the summer season.

Summer speaks to a simpler lifestyle. To conserve energy in the heat of summer, consider serving meals that require little or no cooking or baking, such as salads, sandwiches or a variety of deli items. Water your potted plants, lawn or garden in the evening, when the cooler weather causes less evaporation. Keep the thermostat setting high, use your fans, and open the windows in the evenings to let the fresh air in.

When the heat of summer seems to be stronger or longer than usual, consider looking at the unique things the season has to offer. Slow down, take a dip, look at the nighttime sky, read a good book, talk to your kids, listen to the noises of nature, and use the heat as an excuse to take some well-deserved downtime.

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