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Transitioning to Summer Decor: Refreshing Your Home to Reflect the Season

Blossoming branches, rattan accessories and summery fabrics will ready your house for warm weather



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Each week, Mansion Global tackles a topic with an elite group of designers from around the world who work on luxury properties. This week, we explore how to prepare your interiors for summer.

As temperatures creep up, it's time to shed any cool-weather decor and refresh your house to reflect the summer season.

“When the warmer months arrive, we like to transition our homes from the coziness of winter to the light and airy mood of summer,” said Mark Lavender, principal designer at M. Lavender Interiors in Memphis, Tennessee, and Winnetka, Illinois.

Preparing outdoor rooms is an excellent place to start. “Wash and fluff your outdoor furniture and pillows—it provides a clean slate for the season and spruces up your yard,” Mr. Lavender suggested.

For additional ideas on transforming a home for the warm weather ahead, we turned to several design pros who share tips on color, materials and mood.

Declutter and Lighten up

“Clear off any tables to leave room for open surfaces. Consider moving books, magazines and other small decorative objects into a cabinet for the season and take any houseplants outside for a vacation. This not only frees up your interior space, but provides a great change of scenery. A candle and some simple fresh flowers are all you really need.

“Scented candles should always evoke a mood or place. So for the summer, take your home to the beach with a fresh ‘salt air’ candle with hints of coconut or ‘fresh cut grass.’ It will instantly transform the feeling of the room.

“Take the warm weather as an opportunity to use the boldly colored dishes and glassware that you may have stored away the rest of the year. For napkins, linens and table settings, keep it casual—forget the starch and think crinkled linen instead.

“Switch up your window dressings. I have been known to seasonally change my curtains and it always makes such a big difference. While winter brings an opportunity to display heavy, colorful curtains, summer is more for wispy, lightweight linens.”



Introduce Slipcovers and Summery Pillow Covers

“Consider slipcovers for your family room furniture. This creates a light, beachy feel to your home and protects your furniture from the harsh light as well as chlorine-soaked bathing suits that always end up on the furniture. Slipcovers may be purchased online or at places like Pottery Barn. For the best fit or for slipcovers being purchased through a vendor that differs from the furniture, try to have slipcovers custom-made. While it is an expense up front, they should last for many years and will protect your furniture.

“Swap out indoor pillow covers on your furniture from the heavier winter covers to something more summery. Light fabrics can be linen or cotton instead of a heavier velvet or wool. Colors such as cream, white or light versions of orange, green or blue really lighten up the room for summer. I like patterns such as stripes, madras plaid or floral. These just really evoke summer to me.”

— Mark Lavender, principal designer of M. Lavender Interiors



Bring the Outside In

“Change up a few accessories like lamps, ceramic vases and sculptures to lighter and brighter colors. Adding colors that are decidedly summer--like yellows, greens or aqua blues--will surely give your room a warm seasonal uplift.

“Remove area rugs for clean open floor spaces. Removing rugs, and storing them until the fall will feel like the room has been made lighter and fresher. The added benefit is that the rugs, once reinstalled, will feel like new.

“Bring the outside in with fresh flowers and plants. Keep to blooms that are native to your area and time of year for a more authentic feeling. Generally, I like to display flowers in clear vases of various shapes and sizes. I love blossoming branches like cherry blossoms and baby’s breath. When they are in season, I gravitate towards tulips, peonies and flowers with petals such as daisies and cosmos.”

— Andrew Suvalsky, Andrew Suvalsky Designs in New York



Incorporate Rattan and Teak

"Rattan and wood tones are a staple at House of Nomad, and summer is the perfect time to experiment with these materials, particularly with your smaller décor pieces. Swap out that shelf décor or coffee table styling for an easy summer transition. To accessorize your shelves, we love placing a small rattan 'Bali fan,' carved wooden bowls and lighter toned beads draped over a bowl. For coffee tables you can't go wrong with a rattan or seagrass tray.

"We love sourcing summer decor from Indonesia where they often use suar wood for smaller decorative items, and teak wood for furniture accent pieces. Small wood bowls and trays in natural to medium wood tones are great options to attain that summer vibe. Wall hangings made from rattan are great warm weather swaps for above a console or fireplace."

— Berkeley Minkhorst and Kelley Lentini, founders and designers at House of Nomad in Charlotte, North Carolina, and Charleston, South Carolina

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