

fresh HOME

Easy Ideas For Hands-On People

free & easy fun

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decorating



Free & Easy Fun

Celebrate the season with a bright and airy spring fling.

Nothing gets the DIY spirit pulsing like planning the season's first warm weather get-together. We rush to perk up winter-weary spaces, give new recipes a try and create personal touches to make our event memorable. It starts with inspiration and some fresh ideas. Time to get the fun on!

Set the Scene



Clear the Decks

How much seating do you need? What stays? What goes? All are good questions to ask yourself as you take a step back and evaluate your space. Look at your party room like a Hollywood movie set. A good rule of thumb: Less is more. Underfurnishing a space can open it up and promote good mingling. Plus, the more blank and clutter-free your "canvas," the more your colors and decorations will pop. So if something doesn't work, don't force it. Move it to another room.

What about things you can't move? What should you do about that 52-inch flat screen your hubby just had to have? Cover it up with artwork or hang some floor-to-ceiling fabric. What about that 14-by-24-foot sisal rug? Throw a new rug right on top. Don't be afraid to mix colors, patterns and textures.

Fun with Furniture

Shake things up, move things around—nothing is sacred when you're setting up for a good time. After all, why should your patio have all the fun? Snag that cute retro lawn chair and bring it inside. Soften it with a throw pillow. And while you're at it, carry in that outdoor table. Top

it with a potted plant. Now you're building a fresh-air space that invites partygoers to mill about and perch if they wish.

Moving a piece of furniture also gives it new life. Placing a table near a window and suspending birdcages above sets a whimsical scene (opposite page) that can be broken down when everyday living resumes.

Bigger is Better

Flowers are a sure bet for any party. But instead of fussing with multiple arrangements, opt for one knock-their-socks-off dramatic display. You'll get more bang for your buck—and effort—that way. If you're lucky enough to have flowering branches just outside your back door, gather a large bunch—forsythia, apple and cherry are good choices. If they aren't blooming yet, force them indoors. ☀

ABOVE Less is often more when furnishing a room for a party. Express an open-air feel by bringing outdoor chairs and a table in, overlaying a light-colored rug on top of an existing one and replacing heavy window treatments with light and breezy fabric.

Moving a piece of furniture gives it new life. Placing a table near a window and suspending flower-filled birdcages above it sets a whimsical scene.



ABOVE Set up for good conversation, this room feels both intimate and open. A large piece of artwork hides a flat-screen TV, while a spray of forsythia displayed at eye level is a dramatic focal point. **LEFT FROM TOP** Colorful gumdrops look deliciously fun served in bud vases. Children's rubber boots packed with cut flowers make a cute statement. Allow yourself plenty of time to happily fuss, so you're ready when guests arrive.

