


*Easy, affordable ideas to fill your house with  
holiday cheer throughout the year!*

# **Holiday Decorating** FOR **DUMMIES**<sup>®</sup>



**Kelley Taylor**

*Home decorating designer and  
founder of [CreatingHomeDecor.com](http://CreatingHomeDecor.com)*

**A Reference for the Rest of Us!**



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Dummies***

**by Kelley Taylor**



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# About the Author

**Kelley Taylor** is a freelance craft and home decorating designer and founder of [CreatingHomeDécor.com](http://CreatingHomeDécor.com), a site for do-it-yourself decorating and craft enthusiasts. Her work has appeared in several books and publications, and she appears regularly on television shows demonstrating her quick-and-easy home décor projects. Her past work as a visual merchandiser, floral designer, craft editor, and holiday decorator gave much inspiration for this book. Now she knows why she wore so many hats. She and her husband Byron live in southern Connecticut with their son Lex.

# Dedication

This book is dedicated to my husband, Byron, who continues to decorate my world with his beautiful, supporting, and loving spirit.

To my son, Lex: Your smile lights up my world. I'm so happy and amazed God blessed me with the miracle of you.

And in loving honor and memory of my sweet companions who passed during the process of this book. Gertie, Stogey, and Scout: The time I spent with you was never enough. You're missed dearly.



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# Introduction

**H**oliday decorating can be elegant, whimsical, minimal, or over the top; holidays can hold significant meaning and tradition, or exist mainly for a rip-roaring good time. Either way, during each holiday throughout the year, people gather, celebrate, entertain, and, of course, decorate, which can be a challenge to your time, budget, and space.

Many books have been published on the subject of decorating, crafting, or decorating each holiday specifically, but I wanted to write a reference guide that you can easily and quickly use to decorate the major holidays — a guide containing simple decorating, craft and holiday ideas, techniques, and tricks that resist any obstacle of time, money, and space.

And that's what you've got right here.

Although I would've loved to, I couldn't include an expansive, all-inclusive, let-you-know-everything-there-is-to-know about each holiday in this volume (who could move the darn thing it would be so thick?). But what I have given you are the basic fundamentals for designing your holidays, your way.

Holiday decorating is for anyone and everyone who loves to celebrate very special occasions. And a holiday isn't

limited to the ones listed in this book! An anniversary, a special birthday, a warm welcome home — all these are holidays that we cherish and want to celebrate. So this book shows you how to plan, budget, and decorate any of the special occasions in your life, no matter what your budget can afford, what skill set you may have, or what living arrangements may be bestowed upon you now. And the best part is you can just skip to the sections that interest you.

Decorating for the many holidays throughout the year is rewarding. It allows you to stretch your creative muscles often and shake up your décor a bit. Armed with this book, you can find numerous ways of using what you've already got and start accurately planning for your next holiday or special occasion confidently.

## About This Book

This book is for you if:

- ✔ You have no idea where to start and just need some ideas to get you going.
- ✔ You've already got a huge collection of your own holiday stash and need to get organized before pilfering and plundering.
- ✔ You need an all-in-one reference in order to decorate most of the major holidays.



Part decorating guide, part stylist guide, and part craft instruction book, *Holiday Decorating For Dummies* helps you access the knowledge you need to create beautiful homes and great gatherings that anyone would feel welcome in.

Even if you don't fall into any of the groups I mentioned, this book gives you clear explanations of how beautiful yet practical holiday decorating is done. You don't have to worry about suggestions of over-the-top decorating here — that I'll leave to you. I present only basic ideas that are easy to grasp (and do) and give you the insights and idea starters to help you become your own best decorator.

You find planning tools, decorating ideas, decorating tricks, crafting basics, care and cleaning tips, storage solutions, and more. All you have to do is pick what you're interested in and go. Dive in!

## **Conventions Used in This Book**

When I refer to holiday decorating, I use it in the broadest terms imaginable. Normally, when people talk about holiday decorating, the Christmas season comes to mind. In this book, when I discuss holiday decorating, I include all holidays in general and how to decorate for any or all of them.

Holiday decorating is an easy topic to explain, although there will be times when I use the terms *visual merchandising* and *styling* to complete a look. These are simply conventions I use to describe the attractive arrangement of items in a designated area. Visual merchandisers — people who make displays in department stores make merchandise look more appealing — are pros at making unique arrangements that make you stop and take notice. Stylists — people who are hired by ad agencies, celebrities, magazines, and photographers — make things look beautiful for the lens of a camera. They usually design, protect, sculpt, and carve out a brand image for their clients. They primp and prop homes for beautiful photographic shots.

So when I talk about how you can style and visually merchandise your home by making beautiful holiday vignettes, you can know that it's just a fancy schmancy way of saying, "Make it look purty."

A couple other conventions:

- ✓ When I introduce a new term, the word is *italicized*.
- ✓ Keywords in bulleted lists are **bolded**.
- ✓ Web sites and e-mail addresses appear in monofont to help them stand out.

## **Foolish Assumptions**

I assume that you know what a holiday is and that you know this book doesn't contain entertaining ideas or recipes for holiday cooking, or concepts on home decorating. For those subjects, I suggest that you pick up a copy of *Christmas Cooking For Dummies*, by Dede Wilson, or *Home Decorating For Dummies*, by Patricia Hart McMillan and Katharine Kaye McMillan (Wiley).

I assume that you have very few crafting skills, so the instructions I give are very basic techniques that you can adapt as you need them. Although the instructions may be basic, each project is suitable for any crafting skill level, so don't shy away from trying any project I include in this book.

# How This Book Is Organized

This book is organized in parts to help you find what you need a little more easily. Each part covers an aspect of holiday decorating, so you can just go to the section that applies to you or your situation. Here's a rundown of what you'll find.

# **Part I: Becoming a Holiday Decorator Extraordinaire**

Whether your desire is to have the best decorated house on your block, or you need quick tips on how to set a buffet, you find the decorating basics you need in this first part of the book.

I've gone to great lengths to show you from the get-go that even though you may have to overcome various challenges, you can easily get on your way to decorating whatever holiday you choose with style, fun, and panache. Because holidays seem to be a bit overwhelming in general, I spend quite a bit of time getting you focused on the hows and whys of decorating. But I also show you how to find ideas from things around you every day, and how to pull a whole look together by using an inspiration piece. You'll have fun collecting decorating skills from which you can build a firm foundation.

## **Part II: The Practical Stuff: Money, Space, and More**

In Part II, I show you how to get yourself, your money, and your time organized, so that you have more realistic expectations when it comes to holiday decorating.

This part shows you how to make a decorating notebook complete with project plans and design space-planners for every room in your home, and it gives you a good start at getting it all together — not just for the holidays, but period.

You also find out how to care for and clean the treasures you have, and you find neat little tricks on how to store unique items that are exclusive to holiday decorating (like how to keep those darn lights from tangling!).