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HARVEST SEASON DÉCOR

Pumpkins, squashes and gourds come in a rainbow of colors, shapes and textures

by MARTY JONES • photos by TRACI J. MACNAMARA

BY THE TIME THE AUTUMN'S cool evenings are here to stay, annual flowers and most perennial plants have lost their color, and in this transitional season, a lone pumpkin's pop of color can do a lot to brighten up a porch. But harvest season décor can also go beyond the addition of a traditional pumpkin to the scene. Unique pumpkin varieties, squashes, gourds, corn stalks, straw bales and more can add a festive feel to all of your fall celebrations, whether they center around your kitchen table or extend outside of your home.

Beyond the norm

Pumpkins come in a surprising array of colors, shapes and sizes, so instead of grabbing one of the first decent-looking orange ones you see at the market, source other local vendors for standout varieties including those that range in color from blood red to ghost white. Some pumpkin varieties have bumpy, textured exteriors and mottled or striped color patterns that blend together tones of green, orange and white.

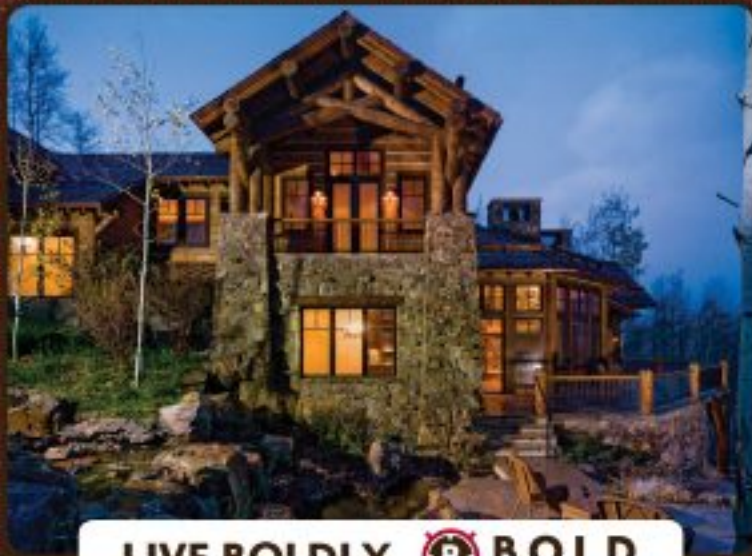
At Wildflower Farm, we send our staff beyond the Vail area to hand pick the best of the best from farms across Colorado, so we always have the most unique selection of pumpkins, squashes and gourds available here for you at our pumpkin patch, which usually opens mid-September. While kids love having the chance to pick pumpkins, they're often especially drawn to mini pumpkins, which can be used along with squashes and gourds as table centerpieces.



When arranging mini pumpkins, squashes and gourds into a table centerpiece, consider combining them with other artful elements such as sculpted wood bowls or dried ears of corn. Mini pumpkins can also be painted with acrylic paint to add fun faces, fall scenes, or metallic highlights. These same items that work well as table centerpieces can be placed elsewhere in the home along with candles for a festive glow.

Fun and festive

Corn stalks and straw bales can set the mood for fall gatherings such as pumpkin carving or pumpkin painting parties, harvest dinner celebrations and Halloween Eve activities. Straw bales can be topped with colorful fabrics or quilts and arranged as extra seating for guests or as pedestals



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LET YOUR UNIQUE STYLE AND PURPOSE GUIDE YOUR USAGE OF CORN STALKS AND STRAW BALES AS DECORATION ELEMENTS IN AND AROUND YOUR HOME.



for displaying decorated pumpkins, while corn stalks can offer more vertical visual interest to a scene.

Let your unique style and purpose guide your usage of corn stalks and straw bales as decoration elements in and around your home. While kids might love using these elements as part of a haunted porch that's perfectly suited for surprising trick-or-treaters, straw bales and corn stalks can also be employed more subtly as exterior decoration elements to be kept in place throughout the autumn season. For some sparkle on a special evening, intertwine white lights with tall corn stalks to create a beautiful front-door entrance that will be appreciated by all.



Harvest season decoration elements can help serve as a bridge from summer gardening activities into the quiet outdoor winter season. Plan to protect any pumpkins outdoors by covering them with blankets on nights expected to have hard frosts. The effort that you put into creating a fun and festive atmosphere for the harvest season is something that can be shared with family and friends, which will surely make the process as rewarding as the final product. **www**



Marty Jones is the owner and manager of Colorado Alpines & Wildflower Farm in Edwards. Marty has lived in the Vail area since 1973, and his work with Colorado Alpines & Wildflower Farm has inspired extraordinary landscapes and gardens in the Vail Valley and beyond. Marty can be reached at marty@thewildflowerfarm.com.



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