

Living Wreaths

Living wreaths can be seen featured in the newest gardening magazines and recent television shows on home decorating. This latest trend is elegant as well as useful and long lasting. At first glance, one may think that assembling such a beautiful wreath must be a difficult task, but with these step by step instructions you'll soon discover that making a living wreath is fun and enjoyable. Creative possibilities are endless.

Materials needed:

- A wire wreath ring (we prefer the open prong types) of the desired diameter
- green moss
- #26 florist wire
- floral pins
- light potting soil such as Bacco Lite or Hoffman's light
- An assortment of herbs, foliage plants, berries, holly twigs, picks (such as birds), candle holders, candles, bows, etc. (embellishments are optional-be creative)
- Peters 20-20-20 fertilizer
- a spray bottle
- a bucket

Instructions:

1. Materials may be purchased from any SKH location. Check with a salesperson if you need help obtaining the right materials.
2. Assemble your materials on your work area. Fill a bucket with warm water. Place the green moss in the water and allow it to soak for 5 to 10 minutes or until it is thoroughly saturated. Remove wet moss from the bucket and squeeze out the excess water.
3. Line the wire wreath form with the moist moss, pushing the moss around the wires to hide them. Using both hands pat the moss together to compact it around the ring and to form an indentation around the inside of the ring for the plants.
4. Select the plants of your choice. Look for plants that have different colors, textures, and even fragrance. You may want to ask an SKH greenhouse salesperson if the plants you selected have compatible light and water requirements. This is very important. Also inquire about the right location within your house to hang your wreath creation. Some suggestions to combine include: Ivy, thyme, baby tears, dittany of crete, golden moneywort, Indian oregano, ajuga, golden oregano, creeping fig, tarragon, wax plant, ferns, corsican mint, purple passion plant, peppermint, air plants, earth stars to name a few.

LIVING WREATHS

Instructions: cont'd

Cont'd...

5. Once you've selected your plants, remove them from their pots and arrange them along the indentation of the wreath. Keep in mind to space them close together for that instant effect. Fill in the spaces between plants with a light potting soil mix.
6. Add more moist moss around the plants to cover the potting soil.
7. At this point, you need to secure the plants, moss, and soil in place. Simply close the wire prongs of the open wreath form. Add pieces of #26 florist wire to close any open gaps that may remain. Be careful to place the wire around the plants and not directly on them. Once the plants and soil are snug, add little bits of additional moss to hide any wires that may show. Loose ends of trailing plants such as ivy and creeping fig may be affixed to the wreath with floral pins if desired.
8. At this point you may embellish the design with berries, holiday picks, bows, holly or spruce sprigs, or artificial birds. The ideas are endless. You can change the look to accommodate Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Christmas, or any festive occasion.
9. Your finished work of art may be used as an indoor wreath for a door or wall, a table centerpiece, even an advent candle ring. If you wish to use it as a candle ring, place candle holders into the wreath at step number 5, when you are placing the plants into the indentation of moss. Make sure you secure the candle holders with lots of florist wire to hold them in place. Keep in mind that if you chose to light the candles in a living advent candle ring, dripping wax will damage any plants that it touches.
10. Leave the completed wreath in a horizontal position for about 2 weeks or more to allow the plant to have time to start to root, then hang at the desired location. Mist the wreath daily to keep moss moist. 2 to 3 times a week check the soil for moisture. If it's dry, remove wreath and place on a horizontal surface. Slowly and gently water the wreath. Allow the water to reach all parts of the wreath. When all the excess water has drained from the wreath and it is no longer dripping, return to its hanging position. Fertilize the same way monthly with Peters 20-20-20- fertilizer. Mix according to directions.
11. To maintain the wreath you will need to either train or trim the plants as they grow. You can train trailing plants around the wreath using florist pins to secure the ends against the wreath. You may trim the plants and in the case of an herbal wreath you have fresh herbs to use in your cooking. What fun!

Now it's time to get started! You'll have so much fun that you'll want to make a couple extras for those perfect and unique holiday gifts that'll be sure to dazzle and delight those who receive them.