

# Branching Out

## LIVELY USES FOR YOUR ICE-STORM WASTE

**BY Sandra Nash** | Often as a designer, clients turn to our firm to help them deal with challenges. After a brutal Canadian winter, many clients were faced with debris from the ice storm. Why not convert your fallen tree limbs and branches into unique home décor by recycling them into eco-friendly products that you can actually use? Often I encourage my clients to bring the outdoors in with simple and cost effective projects that can be worthwhile, not to mention gratifying.

**A**t our design firm we strive to create spaces that work, for example creating centerpieces from branch arrangements in large glass vases. In fact, we often leave the branches natural/untouched or you can spray paint them a bright colour for dramatic effect. These can be placed on either end of a large dining table, as we did in the picture on the next page, or they could be placed on top of, or in front of a fireplace mantel on either side.

Over the years we have found that people are afraid to experiment. For example, one simple trade secret ... we will group three oversized, and completely different shaped glass vases on the floor and filling them with wood discs create a spectacular vignette focal point. We accomplish this by sawing branches into discs, which gradually decrease in size. We then layer different sized discs in vases. You can make coffee table coasters, attaching cork to one side to protect your table from scratches.

**TIP:** find unusual glass vases, place large pillar candles inside, and then layer wood discs around the



base of the candle. You can use bright coloured candles for a more dramatic impact. (See photo above).

Wreaths don't need to be a seasonal decorative item, they can be a hip focal point used alone, in group or amongst a collage of pictures and art over a sofa or console table. It's an excellent way to use the smaller portions of a fallen tree limb, with or without foliage for different wreath styles, like we did in our photo (next page).



**A**nother practical application that we have also used, is to create sea side focal points — by taking shells that you may have collected on a trip (but don't know how to display). In this case we simply put them in tall vases to create an interesting visual.

Recovering materials that have naturally fallen is an eco-friendly way to make a creative statement! Storms can leave people overwhelmed and confused. As a design firm we take pride in helping you branch out creatively, and create eco-friendly one-of-a-kind arrangements. Enjoy!

— Photos by Jason Stead.



**SANDRA NASH** is a Toronto-based award winning designer with over 20 years experience and Principal of Making-A-Scene Designs. They specialize in residential and commercial projects tailored to the individual styles and needs of the clients throughout Toronto and the GTA.

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