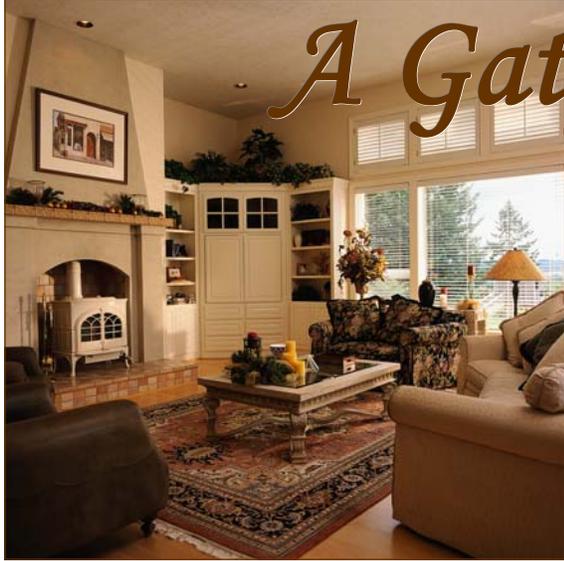


Hospitality Ideas

October 2012



A Gathering Place

As the weather turns colder, the inside of our homes seems to get cozier. If you are lucky enough to have a fireplace in your home, that is probably the favorite place to gather during the winter months. But even a home without a fireplace can be made to feel cozy and welcoming.



How you arrange the areas of your home and how you choose the spaces where people will gather depends on your floor plan and may depend on your budget also. But making a cozy spot in your home doesn't mean you have to go out and buy new furnishings. You most likely have items throughout your home that can be repurposed in another room.



Making a gathering place can benefit not only the guests you invite into your home, but it will also serve in bringing your family together. Technology has caused parents and children to "need their own space" and has basically obliterated the art of togetherness and conversation as a family. A comfortable, inviting space will make your family want to gather together to share the day's stories, create memories and to spend time with one another.



Keeping this in mind, try some of these suggestions for creating a cozy gathering space in your home. And don't save it for the next time someone visits - use it for your family too!



◆ *If you have a fireplace, make it the focus of your room. A stack of wood in an old crate, utensils for cooking over the fire, a grapevine creeping across the mantel all help to make it a beautiful*

focal point.

- ◆ *A rocking chair is always a popular place to sit in a room. A pretty pillow or soft throw adds to its comfort.*
- ◆ *Puzzles are a great winter activity. A card table set up in a corner of your favorite family room will invite your children/guests to sit down and spend time putting the pieces together with you.*



◆ *Be sure to have something snugly on or near the sofa for those drafty nights. A handmade afghan or quilt will allow your family or guests to get warm and comfortable.*



◆ *A small lamp on a stack of books on a shelf or on the corner of a table provides a cozy look.*

◆ *A display of vintage family photos becomes a great conversation starter when guests are present. They also provide the opportunity to share with your own children and grandchildren about their ancestors.*