

Artful Designs Inspired by Nature

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Enhance your outdoor living space by accessorizing it with some of nature's most popular gifts. Earthy materials like coconut and bamboo, along with aquatic treasures such as shells and starfish, have long been collected and transformed into one-of-a-kind works of art. When used as such, these hanging displays provide soothing sights and sounds that symbolize the serenity of our coastal surroundings.

A Lovely Bunch of Coconuts

Want to create a suspended design piece that showcases something uniquely eye-catching? Consider decorating with coconuts! Unless you have a coconut palm tree in your backyard and can wait for fallen coconuts to dry out completely before use, you might want to try a different approach. One option is to form coconuts using balloons and papier-mâché. After they dry, create holes for threading rope; paint their surfaces in shades depicting the sun, sky, and sea; and string them together. Another method is to purchase lightweight coconuts at your local craft store and follow the steps mentioned above. Display your arrangement anywhere you want to create a colorful, tropical environment.



DESIGN & STYLE

Coastal Charm

Appearing in abundance along our sandy shorelines, shells are another useful material for making coastal décor items like wall hangings and wind chimes. While you can collect a plethora of these popular sea trinkets in various colors, shapes, and sizes, you may come across certain types of shells that have small, naturally occurring holes, making these even more valuable finds. For those setting out to make their coastal décor, keep in mind the size and weight of the shells you plan to use and distribute them evenly throughout your design. The frame that carries the weight of the shells is equally as important, so consider using a sturdy material. You will also want to select a light, flexible cord such as a fishing line to thread through the shells, making sure that it is sturdy enough to hold the shells without breaking and can withstand the outdoor elements





Summer Breeze

Found in souvenir shops, specialty stores, and in the garden department at select retail stores, bamboo chimes are known for the distinctive melodies made as air passes through their hollow tubes, causing these parts to bounce against a clapper. Depending on the

length, thickness, and diameter of bamboo used, these natural plant chimes can produce a range of tones spanning from light plinking sounds like the patter of rain to deep resonating tones that may call to mind exotic drums. Since bamboo is a lightweight material that is susceptible to cracking or splitting after extensive outdoor exposure, a protective varnish is recommended. While a skilled craftsman could easily construct this unique musical instrument, others might seek to purchase a windchime kit or buy one already assembled. Regardless of which option you choose, well-built bamboo chimes will surely set the mood for serenity.

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A Little Star Appeal

Perhaps one of the most sought-after aquatic treasures is the starfish, which is also known as a sea star. Unlike shells that cover the beach in abundance, starfish are rarer finds. If you want to look for one on your own, it's best to wait until after a significant storm has passed to see if, by chance, the waves have carried any to the shore. The good news is that plenty of starfish are available for purchase in specialty shops and craft stores. Lovely even in their natural state, these beauties need no embellishment. Simply adhere three same-size sea stars to a rope (as pictured) using glue that will withstand extreme temperatures, and you have an instant show-stopping door hanger.

When your projects are complete and you are ready to display your hanging pieces of art, select a prominent place such as outside your front door, on your lanai, or inside your garden gazebo. Once suspended, these tropical treasures are sure to be admired and enjoyed for years to come!