Above: Curtains add an interesting texture.

A woven chandelier is an example of texture in statement lighting.

Embracing Natural Textures

Top design trend suits northern seasons.

By Zoe Yates

IN THE NORTH, we face a particular design challenge not experienced in other climes. Though we may change our decor seasonally as summer folds into autumn, crafting a year-round home interior that fits the feeling of each season is paramount.

It's a topic that came up when we sat down with Carrie Ellington of Ellington&Co. Design to discuss how the Best of Edina 2023 winner incorporates natural textures in her work. Ellington says natural textures like wool, cotton, boucle and wood fit into just about any style—in every season and climate.

"We have a line to balance because whatever we're doing needs to look nice seasonally," Ellington says. "Design has to really flow through the seasons, and texture is a nice way to do that."

We asked Ellington to share her top ways to introduce natural textures into the home.

Statement Lighting

One of Ellington's signature ways to incorporate natural textures into a room is with lighting fixtures. A woven pendant light, she says, goes a long way in filling space and warming large rooms. "[Chandeliers] come in really beautifully when I can use something that's got that big of a scale to it," she says. And now that manufacturers have caught on to the natural textures trends, there is a plethora of options in style, color and scale to suit any room.

Area Rugs and Distinct Flooring

One of the first signs of the natural textures trend came in the form of thick, soft woven and natural jute rugs. These "supporting characters" build up a room's story and provide a great means for trying out natural textures. "It doesn't matter how old you are, how young you are, what kind of style of house you have—there's a way for [natural textures] to work in anywhere," she says, adding that one of her favorite recent projects involved textural layering in a laundry room and bathroom with a completely stone floor.

Windows and Walls

Adding window treatments, like woven wood shades or linens, is another simple way to begin to incorporate natural textures into the home. "Woven woods have never been more popular. They've been around for forever and a day, and they're still as popular as ever," Ellington says.

When you're ready to take it up a notch, experiment with a textured grasscloth wallpaper. "There's grasscloth with patterns, there's heavy textured [and] there's a little lighter texture," she says. Level up your drapery with an open weave or a contrasting fabric. "I like mixing in velvets and linens, two opposites really. Velvets are just a good juxtaposition with the more casual and having the fabric be a little more formal."

Furnishings and Accents

Often, Ellington will bring natural textures in via statement pieces or accents. Boucle or woven wood lounge chairs suit many design styles and tastes. In furnishings, Ellington shares, the industry is incorporating textures in new ways, like in carved dresser drawer fronts. Every addition of texture imbues a feeling of comfort in a space. "I think [interior design today is] more comfortable. It's not so stiff," Ellington says. "A long time ago, we might be doing formal living rooms and formal dining rooms and now, in this cycle of design, we're just making every room comfortable and lived in ... I think that is one of the best things that comes out of the natural texture and just having it flow throughout a house."

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