

SPECIAL OCCASIONS



To avoid frightening young trick-or-treaters, add some playful elements to stereotypical creepy Halloween decor such as skeletons.

Create a front lawn fit for Halloween

Halloween decor beyond the Jack'o'lantern

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Special to QMI Agency

Picking out the perfect pumpkin for your front stoop may be at the top of your to-do-list this month, but don't forget about the rest of your home.

Whether you're hosting a spooky gathering or want to give neighbourhood trick-or-treaters a scare, getting into the Halloween spirit begins with your home décor.

Danusia Rogachi, art director of Canada's Wonderland's Halloween Haunt shares her tips for going beyond the witch cut-outs and fake spider webs.

Create a haunted graveyard

Transforming your front lawn into a makeshift graveyard is one of the easiest ways to add mystery to your home. Purchase some foam tombstones or make your own by painting some old pieces of plywood. For an extra spooky effect, Rogachi loves the trick of scattering body parts throughout the graveyard.

"You can have an arm sticking out of the ground or even half a torso as if there's a zombie coming out of the ground," she says. Add some fog and illuminate the body parts with some colour-changing LEDs.

"When you light the fog with one of these LEDs it slowly changes colour so it adds a layer of fantasy," says Rogachi.

For even more ambiance, add some wet mulch to the ground to give your graveyard an earthy smell and play up the experience, making guests feel they're somewhere where the ground has been turned up.

"When you add layers it adds realism that takes the guests away," says Rogachi. Some spooky background music or sound effects can also help play up the eerie atmosphere.

Be creative

"You don't necessarily have to stick to zombies and ghosts to make your home spooky," Wonderland's Sci-Fi Maze features man-eating plants, which can easily be replicated at home. Distress a thick rope by running a sharp knife up and down to fray it.

Give the rope a coat of paint to darken it up and wrap it around pillars or stair railings, mixing some leaves amongst the vines.

Purchase a few Styrofoam balls, cutting mouths into them and adding some teeth to create Venus Fly Traps. If you want to get a little gory,

you can add some ketchup or fake blood to the teeth and place a blood-soaked arm or leg sticking out of the vines.

Have a friendly Halloween

If you live in a neighbourhood with a lot of small children, you may want to create a less-than-spooky Halloween atmosphere. To avoid frightening young trick-or-treaters, Rogachi recommends avoiding stereotypical creepy Halloween décor and adding some playful elements.

Rogachi has borrowed from the Mexican Day of the

Dead celebration and has placed skeletons dressed in various costumes throughout Wonderland's grounds.

"Taking a skeleton and putting a pirate hat on him and placing him beside a treasure chest full of gold coins can give that Halloween feel without being scary," she says.

Wonderland's International Street features a skeletal Romeo and Juliet scene in which one skeleton is kneeling on the ground with his hand in the air and the other is on the balcony holding a flower. This idea can also be replicated with friendly scarecrows on the front lawn.



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