

Turn over a new leaf

The trees may still be bare, but foliage of all shapes and sizes is a key theme for this season's freshest fabrics and ceramics

We may have a while to wait for the green shoots of economic recovery, but the leaf motif seems to be cropping up everywhere in interiors: on china and cushions, wallpaper and linen. From Orla Kiely's funky retro Rowan furniture, for Heal's, to Nina Campbell's delicately embroidered fern napkins, it's a trend that comes in so many varieties, there's a leafy look to suit everyone.

So what's new? Gilly Newberry, who owns Bennison fabrics, has launched a flamboyantly foliate linen, called Waikiki, that positively writhes with Hawaiian-shirt-style palms and banana leaves (hand-printed, £139.96 per metre; 020 7730 8076, www.bennisonfabrics.com). It was inspired by a curtain she bought from an antique-textiles dealer. "The pattern was French, from about 1860, and we re-created it in prussian blue and a fabulous, vibrant green to make it more edgy," Newberry says. "I love the tropical look — a bit of saturated colour is just what we all need."

Another exuberant new design comes from Lorient Décor. Allegra Cerise, part of its Krista collection, is a cotton/linen mix printed with climbing creepers in crimson and green (£30 per metre; 0141 641 1700, www.voyagedecor.com). Kabuki wallpaper, from Designers Guild's Oriental Garden range, is a more serene take on the leafy theme, with painterly sketches of bamboo plants set against plain white or aqua backgrounds (£38 per 10-metre roll; 020 7893 7400, www.designersguild.com). Harlequin has a similar, but more graphic, bamboo-leaf design in its Misaki wallpaper, from the Tamika range (£38 per 10-metre roll; 0844 543 0299, www.harlequin.co.uk).

Other designers are drawing on the influence of botanical drawings to produce embroidered table and bed linens. Among the most covetable of these is Jan Mankin's Union Fern cushion (£35; 020 7722 0997, www.janmankinonline.co.uk) and Nina Campbell's Green Fern embroidered napkin (£6.95; 020 7225 1011, www.ninacampbell.com). You can get the look for less with Oka's set of six cotton napkins, each decorated with a different leaf, including maple, lime and oak (£38; 0844 815 7380, www.okadirect.com) or Sibona's white cotton napkins, hand-embroidered with olive sprigs and ginkgo (£5 each; 020 7924 5912, www.sibona.com).

Best of the current crop of leafy bed linen is Margaret Muir's Japanese Maple: white cotton percale, strewn with gorgeous purple and lilac embroidered leaves (from £15 for a pillowcase and £70 for a double duvet cover; 0161



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628 2322, www.margaretmuir.com). John Lewis's Phoebe bed linen, with appliquéd green silhouettes on white cotton percale (from £7.75 for a pillowcase and £44 for a double duvet cover; 0845 604 9049, www.johnlewis.com), is another fresh, spring-like design.

The leaf-motif rug is also a favourite. Esti Barnes's Ethereal is a plain carpet that appears to be breaking into leaf around the edges (made to order; £2,202 for 170cm x 240cm, from Top Floor; 020 7795 3333, www.topfloorrugs.com). Several price points south, Arte Espina has a rug patterned with a rich red, orange and ochre tumble of autumn foliage (from £100; 0845 071 9456, www.artespinarugs.co.uk). And, intended for children, but perfectly suitable for parents, too, vividly colourful boiled-wool Mushkane rugs, shaped like beech leaves, are a particular delight (63cm x 42cm, £24, from Bobo Kids; 020 7838 1020, www.bobokids.net).

There are also plenty of inexpensive accessories with fabulous leafy designs. Tatjana Kern sells gloriously chunky crockery, plates, bowls and serving dishes made in the form of dark-green, glossy ivy leaves (from £6.42 for a cereal bowl; www.bytatjana.com).

Three metalwork designs stand out as especially stylish examples of the trend. My favourite is Mann Singh's splendid fruit bowl composed of dozens of loosely arranged soldered brass sprigs (£75, from Conran; 0844 848 4000, www.conranshop.co.uk). A bit pricey? M&S has a chic black-metal riposte for £15 (0845 609 0200, www.marksandspencer.com). And, for leafy bling on a shoe-string, Graham and Green is about to launch a trio of decorative leaf dishes in highly polished aluminium (from £25; 0845 130 6622, www.grahamandgreen.co.uk).

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Mushkane rugs, in seven colours, £24; 020 7838 1020, www.bobokids.net



Above left: Jocelyn Warner wool rug, 213cm x 152cm, £1,085; 020 7375 3754, www.jocelynwarner.com. Above right, Golden Orchard cushion, 45cm square, £16 (down from £20); 01989 740380, www.newhousetextiles.co.uk



Golden Beech wallpaper from Loui Loui, £164 for nine metres (three panels, each 300cm x 61cm); 020 7371 9255, www.housecouturier.eu

