

Macramé makes a splash in home decor, taking centre stage as it manifests in furniture, accessories and more

Macramé musings

BINDU GOPAL RAO

MACRAMÉ, a bohemian craft, has made a comeback after several years. The knotted-cord craft that had reached the pinnacle of its fame in the 1970s is the neo favourite among textile designers and interior designers.

The cord used in making macramé design includes cotton, wool, linen, jute and even leather and

offers an organic yet complex aesthetic feel to home decor.

Do it right

Macramé offers several design possibilities. To get a best fit, it is wise to first identify what, how and where you want to include it in your existing home decor. Whether you want to include it to highlight some space or complement the decor, your choice of macramé feature will depend on that. A macramé decor feature can add the charm of a hand-crafted elegance, adding warmth in earthy tone to uninteresting spaces. It possesses a boho-casual appeal and works well when paired with similar decor tone in the surrounding. It goes well with wooden furniture and soft furnishings in the similar tone. "With macramé curtains, one can opt for dense weave for privacy or loose fringe for a dainty look. Macramé curtains also act as the noiseless replacements to the bead curtains that are often used as dividers... As macramé features are generally in neutral colours, you can introduce specks of contrast by pairing it with vibrant accents. For instance, you could pair a macramé chair with colourful cushion or



off-white coloured macramé curtains could be the backdrop to a coral or blue coloured seating," says Radeesh Shetty, Lighting Designer and Director, The Purple Turtles.

Myriad hues

Macramé is trending in the design and décor sector due to its versatility and you can add a little bit of your own personality in designs, which can be custom made. "The macramé wall hangings bring this same versatility, giving this trend a reason to stay. These works of art can be monotone in colour or contain an array of fibres in every shade of the rainbow. They are grand, beautiful, stretching wide or hanging long and also provide an instant shot of texture to any room," says Malini Chawla Saigal, Momprenuer & COO Ravissant.

GRAND AND INTRICATE

Macramé is intricate, grand and can be modified to fit in any look. It can be done in monotonous or using contrasting threads. Amita Kanwar, creative director, Window Passions, avers, "Today the focus of interior trend is increasingly moving towards fusion where we fuse traditional with contemporary and thus macramé fits in perfectly. Today macramé is just not restricted to a bohemian décor. It can be tweaked with the kind of yarns, which could be used in multiple kinds

of decor styles. Macramé is a new décor trend because it adds a sense of dimension, and an effortless way to integrate some texture to a setting." Right from the living room, bedrooms to garden décor, this knotty textile form has found many uses in the choicest of interiors. Baashobe Majumdar, vice-president, design, Home Lane, adds, "Macramé is most commonly found in wall hangings. They also look beautiful in the form of plant holders. Just about any kind of plant

can be hung from a macramé plant holder. They are especially useful if you are short on space; you can suspend plants at various heights from your window grills or hooks on the wall. Those skilled in the art of macramé can make exquisite bedspreads, throws, wall screens and lacy curtains. Rich in pattern and texture, it can add a lovely dimension to any bedroom. You could also choose pieces that are embellished with beads of different sizes and shapes."

The macramé home ornamentation trend is back in a huge way.

Adorning households nationwide, macramé is coming back in a stylish, up to date mode, adding sleek accents to several areas. Macramé wall hangings, plant hangers, curtains, cushion covers and chairs or swinging seats hung from the ceiling are some of the top trending forms for interior decor.

Easy to maintain

As macramé features are made of cord or fabric, they are easier to maintain and wash. Also, as they are mostly lighter in colour, it's better to wash them separately and not with dyed fabric. Alternately, a soft brush can be used on a daily basis to keep the dust from settling on these pieces. The material you choose to make the

macramé cord is very important. Leather will stretch after a while, and could lose its shape. Hemp and jute are very popular, so is cotton twine. Ekta Khialani, founder, Casa Novo, says, "Macramé objects will require the same level of upkeep and gentle usage. This means in the case of larger objects, gentle vacuuming will work. Avoid staining these

objects as they are made out of rope-like material. One should periodically invest in dry cleaning smaller objects like cushions to maintain them. Also, like any other fabric objects, know when it is time to switch and say goodbye to your macramé beauties and invest in newer ones." So are you ready to give your home a macramé makeover?



Creeper that spreads far & wide

ANTIGONON LEPTOPUS is also known by its native name Mexican Creeper or Coral Vine or Love Vine. The pretty, pink ornamental flowers are used in wedding bouquets and the vine mass colour creates a monsoon sky, casting a magical spell on the onlooker. The flowers also attract birds, bees and butterflies. It is a fast-grow-



GREEN HOUSE

AMARJEET BAITH

ing tendril-climbing vine, which spreads to 25 feet and beyond. The evergreen leaves are coarse, heart-shaped and even triangular, of medium size with wavy edges. The showy flowers are borne in panicle clusters in abundance, producing pink or white flowers, which are in full bloom towards the end of the rainy season.

Best suited

Love Vine creeps aggressively, so it has to be planted very carefully with a definite purpose. If you want to keep it small, plant it in a container. In a garden it can trail on arches and pergolas but it requires regular management. It can be planted to engulf a dry tree, spread over an old or abandoned

building or at a farmhouse to cover a fence or boundary walls with evergreen leaves and colorful bloom. It is an excellent screening climber, most suited for large gardens or open spaces in cantonments or in an institute or university campus.

Location

It flourishes in a place with abundant sunlight and warmth. Considering its vigorous growth potential, the plants are planted at 25-30m apart.

Soil

Antigonon grows well in any type of well-drained soil, but needs moisture

Fast-growing

Love Vine is a very fast growing creeper, so periodic pruning and training is a must. If it's not done, it will spread beyond its area of introduction and characterise itself as an invasive vine. Winters are the best time to contain the vine after a bounty of bloom



during its growing period.

Irrigation

It is a drought-tolerant

climber. Regular irrigation keeps the soil moist and the plant in good health. In summers, the irrigation

requirement increases, so deep irrigation is desirable every fortnight. During the growth period also, the moisture level has to be maintained.

Fertiliser

The plant hardly requires additional doses of manure and fertilisers. Avoid excessive nitrogenous fertilisers, which will only increase foliage mass.

Propagation

It reproduces by its seeds. Also, by cuttings either broken accidentally or planted. The plant produces underground tubers and large rootstocks, which helps in multiplication. The tubers re-sprout if the plant is cut back or damaged by frost. The seeds float on water and are carried to far off locations. In home gardens, they are cultivated in nurseries. In extreme winters, it enters into dormancy.

Other features

It is a prolific seed producer. The seeds are edible and are also consumed by many animals and birds. It has medicinal value to control diabetes.

Diseases

Antigonon faces no serious threat from any pest or disease, barring a few. Just be vigilant and treat accordingly.

Velvet is taking over interiors

VELVET is fast becoming something of a trans-seasonal fabric choice in interior schemes all over the world. From hotels and bars to the most Pin-able of living rooms and bedrooms, velvet has scalloped, pleated and dimpled its way onto our feeds and into our homes. From upholstery to curtains and carpets; the trend is here to stay.

One of the most prominent ways we are introducing velvet into our interior schemes is via upholstery on armchairs and sofas. Sofa Workshop, a leading sofa retailer, has reported a 58 per cent increase in searches for velvet sofas year on year, while online furniture retailer, Wayfair.co.uk, has quoted a staggering 500 per cent year on year increase.

However, velvet sofas may not have the monopoly on the market, as the site has also seen a spike in searches for "velvet wallpaper", which is up more than 1000 per cent year on year. Heritage carpet manufacturer, Brintons, has also revealed that velvet-style carpets are enjoying an increase in sales. Nadia McGowan Hill, Wayfair.co.uk's resident style advisor, believes this is indicative of a growing confidence in the material, "proving that this trend is being creatively adapted into home improvements and

decor, as well as furniture."

But it's not just a creative confidence in the fabric that's fuelling its popularity, as

Kelling Design/KDLoves's founder and creative director Emma Deterding tells me. "There are so many bombproof varieties of velvets available today. You can be as daring as you like, without the fear of spills, stains, wear and tear. Velvets are now just as life-proof as any other fabric on the market."

Shelby Pearson-Hendry, visual merchandise and photography manager at Sofology, agrees and believes the variety available in top retailers today is also driving the market. "The popularity of velvet continues, not only because of the luxury and richness that it offers, but also because of the wealth of choice in terms of finishes. From crushed and matte velvet all the way through to deep pile, with interwoven pattern, this sumptuous fabric is both liveable and indulgent." Helen Bygraves, co-founder of London and Surrey-based design studio, Hill House Interiors, points out that due to the variety available, velvet "lends itself well to both minimalist and maximalist designs", meaning its popularity reaches across two of the key schools of aesthetics in interiors.

— The Independent