

***January. My husband loves winter.
Me, I need a house project.***

I gaze at the dining room:
perfectly nice as is. But I'm a
princess at heart, and long for
lavishly grandiose
moldings,
swags,
pilasters,
the works.
I'm talking
18th century palazzo.

Or the St. Petersburg

Winter Palace.

So I want to stage some sculptural drama.

What if a flower design were glazed in ivory and then perched atop a matching ivory cabinet, like some kind of *theatrical carved finial*....

Literally over the top.

To make this happen, I'll need plants with considerable **substance and heft**.

First thought: yucca.



Next, a lucky break —

One of my neighbors is more than happy to let me chop all the leaves off a dead **banana tree** on her front porch.

And then, my friend Fran spots a rare “golden rain” tree (*koelreuteria bipinnata*), festooned with puffballs. Each puffball is a gigantic polyhedron cluster of strange pods, like *tiny paper lanterns*.

And a sprinkling of rudbeckia bobbles is the ***icing on the cake***.





*f*leur de lys crown.
spectral sea anemone.
a nest of snowy owlets.
rough diadem in
a moonlight setting.