



Green County

FCS Extension

December 2008—January 2009

Dress Your Holiday Tree in a Family Heirloom

Traditions are an enormous part of holiday celebrations in Kentucky as well as the rest of the country. What we eat, how we decorate, and how we handle gift exchanges all define our family values and traditions. Some of these traditions last a lifetime, and are passed on to future generations. Here's an idea for creating an heirloom skirt to adorn the tree before gifts arrive at its base.

The origin is not really known but some accounts say it was to protect the floor from candle wax while others merely claim that it was designed to hide the often unsightly tree stand. Either way, it is now a fashion statement of sorts. From plain red felt or velvet to quilted varieties, holiday tree skirts can cost a little or a lot. Creating your own version, however, ensures your family a lifetime of holiday memories. Try to incorporate your entire family into the creating of your holiday tree skirt. Start with a template for the shape of the skirt. Be sure to leave an opening where the tree trunk and stand will be situated. Most skirts extend at least two feet out around the base of the tree.

Adorn your tree skirt with photos of the family. With the ability to print on fabric or fabric transfers, computers and scanners help make heirlooms like a family photo tree skirt a breeze. By copying photographs onto transfer paper, they can be ironed onto contrasting fabric and stitched to the skirt fabric. Special fabric, sized and prepared for the printer is also available to print the photos directly. If you don't have a scanner or printer, your local copy shop can perform this task for you. Be sure to leave room for growing families! Transfer a few holiday patterns like stars, packages or angels onto the skirt layout as well. As the family grows, through additional births or marriages, photos can be sewn over the patterns, adding each new family member to the heirloom.

A variation of this skirt might include embroidering the names of all family members. Again, leave room for additional members as the family expands. Adding birth and wedding dates is a fun way to chronicle when each member joined the family. A no-sew suggestion would be to use permanent fabric marking pens in place of needle and thread. Christmas tree skirts may not be foremost in your holiday decorating plans, but with a little imagination and simple creativity, they can become a part of your family's history. Start planning your family's holiday tree skirt today, and enjoy your cherished family heirloom for years to come.

Source: Marjorie M. Baker, Extension Associate for Clothing and Textiles, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture

Plan for Holiday Expenses

As the holiday season approaches, make a written spending plan for your extra holiday expenses. Calculate how much "extra" money is available for gift buying, decorations, extra entertaining, etc. Once you know how much money is available for extra holiday expenses, decide how much you want to spend on each category of your holiday spending plan.

Making plans early will save you financial stress later when the after-the-holiday credit card bills arrive. Remember to only spend what you can afford. Over spending on the holidays can leave you paying twice as much for these items. Overspending will also keep your future income tied up with holiday debt.

Try to make your holidays as financially stress free as possible with before-the-event planning.

Source: Suzanne Badenhop, Extension Specialist for Family Resource Management, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture

Spiced Hot Chocolate

- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup baking cocoa
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon cloves
- 8 cups milk
- 2/3 cups water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Miniature marshmallows



In a 3 quart microwave safe dish, combine the first six ingredients. Whisk in milk and water until smooth. Microwave, uncovered, on high for 3-4 minutes or until mixture comes to a boil. Stir in vanilla. Ladle into mugs; serve with marshmallows, if desired. Yield: 2 ½ quarts.

Source: *Taste of Home Holiday Book*

**Green County
Cooperative Extension
Service**

**106 S. Public Square
Greensburg, KY 42743**

**Phone: (270) 932-5311
(270) 932-3949**

Fax: (270) 932-4390

Email: audrey.myers@uky.edu

**Website:
<http://ces.ca.uky.edu/green/>**

Audrey Myers, *Audrey Myers*
County Extension Agent For
Family & Consumer Sciences



Vitamin C and the Common Cold

It seems like everything from water to cold remedies are being fortified with vitamin C. Although vitamin C has been touted for the common cold since the 1970s, there is little proof that vitamin C actually has any effect on the common cold.

Vitamin C is an essential nutrient that acts as an antioxidant, reducing oxidative stress in our cells. Vitamin C is essential for the synthesis of collagen, an important structural component of blood vessels, tendons, ligaments, and bone. Acting as an enzyme, it is involved in many pathways that keep the body healthy. Vitamin C also improves the absorption of iron.

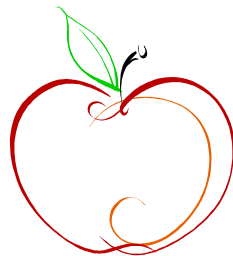
Vitamin C is naturally found in fruits and vegetables. A 6 ounce glass of orange juice can provide the recommended dietary allowance of vitamin C for women at 75 milligrams (mg). Men require slightly more (90 mg). It is suggested that smokers and breast feeding women may need more. Eating five servings of fruits and vegetables should give you about 200 mg of vitamin C in the diet. Since there are possible problems with large doses (over 2,000 mg) of vitamin C, supplements besides the recommended amounts are not recommended.

Studies show that increases of vitamin C may help reduce the risk of chronic diseases, from cardiovascular disease to cataracts. However, the common cold research has provided conflicting results. Under extreme conditions, such as marathon runners, vitamin C may reduce the risk of catching a cold. But the general consensus is that there is little or no benefit in vitamin C preventing or treating the common cold.

Source: Sandra Bastin, Extension Specialist for Food and Nutrition, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture

Apple Coffee Cake

- 5 cups tart apples, cored, peeled, and chopped
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup dark raisins
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 1/2 cups sifted all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon



Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly oil a 13x9x2 inch pan. In a large mixing bowl, combine apples with sugar, raisins, and pecans; mix well. Let stand 30 minutes. Stir in oil, vanilla and egg. Sift together flour, soda, and cinnamon; stir into apple mixture about 1/3 at a time just enough to moisten dry ingredients. Turn batter into pan. Bake 35-40 minutes. Cool cake slightly before serving.

Yield 20 servings.

Nutritional analysis per serving: 188 calories, 5 g total fat; <1g saturated fat; 11 mg cholesterol; 68 mg sodium.

Source: Stay Young at Heart: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health



FYI: Cultural Arts Contest is coming up in February! Ask your cultural arts chairman about the 2009 rules and categories.

Healthy Holiday Eating Tips

Holiday seasons often bring extra weight gain. Over the years, these extra few pounds can add up until obesity looms later in life. Discovering how to prevent these extra pounds may also help reduce the risk of other diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, coronary heart disease, some types of cancer, as well as other serious health problems. To keep from feeling deprived during the holidays, fix traditional favorites, but eat smaller portions. Look for ways to reduce the calories in side dishes. For example, use low-fat soup in a green bean casserole and sugar and butter substitutes in candied sweet potatoes. Also consider alternatives such as steamed green beans with slivered almonds, mashed sweet potatoes, or roasted herbed carrots. Lighter fare such as raw fruits and vegetables with low-fat dips and reduced-fat cheese and crackers provides color and nutrition without a lot of extra calories.

Never skip meals all day to be able to go to a holiday party. Instead eat low-fat, nutritious meals and drink plenty of fluids all day. Before leaving for the party, drink a large glass of water and eat a snack like yogurt or whole-grain crackers with peanut butter. When you get to the party, put food on your plate instead of eating directly from the buffet. Focus on healthy foods, and then choose bite-sized samples of several desserts and appetizers rather than a whole piece of chocolate cake or a plate of fried chicken pieces or meatballs. To keep from nibbling on food without thinking about it, move away from the table after putting food on your plate.

During the holidays, maintain your physical activity routines. Suggest that everyone go for a walk through the neighborhood or to the park so you can enjoy your favorite activities without going overboard. If you concentrate on conversation rather than food, you may also find that the holidays are a fun time, instead of a stressful time trying to avoid those extra pounds.

Source: Sandra Bastin, Extension Specialist for Food and Nutrition, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture

Thought for the Month:

Keep love in your heart. A life without it is like a sunless garden when the flowers are dead. The consciousness of loving and being loved brings a warmth and richness to life that nothing else can bring.

Oscar Wilde

Roll call:

What was your best Christmas present?

Hints for Wrapping the Perfect Gift

Everyone likes to see a beautifully wrapped gift. It's a creative activity that's fun and brings joy to both the person giving the gift and the person receiving it. It doesn't have to be perfect, but it's a part of gift-giving. In fact the act of presenting a gift can be as important as the gift itself. Here are a few hints to help give your next gift wrap project that extra special touch.

- Select gift wrapping using the same principles you do for clothing and home furnishings. Match or coordinate patterns, colors, and textures to create an attractive, finished design.
 - Use a box to make the gift easier to wrap as well as to disguise and protect the gift.
 - Lay the paper on a table with decorative side down. Place the box in the center of the paper and wrap it around the box, measuring enough to go around three sides and overlap on the bottom. Cut wrapping paper to fit, leaving a few inches extra to allow for the overlapping and also enough to fold at each end of the box.
 - Wrap the paper around the box. For a professional, finished look, fold under the exposed or top edge of the paper along the overlapped edge. Make a sharp, flat crease that will lie flat. Use double-stick tape to fasten this folded-under edge in place.
 - When folding the ends toward the box, sharply crease the edges at an angle to fit against the box side. Lap one end piece over the other and fasten with double-stick tape. Repeat on other end of the box.
 - Finish a gift wrap with ribbon and bow, cutting the ends of ribbons with a slant or "v" cut.
 - For a quick wrap simply keep gift bags on hand. Then all you need to do is add tissue paper, place the gift inside the bag, and top with a fancy ribbon and ornament.
- Use two or even three layers of different colors of crisp tissue paper to add flair and excitement when opening the gift.

References: Adler, Linda. *Gift Wrapping/Trends and Presentations*. 2007.
 Summerlin, Linda. *Let's Wrap! Spectacular Gift Wrapping Made Easy*. Absolute Press, Encino, CA. 2004.

Source: Linda Adler, Extension Specialist for Home Furnishings, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture

Online Newsletters

The Green County Cooperative Extension Service is doing its best to meet the needs of its clientele. If you receive this newsletter and in the future would like to receive it through email, please let us know. We are continuing to look for ways to both provide information through an accurate and informative way, while also being cost effective.

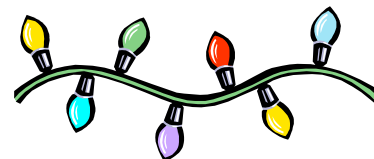


December

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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Important Dates:

- Dec. 4 **Mae's Homemakers** meeting at the home of Nadine White, 5:00 P.M. C.T.
- Dec. 8 Rag Quilt Class, Extension Office, 1:00-4:00 P.M.
- Dec. 9 Needlework, Extension Office, 10:00-12:00 C.T.
- Dec. 9 **Summersville Homemakers** meeting at Jen's Little Kitchen in Summersville, 5:30 P.M. C.T.. After meal, meet at the home of Duval Hay for dessert and \$5.00-\$7.00 gift exchange.
- Dec. 15 Scrapbook Class, Extension Office, 2:00-4:00 P.M.
- Dec. 15 Basket Class (Vegetable Garden Trio Basket), Basement of Extension Office, 4:00 P.M. C.T.
- Dec. 16 **Highland Homemakers** meeting at Green County Extension Office, 11:00 A.M. C.T. Potluck meal, \$10.00 gift exchange.
- Dec. 18 Green County Quilt Guild, Extension Office, 10:00-12:00 C.T.
- Dec. 23 Needlework, Extension Office, 10:00-12:00 C.T.
- Dec. 24-Jan. 1 **Office Closed Happy Holidays**
- Jan. 6 Training "New Home Options for the 21st Century", Extension Office, 10:00-11:00 C.T.
- Jan. 13 Needlework, Extension Office, 10:00-12:00 C.T.
- Jan. 13 **Summersville Homemakers** meeting
- Jan. 19 Scrapbook Class, Extension Office, 2:00-4:00 C.T.
- Jan. 20 **Highland Homemakers** meeting
- Jan. 22 Green County Quilt Guild meeting, Extension Office, 10:00-12:00 C.T.
- Jan. 27 Training, "Family Photo", Extension Office, 10:00-11:00 C.T.
- Jan. 27 Needlework, Extension Office, 10:00-12:00 C.T.



Chairmen:

Please remember to turn in your reports by January 15.



Disabilities accommodated with prior notification.