

Mrs. Barbara Bomberger

A Creative Egg Decorating Artist



by
Mrs.
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Farm Feature
Writer

With the first day of spring only five days away and Easter just two weeks away women everywhere are thinking about decorating, their spring wardrobes, beautiful flowers, gardens and the various activities that go along with this season of the year. Truly there is no season that restores the hope of everyone as does spring. For Christians, Easter with its annual observance of the resurrection of Jesus, is the basis of their faith. The egg has been the symbol of Easter and new life for time immemorial. Some ladies might like to try their skills at the ever popular art of decorating eggs for Easter this year. There are many methods used.

Mrs. Barbara Bomberger, 60 S. Main Street, Manheim, has become well known for her ability to decorate eggs because she uses some very old methods and creates very beautiful, unusual and interesting ones. She loves to show people how to decorate them and thousands of people have watched her at the Kutztown Folk Festival where she has demonstrated dyeing and decorating eggs for nine years. Her granddaughter, Sally Bomberger, has been her co-worker there the past couple years. They also make cornhusk distlefinks (birds) and place an egg in them. This festival is held for eight days, including the Saturday before and after July fourth each year. This year it will be held June 28 through July 5. This event has been going on for 25 years. It was through Mrs. Bomberger's teaching Mrs. Mark Eaby to decorate eggs by the Fabrege method that Mrs. Eaby's husband, who manages this folk festival, invited her to participate. She also demonstrates egg decorating, mainly the scratch method, at Gimbel's Pennsylvania Excitement Days in their downtown store in Philadelphia the second week of May.

Although Mrs. Bomberger took a course at the Iris Club eleven or twelve years ago in decorating eggs by the decoupage method perhaps she inherited the talent and the patience to excel in this art. Her great-great-grandmother, Maria Brubaker, decorated them by the



Mrs. Barbara Bomberger, Manheim, her knife in hand is scratch-carving an Easter egg. She decorated all the interesting scratch-carved an-

tiqued, decoupage and Fabrege eggs on the table, many of which are operative.

scratch-carving method and one of hers, dated 1774 with her initials M.B. and a beautiful rose and heart on it, has been displayed at the Kutztown Folk Festival. It is the oldest one of this type on record at this time. Mrs. Bomberger also has a scratch-carved egg done by her grandmother in 1889.

Mrs. Bomberger says she would never be able to count the eggs she has decorated. She has given a lot away, has many around their home, particularly in their large front window at this Easter season, and sold some she made while demonstrating at Kutztown.

She uses principally goose, duck, bantam and pigeon eggs in her decorating, and uses the bantam eggs to make necklaces and pigeon eggs to make matching earrings. She has made at least a dozen necklaces and earring sets. Besides being attractive they look very old because of her method of dyeing and finishing. Mrs. Bomberger has a reserve of several goose eggs from her two geese which she kept in her back yard and keeps the one surviving goose at her niece's farm.

Mrs. Bomberger employs methods of dyeing the eggs used by her ancestors by boiling various things at hand: yellow is produced from onion peel briefly steeped, which is the oldest method of dyeing, saffron or celery leaves; red from beet juice; brown from onion skins steeped to desired brown, tea or coffee; green from early grass clippings or spinach; black from alder or walnut bark; and blue from blueberries. Straining the dye before boiling the eggs produces plain colors. Various shades of brown can be formed by laying eggs among the onion skins. The same way, an interesting blue can be produced by mashing the blueberries and boiling the eggs with them. The result is various shades of blue, light blue where the seeds and skin touched the egg. Use white eggs. The eggs must be clean and free from any trace of grease to take the dye properly. Hard boiled eggs are easiest to dye. Boil them gently for a half hour. This makes the yolk and white so hard that they do not spoil and the eggs can be kept whole indefinitely. Mrs. Bomberger has eggs that are many years old and rattle when shaken.

To achieve various designs and colors gather small leaves or weeds, wash and while wet lay on egg to form design. Cover with onion skins, leaving small bare spaces. Roll in cloth or a piece of nylon stocking, twist ends to secure firmly then place eggs in red or blue dye. The egg will be brown where onion skin touches and white outline of leaves or weeds placed under onion skins. The uncovered part of egg will be red or blue according to dye used. Also interesting colors can be achieved by wrapping eggs in colored materials such as calico, which are not dye set materials, and boiling gently for 20 to 30 minutes.

To produce a German variation of leaf decorated eggs, wash leaves, flowers or grasses and dry them. Dip in a small amount of salad oil or beaten egg white. Arrange them on egg to form a design. Wrap in nylon stocking, tie end close to egg to secure leaves. The nylon stocking gives a slight textured appearance to the egg. Dip the egg in the dyes until desired shade is produced. Remove the wrapping and leaves when cool.

Mrs. Bomberger uses a zacto knife, razor blade, sharp needle or other pointed instrument to scratch through the dye to the natural color of the eggshell to create designs such as rose and heart, animals or birds. She found an easy way to finish and seal scratch-carved eggs is to rub them in her hands with a small amount of varnish.

The method she uses to remove contents of an egg for decorating is to clean it a room temperature. Then she makes a hole in the ends of the egg with a sharp needle or ice pick, about one quarter inch in diameter. Break the yolk with a long needle or cake tester. Shake hard, to break the yolk and white. Use a syringe to blow air in the

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hold to force out contents. Wash out egg and set to dry before using.

Blown eggs can be decorated in many ways and hung on an Easter tree, to make jewelry cases or mounted in a base which you can make from many household items such as curtain rings, buttons, egg cups and perfume bottle tops or can be purchased now at craft shops. Rubber bands are easy to use to mark eggs in half length wise for jewelry boxes. Use a number three pencil to mark egg, also to section off egg in equal parts. The egg can be cut with a jewelry hand saw or electric bench tool. Laces, narrow ribbons or braids, sequins and pearls are used around openings. Small ornaments can be purchased in craft shops or figures cut out of cards to make interesting insets.

Mrs. Bomberger uses the Fabrege method of decorating in some cases. They are cut out and decorated with jewels. The name comes from Peter Carl Fabrege who made this type of decorated tin eggs for the Czar of Russia to present to his wife each Easter from around 1880 to the early nineteen hundreds. Mrs. Bomberger used hinges,

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Mrs. Bomberger, holding an egg which she dyed blue with blueberries, shows some of her beautiful dishes she keeps in her old corner cupboard which was saved from her parents burning home when she was less than five years old.

Country Corner

with: Melissa Piper
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Bicentennial Costumes

Although the actual bicentennial celebration of our country will not take place for another year, many people have asked us where they can find patterns for the colonial costumes.

Fortunately, the pattern companies have been a great help as many of them have already designed and are offering patterns for the costumes with costs beginning at \$1.00.

Many of the designs are for adults as well as children and even offer patterns for the period collars and accessories

For more information or to view the actual patterns, consult the pattern books at your fashion or sewing center or department store.

Federal Market Orders For Fruits and Vegetables

Many people realize that there are market orders for milk, yet few realize that there are also specific market orders for fruits and vegetables. In fact there are 48 market orders which provides for fresh produce in every area of our country

Market orders are designed to cope with crops grown in a specific area and to deal with the marketing of the produce in regional areas

Market orders usually contain some information of minimum quality requirements backed by Federal Inspection so that the poorer quality crops are held from the market.

Marketing orders also help in keeping the supply of a commodity at levels that are best for consumers. By allotment, crops are kept from being marketed in surplus at any one time. This helps to reduce any sharp fluctuation in price.

For more information on the subject write to the Information Division of the Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA, Washington, D. C. 20250