



Polish Christmas customs inspired this straw wreath. To make a wreath, soak straw in water, then drain. Tightly fasten the damp straw to a metal wreath form, wrapping it with fine wire or strong twine. Add bows, balls, bells or baubles as you like.

Floral expert

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focused on the customs of one of these countries - Poland.

There, a shock of grain is stacked in each corner of the family dining room, and wreaths of straw are constructed. On Christmas Eve a child is sent outside in early evening to find the first star. When that star appears the Christmas observance begins. At bedtime, the children go to sleep on straw pallets on the floor, commemorating the Holy Family taking refuge in the stable.

WREATH FOR BIRDS

Mrs. Behler enjoys making food wreaths for the birds and recommends them to anyone who enjoys watching small animals and birds feeding. On a greenery background, she tied small bundles of grain, suet balls, and cross-cut pieces of apple stuck to the wreath with long protruding wood skewers, which the birds can perch on while eating.

During the harvest in Scandinavian countries, farmers set aside special bundles of grain just for the birds. At Christmas, the sheaves are placed on the barn roof or atop a tall gate post. This custom can be adapted by placing a

broomstick in a block of wood, tying stalks of grain to the top of it, and placing it out into the yard.

FAMILY TREE

One very special suggestion Mrs. Behler included was starting a "family tree" tradition. Each year when relatives gather to celebrate the holidays, decorate a small tree with remembrances from them. Her "family tree" includes wedding rings from her mother and grandmother and a stick pin from Germany that belonged to her grandfather.

"In this way, each past member of the family can be with you in a very special,

loving way," Mrs. Behler fondly explains.

"And, by all means, decorate your home for Christmas. But remember, nothin' says lovin' like something from the oven," concluded the talented holiday decorator.

Included in the presentation was a recipe which she uses to make durable, inexpensive molding material. The mix can be worked like bread dough, oven dried and then painted.

DECORATOR BREAD DOUGH

4 cups all purpose flour (not self-rising)
1 cup salt
1 1/2 cups water

Mix flour, salt, and one cup of the water. Continue adding small amount of remaining half cup of water, just until mix is slightly tacky. Knead until soft. Mold into shapes, or roll and cut. Bake for one hour at 350 degrees F. When cold, paint, and shellac as desired. If finished design is to be hung, place a hairpin in the dough while baking. Remove when cold.

POMANDER BALLS

(An excellent project to keep the children occupied for a few minutes!)

Stick whole cloves, close together, covering a lemon or an orange. Fasten a bow and a hook to the top. Finish with a small pine cone fastened to the bow.

The Extension Service prepared and served a special hot tea mix during the lunch break. After several requests, they shared the recipe.

SPICED TEA

1 pound 2 oz. jar of Tang
1 cup instant tea
1 quart dry lemonade mix
1 teaspoon each cinnamon and cloves

Mix ingredients well and store tightly covered. Add spoonful of mix, or as desired, to each cup of boiling water.



Berks Co. Society 6

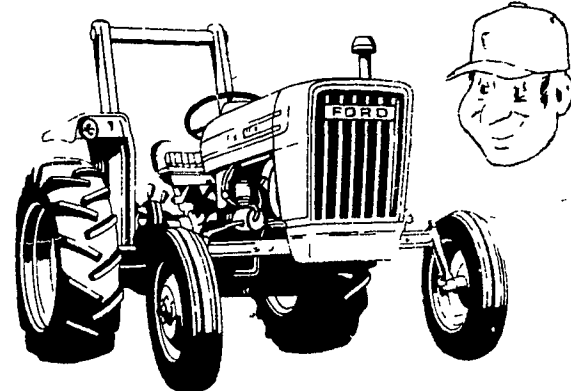
The Berks County of Farm Women Group 6, held their Christmas party at the Exeter Restaurant on December 3. Thirty-eight persons attended. Rufus Brubaker, Manheim, showed a film entitled, "Beautiful America".

There was a short business meeting following the dinner. Mrs. David Hauseman and Mrs. William Koch will be the two delegates from the group for the state

convention to be held in Harrisburg on January 10 and 11. Mrs. Richard Schlegel will also be attending the convention January 11.

Secret pals names were revealed at this time and new ones selected for the coming year.

The January 18 meeting will be at the home of Mrs. William Mest, Oley, R2, at 8 p.m.



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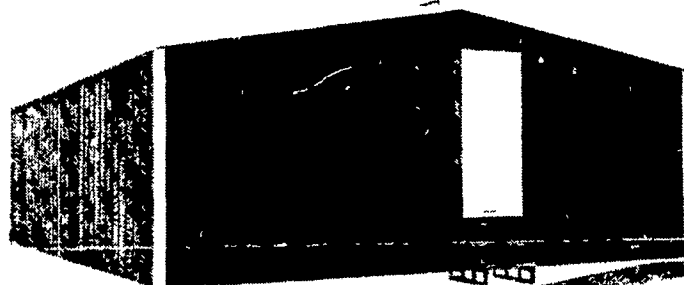
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