

## Cheese is a treat for mice and men at Christmas

ROSEMONT, Ill. — Everyone has someone on their Christmas list that is hard to buy for because of size, not knowing what they need, or for some unique reason. For those people, why not buy them a gift they can eat, like cheese.

Cheese is a most welcome gift, especially at holiday times. Many shops and delicatessens have assorted cheese trays already prepared. Or, to add an individual touch to the gift, special cheese can be selected and packaged.

The most pleasing assortment contains cheeses in a range of flavors, from mild to sharp, with a variety of textures — soft, semi-soft and hard. Select three to six different types, depending on your budget.

To make assembling a gift package easier, here are some descriptions of natural cheeses grouped according to taste and texture.

Cheddar, Colby and Provolone are hard cheeses with flavors ranging from mild to sharp, depending on how long they've been

allowed to age. The longer natural cheeses age, the sharper and firmer they become.

Cheddar is a versatile, flavorful cheese that makes an excellent appetizer or dessert as well as adding its distinct zest to cooked foods. It is sold in random weights, wheels, cylinders (longhorn) and blocks.

Colby is a member of the Cheddar family with a softer, more open texture and milder flavor than Cheddar. It's best used as a snack, in sandwiches and as a cooking ingredient.

Provolone is aged slightly and usually smoked to produce a savory taste. It is used frequently in Italian cooking, but also goes well with crackers and fruit. Its appearance adds a unique touch to a gift package as it is often sold in irregular shaped spheres and sausage-like loaves tied with twine.

Swiss and Gruyere have a sweet, nut-like taste and make good appetizers and snacks. Swiss is sold in random cuts; however, most of the Gruyere sold in the

U.S. is pasteurized, processed cheese sold in small, individually wrapped wedges.

The Dutch cheeses, Edam and Gouda, also have a mild, nutty flavor. Their small, round, loaf-like shapes and red wax coatings make them attractive additions to a gift package. Both are creamy yellow in color and are used for appetizers and desserts. They sometimes contain mixtures of cumin, caraway and other spices or have a smoked flavor added.

Brie, Camembert, Port du Sault, and Limburger are surface-ripened cheeses in which a mold or bacterial culture grows on the outside and gradually penetrates the cheese to produce the characteristic taste and texture.

Brie and Camembert are mold-ripened cheeses, sold in small, foil-covered wheels. They have a light crust with a very soft interior and a mild but pungent flavor.

Port du Salut is firmer than the others and has a distinctive aroma similar to

but lighter than that of the soft, aromatic Limburger. All four are served most often as dessert with fruit.

Brick, Muenster and Monterey Jack are semi-soft with open textures and mild but unique flavors. They are good additions to appetizer and dessert trays.

With the cheeses you might want to give a serving board and appropriate cutting utensils, sold at cheese and gourmet shops.

A blunt, rounded knife is used to serve soft, spreadable cheese; a wire-and-roller-type cutter is best for semi-soft cheese.

For hard cheese, buy a sharp, curved utensil with small prongs for picking up the pieces as they are cut. A plane, which creates slices as it is scraped along the surface of the cheese, also is good for hard and semi-soft cheeses.

A spoonlike utensil with a slightly concave surface is used with the crumbly, blue-veined cheeses.

To prepare a distinctive gift package, pair several dessert cheeses with com-

patible fruits: Camembert and Brie with green grapes or apples; Blue with Anjou and Bosc pears; Provolone with Bartlett pears; Cheddar with Jonathan apples; Gouda and Edam with Delicious apples or green grapes.

Lightly flavored crackers or hor d'oeuvres-style breads make a nice addition to a cheese assortment.

When assembling your gifts, remember that natural cheese must not be kept outside the refrigerator for long periods of time. Store them at 40°F. in their original packages or wrapped securely with

aluminum foil or plastic wrap.

If you don't have room in your refrigerator for lots of gift-wrapped boxes, wrap your presents just before giving them.

Browsing in cheese shops may make you want to taste some of the less familiar varieties yourself, or perhaps serve them at holiday parties. To create a cheese tray for an appetizer or dessert with fruit, use the same type of combination as in a gift. Three to six different kinds of cheese will give you and your guests a pleasing variety of tastes and textures from which to choose.

## USDA earmarks funds for nutrition work

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Agriculture has awarded \$20 million to 57 states and territories to teach children, teachers and school food service personnel about nutrition.

The grants are made available through USDA's nutrition education and training program. States will use the grants to develop and carry out nutrition education and training programs in schools, and for projects that provide information in the important relationship between

nutrition, food and health. The grants provide each state with about 40 cents for each child enrolled in schools and child care institutions. No state will receive less than \$75,000. Congress provided the \$20 million in funds in recent legislation.

A notice of the funds available by state was published in the Dec. 7 Federal Register.

Funds available to Pennsylvania for this program during fiscal year 1980 total \$94,945. Maryland will have \$373,714; New Jersey \$650,016.

## Consider a living Christmas tree

NEWARK, Del. — If you can use a large specimen evergreen in your yard, you might consider buying a living Christmas tree this year. The cost will be double or more that of a cut tree, depending on the species and size you choose, says University of Delaware extension horticulturist Dr. Charles Dunham. But as a living symbol of Christmas and as a permanent addition to your home landscape, the investment could be well justified.

Species suitable for Christmas and home garden use include the white pine, Douglas fir and Norway spruce. The Scotch pine, though widely used as a cut Christmas tree, doesn't usually do well in Delaware's climate, notes Dunham. He doesn't recommend the Colorado blue spruce either, since this tree is always expensive and is less likely to survive a mid-winter planting.

In choosing a planting site for your live tree, try to select a spot on the north side of your property. Here it will cut out cold winds without screening out the warming rays of the winter sun. Be sure to allow enough room for growth, too. Each of these species will grow into a large tree needing 20 feet or more to spread.

You can buy a live tree any time in the fall and store it outdoors. Just take care to keep the root ball moist by watering it once a week when rainfall is inadequate.

Dig the planting hole for your live Christmas tree ahead of time on a day when the weather is good. Cover the hole with straw, plastic or burlap. And store enough soil indoors to fill in around the tree. Then you'll be ready to plant after the holidays, regardless of weather conditions then.

While it's being used indoors, your live tree must not be allowed to dry out. So thoroughly soak the ball of earth covering the roots before you bring it inside for decorating. Wrap the root ball in plastic to help retain moisture and also to protect your floor. Just be sure to remove this plastic covering before you plant the tree.

After Christmas it would be best to move your live tree back outdoors promptly. Follow the usual procedures when setting it in the ground. Remove the rope and burlap from the root ball. Then set this in the planting hole. Be sure to tamp the soil firmly around roots and water well. Then spread several inches of loose mulch around the base of the tree.

As an extra precaution, the specialist suggests you stake the tree so that it won't blow over before it has a chance to become firmly rooted. And be sure to give it extra water during any dry spells next summer.

With this kind of care, this year's Christmas tree will soon become a valuable landscape specimen.



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Since feed costs account for about 75% of the total cost of most operations, it pays to invest in feeds formulated for Eastern pork

producers. 1,800 litters a year has taught Agway a lot about feeding pigs. Call your Agway store or Representative, they're ready to put this knowledge to work for you.



Lowell Sensenig, Mohnton RD 2, Pa. has a fattening operation marketing 900 to 1,000 head a year. Why does he like Agway?

They've got feeds that perform a program that works and a serviceman who's here when I need him. (His serviceman is Dick Myers at right of Henry Hoover, Agway, Ephrata, Pa.)

Mr. Sensenig takes his pigs from 8 weeks old (about 50 lbs.) to market weight in four months with a conversion rate of 3.1 to 3.2.

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