

Color eggs the natural way

LITITZ — Did you ever wonder how the first Easter eggs were colored? Long, long ago our ancestors noticed that berries and certain other foods color the fingers when being prepared, and that beverages such as tea, wine, and fruit juice leave stains on clothing that won't wash out. People have been making use of natural coloring agents ever since.

Instead of using pre-packaged Easter egg coloring kits this year, the family might enjoy experimenting with these natural colors, suggests JoAnn Cloud, University of Delaware dietetics student.

A check of the kitchen cupboards should turn up several possibilities. Spices, teas, herbs, vegetables, and fruits all yield color. The following list should help:

Beverages: tea, coffee, grape juice.

Fruits: pomegranates, plums, purple grapes, blueberries, blackberries, huckleberries.

Seeds: annatto, sunflower

Spices, Sauces: tumeric, paprika, chili powder, curry, saffron, soy sauce.

Vegetables: onion skins (red and white), watercress (outer dark green leaves), spinach, purple cabbage, carrot tops.

Use either the kitchen stove or a portable burner for your egg coloring. You'll need a measuring cup and spoon, stirring rods, a strainer and an old pot or coffee can. Choose utensils you don't mind having stained.

The amount of coloring agent you'll need to prepare your coloring liquid will depend on the color you want to achieve and the number of eggs you plan to color. Generally speaking, the more coloring agent you use, the darker the coloring liquid. Just keep in mind you'll need enough liquid to color the entire egg. Also, the

longer the egg stays in the liquid, the darker it will become.

To mix your coloring liquid, fill your pot or coffee can with enough water to cover your eggs, but don't add the eggs yet. Add the coloring agent and one tablespoon of salt to help draw out the color. Allow the mixture to soak for six to 12 hours.

Since the coloring process involves long cooking, you might as well start with raw eggs to save time and energy, Cloud suggests.

If you want parts of the eggs to remain white, color those parts with white crayon or use candle wax. The coloring won't stick to the wax. Then add the raw eggs to the colored water and simmer gently for 30 minutes. Do not boil.

Remove your colored, hard-cooked egg and strain the residue from the coloring liquid. The liquid may be used again to color more eggs.



Flower demonstration planned

LANCASTER — A demonstration of flower arranging in the colonial manner will be presented Thursday, April 23 at 1:30 p.m. at the Farm and Home Center.

The demonstration, entitled "Spring," will be presented by

Claude Jones, Jr., a florist from Williamsburg, Virginia.

Jones, who does extensive work with colonial Williamsburg, recently demonstrated at the Williamsburg Garden Symposium. He was featured with his arrangements in the January-

February, 1980, issue of Colonial Homes magazine.

The program is being presented by the Farm and Home Foundation and the Green Acres Garden Club and will be open to the public free of charge.

Coloring eggs is old tradition

LITITZ — The coloring of eggs at Easter was first introduced to America in the 1600's by Dutch settlers in Pennsylvania and New York, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

The Dutch settlers brought with them many games centered around the brightly colored egg. The customs of Easter egg hunts and egg rolling spread throughout the colonies and are still being practiced today, adding to the merriment of celebrating Easter.

The tradition of the Easter egg is one of our oldest customs, going as far back as 5,000 B.C. The tradition, surprisingly enough, began as a pagan custom, long before Christianity was a reality.

The egg symbolized the world to the pagans, and the color red represented the "force of life." Pagans exchanged eggs as tokens of goodwill at great spring festivals held each year. Festivals

celebrated the beginning of a new year and renewal of life, new crops and a new food supply.

The Christian era brought forth the new faith, and the Apostles were confronted with eliminating customs that conflicted with their new religion. But Christians chose to adopt spring celebrations and colored eggs at Easter. The egg became a Christian symbol for renewal of life, representing the Resurrection of Christ, and red symbolized Christ's blood shed on the cross.

As time passed, colored eggs included all colors of the rainbow. Coloring eggs has become universal, but the egg's meaning varies throughout the world.

Many unusual Easter egg customs originated in Europe. "Pace-egging" was popular at Easter time in England. Children dressed up in costumes much like we do at Halloween, and went from door to door asking for Easter eggs. The object was to see how many colored eggs the children could collect.

In some parts of England, colored eggs were used for sending elaborately decorated Easter messages of love. These are highly prized and have become treasured family heirlooms, handed down from generation to generation.

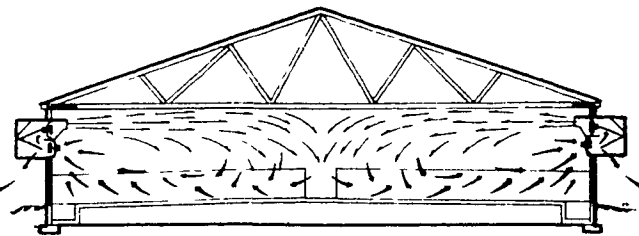
In Italy, large quantities of colored eggs were blessed in church on Easter eve. These blessed eggs were the first nourishment taken after Lent. Each family kept a "charger" with as many as two to three hundred colored eggs. Every guest was invited to eat an Easter egg during the week following Easter.

The Easter Egg has been a symbol of life for nearly 7,000 years, not only as a source of life, but as a source for a healthy life.

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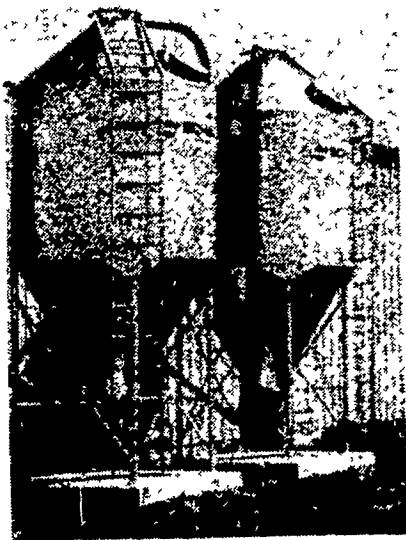
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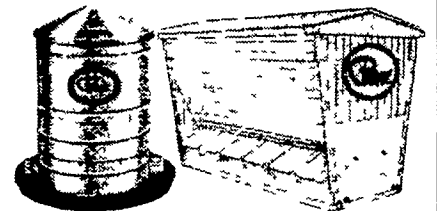


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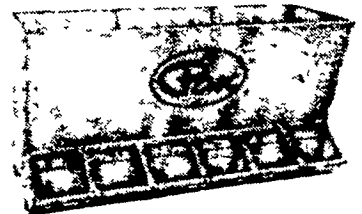
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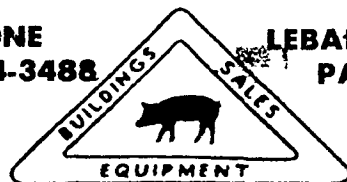


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