

Food executive

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if desired. The heat evaporates the alcohol content and leaves only the flavor.

When baked, each apple goes in an attractive dessert serving dish, and then a small scoop of vanilla ice cream added on top melts with the dessert's warmth and forms a tasty sauce.

Apple slices, deep fried, and kept warm on a serving dish, with confectioners sugar dusted over the top, make a lovely accompaniment to an entree, says Trautman. Apples are cored and sliced crosswise, dipped in pancake batter and deep fried. And, round apple slices, sauteed in butter, make an excellent side dish to pork.

Oranges are popular and generally plentiful at the holidays. Orange shells become interesting dessert cups, created by cutting the fruits in half crosswise and carefully scooping out the pulp for use otherwise. The shell should be cleaned out well, then stored, upside down, in the refrigerator until needed.

When ready to use, Trautman likes to sit the chilled shell cups in attractive dessert dishes, then spoon in sherbet, or even a selection of contrasting colors of sherbets. He recommends serving a small petit-four type cake cube as an accompaniment, or passing a plate of small cake cubes from which guests can help themselves.

Locally grown winter vegetables are usually available and fairly inexpensive through the holiday season, and can add attractive

color and textures to food presentations.

Cabbage, red or white, lends itself to a role as another type of serving container. Slice the head of cabbage in half, then remove part of the inner portion of one of the halves for use in other recipes. Into the empty center of the cabbage half, insert a small dish or bowl, and fill with condiments or dips. Radishes, hand-turned into rose or similar flower shapes, and skewered on sturdy toothpicks, can be stuck into the cabbage "wreath" to add a touch of color to the green background.

Some gardeners are able to store tomatoes until Christmas, and these fresh favorites can be used as a colorful vegetable addition to a plate presentation. Split and covered with parmesan cheese, the tomato halves are baked in the oven, until cooked and the cheese bubbly.

Cherry tomatoes add color to finger-food trays, and Trautman likes to scoop out the top of these miniatures, then stuff with a favorite cheese. These can be prepared ahead and held for several hours in the refrigerator.

Pennsylvania is known for its mushrooms, and Trautman often incorporates them in his planning. A favorite is fresh mushrooms, stems removed, with the remaining cavity stuffed with a meat or sausage combination, or perhaps crab meat, and then baked until tender.

Even that Pennsylvania Dutch classic, the pickled egg, gets a new look with Trautman creativity. Rather than serving them with just the usual yoke centers, he stuffs the halves with ham, chicken or

tuna salad.

Several days before entertaining, get out some favorite "nice things," suggests the food specialist, perhaps family treasures not used for everyday serving. Sit them out where they can be studied, and think about how they might be used in interesting ways to serve and highlight foods.

Finger foods are handy for informal parties, and Trautman leans heavily toward them in his family's own personal entertaining.

"Convenience foods make entertaining so easy," he believes. "And many people overlook what's available in our modern markets, especially the fresh produce sections."

Again and again, Trautman stresses the importance of "presentation," that eye appeal that makes food look elegantly special.

Garnishes often make the difference in that final appearance, and he suggests "cleaning out" the refrigerator to find garnish material, using up the few remaining odds and ends of pickles, or olives, to shape into decorative touches.

Cheery red crabapples, nestled in a bit of curly, green endive, are a favorite plate garnish, or slices of red spiced apples. A red crab apple also makes a nice finishing touch, he says, to a fruit cup, with droplets of the red juice accenting the fruit mixture.

One food ornament that Trautman often designs for large food trays is a work of art, an apple shaped into a "Bird of Paradise."

Using a red or yellow delicious

apple, he slices from one side a section about a half-inch thick at the center, which gives the apple a stabilized side on which to sit.

With the apple on its side, he begins at the top, cutting out a tiny "V" shape, just barely slicing through the skin, then dips it in lemon juice, and carefully lays it aside. About five or six additional "V" cuts are made into the apple, each cutting deeper, but just a fraction of an inch thick, with a sliver of colored peel along the outside. Each "V" is dipped in lemon juice and carefully laid aside. This procedure is repeated on each side of the apple, beginning about halfway down each side.

When all three sides are cut, with deep cuts in the side and top, Trautman begins replacing the "V" shapes, starting with the

largest but staggering each back about a quarter inch. When all have been replaced, they sweep back and protrude from the back of the apple, forming a sort of feathered red wing and tail effect.

Then, from the section originally first cut from one side, he carves a slightly curved neck with head at the top, fastens it to the front of the top cut, and adds a whole clove on each side for eyes.

If all exposed cut edges of the apple have been dipped in lemon juice, the edges will not brown and the "bird" can be kept refrigerated for several hours. At the center of an attractively arranged grouping of cold cuts, sandwiches, cookies or other finger foods, the "bird of paradise" will convince your guests that you, like Bill Trautman, are a food artist.

Bucks Co. 4-H'ers learn to clown

BUCKINGHAM — Tulip the Clown of Doylestown has been working with a group of 4-Hers from the Buckingham Club in the field of clowning. The following members have learned how to apply clown make-up, the history of clowns and how to interact with patients in nursing homes using clowning: Alison Alexander, New Hope; Heather and Erica Glaab,

New Hope; Dawn Godshall, Warrington; Joanne and Heather Guthrie, Buckingham; Amy Janis, Buckingham; Meg Montgomery, Buckingham; Jennifer and Debbie Wiley, Furlong.

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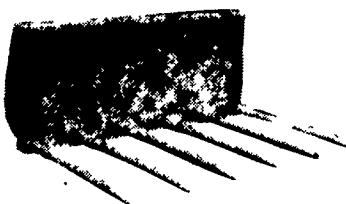
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