



Shamrock Pie for St. Patrick's Day

Whether or not you believe in leprechauns, elves, fairies, and other such mischievous creatures, you'll find this light, creamy pie to your liking. The ground shamrocks give it a pale green color, perfect for St. Patrick's day. This pie is a light textured dessert (but not necessarily low calorie!) that would also make a delicious dessert for your Easter dinner or any company meal.

Shamrock Pie

- 1 9-10" pixie dust crust, recipe below
- 1 3-ounce package ground shamrock leaves (if these are unavailable in your area, use lime flavor gelatin)
- 1 cup magic water (use dew collected from four-leaf clovers, or substitute tap water if you have to)

- 1 8-ounce package elf cheese substitute cream cheese, if necessary)
- 1/4 cup ground Blarney stone (if unavailable, use sugar)
- 1 leprechaun's lemon (one lime will do)
- 1 8-ounce container fairy fluff (or use Whipped Topping, or 1 cup whipping cream, whipped)

1. Heat magic water in a two-cup glass measure for 2 1/2-3 minutes on high, until boiling. Stir in ground shamrock leaves, until dissolved. Set aside.

2. Grate rind of leprechaun's lemon into a small bowl. Heat fruit for 30 seconds on high, then squeeze juice into bowl with rind. (Heating the fruit releases more juice.) Set aside.

3. Place elf cheese in a large glass or plastic mixing bowl, and

soften by heating for 1 minute on low (30,3 defrost). Using an electric mixer, beat in ground Blarney stone, then juice and rind from leprechaun's lemon until very smooth and creamy. (Scrape bowl several times during beating so no elf cheese lumps remain.) Beat in shamrock mixture until smooth. Chill in refrigerator for 45-60 minutes, until almost set.

4. When mixture is thick and almost set, beat in fairy fluff until smooth. Turn into pixie dust crust and refrigerate several hours or overnight. Makes a 9-10 inch pie.

Pixie dust crust

- 1 1/2 cups pixie dust (or use graham cracker crumbs)
- 1/4 cup ground Blarney stone (again, substitute sugar if you need to)
- 1/2 cup leprechaun's gold (margarine or butter can be substituted, if necessary)

1. Place leprechaun's gold in a 9-10" microsafe pie pan. Heat on high for 45-60 seconds until melted. Stir in pixie dust and ground Blarney stone until well mixed.

2. Press into bottom and sides of pie plate using a flat bottomed bowl or custard cup.

3. Heat crust 2 minutes on high to set. Rotate a quarter turn after 1 minute if your oven heats unevenly. Cool before filling.

Note: The times given above are for microwaves with 600-700 watts of power. For 500-600 W, add 10 seconds to each minute; for 400-500 W, add 20 seconds to each minute.

Did you know that microwave ovens don't really cook your food by magic? Microwaves are attracted to fats, sugars and liquids in foods. When microwaves enter food, they cause the food particles (or molecules) to vibrate very rapidly — millions of times each second — if you can believe it!

This intense vibration causes a

lot of friction, and friction causes heat (just rub your hands together briskly!). So the heat which cooks your food in a microwave oven comes from the friction created by the food molecules vibrating. Very simply, your food rubs itself cooked! and that's not magic, or is it?

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Beat garden pests with early pesticide applications

NEWARK, Del. — Home gardeners can get ahead of the gardening game with timely pesticide and fertilizer applications, says Delaware State College extension agricultural agent Glenn Layton. Late winter is the time to have soil tested so that gardens can be fertilized and limed before spring planting. It's also the time to apply dormant insect sprays to fruit trees and ornamentals.

In general, vegetable garden fertility levels can be maintained by applying 50 pounds of limestone per 1,000 square feet every three to four years, and by adding two to three pounds of 5-10-10 or 10-10-10 per 100 square feet each spring. Putting on an additional pound of fertilizer per 100-foot row six to eight weeks after planting will also be helpful. Though these practices will usually maintain soil fertility, Layton says it's wise to have garden soil tested periodically.

Another way to get a jump on the growing season is to spray susceptible trees and shrubs for scales, spider mites (not true insects) and mealy bugs. These are among the hardest pests to control as well as the most damaging. "If any of your trees or shrubs have a history of these insects, take steps right now to reduce spring and summer infestations," the agent says. "Dormant oil sprays such as supreme oil or volck, can be applied while plants are still dormant." These sprays work by coating the eggs or bodies of

overwintering insects and suffocating them.

Spider mites can't be seen without a hand lens or microscope, but their damage is easy to spot. The leaves on infested plants lose their shine and become yellow or speckled. If uncontrolled, mites will eventually weaken and sometimes kill the plant.

"Most scales don't look like insects at all," Layton says. "The branches on an infested plant have crusted appearance. Up close, the scales look like bumpy little tortoises without legs, heads or tails. Usually the only time you can see legs on a scale insect is when it is newly hatched, and even then they're so small you can't see them without a magnifying glass. At this stage the young are called crawlers." This is when they're most susceptible to insecticides, but the stage lasts only a few hours, which is why dormant sprays are usually preferred.

The eggs of most scale species hatch in May or June, so plants must be watched closely then to make sure the dormant oil treatment was effective. If crawlers are present, a rescue spray with another insecticide may be needed.

Lawns can be fertilized in March and April. Layton recommends using five to 10 pounds of 12-4-8 per 1,000 square feet. Heavier applications are usually made in the fall. Again, a soil test is the only way to know exactly what is needed.

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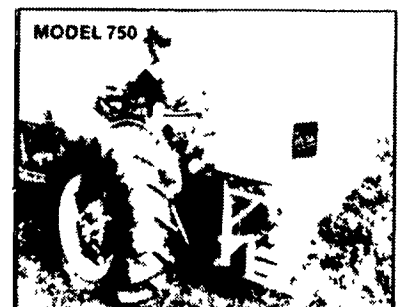
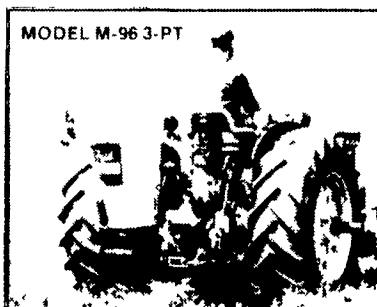
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