

# Cake Decoration Seminar Set

**EAST PETERSBURG** (Lancaster Co.) — "Flowers so real, you can't distinguish it from a fresh flower" is the way some people describe gum paste flowers. Gum paste flowers are used in upscale cake decorating. Gum paste is a medium of vegetable gums which, when exposed to air, becomes very hard and resembles porcelain. Each petal is hand

formed and constructed petal by petal and then accented with color. Gloria Griffin from Toronto, Ontario, Canada is coming to the Cake and Kandy Emporium (CAKE) in East Petersburg to teach a class on gum paste flowers. The two-day class will be held Saturday and Sunday, June 12 and 13, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuition is \$135. Register by calling CAKE at (717) 569-5728.



Gum paste flowers are difficult to distinguish from fresh flowers.



Gum paste flowers are formed petal-by-petal and accented with color.

## Therapeutic Riding More Than A Pony Ride

**University Park** (Centre Co.) — Some of the newest 4-H animal programs involve more than raising farm animals for show. Therapeutic riding programs use horses to help people with disabilities gain muscle strength and coordination, independence and self-esteem. "Therapeutic riding is more than just a pony ride," says Ben Nolt, coordinator of 4-H therapeutic riding at Penn State. "Horses can help people who are physically and emotionally impaired achieve their personal best. As people walk, their bodies move back and forth, side to side and up and down. The horse's gait almost exactly simulates that motion, recreating the sensation of walking in the rider who is physically disabled. This helps riders become more aware of how their body muscles operate, and the warmth of the horse helps stiff muscles relax. Learning to stay in the saddle and control the horse helps riders develop arm and leg control. The riders learn to breathe deeply and steadily, improving cardiovascular functions. Riding has psychological benefits too. Picture a child who may

get belittled at school or around the neighborhood for looking or acting "funny," or an adult who always has to look up from a wheelchair to catch other people's eyes. "But people astride horses and suddenly they're taller than everyone else," says Nolt. "What a boost! For once in their lives, they're in the driver's seat. Their range of vision increases. They're no longer passive spectators, but active participants. After riders get medical consent to participate, a physical therapist evaluates their abilities and designs a course of exercises. Riders may perform exercises that help improve their balance and coordination, such as riding their horses while balancing bean bags on their heads. Some participants do not actually ride moving horses, but perform stretching exercises on stationary animals. The youngest participant in Pennsylvania, a nine-month-old baby diagnosed with developmental problems, simply lies prone on the horse, rocking back and forth to experience movement. Putting an infant on a 1,000-pound horse may seem

risky. But safety, a key concern in any riding program, is paramount in therapeutic riding. "Horses are carefully selected for docile temperament," says Robert Kessler, an extension agent who facilitates the program in Franklin County. Pennsylvania is a leader in the therapeutic riding movement, with nearly 70 programs in place — more than in any other state. Programs are monitored by the Pennsylvania Council on Horseback Riding for the Handicapped, which is supported by Pennsylvania 4-H and the Pennsylvania Easter Seal Society. For more information on therapeutic riding in Pennsylvania, contact Ben Nolt at (814) 863-3824.



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