

# Deck Your Doors With Greenery

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Lancaster Farming Staff

**LEESPORT (Berks Co.)** — In preparation for the Christmas season, people throughout the states are decorating their homes with greenery.

Many people question where this custom began.

Dieter Wolter told participants during the Berks County holiday program, "The ancients believed greens had special powers since they remained green throughout the winter. Decorating with evergreens began as a symbol representing Christ's life everlasting."

Wolter said of holiday decorations, "Laden with traditions and customs, immigrants came to America on the boat. Since then, many of these traditions and customs have spread with each generation going a little more nuts and overdoing it."

He isn't complaining. Wolter, who operates Temple Greenhouse, makes a living arranging greenery and flowers for clients.

Recently, Wolter and his sister, Sheila, revealed tricks of the floral trade when making wreaths, swags, and garlands.

"Don't pick evergreens until after the first heavy frost. Then all the brown things have fallen off," Wolter said. He prefers shipping in varieties of Noble fir and Norway pines, which hold up better than local evergreens.

When creating swags, wreaths, and garlands, Wolter suggests creating a three dimensional-look by layering different sizes of greens together before attaching with number 22 wire. Chenille stems work well for attaching bows and for hanging.

One of the things that has changed in recent years, is that Christmas decorating is no longer limited to the colors of green and red.

"All different colors are used in order to make the decorations fit with the style and colors of the rooms," Wolter said.

Put larger greens toward the outer edges of a wreath and smaller ones toward the center. Remember that a variety of greens cut in different lengths give a fuller three-dimensional look. Seeded eucalyptus, boxwood, juniper, and pinecones complement the greens,



**Swags and garlands appear three-dimensional when greens of different sizes are layered, according to Dieter Wolter.**

but "too much is too much," said Wolter who believes "brevity" is often more appealing.

"Just plunk a doll in a wreath," he said of the ease of which one can make a stunning statement.

Wolter showed several ways in

which to customize arrangements to fit the personality of the owner. One of the most outlandish was a wreath stuck with bullet shells, bow and arrows.

Williamsburg-style arrangements that use natural materials are popular, but Wolter warned that placing oranges and apples next to holly will cause all the holly leaves to drop off within a few days.

He created a wreaths with meaningful symbolism. He said that fruit

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**Dieter Wolter**  
Temple Greenhouse

branches symbolize the hope of the world. Pinecones represent the seed of faith sown by Christ. Grapes reflect the joy in the miracle brought into the world by Christ. The dove represents Christ's peace.

Regardless of what designs are used, Wolter said it is important to protect doors and woodwork surfaces from sap by covering the back of stems with ribbon.

While people rush to put up holiday decorations, Wolter reminds them, "May the light, joy, hope, and peace of Christmas always be yours."



**Sheila Wolters shows off a wreath reflecting Christmas symbolism: fruit branches symbolize the hope of the world, pinecones represent the seed of faith sown by Christ, grapes reflect the joy in the miracle brought into the world by Christ, and the dove represents Christ's peace.**

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