

Turn a discarded piece of wood into a checker gameboard, which also makes a nice decorating accent when hung on the wall. Use pieces of old shutters or old wood to create shelves and hanging racks.

## Gifts From The Barn

**LOU ANN GOOD**  
Food And Family  
Features Editor

NEW HOLLAND (Lancaster Co.) — those who live on a farm, no doubt can find odd pieces of wood, wooden shutters, paint, and other discarded items from years past in the barn and other

outbuildings.

These pieces of "junk" can form the basis for gift giving and for home decor if you follow the example of Judy Kurtz, Bowersville, and Cindy Wegaman, Berks County.

It's true that Judy and Cindy are adept with using a drill, jig-

saw, and sander. But they claim that "it takes no talent" to use many of their ideas.

Old tins and clay pots can be given a new look with a bit of paint. If you can't paint free-hand, many stencil designs are available. The star motif is especially popular not only at Christmas but year-round. Craftmakers can even stencil with the word "joy" or other words.

Old doors with original peeling paint or made to look that way are in vogue in home decor. Prop doors upright in a corner or hang horizontally on a wall. You can even cut out parts of the door to use for a variety of shelves or other craft ideas.

Fill a painted aluminum bucket with cookies, teatowels or variety of other little gifts.

Use an area rug (new or clean) beneath a table centerpiece.

Turn old porch posts into candlesticks.

Update old clay flowerpots and saucers.

Have some old mason nails? If they aren't already rusted, leave

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Ruth Frantz said that the foundation for this cedar and peppermint swag is formed using a bent wire clothes hanger.

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LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) — Items to transform into stunning decor and gifts can be found in your backyard, in the field, or in the woods.

With a little bit of know-how, a set of instructions, and the leniency to adapt and substitute what you have, Ruth Frantz demonstrated just how easy it is to create a "natural holiday."

Frantz, master gardener with Penn State Lebanon County, used greens, birch branches, boxwood, and a crafts person's staples of hot glue, floral foam, and floral wire for several projects.

Can't make a perfect wreath? Frantz is reassuring: "Nothing is straight in nature. It doesn't need to be perfect."

However, do make sure that you wire wrap things tightly. Natural materials shrink as they dry.

Here are directions for three projects. Frantz adapted them from "Nature Crafts for Christmas" by Dawn Cusick and Carol

Taylor.

Remember, you can use materials you have on hand. Make wreaths and swags as full and as thick as preferred.

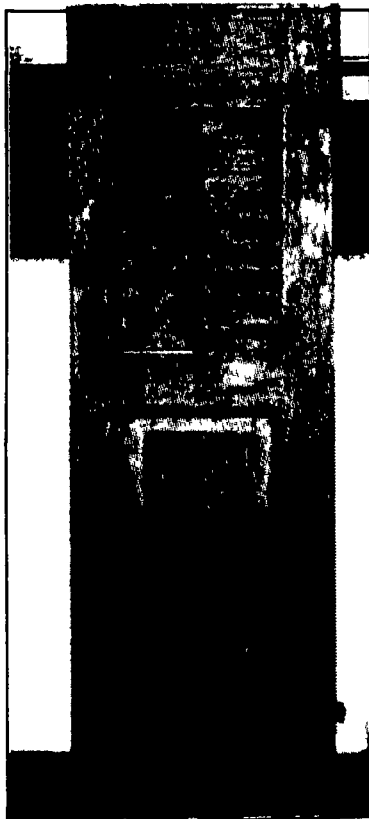
### OBLONG WREATH

This three-foot-long wreath can decorate the largest fireplace without looking skimpy. The base is heavy, galvanized clothesline wire shaped into an oval with the ends overlapping about 3 inches and taped together with duct tape.

Bunches of boxwood — 3-4 bunches about 12 inches long — are wired together and to the base, starting at the bottom and working up one side, overlapping the bunches to cover the stems of the previous bunch. The other side is covered in a similar matter.

Three-inch burgundy cockscomb heads (or yarrow, rose hips, or whatever else you have on hand) are hot-glued at random to the branches. White strawflowers, sprigs of baby's

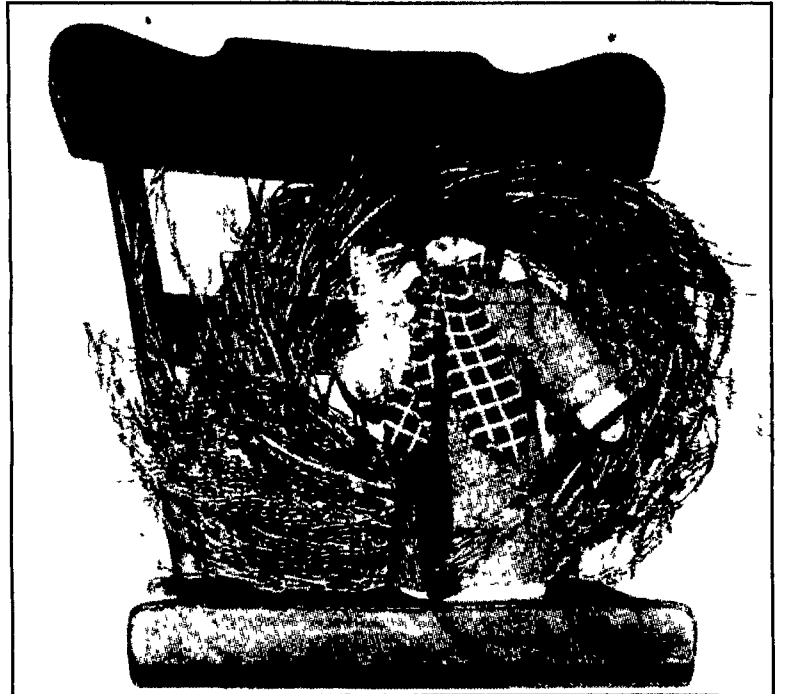
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Old shutters can be painted and used a variety of ways, from hanging on the wall to using as a cup-board door.



Judy Kurtz, left, and Cindy Wegaman used an animal skin stretcher for this snowman. After painting the snowman, they hung a few finishing touches on it.



The top of an old chair finds a new life as a shelf when hung on a wall.



Fay Strickler, Berks County home economist, serves soup in a pumpkin and offers many ideas for packaging soup mixes for holiday gift giving. She also stresses the importance of washing hands often and thoroughly to prevent spreading germs when cooking and serving food. Turn to page B6 for recipes by Strickler and others.