

# Earthly Elements

*"Helpful Information From The Trenches"*

Issue 4

*Winter Edition*

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## Holiday Peace

Yes, winter is finally here and for a change I'm VERY, VERY, VERY, HAPPY!!! I'm in dire need of a BREAK & LOTS of REST!



## Holiday Stress Busters

*For You & Your Family*

Most people agree, that the holidays can be stressful. It seems the number of holiday tasks continue to grow, yet there aren't any more hours in the day to complete them. After the cards are sent, the gifts bought, packages wrapped, and the schedule for visiting family and friends is set, the holiday season is just getting underway.

As the holidays get closer, some people feel the only thing that makes all the hustle and bustle worthwhile is the joy on their children's faces. What parents don't realize is that children can also suffer from holiday stress. The never-ending list of chores and activities takes a toll on youngsters as well.

To keep you and your family from falling victim to stress during what should be a joyous time, experts say that resting is the key! Here's some tips to help your holidays stay stress-free:

- **Rest & relaxation are essential.** No matter how hectic it gets, everyone needs the proper amount of rest. if you have small children, stick to their regular napping schedule. This will keep them happier and better



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adjusted throughout the entire season. It's also important to follow other established routines as well. When routines are broken, children get stressed.

- **Get Physical.** Take the family out for a long brisk walk outside, in a park. Go sledding or skiing on the fresh fallen snow. Physical activities help ease tension and people who aren't active enough tend to get stressed easier than those who get adequate exercise.

- **Have a sense of humor.** Laughter is a proven stress-buster. If you notice yourself or see your children feeling stressed, find something to laugh about. It will immediately change the mood.

- **Don't neglect nutrition.** Eat at least one healthy meal together as a family each day. Don't fall victim to fast-food just because you're busy. The holidays provide enough opportunities to eat high-calorie foods. Also avoid the urge to over eat when stressed. Overindulgence leads to discomfort and more stress. Keep **ALL** things in moderation.

## Interior Plantscaping

### *Using Houseplants as Interior Accents*



Here's 8 creative tips to help you integrate houseplants as part of your home's interior design.

1. **Group in uneven numbers.** This is a basic interior and landscape design method, you can use with houseplants. Odd numbered arrangements offer a more interesting appeal.

2. **Display only healthy plants.** Put tired plants in a sunny back room for some rehabilitation. Keep plants healthy by rotating (every 3 weeks) them to brighter light. Consider buying 2 of each plant so you don't have to alter the look of a room's decor when you switch them around.

3. **Mix colors and textures.** Using contrasting leaf color and texture will add depth and interest to the group. Tie the whole arrangement together by using the same size pot (if plant size permits), color or material.

4. **Right plant, right space.** Just as in landscaping, before you make a purchase, know the size and shape of the plant you'll need to fill the space. Are you looking for something tall to accent a furniture grouping? A trailing vine for a bookshelf? Perhaps a centerpiece for the dining room table? Next you'll need to find out what plants are acclimated to the conditions of that room.

5. **Stagger plant heights.** Instead of lining up a row of African violets on a windowsill, place them at different levels. Also consider putting smaller plants around the base of a taller one.

6. **Blend and compliment.** Choose plants and containers that compliment your decor. If you have Oriental decor, choose a bamboo or dra-caena plant and put them in china pots. For a Southwest feel, go for cacti, succulents or yuccas and use a terra cotta containers.

7. **Keep it cool.** Overheated homes are unhealthy for plants. While plants vary in their temperature needs, it differs from day to night. The best ranges are between 60 F and 75 F in the day, and 60 F to 65 F at night.

8. **Don't overdo it.** If "houseplant mania" strikes you, it's easy to go overboard. Remember that too many plants make rooms look like a cluttered jungle.

## Some Fun Thoughts About Chocolate



Chocolate is a Vegetable: Chocolate is derived from cocoa beans. Bean = vegetable. Sugar is derived from either sugar CANE or sugar BEETS. Both are plants, which places them in the vegetable category. Thus, chocolate is a vegetable.

To go one step further, chocolate candy bars also contain milk, which is dairy. So candy bars are a health food. Chocolate-covered raisins, cherries, orange slices and strawberries all count as fruit, so eat as many as you want.

If you've got melted chocolate all over your hands, you're eating it too slowly.

The problem: How to get 2 pounds of chocolate home from the store in a hot car. The solution: Eat it in the parking lot.

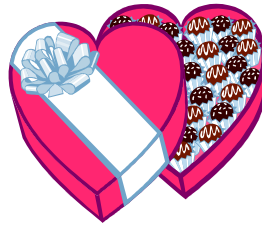
Diet Tip: Eat a chocolate bar before each meal. It'll take the edge off your appetite, and you'll eat less.

Chocolate has many preservatives. Preservatives help make you look younger.

Put 'eat chocolate' at the top of your list of things to do today. That way, at least you'll get one thing done.



A nice box of chocolates can provide your total daily intake of calories in one place. Now, isn't that handy?



## The Blessing of Chocolate

Valentine's Day wouldn't be complete without **CHOCOLATE**. History proves however, that we're not the first to treasure this divine concoction. The Mayans worshipped the cacao plant (*Theobroma cacao*). They used its beans as money, and brewed them into a medicinal drink mixed with wine and fermented corn, called *xocolatl*. The later Aztecs of Mexico added chile peppers to make an aphrodisiac. The explorer Cortez knew a good thing when he saw it, and took the cacao beans back to the Spanish court, where passions soon ran high over chocolate—and not just because it was tasty. Doctors began prescribing the new drink for everything from tuberculosis to intestinal parasites and sexual dysfunction. It was also said to cure hangovers, shrink tumors, and strengthen the heart.

More recently (and reliably), scientists have learned that chocolate has twice as many antioxidants as red wine, and that it may relax blood vessels and reduce the risk of blood clotting. So, pass the chocolates, please!





## Hot Cocoa Fights Cancer

Here's even more proof that chocolate really is good for you. Researchers at Cornell University have found that hot cocoa (**PURE COCOA powder** and water) is high in cancer-fighting antioxidants. The research showed that one cup of hot cocoa contains double the protective antioxidants found in one glass of red wine, three times the amount found in one cup of green tea, and up to five times the amount in one cup of black tea! These antioxidants protect against cancer by ridding the body of free radicals.

The researchers also conducted a study that suggested that milk may block cocoa's antioxidant activity, so hot chocolate drinks made with milk or other ingredients may not be beneficial. The best way to know for sure is to use **PURE COCOA powder**. The powder is available at Good Food Company (Canton), Whole Foods Market (Ann Arbor & Troy) & Better Health (Canton & Novi). The price ranges from \$4.80 (non-organic 10 ounce size) to about \$7.25 (organic 10 ounce size).

*There's one good thing*



*about snow—*



*it makes your lawn look*

*as good as your neighbors*



Clyde Moore

## Herbed Tomato Soup

- 1 1/2 cups finely chopped onion
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. butter
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 cups chopped or shredded carrots
- 5 cups chopped or diced canned tomatoes (three 14 1/2 oz. cans)
- 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. dried basil, crushed
- 1/2 tsp. dried thyme, crushed
- 1/8 tsp. black pepper
- 1 cup chopped tomatoes
- Optional Extras:  
Sour cream, fresh basil, "Star Croutons" (see December 2004 newsletter or go online to [earthenjoy.com](http://earthenjoy.com) newsletter archive December 2004)



In a large saucepan cook onions and garlic in hot oil and butter until tender, about 5 minutes. Add water and carrots. Bring to boiling. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 5 to 7 minutes or just until the carrots are tender. Stir in the 5 cups canned tomatoes, sugar, basil, thyme, and pepper. Bring to boiling. Reduce the heat. Simmer, covered, for 20 minutes. Cool slightly. Place one-third of tomato mixture in a food processor or blender container. Cover; process or blend until nearly smooth. Repeat with remaining mixture. Return to saucepan; stir in the 1 cup chopped tomatoes. Heat through.

