



Earthly Elements

"Helpful Information From The Trenches"

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Holiday Peace



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Living Ornaments

These holiday ornament gifts are beautiful and practical. While I like to make small floral arrangements, you can also take cuttings of your favorite houseplants and present them as gifts.

Add some life to your holiday table or mantle with a display of these beautiful ornaments. I prefer these made with clear or frosted globes, but any ornament works well. Especially attractive are dark green balls filled with red roses, or bright red balls filled with holly leaves. They're delightful placed in small bowls, fancy holiday tea cups or on candlesticks (like in the photo). For the longest lasting arrangements ivy, mistletoe, holly, fern leaves, roses, mums, and daisies work best.

What You'll Need:

- Assorted glass ball ornaments
- Plant cuttings or flower stems
- Water
- Candle Sticks (for displaying)
- Double Sided Tape
- Food coloring (optional)
- Floral preservative (optional)



How To:

Place the ornament in a tea cup or bowl so it sits firmly upright. Fill the ornament most of the way with water. If the ornament is clear or translucent, add food coloring if desired. If doing a floral arrangement add floral preservative if desired. Place the plant cuttings or flowers into the top of the ornament, threading the stems through the hole in the ornament hanger and making sure the bottoms of the stems are totally covered by water. Display in a decorative bowl or candlestick, (use double sided tape to hold ornament firm) and water occasionally. Remember that some holiday flowers, berries, and leaves are poisonous. Take care when working with them as well as displaying, so that young children don't eat anything that they shouldn't.

SIDE NOTE: You may choose NOT to keep the hanger on the ornament as it will give you more room to add flowers. If you do this, be sure to use greens of some sort to cover over the glass edge as it may be sharp.

Food Fight!

Plants That Fight Cancer

The case for eating your veggies keeps getting stronger. For years, scientists have agreed that a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, beans and grains decreases the risk for cancer and other diseases. New Research from the American Cancer Institute is showing that some of the compounds in foods called "phytochemicals" (plant

chemicals), may go to work for patients even after cancer has begun.

Researchers found that the antioxidant chemicals in citrus fruits, berries, carrots, mangos, leafy green vegetables all appear to stave off illnesses such as cataracts and heart disease. The study also found certain phytochemicals in tea that seem to focus on cancers in the digestive tract. While others found in concentrated forms of tomatoes (paste) target prostate cancer. Below is a list of several other foods that may be workhorses against disease:

GARLIC. What's known: Helps neutralize agents that trigger cancer-cell development, also helps fight heart disease.

What's new: Could stop stomach cancer cells from dividing and multiplying; may trigger cancer-cell death.



SOYBEANS. What's known: Thought to prevent colon cancer and help fight heart disease

What's new: May stem the growth of existing cancer cells in the mouth and breast

BROCCOLI, KALE. What's known: Along with other dark leafy green vegetables, could help prevent a variety of cancers

What's new: Also contain compounds that may incite cancer cells to self-destruct.



GREEN & BLACK TEA. What's known: Could help prevent cancer of the mouth, esophagus, and stomach.

What's new: Contain compounds that could slow the growth of certain tumors and possibly stop the tumors right in their tracks.

raffia and it will hang from a tree easily.
3. The bread should be dry and crusty, so either bake it in an oven at 250 degrees or let it sit overnight.

4. When it's dry and crusty, spread on the peanut butter and add the birdseed. (similar to directions for bagel bird-feeder).

5. String raffia or ribbon through hole at top, tie and hang from the tree.

Simple Suet

What You'll Need:

1 can (3 pounds) vegetable shortening

2 cups peanut butter

2 cartons (24 ounces each) cornmeal

OPTIONAL INGREDIENTS:

2 to 3 lbs. sunflower hearts

2 1/2 lbs. wild birdseed

2 1/2 lbs. cracked corn

1 lb. raisins

Flour (if necessary)

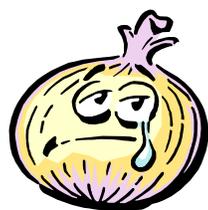


How To:

1. In a large skillet, over medium heat, melt shortening and peanut butter. When melted remove from heat.

2. Stir in the cornmeal. Add sunflower hearts, birdseed, cracked corn and/or raisins if desired. Add flour to thicken if necessary.

3. Pour into 32 oz. yogurt or other plastic containers, & store in the refrigerator.



The Mighty Onion

The onion has long been known for its strong personality and has quite an interesting history. Ancient Egyptians worshipped it, Mediterranean peoples believed

it increased male virility, and Middle Eastern cultures considered it an aphrodisiac. During the 19th century, folk healers prescribed onion poultices for drawing out fever, extracting poison from snake bites and mad dogs. As late as the 1950s, English villagers hung half a cut onion in their homes to absorb infectious germs from the air. An herb magazine recently recommended rubbing a bee sting with a slice of raw onion to alleviate the pain. This trick does work, because the onion serves as a counter irritant to the sting of the bee.

In our culture, the onion's odor makes it a repellent, rather than an attractive, herb. Any way you slice them, onions are herbs that pack a mighty powerful personality.

Simple Onion Soup

1 tablespoon butter

1 tablespoon olive oil

4 large onions, thinly sliced

2 (14 oz) cans beef broth

1/2 cup white wine (optional)

1 1/2 cups water

2 bay leaves

6 slices French bread

1 cup shredded Swiss or Gruyere cheese

DIRECTIONS:

In large pot melt butter with olive oil over low heat. Add sliced onions and cook for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally until onions are soft, translucent and slightly browned. Pour in beef broth, water, wine (if using) and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, reduce heat & simmer uncovered, 20 to 30 minutes. Remove bay leaves, preheat broiler and toast bread slices. Ladle soup in 6 ovenproof bowls, add 1 slice of bread to each, and top with cheese. Place bowls under broiler until cheese is melted.

