



Earthly Elements

"Helpful Information From The Trenches"

Issue 4

Winter Edition

December 2009



Peace

2010 Resolution: EAT BREAKFAST!

The saying is TRUE....breakfast IS the MOST important meal of the day. Just to prove it, recent scientific studies are backing this up. I must admit this has been a HUGE issue with me for years. This year I'm committed to changing that. The studies have proved that being a "breakfast skipper" undermines peoples mental/physical health, their sense of well-being, & how well they perform at work.

Why Breakfast is Important

1. Breakfast improves your health.

In findings reported to the American Heart Association in 2003, Harvard Medical School researchers analyzed the breakfast habits of 2,700 adults, aged 25-37, for eight years. Those who ate a healthful breakfast every day, such as a bowl of whole grain cereal, were less likely to be obese or to develop diabetes or heart disease than "breakfast skippers".

2. Breakfast can keep your weight down.

Many people assume that skipping meals will help them lose weight. Not so. A 2002 study revealed that 78% of 2,959 members of the National Weight Control Registry, a database of individuals who

In This Issue

- *EAT BREAKFAST!
- *Deck the Halls with Holly
- *Bathing Beauty
- *Recycling Christmas Cards

have lost 30 pounds or more and who have kept the weight off for a year or longer, eat breakfast every day.

3. Breakfast can lift your spirits. There are two reasons why even breakfast loathers should try to stomach more than a cup of coffee or a jolt of cold OJ by mid-morning: mood and performance. The brain itself has no reserves of blood sugar, its main energy source, which constantly must be replenished; eating breakfast serves this purpose.

4. Breakfast may help add years to your life. Eat breakfast every day and who knows, you might even live to be 100. Researchers from the ongoing Georgia Centenarian Study report that centenarians tend to be regular breakfast eaters.

Deck the Halls with **HOLLY**

With its luxurious leaves and brilliantly colored berries, holly has been a long time favored holiday decoration. With more than 300 different varieties—ranging from small shrubs to large trees—you're sure to find the perfect holly for your garden. Only female hollies produce berries; there must be a compatible male within several hundred feet in order for fruit to form.

A word of warning: Holly berries contain illex acid, which causes stomach irritation, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. A child must swallow 20 or more berries before serious problems develop, but only a few berries can harm your pet. Contact your local poison control center immediately if holly berries are ingested.

My Top Picks:

Berri Magic Holly—This one is my FAVORITE of all. The main reason is because it has BOTH male & female grafted together. That means that ALL the shrubs will flower.

Blue Holly— A close second, especially if I can't find the "Berri Magic" & the need for berries isn't an issue. It has glossy, blue-green foliage and scarlet berries. There is a "Blue Boy" & a "Blue Girl". Remember if you want berries, you will need at least 1 "boy" for pollination.

American Holly—Considered the Christmas holly with its spine-toothed, dark green leaves. It's the largest of the evergreen hollies, requiring as much space as a small pine or spruce, tree.



Bathing Beauty

In the hectic days leading up to the holidays, give yourself permission to take a time-out in your tub. The warm water will put your mind at ease and leave you looking & feeling rejuvenated.

When was the last time you took a long, luxurious bath? Face it, we're a shower society—turn the faucet to hot, hop in, shampoo, condition, shave, rinse, then jump out. It's a means to an end. With our frenzied lifestyles, we've forgotten how to take advantage of one of life's simplest pleasures. A bath's benefits are time-tested: hot water loosens tight muscles; helps

induce deeper, restful sleep; calms the mind; boosts circulation; and detoxifies your system. Moreover, you'll look and feel great. A bath can be so simple. Close the door, shut out the world, & find solace in plain water. There's oodles of wonderful bath additives, or a sensuous candle lit setting, but a bath doesn't have to be a major production for it to be an effective stress reliever. With the rush of the season, take 30 minutes & enjoy a little "me time". Those quiet moments in the tub may be all the peace you get!

Still not convinced? Hydrotherapy—the use of water for soothing pain & treating disease is one of the oldest forms of medical treatment. The Romans made bathing a central element of life. Their public bath houses involved a choreography of hot and cold plunges that centuries later have been proven to benefit the circulatory system. There is a lost appreciation for 'taking the waters,' a ritual that's so much a part of ancient cultures because it brought health to the body and mind.

All bath house traditions have three things in common. A form of exfoliation to remove dead skin and increase circulation; heating & cooling of the body to stimulate the lymphatic system; & deep, intense perspiration to detoxify and rebuild the immune system. A hot bath causes profuse sweating, allowing the body to rid itself of toxins. By removing dead skin cells, pores sweat more effectively.

To infuse your own bath with some of these benefits add Dead Sea or Epsom salts rich in magnesium, calcium, sodium, and potassium. Not only do salts have exfolia-

tion properties, they create a sensation of buoyancy, helping you release any tension you've been holding. A word of caution: A bath above 100 degrees will dehydrate the body and can be dangerous for pregnant women or those with high blood pressure or heart and kidney problems.

Taking a bath these days should be less about cleansing your body & more about cleansing the mind—doing something good for yourself. Showering, just doesn't give us the same effect.

Bath Additives

With so much available, here's some help for choosing the one that's right for you:

FIZZIES—Also known as bath bombs, these solid cakes of baking soda & citric acid burst into a stream of tiny bubbles. **LUSH** has the BEST & they do MORE than fizz! They explode with flowers/stars etc. You gotta try one. My best pick is called "**Jingle Spells**" (pictured). **AWESOME** scent & leaves skin feeling very smooth & soft.



OILS—Ideal for those with dry skin. They leave the body very slick, so be careful getting out of the tub.

SALTS—The minerals in salts help detoxify the body, and they create a buoyant sensation. They can be slightly drying so moisturize afterward.

MILKS—Milk powders soften the skin. Some products are called milks because of their creamy effect in water, yet contain no milk proteins. Read the label.

Recycling Christmas Cards



Greeting Cards
(I hope you **ALL** enjoyed
the ones I made & sent
this year)!



Gift Bags
& Tags

Bookmarks



Scrapbooking



Postcards



Frame as Holiday Wall Art

After Christmas, what do you do with all those beautiful cards you receive? Do you save them or throw them away? How about preparing for NEXT Christmas by recycling them! Here's some creative ideas

Greeting Cards - Transform old cards into new ones! Pre-folded/colored cardstock is available at many office or craft store.

Bookmarks - Create unique bookmarks with pictures cut from old greeting cards.

Gift Tags - Be prepared with fancy, home-made gift tags.

Ornaments - Trim your holiday tree with these simple ornaments.

Scrapbooking- Place a cookie cutter on your Christmas card and trace around it. Next cut it out then using a glue stick, paste it onto acid free paper. These really add pizzazz to scrapbook pages.

Frame Them- Some cards make beautiful pictures when framed. Use them as holiday decor.

Package Decoration - Cut out pictures from old Christmas cards & glue onto packages. Simply use (recycle) brown paper bags as your wrapping paper. This is a great (& cheap) way to pretty up plain paper!

Postcards- If there's no writing or printing on the inside of the front (picture side) of the card, use it as a postcard/Christmas card. On the blank side draw a dividing line; (*see sample at left*) write a message on one side, on the other, write the recipient's address. Add postage & you're done! The benefit is twice with this one! You recycle & **save money** because it's cheaper to mail postcards!