

Invent your own festive holiday wreath

Wreaths hung on the door with care call out a festive "Happy Holidays."

Share that message in a special way by making your own circle of cheer with plants clipped from the garden or gathered from friends and neighbors.

"A good part of the fun of making your own wreath is going around the neighborhood, collecting plants and talking to people," said Susan Hoffman, who has been a master gardener with Oregon State University's Extension Service since 2012.

Be sure to ask before you clip, she added.

At the entry to almost every store, simple wreaths are stacked up for sale. They're made with some greenery, a bow and perhaps a lonely pinecone. And they're not cheap. Those fashioned by your own hands cost almost nothing and are limited only by imagination and available plants.

Some of the plants used at a recent master gardener wreath-making affair at the Benton County Fairgrounds included long-lasting selections like traditional Douglas fir, fragrant incense cedar and red-berried holly. Other types of fir and cedar, as well as yew, blue spruce, boxwood, laurel and lavender were there for the taking. For color, texture and berries, the wreath-makers added nandina, pyracantha and



KYM POKORNY
Your Garden

purple beautyberry. Of course, there are many other options.

"You can use absolutely anything you want," said Jana Tindall, a master gardener and organizer of the

event.

If a wreath seems too intimidating, a swag is a very simple alternative, Hoffman said. Just gather up some plant cuttings, tie the stems together, add a bow and decorations and that's the end of that. Even easier is a bouquet of plants for a centerpiece. In a vase, place a piece of florist's foam soaked in water and stick in your choice of plants. In a clear vase, hide the foam with

moss, lichen, small pinecones or red and/or green marbles found at craft stores.

"They're really easy and quick," said Tindall. "You can make them in less than half an hour in time for a party."

To make a wreath is not much harder, though it takes more time. One piece of advice from Tindall — have a table available. Bending and kneeling can be hard on the back and knees.

How to make a wreath from the Benton County Master Gardeners

Tools and materials:

- Clippers
- Needle-nose pliers
- Wire (at least 22 gauge)
- Wire or grapevine frame (available at craft stores)
- Gloves
- Plant clippings
- Pinecones, small pieces of wood, bows, ribbon, Christmas tree decorations (optional)

Instructions:

Design wreath by laying out in a circle on the table, using heaviest-textured plants in the back. Or, if you'd rather, design as you go.

Transfer background layer of plants to frame.

Leave wire on the spool it came on. Twist one end of wire to the frame with your fingers or pliers. Wearing gloves is recommended.

Wind wire around the plants and frame in a clockwise direction, pulling it tight to keep plants from falling off. When you've come back to where you started, twist wire to frame behind plants. Alternately, gather a group of plant clippings together in a clump like a bouquet. Wind wire around stems and twist ends together. Then secure each clump to the frame, overlapping stem ends to keep them from showing.

To create a second layer, slip stem ends into the first layer and wrap and attach wire the same way as the first layer. Fluff out small pieces of plant so wire doesn't show.

For small, lightweight pieces of plant, slip snugly into wreath. If they feel wobbly, wire them on.

If using pinecones, wood and decorations secure a length of wire to them, leaving long ends. Wrap those ends around frame or piece of plant stem and twist tightly.

To make a hanger, cut a small piece of wire. Secure one end and then the other to the frame to form a loop. Be sure to position the loop so that you've got top of the wreath where you want it.



PHOTO BY KYM POKORNY

ANNIVERSARIES

Thorpe - 50th



Royce and Mary Alice Thorpe of Dallas celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on Dec. 18. Royce Thorpe and Mary Alice Hoffman were married Dec. 18, 1965, at the Dallas First Christian Church. Rev. Charles Knox performed the ceremony. The couple was attended by Mary Hartling and Donald Ludwig.

The couple has lived in Dayton, Ohio, for four years and Dallas the past 46 years.

Royce retired in 2010 from the Dallas School District as the maintenance supervisor. Mary Alice is semi-retired from Craven-Woods Insurance.

Royce and Mary Alice's favorite activities are hiking, biking, gardening and just spending time together. They are active in the Dallas First Christian Church and Royce volunteers for the Dallas Lions Club.

Their family includes Andrea Thorpe and Ross Artwohl of Louisville, Col., and Jason Thorpe and Heather Knappe of San Francisco. The couple has two grandchildren.

What's YOUR neighbor up to?

Find out in the Itemizer Observer. You may find your neighbor, your boss, your friend or yourself in the pages of the Itemizer Observer. Local stories on local people - that's our specialty.

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

147 SE Court St., Dallas • 503-623-2373

Polk County
Itemizer-Observer



DALLAS OREGON

Providing holiday meals to Dallas-area families in need for more than 50 years

Put Christmas Cheer on your giving list this year!

Make checks to:



Christmas Cheer
PO Box 661
Dallas, OR 97338

All volunteers are encouraged to bring canned goods when coming to help sort, shop & deliver food boxes on Christmas Eve at 6 am, Thursday, Dec. 24th at LaCreole Middle School

More information: 503-623-3585
Coordinators: Warren & Sue Lamb
— 5013C — Non-Profit Organization

Follow us on Facebook & Twitter

MI TOWN

It's almost Christmas in MI Town, the presents are under the tree and we're awaiting the arrival of kids and grandkids. We'll pack up the car to go over the river and through the woods to celebrate with kids, grandkids and great-grandkids in Portland, and come home to celebrate with the kids and grandkids from Scappoose and Miami.

Two more days until Christmas and there's still baking and other food preparation chores to be finished, and most likely there will be at least one more trip to the store for last-minute items that didn't make it onto the previous to-do list. The rain keeps pouring down and we need to be extra watchful that the sump pumps continue to operate smoothly and to keep water



PATTY TAYLOR DUTCHER
Columnist

from going where it isn't supposed to be. Somehow it will all come together and we can relax for a moment and take time to be thankful for all the blessings in our lives and be grateful for those who share them with us.

There won't be any brand-new sports cars decked out in bright ribbons, parked in the driveway, or diamonds in velvet boxes hanging on the tree (That only happens in the television commercials). Instead, there will be baskets of homemade jams

and jellies, good books and unique hand-crafted calendars and pictures and other goodies.

The rooms will be filled with be happy kids and grandkids, dogs with wagging tails and Max and Shadow, the cats who are constantly in search of ornaments to remove from the tree. There will be Christmas carols to listen to and sing along with, and games to play and ever so many good things to talk about as we enjoy pizza, green salad (something healthy) cookies and candy and all kinds of special treats like cinnamon rolls that have become a Christmas tradition.

We'll share stories of Christmases past, of those years when the grandchildren used to find private

corners to try on home-sewn flannel pajamas, just as soon as the packages were quickly unwrapped. Now four are in college, and requests have been for warm and soft fleece blankets for dorm rooms, picnics and ski trips.

At the end of our wonderful day and evening, let's all remember to be thankful for the goodness in our lives, and say a special prayer for our men and women who are wearing the uniform in service to our country. May angels watch over those whose lives have been touched by sadness or tragedy — and may the blessings of the season bring hope and renewed faith and courage to all. We wish you Merry Christmas from our home to yours.

PEDEE NEWS

The most beautiful church service of the year in Pedee is this Thursday's Christmas Eve candlelight service, which will be at 8 p.m. this year. It's the last chance to sing Christmas carols for most of us before the season is once again over, and everyone is invited, whether you attend this church or not.

The Pedee Women's Club had their traditional Christmas luncheon last Wednesday, which included many guests from the community



ARLENE KOVASH
Columnist

and beyond. This will be their last meeting this year. The first meeting of 2016 will be Wednesday, Jan. 6. All are welcome, even the guys, who often show up at noon for the sack lunch.

I got a Christmas card

from Erika Trueax, and she's now a realtor for Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Real Estate Professionals in Salem, where she is now living. Daughter McKenzie is a junior at Oregon Institute of Technology in Southern Oregon. Ashley is a personal assistant for businessman Don Lulay in Salem; Seth is working for both the city of Dallas and his grandfather Jock Dalton in Dallas; and Hallie is at Judson Middle School in Salem. Erika says it's quite a change from her life in Pedee.

2016 WHO'S WHO IN POLK COUNTY

Take this opportunity to tell Polk County your story!

RESERVE BEFORE Dec. 31 for only \$132



Visit our website to see last year's issue of Who's Who: www.polkio.com

FULL COLOR GUIDE
To Businesses Serving
POLK COUNTY
Publishes January 20, 2016

Name of Business _____ Phone _____
Contact Name _____ Phone _____

I would like to run the same ad for 2016
 I would like a new photo. Call _____ to schedule.
Your Name/Number _____
 or **Save an additional \$10** and use photo from last year.
 I would like to change my written information.

Website _____ Email Address _____

Bring this form in to our office: **147 SE Court St., Dallas**
Fax it to **503-623-2395**, or mail it to:
PO Box 108, Dallas, OR 97338