

The BuzzLetter

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Tree Safety Tip

To protect your Christmas tree from that furry little bundle of mischief named "Tabby" who likes to play with the dangling ornaments, place grated orange peel in several little colorful containers and distribute them around the bottom of the tree or in the lower branches. Tabby will find something else to play with.

~

Holiday gifts teachers like

Food gifts and Christmas tree ornaments are some of the most frequently mentioned gifts teachers say they like. An ornament with the child's name on it will remind the teacher of that child in years to come.



Other gifts teachers favor: Gift certificates for book stores or restaurants, picture frames, albums filled with classroom photos, note cards, stationery, paper cubes, sticky notes, art supplies, special pens, and tote bags.

What counts is the thought involved, teachers say. Some fondly remembered gifts: M&Ms, two walnuts, a peacock feather, and cookies.

~

Helpful Hint: Get ready for the holidays! Does your favorite glassware suffer from "cloudiness?" Add one or two bubbly denture tablets to warm water and let it stand overnight. In most cases, one treatment will work. If not, repeat the process.

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Why the Rockefeller Center Christmas tree may last longer than yours

It's not easy to choose a specimen that will become the most famous Christmas tree in America. Each year in the fall, David Murbach surveys growing areas from a helicopter to make his choice for the Rockefeller Center Christmas Tree. It must be huge and beautiful.

For his own tree, Murbach doesn't make the selection by helicopter. He buys from a street vendor about two weeks before Christmas.

Outdoor trees stay fresh longer because it's cold, Murbach says, but cut trees dry out much faster when they are in warm interior rooms.

He doesn't search for the perfect tree, because one with a flat side can be put against a wall to save space. Rather than asking for a fresh square cut, Murbach asks the vendor to cut the tree trunk to a point, making more of the trunk available to water in the stand. The tree drinks more, stays fresh and holds its needles longer.

It is now customary to light outdoor Christmas decorations on Thanksgiving Day. Beautiful artificial trees can be lighted indoors at that time, too.

If your decorating choice is a real tree, it's better to wait a while before buying one. Make sure it has a fresh cut. Let it soak in water over night before setting it up. The fresh-tree aroma makes it more festive.



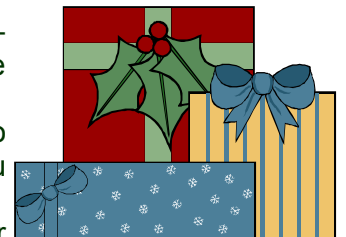
CHALK TALK

Traveling with the kids on the holidays?

How to be a welcomed houseguest

Is a holiday trip on your agenda? When you are invited to stay with family or friends, here are some things to consider.

1. Look hard at your family before you decide to stay. Forget it if the hosts are house-proud, and you have marauding kids. Stay at a hotel, or stay home.
2. Even with grandparents, rehearse their behavior with children. Tell the children they need to keep the noise level down, especially during dinner. If a relative is cranky, let the kids know that's the way grandpa is, and it's not their fault.
3. Check the house to ensure that medications and cleaning supplies are out of kids' reach. See that knickknacks and guns are put away.
4. Go home soon, especially if there are make-shift sleeping arrangements.
5. Entertain yourselves rather than expecting hosts to arrange everything. And have escape hatches. Give all a break by saying up front that you will be visiting the museum.
6. Help with the housework. Offer to polish the silver.
7. Show your appreciation by getting a baby-sitter and taking the adults out for dinner.
8. Be prepared to reciprocate when your hosts want to visit you.



Wherever you are . . . Happy Holidays!

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

PET HOLIDAY GIFTS

Dogs' favorite-music CD!

After extensive testing of various songs and arrangements, Laurel Canyon Animal Company has come up with a CD of songs most preferred by 200 dogs. Responses included a bark, a smile, and a wag, by an intuitive animal communicator in order to guide creation of the music and lyrics. There are 12 songs on the *Songs to Make Dogs Happy* CD, including Squeaky Deaky in which a



squeaky toy is used as a backup to the soprano. Other canine favorites were *My Back, Hap, Hap Happy!*, and *I'll be*

Back. Some say it's great entertainment for a dog on a long car ride. On that drive to Grandma's house, you *and* your Pooch will love these songs; the driver will, too. It's a tail-wagging gift for man's best friend.

To order go to www.amazon.com.

For cat lovers

Since 1999 the *petsandmusic* team has been developing special CDs, which use certain rhythms and frequencies to help relax house-cats, but which are still pleasing to the ears of cat lovers. Vols.1 to 3 include *Rainy Day*, *Lazy Days* and *Magic Moments*. To see more go to www.petsandmusic.com.



Some pet truths:

Dogs have owners. Cats have staff!

A Poem for the Holidays

I made myself a snowball,
as perfect as can be.

I thought I'd keep it as a pet,
and let it sleep with me.

I made it some pajamas,
and a pillow for its head.

Then last night it ran away,
but first it wet the bed!!!

~ Written by Anonymous Kid

Preserving Holiday Memories

Holiday Scrapbook

Every scrapbook is unique. They preserve the cherished memories and the small details that might otherwise be forgotten.

The most important thing is that the stories of the lives illustrated in the book are not lost while the mementos trigger fond memories.

* Save original art and stories.

* Reduce the size of artwork. Make a color copy or scan them into smaller versions, preferably on acid-free paper.

* If your child has made many holiday drawings, tape them to the refrigerator and take a photo of the collection. Keep that in the album.

* For the holidays, take plenty of photos and include the best, most colorful ones.

* Make a title page in an album with small school pictures from each year. It will let you see how kids change from one year to another.

* Don't wait too long. Make scrapbook pages as events occur rather than waiting until the end of a year.

* Include party napkins, flattened gift bows, ticket stubs, and other mementos.

Remember, the simple design that gets the job done always beats the fancy one that is left unfinished. It will be a gift to your children and grandchildren of your family history as they look back on the experiences and holidays they celebrated with you.

Oh, and it's something else to do with the youngsters.

**SNOWFLAKES ARE KISSES
FROM HEAVEN**

December Project



Create your own village for tabletop or under the tree

Start building a holiday memory by decorating gingerbread or sugar-cube houses - a sweet and spicy tradition for all ages.

It's a good idea to design your house on paper before you begin so you can leave spaces for doors and windows. Remember to install a popsicle stick header above each window and doorway for support when building the sugar-cube house. For the gingerbread house, go to bettycrocker.com for the Royal Icing recipe to use for "gluing" candy decorations to the houses and "mortar" for layering sugar-cube bricks.

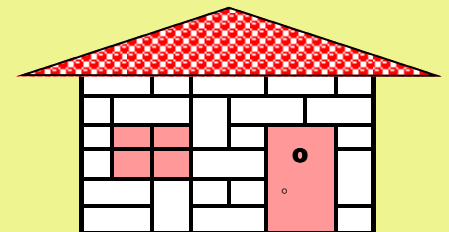


You will find many ideas for decoration such as: wafer cookies for doors; pretzel squares for windows; pretzel sticks for siding, fences, and log piles; mixed nuts for stonework; and peppermint sticks anchored in gumdrops for light poles and mailbox posts.

Other ideas include flat round wafer candies or flattened large gumdrops for roof tiles and clear food wrap for windows "glued" to the inside.

Remember to allow the "mortar" to dry completely before adding the roof or when moving the structure.

Don't forget the cornerstone - add the date. Next year add to your village.



Note: To see more great crafty ideas click www.craftyartworld.com and go to Holiday Crafts, then Christmas Crafts.