

Holiday Hints

Pomegranates: An Elegant And Colorful Addition To Festive Holiday Decorations

(NAPS)—If you're searching for fast and fabulous centerpiece ideas or a homemade holiday gift from the heart, consider something innovative this year—the pomegranate. Because of its deep red coloring and extra-large size, the wonderful variety of pomegranate can be used as a festive addition to any holiday decoration.

Throughout its 5,000-year history, the pomegranate has been revered not only by painters and sculptors, but also recognized in many cultures, religions and mythologies as a symbol of life. Pomegranates are easy to work with and make a dramatic statement in any centerpiece. Here are some basic tips for how to decorate with pomegranates and step-by-step instructions for a classic candle ring.

Enhance the color and textured surface of pomegranates by applying a light coat of cooking oil to the surface. Remove excess with a paper towel. Buff the surface till it shines!

Or, if you prefer extra sparkle without losing the rich burgundy red color, dust the untreated surface of the pomegranates with an aerosol spray glitter, available at craft stores. The fine glitter adds a bit of sheen to the surface and dresses up the fruit for the holidays. If you can't find the spray in craft stores, try glitter hairspray from the beauty supply store. (Note: Don't try this if you have already shined the surface of the fruit. It won't adhere to a shiny surface.)

Classic Candle Centerpiece
1. Fill the bottom half of a pretty pedestal bowl with floral foam.
2. Insert 2 or 3 candles in the center, close, but not touching each other.

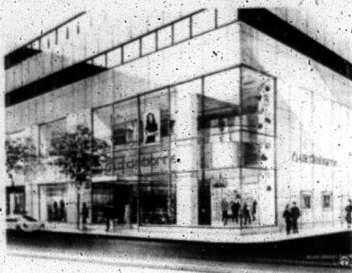
The deep red color and versatility of the pomegranate helps make this classic candle ring a quick and easy holiday centerpiece or a great gift.

3. Use ivy or garland to surround the candles and cover the foam.

4. Nestle in fresh pomegranates (on skewers) and roses.

5. Decorate with smaller, natural items such as nuts, pinecones, holly and ribbons.
6. To secure pomegranates in a formal arrangement, insert two 6 inch bamboo skewers at least 1 inch deep into the fruit. Space the insertions about 1 inch apart. Then place the skewers into the floral foam to hold them securely. Using two skewers instead of one will better support the weight of the fruit and prevent it from turning in the design.

You'll find the wonderful variety of pomegranate in plentiful supply from mid-October through December. And, by visiting the Web site, www.pomegranate.com, you'll find more pomegranate decorating ideas, recipes and eating tips.



A Fashionable Destination For The Style Savvy

(NAPS)—A city already known for its fashion savvy now offers a new destination for those connoisseurs of style and sophistication. Amid the hustle and bustle of New York City's Fifth Avenue, the recently renovated Liz Claiborne flagship store offers the world's largest and most comprehensive selection of Liz Claiborne apparel and accessories under one roof. The functional and modern two-story store is a structural embodiment of the Liz Claiborne brand. The classic and feminine open environment is both pleasing to the eye and makes shopping a pleasurable total experience. Notable design elements include an original glass art installation of bright blue pods by internationally acclaimed artist Dale Chihuly. The sculpture becomes public art thanks to the two-story glass wall that brings the radiant natural light from outside to the interior of the store. Inside, a wide stone aisle creates a path that leads visitors toward the escalator and up to the grand second floor. Mini-boutiques within the store, including the popular accessory walk on the ground level, have been well received by locals and tourists alike. The combination of quality products and distinctive architectural detailing has placed this store on the must-see list of tourists from around the world. Centrally located on the corner of Fifth Avenue and 52nd street, the store is just a few steps away from Rockefeller Center and St. Patrick's Cathedral. For more information about the store and the best of Liz Claiborne fashion in your area visit www.lizclaiborne.com.

I'll Be Home for Christmas

Just hearing the phrase, "Home for Christmas" brings instant feelings of nostalgia to most of us.

Our memories differ. They may be centered on the sights of the tree with its gaily-wrapped presents, the sounds of carols, or the smells of special foods.

But one thing that is common to all of us, no matter the tradition that sparks the memory, is that all these activities centered on the people we love and call family. Those feelings of home are evoked wonderfully by Hallmark Cards with their holiday commercials.

Those of us who are going "home" for the holidays usually have a place to live already, but somehow it's not the home we need for Christmas. So, why do many of us travel long distances this time of year? Be-

cause it's so important to be with those we love and who love us in return. We're not "home" without them.

There are hundreds of Kentucky children who will be spending the holiday in a residential children's home. We once called these places "orphanages" and in a real sense the children living there are today's orphans. Many of them or the victims of such severe abuse and neglect that they will never return "home."

Unlike those orphans of yesterday, these children do have living parents. Parents who are alive but are unable, often due to alcohol and drug abuse, to make a minimally acceptable home for their children.

However, even in a warm environment, these children feel "homeless." The holidays are a difficult time for them and those of us who care for them because of the constant reminders that everyone needs a family and a "home of their own, especially in this

time of year. We struggle to find enough financial support to buy the children nice gifts, and we feel guilty, just as many parents do, when we can't afford more. But, tragically, gifts are really not what the children want. They, too, want to be "home" with family for Christmas.

This is why at Buckhorn we now have many more children in foster care than in our residential programs. Foster parents are amazing people. As a nation, we are legally and morally responsible for all children who, through no fault of their own, are without a home and a family. Today, it is the foster parents who carry the real burden for the rest of us.

A few years ago, we placed a very difficult young man with a host of physical and emotional problems with a first-time foster family. The

married couple had two beautiful and talented daughters, who were wonderful students as well. Now, they also have a foster son with some severe limitations.

We'll never fully understand how they managed, but that couple never gave up on becoming that young man's family and making their home his home. The two daughters graduated from college and now are both social workers, employed by Buckhorn. The young man married, is all and graduated from high school. He still lives at home.

The popular holiday song ends: "I'll be home for Christmas, if only in my dream." Blessed are those families who open their hearts and homes to the dreams of children, in this time of year when we remember the Child who is at the heart of the Season.

Email the Signal at mvsignal@sun-spot.com

The First Noel

Humbly they came in wonder and adoration, bearing gifts to the newborn babe.

May the peace, hope and joy of the Christmas season fill your holidays.

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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from our family to yours. Remembering that Jesus is the reason for every season.

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