

## DRIED FRUIT HOLIDAY ORNAMENTS

Lesson developed by: Sue Worstall, Summit County Master Gardener Volunteer

### ACTIVITY OVERVIEW:

Section One: Staff/caregiver can share holiday facts, then question residents about their personal memories and experiences.

Section Two: Staff/caregiver will find a list of supplies required to make dried fruit ornaments. Ornaments can go in private living areas or public spaces.

### PROGRAM

#### **Section One: Christmas tree history**

The idea of decorating a tree for Christmas began in Germany, where fruits and nuts were added to trees once the leaves fell off to symbolize the promise of spring to come. In the early 1600s, a fir tree was brought inside and adorned with paper roses, candles, nuts, and fruit. The idea of decorating a tree indoors took off and spread across Germany.

In the 1800s, German immigrants brought the tradition to America, where people made their own interpretations. Early ornaments were made out of whatever items families had available to them – including fruit (especially apples), nuts, strings of popcorn and cranberries, paper streamers, candles, and metal foil. Stars were popular and some sources have noted that they were used to convey the principles of heaven. Angels were used to teach about revelation and communication of God to man.

Hans Greiner started making glass ball ornaments (called baubles) during the 1800s, which became the first manufactured Christmas ornaments. In the late 19th century, the enterprising F.W. Woolworth brought the idea to America, where he sold more than \$25 million worth of ornaments per year.

The Christmas pickle is definitely one of the weirdest Christmas ornament traditions. It emerged in the late 19th century as a game that parents created for their children. They bought a glass pickle ornament, hid it inside the tree, where it blended in with the branches, and asked the children to hunt for it. Whoever found the pickle first got an extra gift!



Source: [naturalsuburbia.com/2009/12](http://naturalsuburbia.com/2009/12) - with permission

Ornaments are treasured by many. While some trees don't have themed ornaments, many family trees contain these and an assortment of ornaments made by schoolchildren, gifted objects and keepsakes from travels.

### Questions:

- ❖ What special holiday ornaments do you remember from when you were a child?
- ❖ Did you make ornaments in school? As gifts?
- ❖ Have you bought holiday ornaments for children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews over the years?
- ❖ If you chose an ornament today for yourself, what would it be?

### CRAFT ACTIVITY: DRIED FRUIT ORNAMENTS

Source: <https://hearthandvine.com/dried-fruit-ornaments/>

#### Items needed, per ornament:

Approximately 6 total slices of dried oranges, lemons and lime\*

2 cinnamon sticks, with small hole drilled in middles

Large needle or large paper clip

Raffia or ribbon, 20 " long

Paper plate to work on



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AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

**\*To dry fruit slices:**

Slice fruit into slices. Use paper towel to dab and soak up as much juice as possible before placing on a small baking/cooking rack in 200 degree oven. Bake about 3-4 hours, turning every hour until they look dry. Keep an eye on them. If they look good but feel a bit sticky remove them and let them sit out for a few days on the racks.



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**To create the ornament:**

1. Poke a hole in the fruit slices with a large needle or paper clip
2. Fold the raffia or ribbon in half. Tie a knot approximately 1 " up on the 2-thread end
3. Start with the loop end and thread 1 of the cinnamon sticks through, followed by the fruit slices
4. Finish with another cinnamon stick
5. Tie another knot at the end of the raffia. Trim any excess raffia

The ornament can be hung on a tree or doorknob. It can also be used on a gift package. Enjoy!

You can also use beads, bay leaves, more cinnamon sticks, and plant materials.

**BONUS HOLIDAY INFORMATION**

- ❖ **Peppermint candy cane** - Legend has it that the red-and-white-striped candy dates back to 1670, when a German choirmaster gave the sugar sticks, which he'd bent into the shape of shepherd crooks, to his young singers to keep them quiet during a Nativity pageant. In 1847, August Imgard, an immigrant living in Wooster, Ohio, became the first known American purveyor of candy canes. Now, they're the top-selling non-chocolate candy during the month of December.
- ❖ **Poinsettia** - Native to Central America and favored by the Aztecs, this pretty red plant was brought to America by Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico, in the 1820s. The bright red flowers and winter blooming season have made it synonymous with Christmas.
- ❖ **Dreidel** - Spinning tops in Yiddish are "dreidels" and the popular Hanukkah custom stemmed from the gambling game that dates back to 1500. The four Hebrew letters on each side of the dreidel—shin, hey, gimel and nun—form an acronym for "a great miracle happened here."
- ❖ **Mistletoe** - In ancient times, this parasitic plant was used both for fertility and as an aphrodisiac. Ancient Greeks made it a custom to kiss under it. Important: Don't kiss or eat the plant itself—it has toxic properties.
- ❖ **Wreath** – The wreath dates back to ancient Rome and Greece, when rings made of twigs, fruit, flowers and leaves were worn on heads. (Think the Olympic laurels.) In Christianity, evergreen wreaths symbolize strength and everlasting life, with the presence of a wreath on a door serving as a sign of Christmas spirit.

**Contact Information:**

If you have any questions about this activity, please email [mgsummitcounty@gmail.com](mailto:mgsummitcounty@gmail.com).

We hope you benefitted from this activity. Please let us know if you utilized this with a quick email to the above address. Please send your name, facility name, number of participants involved in this activity, and your feedback for improvement so we can measure our impact and improve this product. Thank you!

*Unlabeled photo sources: Sue Worstall*