

Extension Notes

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

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Enjoy Fresh Greenery Decorations Throughout the Season

Winter greenery arrangements are a beautiful and festive way to decorate your home for the holidays. But like all cut plants, they need a little TLC to stay fresh and looking their best. Here are a few tips for caring for your winter greenery arrangements:

- Keep your arrangements cool. Avoid placing your arrangements near heat sources, such as vents, fireplaces, or direct sunlight.
- Winter greens need moisture to stay fresh. Change the water in your arrangement every day or two. This will help to prevent the growth of bacteria and keep your greens fresh. You can also add a commercial floral preservative to the water.
- If the style of the arrangement makes keeping the cut tips in water impractical, mist the tips with water every day or two. Avoid excess water on the foliage.

Remember safety is always an important factor to consider. The foliage and berries of many evergreens are toxic to both people and pets. Arrangements are also flammable if they come in contact with open flames or heat sources such as fireplaces, space heaters, sunny windows, or lights. Check the needles on your arrangements throughout the season. Needles should be flexible and not break when bent. Avoid greenery that is shedding needles or has brown, dry tips.

If you decide that you would rather create your own greenery arrangement than purchase one, a variety of choices may be available in your backyard. Pine, juniper, arborvitae, yew, boxwood, magnolia, and holly all make great arrangements. Hemlock and spruce may be used as well, but will drop their needles quickly, especially indoors. Twigs, berries, nuts, seed heads, and other plant material from deciduous plants like viburnum, crabapple, acorns, hydrangea blossoms, and sweetgum balls may also add interesting textures and colors to winter arrangements.

If you are gathering fresh greenery yourself, keep in mind that you are pruning these trees and shrubs so particular attention should be paid to the cuts that are being made. This is especially true with pine, because since they only grow on new growth once you remove the end new growth will not develop in that spot.

You will want to use clean, sharp pruners and place the tips of your branches immediately into water. Ideally let your greenery soak overnight. Crushing the ends of the stems as you make your arrangement will allow for more water uptake. With proper care, your winter greenery arrangements will last for weeks and help you enjoy the holiday season.

If you're interested in learning more about winter arrangements consider joining us for the winter door swag workshop that will be held at the Carter County Extension Office on Wednesday, December 13th at noon.

The cost is \$5 and preregistration is required by December 7th. The Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment is an Equal Opportunity Organization with respect to education and employment and authorization to provide research, education information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Other Upcoming Events:

- **Little Sandy Beekeepers Association Meeting** – Tuesday, December 5th @ 6:30 PM; Speaker: Kenneth Holbrook, KSU Bee Lab
- **Extension District Board Meeting** – December 12th @ 10:00 AM