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Shore HOME & GARDEN

January 2025



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New year, new organizational goals

Happy New Year everyone!

Raise your hand if you feel a bit blue from the annual post-holiday letdown.

It's cold, I'm broke and my festive house feels a little empty without the lovely lights from my now-stored December decorations.

It can be a struggle, to be sure, but I always try to find the silver lining and remind myself that new beginnings and a fresh start are always possibilities each New Year.

I am fully aware that most of those January resolutions end up falling by the wayside within a month — just compare the parking lot of your local gym on the

Sweet Simplicity



By Kristine George

first week in January and again around Valentine's Day for proof!

That said, here are a few refreshers, complete with some homework, to help you start your new year strong!

Get it Together: In the words

of my favorite viral elf, Tally (do a search if you don't know what I am talking about — you will thank me later) "*Get it together.*"

I say this literally and figuratively because I personally spend way too much time looking for things!

Apparently, I am not the only one.

Did you know the average person spends 12 days a year looking for things?

Can you imagine what you could get accomplished if you had that dozen or so days back?

Use the new year as an excuse to hit the reset button on yourself and get those who you love organized! (PAGE 24)



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It's a good time to get busy indoors

Welcome to January and 2025!

The hustle and bustle of the holidays is now over.

Knowing that winter is the time of year where we spend most of our time indoors, why not consider refurbishing or creating new silk wall hangings and arrangements for your home.

You can pick from our extensive selection of silk botanicals, including succulents, flowers and foliage, designer ribbons, as well as one of a kind ceramic containers.

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Whether you are a do-it-yourselfer or you can have one of our expert floral designers create the perfect home accent for you.

After taking down your holiday decorations, why not consider adding a few new tropical plants. It is no doubt that tropical plants in the home or apartment provide a warm home environment.

House plant varieties grown today have been collected from all parts

Ken-Do Attitude



By Ken Morgan

of the world by professionally trained botanists.

They seek out unusual beautiful species that will adapt to our home climates.

Here are a few simple guidelines for growing great plants indoors.

• **Raise The Humidity:** This is one of the biggest problems houseplants face is the dry home air. Winter time in most homes is where the air can become drier than that of a desert.

Consider purchasing a humidifier

or simply spray mist the air around the plants.

• **Add Nutrition:** Most indoor plants benefit from a regular fertilization program from April thru October.

As a general rule mix-up a general purpose water-soluble fertilizer of 20-20-20, mixing at half the recommended label rate in a gallon jug.

Using room temperature water is better for the roots of the plant. The half-rate allows for constant feeding of the necessary nutrients and diminishing the chance of burning the plant from over-fertilization.

Cooler season plants like cyclamen, violets and rieger begonias benefit from bloom-booster 20-30-20 water soluble fertilizer, at room temperature during their bloom time of October through March.

• **Turn On The Light:** The ideal exposure for many houseplants year-round is an eastern facing window.

Remember too little (PAGE 40)

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Create warmth with indoor ferns

Ferns are usually found under the shady canopy of tall trees near streams and ponds, but many can be found in warm homes all year long.

Indoor ferns have delicate or sturdy green fronds that are made up of leaflets and a stem.

Some ferns have arching fronds that look graceful while others have sharp, upright spikes of fronds that give indoor gardens energy.

Ferns will keep their bright green color all winter long and can be a wonderful companion to other indoor plants.

Grouping ferns with other house plants can enhance the colors and textures of both, and the grouping will also help raise the amount of moisture in the air that the ferns need.

All ferns need moisture in the air as well as in the soil.

Misting the ferns once a day is an excellent way to help keep the humidity up, and another way is to place the pots of ferns on a tray of pebbles and keep the tray filled with water once a week.

Ferns like soil moisture but can't survive soaking wet soils, so be sure to allow the water from the ferns to drain in a saucer after watering for about 10 to 15 minutes then pour the remaining water out. All ferns like low light levels so they are perfect for the indoor gardener who only has north- or east-facing windows.

They also prefer day temperatures between 60 and 70 degrees and 10 degrees cooler during the night.

Gardening Tips



By Ginny Rosenkranz

Ferns come in many shapes and sizes that fit well with indoor gardening.

The Rabbit Foot fern (*Polypodium aureum*) is a small fern which has delicately cut light green leaves and rhizomes that are thick and furry, looking just like a lucky rabbit's foot.

Button ferns (*Pellea rotundifolia*)



Some ferns, such as the Boston fern, grow so fast that they shade out the fronds underneath.

grow 12 to 18 inches tall and have small dark green round leaves that are thick and rubbery evenly placed on either side of the slender arching stems.

Boston fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata*) is a popular fern due to its ability to thrive in most homes indoors and there are a number of different cultivars ranging from "Bostoniensis" with its arching fronds up to 3 feet long and cascade over the pots to "Fluffy Duffy," a very fringed and compact plant growing only 8 to 12 inches tall.

Boston ferns are the easiest to grow, needing low soil moisture while the Maidenhair fern (*Adiantum tenerum*) is the most difficult to grow, needing both high humidity and moist soil at all times.

The Maidenhair fern is very delicate with fan shaped leaflets on a slender black stem.

Ferns that need a lot of high humidity will do very well in a terrarium. Some ferns like the Boston fern grow so fast that they shade out the fronds underneath.

Trimming the dead fronds once a month can keep the ferns looking neat and clean.

Be aware that water softeners use salt to condition the water and can be too salty for watering ferns.

Clay pots are great for ferns as they have a tendency to create better air flow into the potting soils, preventing root rots. ➡

(Editor's Note: Ginny Rosenkranz is a commercial horticulture specialist with the University of Maryland Extension.)

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Mocktails: A complete experience

Story by Leslie Milby

January is the start of getting back into a normal routine, and maybe even setting goals for an improved one.

In recent years, one trend is having a “dry January,” where you abstain or limit alcohol consumption to kick off the new year.

Whether you have never been much of a drinker or if you are trying something new, experimenting with “mocktails” can be a great start to 2025!

Modern mocktails aren't as simple as leaving out the alcohol and

mixing juices and sodas. Complex ingredients and flavors as well as newly developing non-alcoholic beers, wine and liquor options make mocktails the complete experience.

The market for new alcohol-free spirits includes zero-proof tequila, vodka, gin and rum.

It's grown from \$8 billion in 2018 to over \$11 billion in 2022 and is expected to keep going up.

That consumption isn't just taking place at home and at small gatherings.

Upscale mocktails are starting to appear at several bars and res-

taurants. So long to having only club soda and Shirley Temples to choose from.

For these new non-alcohols, companies are still using the same refining steps to extract the herbs and botanicals as their alcoholic counterparts.

Depending on your goal and if you are trying to just reduce instead of completely stop your alcohol consumption, there are also options with a very low alcohol content. Just don't get them mixed up.

If you're more of a beer or wine drinker, the non-alcoholic



version has had a handful of options around for a while, but now many craft brewing companies are adding a non-alcoholic version to their lines, and some only brew non-alcoholic beers altogether.

As for wineries, the de-alcoholization of wine — done through the reverse osmosis process you learned about in grade school — has taken a bit longer to perfect.

Lots of research on the best grape choices, then producing those grapes, and then perfecting the process has ensured that you'll end up with the same complexities you enjoy with regular wine and are not just left with a glass of grape juice.

With all of the research and

development and then the processes themselves to create these authentic tastes, unfortunately, you'll notice prices to be just as high as regular alcohols.

Now for the fun part of actually using the spirits to create a mocktail.

The easiest way to get started is work with what you know. Try a riff on your regular drinks, tweaking to suit your tastes.

You'll note that some mocktail recipes do not use any alcohol replacement and rather focus on building a taste profile from scratch.

If you do choose to use a non-alcoholic spirit, a good starting point is to taste it with nothing

added. Is it sweeter than your former go to, or maybe it has a more of a (non-threatening) bite?

This will help you know how you need to treat the other elements of your cocktails.

From there, play up the rest of your flavors to add to your experience and help to trick and pleasantly distract your tastebuds.

If you need lime, squeeze it fresh. Get out your juice press for oranges if you need orange juice.

While you might think that going as far as adding extracts or oils is just a bit much, chances are, those flavors were added in for a reason.

Rather than omitting, choose a simpler recipe if you aren't ready



to commit to purchasing specialized ingredients.

Another trick for having a fancy feel is the glassware and ice you choose.

If you are trying a riff on an Old Fashioned, use a large round ice cube in a rocks glass. A Moscow Mule inspired beverage certainly needs a copper glass.

Companies releasing these totally new to the market beverages know that their consumers will likely need some guidance on how to best use them.

Head to the beverage's website for their best recipes and pairings. They've also likely scattered product out to influencers too, so search your favorite social media platform for some inspiration as well.

Want to learn more tips and tricks in person? The Centreville Branch of the Queen Anne's Public Library has partnered

Winter Cranberry Sparkler

Ingredients

- 2 ounces Cranberry Juice
- half- Simple syrup
- Squeeze of fresh lime juice
- crushed ice
- 4 oz sparkling water
- Slice of lime and sprig of rosemary for garnish

Instructions

1. Add cranberry juice, simple syrup, and lime juice to the bottom of a tall glass.
2. Add crushed ice to fill the glass, then pour in your sparkling water. Garnish with lime slice and a sprig of fresh rosemary.

with Chesapeake Culinary Center to invite Chef David Murray of Chesapeake on Thursday, Jan. 16 at 6 p.m. to teach an "Art of Mocktails" class.

Chef Murray believes the trend

correlates with people looking for a healthier lifestyle.

"We see the general population getting more creative about getting healthier food and drink into their bodies," he said. "Influencers' sharing recipes on social media has played a big part in this as well!"

The class will include a demonstration, tastings, and take home recipes to give a good start to creating mocktails at home.

"A good mocktail comes from having a good balance," Murray said. "Balancing sweet with sour or bitter and enhancing with flavored syrups or herbs is essential in making a delicious mocktail. And just like any beverage from behind the bar, you want texture and presentation to be on point as well."

If you can't make it to the library, he shared his recipe for the Winter Cranberry Sparkler. ➡





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A thick layer of fallen leaves can serve as mulch to protect spring bulbs.

Gardening can be a four-season labor of love

Story, photos by Jessica Damiano

See you, sitting there by the fire with your cup of hot cocoa (or wine). Don't get too comfortable.

You might think you can rest on your laurels now that there's a break in the mowing, weeding, sowing and planting action.

But fall and winter are the best times to tend to your garden's maintenance and prepare for the next growing season.

Outdoor care

For instance, have you planted your bulbs yet? It's not too late if the soil in your garden isn't frozen. As long as the ground is soft

enough to dig, you can continue to plant tulips, daffodils and other bulbs.

Be sure to cover them with a 3-inch layer of mulch, leaves or seed-free straw to prevent the heaving that often accompanies winter's freeze-thaw cycles.

If the garden is frozen, avoid

walking on the lawn, which would damage grass blades (and possibly soil structure).

Even in temperate zones, delicate garden plants like citrus trees, dahlias and spring-blooming plants often need protection over winter.

Keep them warm with a loosely wrapped and secured burlap jacket.

Knock snow off evergreen branches to prevent bending, buckling and splitting. Arborvitae and Leyland cypresses are especially susceptible.

Now is a great time to document what worked well in your garden this past season and what didn't, and note which plants you'd like to move in spring.

I can almost guarantee you'll forget at least some of your intentions if you don't write them down.

Go a step further and take photos of the plants you'd like to relocate so you'll remember where they are; it can be challenging to identify them when they first come up in spring, which is when you should dig up early bloomers.

If you have extra seeds, consider trading them with some gardening friends or seeking out a seed swap, many of which are held at libraries or organized by garden clubs.

Store seeds in paper envelopes or glass jars in a cool, dark spot away from fruit.

Label them even if you're confident you'll remember what they are. You won't.

If pests or diseases ravaged your plants during the growing season,



Homeowners in cold climates are encouraged to provide high-quality seeds, like cracked corn and sunflower seeds, and water to help sustain birds over winter, when flower seeds, fruits, nuts and nectar are typically unavailable.

(Photo courtesy Lena Monaco via Associated Press)

read up on the companion plants you can use to thwart them next year.

Indoor care

Place houseplants near a west- or south-facing window to maximize sunlight, and give pots a

quarter turn with each watering to expose all sides.

While you're at it, check them for mealybugs, spider mites and scale insects. If you find any, rinse them off in the sink.

If you're buying poinsettias,



It's important to avoid heavy traffic on frozen lawns, whether or not frost is visible, to avoid damaging delicate grass blades and soil structure.

check them carefully for whiteflies before bringing them home to avoid an infestation.

It may be too late to start Amaryllis bulbs indoors for holiday blooms, but if you pot them up now, you'll get to enjoy them during the winter doldrums.

Plant them with their pointed ends half-sticking out of the soil, and water thoroughly once. Then keep the soil consistently slightly moist.

Place them in a warm, sunny spot and increase watering when bulbs sprout.

When Amaryllis plants bloom, move them to a cooler room to extend flower life, but keep them away from children and pets; like many houseplants, they're toxic if ingested.

Remember the birds

In the absence of garden seeds, fruits, nuts and nectar, non-migratory birds depend on us over

winter.

Set out a feeder and keep it filled with high-quality birdseed.

And remember to provide water in the absence of snow or rain.

The birds will repay you by feeding thousands of your garden's plant-munching insects to their young in spring. 🐦

(Editor's note: Jessica Damiano writes weekly gardening columns for the AP and publishes the award-winning Weekly Dirt Newsletter.)

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(FROM PAGE 6)

Buy an organizer, subscribe to one of the many organizational apps, and purchase storage cubes or other organizers to help consolidate your physical items.

For example, my kids spend each day looking for their shoes. Every. Single. Day.

My solution? All shoes have a home in a specially designated cubby — next to the door — so they are easy to take off and put on, right where they need them.

While getting them to actually use the cubby is another battle, we have a place to put them.

The same goes for coats and gloves: Anything that we can streamline to make coming and going is a good place to start.

My challenge to you is to find one area of your life to organize today and get it done.

Once one area is done, you will be addicted and ready to tackle another area!

Build a Routine: One of the things I find to really help me live a more simple and stress-free life is to develop a routine and stick to it.

It can be as simple as scheduling things that matter to me.

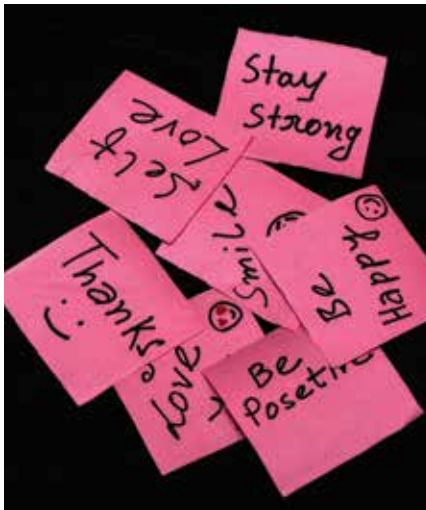
This past year, I started going to the gym and, rather than try to fit it in around my schedule, I made sure to add it to my calendar so that it is part of my day's planned activities.

Otherwise, it would get bumped off my day with some excuse.

Being intentional about the things that are important to us — including essential activities — will help you build a schedule that helps you meet your obligations such as work and school but that also makes sure that the things that you enjoy doing, such as self care or social time with friends - are part of your routine.

You have heard the saying that you cannot pour from an empty cup and making sure that you make things that invigorate you are part of your daily essentials will go a long way toward making your daily routine a happy and healthy one!

• **Daily Gratitude:** As much as we love celebrating the New Year, many of us fall into the doldrums



that inevitably accompany the winter months, aka seasonal affective disorder,

If you live in a cold weather area, you are likely to deal with this at one time or another — and it can be physically and mentally daunting!

When the cold weather and lack of sunshine gets you down, try this exercise: Get a sticky note and put it somewhere prominent, like your desk or the refrigerator.

Each day, write something that you are grateful for. It can be anything at all.

Do this every day for at least a week and then at the end of your week, read over all of those daily musings to remind you of the things that are worth getting out of bed for!

If you prefer, put them in a fun Mason jar - and encourage your family to join in.

You can review them as a family at the end of the month as a fun family activity. ➡

(Editor's Note: Kristine George is a freelance journalist who resides in Easton.)

An advertisement for "Market at Dover Station" in Easton, MD. The background is a photograph of a building with "DOVER" visible on its facade. On the left, there is a circular logo with a large "M" in the center, "EST. 2024" on either side, and "MARKET AT DOVER STATION" around the perimeter, with "Easton, MD" written below the "M". To the right of the logo, the text reads "Market at Dover Station" in a large, bold, serif font, followed by "a new and unique retail destination featuring local art, home decor, furniture and interior design" in a smaller, italicized serif font. Below this, the address "500 Dover Road, Easton, Maryland" and website "www.DoverStation.com" are listed. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner of the advertisement area.



Use bypass pruners to take a hardwood cutting from perennial shrubs like this redbud dogwood.

Make new shrubs with your own hardwood cuttings

Story, photos by Jessica Damiano

Our gardens may be in their winter slumbers, but that doesn't mean we have to rest: It's time to make free shrubs!

The easiest way to propagate woody plants like dogwood, forsythia, hydrangea, rhododendron

and viburnum, among others, is by taking hardwood cuttings in late fall or winter.

All you need is a clean pair of bypass pruners (whose scissor-type action makes clean cuts), a container and a well-draining medium (a 50-50 mix of coir and perlite is ideal, as it will simulta-

neously retain moisture and drain well.)

No special training or expertise required.

And, unlike growing from seed, the resulting plants will essentially be clones, growing into the same size, shape and color as their parents.

How to begin

First, select a deep container with drainage holes in its bottom and fill it with your potting mix.

Water it well and allow it to drain while you take your cuttings.

Select a stem roughly the width of a pencil, aiming for one that was a new shoot in the past growing season.

Measure down about 8 inches (the length of a pencil) from its tip and make a straight cut below a small leaf node (a bump on the stem from where a new leaf will grow).

Avoid large nodes, which are likely to be flower buds or leaf nodes from older stems and are more likely to rot.

Cut the top of the stem on the diagonal just above a node. Since plants remember their orientation, this will ensure you don't confuse top from bottom, as well as allow rainwater to roll off your cutting easily.

Repeat as necessary until you've acquired as many cuttings as you'd like.

You can also remove one long stem from the plant and cut it into 8-inch sections, observing its nodes and cutting each top portion diagonally.

Lightly dipping stem bottoms into rooting hormone powder and/or scraping a bit of bark from the bottom inch of each stem will help promote rooting but isn't necessary.

Planting the cuttings

Remove leaves, if any, from your cuttings, then stick the bottom thirds of each stem flat-cut



Cut the top of the stem on the diagonal just above a node. Since plants remember their orientation, this will ensure you don't confuse top from bottom, as well as allow rainwater to roll off your cutting easily.

side down into the mix about 2 inches apart around the perimeter of the pot.

The risk of rot is lower near the container's edge, as the soil there tends to dry out more quickly.

It's higher at the pot's base, so don't push cuttings all the way to the bottom.

Firm the soil around the cuttings with your fingers to remove

air pockets and ensure they are held securely upright.

In time, you will notice a callus develop on the exposed, diagonal wound.

A similar callus will form on the buried end of the cutting, and roots will grow from it as well as from the buried nodes.

Keep the soil only slightly moist — remember, new cuttings don't

have roots yet, so they can't take up water. Still, they shouldn't be allowed to dry out.

Let them get cold

Cuttings need to experience winter, but should not be allowed to freeze.

Depending on your climate, place pots in a cold frame, an unheated garage or a sheltered outdoor location until spring, then move them to a partly shady spot in the garden.

Check on cuttings regularly during spring and summer and water as needed.

They'll be ready to plant in the garden next fall. 🌿

(Editor's note: Jessica Damiano writes weekly gardening columns for the AP and publishes the award-winning Weekly Dirt Newsletter.)



After cutting, stick the bottom thirds of each stem flat-cut side down into the mix about 2 inches apart around the perimeter of the pot. The risk of rot is lower near the container's edge, as the soil there tends to dry out more quickly.

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Elaine and Glenn Orme moved from Florida more than 20 years ago to Maryland, starting Tuckahoe Treasures Alpaca Farm. "I love the alpacas," Elaine said. "They're such gentle animals. They're such a calm animal just to watch."

Local farms help folks find warmth in alpaca fiber

Story, photos by Sean Clougherty

It seems no matter how warmly dressed you are for an outside activity, once your feet and toes get too cold, it's time to go inside.

That's only one reason why socks made from alpaca fleece are one of the most popular items at local alpaca farm stores.

"It's like heat on the feet im-

mediately," said Elaine Orme, who owns Tuckahoe Treasures Alpaca Farm in Denton with her husband Glenn.

Native to the Andes Mountain region of South America, alpacas thrive in harsh conditions aided by coats of dense fleece.

As livestock on farms, the animals' coats are sheared every spring with the fleece gathered to

process into yarn and then made into clothes and other products.

The spring shearing also helps them manage the summers' heat.

"They just get a haircut," said Phil Liske of Outstanding Dreams Alpaca Farm in Preston. "It takes about 10 minutes for each animal."

The natural fiber's warmth is only one of its aspects, alpaca

farmers espouse to people that come to their farms and shops.

The fleece is hypoallergenic as it doesn't have the oil lanolin found in sheep's wool and it's a softer fiber making it smoother on the skin.

"It's as soft if not softer than cashmere," said Liske.

All these attributes connect back to the tiny fiber's semi-hollow core, which traps heat, insulates the body but also stays breathable and allows moisture to move away from the skin and evaporate away.

Orme and Liske said winter is busy in their stores as people seek a quality fix to their cold parts.

Along with the socks — prized by hunters and outdoor workers — scarves, hats and gloves also get plenty of interest, and there's also toys animals, yarn, rugs, sweaters, blankets and many other items.

The Ormes stock soap with a felted alpaca covering.

"It's like a loofah or a wash cloth," Elaine said.

Interest beyond the Mid-Shore is expected to keep growing as well, even with those large sportswear brands.

"Growing consumer awareness regarding the benefits of eco-friendly textiles will spur the product demand," according to a recent report from Growth Market Insights.

"In the space of textiles and fashion, natural and breathable fabric has become very popular in recent years. Peruvian alpaca wool has gained momentum ow-



Native to the Andes Mountain region of South America, alpacas thrive in harsh conditions aided by coats of dense fleece.

ing to its unique characteristics, durability, and superior quality. Various clothing brands and designers are using alpaca to make jackets and coats owing to their low water retention rate and

moisture resistance. Additionally, the rising demand for biodegradable materials in the construction sector will positively impact the industry outlook."

While the garments and items

made with alpaca fleece warm the body, seeing and watching the alpaca animals warms the heart for many visitors, the farmers said. Liske and his wife Vickie hold an annual fall festival that draws hundreds of people to the farm to see the animals and learn about the fleece's characteristics.

"It took a while for people to understand the difference," he said. "Once people try the product they understand the value."

Elaine Orme said when their first alpacas came to the farm more than 20 years ago, she often sat near the pasture just to watch them.

"I love the alpacas," she said. "They're such gentle animals. They're such a calm animal just to watch." 🐾



Alpaca yarn appeals to the crafters seeking the luxurious feel of the animals' fleece. "Not everybody knits but there's definitely an enthusiasm about it," said Phil Liske of Outstanding Dreams Alpaca Farm in Preston.



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Keep cold and flu season at bay

Story by Family Features

It doesn't take much for cold and flu symptoms to take over.

Even a mild case of the sniffles can make it difficult to navigate the demands of everyday life.

It's virtually impossible to avoid germs altogether, but you can make sure you're ready to fight off an infection, whether it's a minor cold or a full-blown case of the flu.

"I always share a few easy and simple methods with my patients when cold and flu season comes back around to keep them in the best shape," said Dr. Tim Tiutan, board-certified internal medicine physician. "Not only does getting ahead offer protection, but knowing what to do when symptoms start to come on, and what to have in your medicine cabinet, can help ease the burden of an oncoming illness."

Preparation and prevention play important roles before a bug hits, but it's also valuable to know how to effectively treat an illness and keep your loved ones from getting sick.

Short of stashing yourself away in a bubble, there aren't many failsafe ways to fully avoid germs. However, some basic hygiene and preventive care can go a long way toward minimizing your risk. Regularly washing your hands can help get rid of germs before you accidentally introduce them to your eyes, mouth or nose. Be especially diligent after spending time in crowded places.

Maintaining an overall healthy

lifestyle also helps ensure you're in optimal condition if you do get sick. That means eating a nutritious, well-rounded diet and keeping up with your exercise routine. Also be sure to talk to your doctor or pharmacist about getting a flu shot; while it may not fully prevent you from getting sick, in most cases it helps your body fight back and keeps your symptoms manageable.

Knowing you can't completely eliminate your exposure to germs, it's a good idea to ensure you have everything you need to fight a cold or flu on hand. At least once a year, give your medicine cabinet a thorough cleaning. Discard any expired medications and replace products that have run low, especially those designed to help fight symptoms like pain relievers, fever reducers, decongestants, antihistamines and cough syrups.

It's also a good time to restock items like tissues, cough drops, hand sanitizer and antibacterial soap. Medical supplies like thermometers and humidifiers also come in handy when you're under the weather; check to be sure yours are in good working order and consider adding any supplies you don't already have, such as a blood pressure cuff or home oximeter.

Once you're sick, sleep is one of the best remedies. Your body can redirect energy toward healing when you're sleeping, which helps boost your immune system, so give yourself permission to rest when

you're feeling down.

It's important to treat symptoms, not just mask them. Because symptoms like fever, runny nose, chest congestion, cough and more can indicate a more serious problem, finding the root cause of the symptoms can be a more effective treatment strategy.

Some common remedies for chest congestion only mask the symptoms. Many doctors recommend an option like Mucinex 12-Hour because it treats the cause of chest congestion by thinning and loosening excess mucus. One dose lasts up to 12 hours, helping you clear mucus and relieve congestion.

Getting rest and managing your symptoms are easier when you stay at home, but it's also the best way to prevent spreading germs to others. It's not always practical, but if you can, limit yourself to one area of the house, away from family members. Cough into your elbow or a tissue, never your hands. Use antibacterial hand sanitizer and wipe down surfaces to minimize others' contact with your germs.

Be especially wary of spending time with anyone who has a compromised immune system while you're contagious, including those with pre-existing conditions, older adults and pregnant women. Take advantage of delivery or curbside services for essentials like groceries and talk with your employer about working remotely or using sick time until you're feeling better. ➡

How Enlightening!

After the ball ...

With a new calendar, millions of people will be marking the event to make new lifestyle beginnings by formulating their New Year's Resolutions.

- The *top three* New Year's resolutions among Americans are losing weight, getting organized, and spending less money.
- People tend to make more resolutions to start a new *habit* (84 percent), than to break an old one (16 percent).
- Of those who successfully achieved their top resolution, 40 percent of them did so on the *first try*. The rest made multiple tries, with 17 percent finally succeeding after more than six attempts.
- Sixty-five percent of people made their *list* of resolutions between Dec. 28 and New Year's Day. The rest usually take up until the end of January.
- The most frequent resolutions usually involve *promises* to exercise more (37 percent), increasing the time devoted to study or work (23 percent), losing weight, stop smoking or drinking (alcohol and/or coffee), and to eat healthier.
- Many historians believe that the *Babylonians* were the first to make New Year's resolutions.
- Two out of every three people actually make *three* or more resolutions.
- It's estimated that *63 percent* of people will still be keeping their resolutions intact after the two months.

(FROM PAGE 8)

or to much light will produce unattractive plants.

It is a good idea to check the light needs of each individual plant you may have. Be sure to give all your plants a quarter turn every time you water.

This way the sunlight will uniformly reach all sides of the plant over the course of a month, keeping them growing upright.

• **Wait On The Water:** Too much or too little water kills more houseplants than anything else.

Water plants only when the soil is dry to touch — not just on the surface, but also a half- to 1-inch deep.

Avoid letting plants sit in water for more than five minutes.

One more wise tip, do not water your house plants if you are using town tap water, as it is high in fluo-

ride, which can cause tip burning of certain house plants. If this is the case, consider purchasing distilled or spring water. Well water doesn't have high amounts of fluoride and is safe to use.

• **Set The Thermostat:** Learn what temperatures your plants need and place them accordingly.

Always avoid placing plants where heat registers blow on the foliage.

All plants benefit from protection from blasts of hot or cold air. Following these few simple tips will greatly improve your houseplant growing success.

As always, stop by with any questions or concerns.

On nice days try to spend some time outside cleaning up any debris the wind may have blown on the property. It is also a good time to prune deciduous trees, whose canopy may have overgrown into

your sun-loving flower beds.

Remember to prune away and branched growing down below 10 and 2 o'clock, anything that may be rubbing and any branch that is damaged or diseased. Pull up any remaining fall weeds and plant debris now to prevent them from going to seed in the spring.

This is the time of the year when some of us make a New Years resolution. Join me in this realization for 2025:

"The secret of contentment is the realization that life is a gift, not a right. Next to faith this is the highest art — to be content with the calling in which God has placed you." — Martin Luther

May God grant you contentment and abundant blessing for the New Year. ➔

(Editor's Note: Ken Morgan is the owner of Robin's Nest Floral and Garden Center in Easton, Md.)

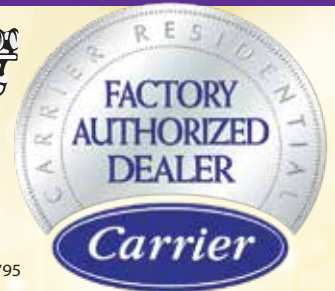
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American Brilliant Cut Glass

Antique Discovery



By DeeDee Wood

(Editor's note: DeeDee Wood is the owner of Black Cat Curiosities, an online antiques research and sales venue.)

Recently, I took my American Brilliant Cut punch bowl to a Christmas party. It sparkled in the light, holding a large amount of spiked eggnog and a dash of nutmeg swirling in the top, a clear glass ladle spinning around as partygoers obtained their libations with an accompanying cup that matched the bowl.

As I stood, while talking about my punch bowl, no one knew what American Brilliant Glass was — nor did they seem to be very interested in anything but the eggnog within.

However, there was once a time when having Brilliant glass was a status symbol, due to manufacturing techniques, costs and labor of



the item.

The American Brilliant Period (aka ABP) refers to a time between roughly 1870 and 1920, when cut glass from the United States was considered some of the finest crafted glass in the world.

The glass was known for its brilliance, which came from its lead content, which could be as high as 50 percent.

Cut by hand on various sizes of wheels and varying amounts of painstaking labor, and polished to perfection, to have “ABP” was a symbol of status and luxury, for gift-giving, parties and as part of a noble house collection.

Immigrants to the United States during this time period, coming from European glass houses with their cutting skills, glass knowledge



and acumen, helped American glass houses make some of the finest cut lead crystal glass in the world—some call it the Victorian Glass Renaissance.

Before American Brilliant Glass became popular and considered supreme, it was the glass houses in Ireland, England and France that had the reputation for the finest glass anywhere.

The Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 gave manufacturers (for which later there would be more than 1,000 cutting shops producing ABP in the United States during this glass reign), a chance to showcase their deep cut, brilliant glass.

Decanters, glasses, platters, bowls and more, were showcased and techniques explained and displayed, and

the results were skyrocketing popularity and immediate popularity.

An item that was hand-cut on a wheel, hand-polished, and brilliantly gleaming with lead content enchanted the masses.

Antique collectors can recognize ABP glass in a variety of ways.

Its lead content makes it quite heavy to the touch, so lifting up a piece immediately tells you there is lead contained within.

The patterns cut into the glass, first done by hand, then later, cut from pattern layovers in the soft glass and polished, symbolize ABP-geometric patterns and thick cut adornments really stand out to collectors, with geo-centers swirling within a serving plate, sharp edges and mimics of floral patterns round out ways to spot the cutting techniques in this unique, American antique product.

As with many ingenious, innovative techniques in the antiques market, they can be replaced with cheaper, less expensive methods of production.

The fall of American Brilliant Glass came from something called “pressed glass”, which was a way to press in patterns to molds, without having to cut it by hand.

The results weren’t as glorious, but changing tastes, pocketbooks and styles, as well as the cost of World War I, caused the more expensive, decadent ABP to take a back seat to cheaper methods and more availability to the normal consumer.

ABP definitely had a time period and a reign over what some call the golden age of cut glass. ➤

Candy cane ice cream sandwiches a simple hit

Food For Thought



By Deborah Walker

(Editor's note: Deborah Walker has written about food and recipes for 15 years. She resides in Ocean City.)

Entertaining can be very stressful; especially, if one does not have a lot of experience.

Success is determined by imagination, details, and personalization. And it is this style that flavors special occasions with distinction.

The bar is one of the most popular area's and can be quite pricey to stock. A fortified punch is a way to cut costs and is quite delicious.

A few helpful tips for a tasty punch follow.

First and foremost, chill all wet ingredients. If you add warm liquids to the ice, you will end up with a dull, diluted punch.

Secondly, an ice mold is preferred over ice cubes. An ice mold is attractive and does not melt as fast as individual ice cubes.

While we are on the subject of libations, prepare a special beverage for non-alcoholic drinkers.

An elegant tea service on a tray



As a final touch, the ice cream sandwich is rolled on a plate of crushed candy canes.

(Photo by Deborah Walker)

adorned with a vintage napkin is a possibility. If lemon is part of your tea service, make sure you remove all seeds.

If you plan on having fresh flowers, consider adding fresh fruit or veggies to the arrangement. Not only are they gorgeous but they can be less expensive.

For example, majestic stalks of

asparagus can complement the color of green in your arrangement. Fresh cranberries are a stunning replacement for clear marbles. Just make sure you change the water every day.

Fabulous entertaining does not mean you have to spend beyond your means. An amuse bouche is a great way to incorporate an expen-

sive item at an affordable price. An amuse bouche is simply a one-bite appetizer.

Prepare as much as possible in advance. This includes setting the table, platters, and serving utensils in their desired location.

If you are going to have a sit-down dinner, actually sit in the seats where your guests will be sitting.

This gives you a first-hand view of what your guests will be seeing.

Buffets are popular for the simple fact that guests help themselves which always pleases the host. But buffets can get boring and are predictable.

If you want to spruce up your buffet, think in terms of height, color, and texture.

Height creates drama and is very eye catching. Place a few different pots on your buffet and drape a tablecloth over and in between them. Having all the dishes on the same level of your buffet table is anything but appetizing.

Our eyes naturally go to color. Infuse a rainbow of colors for a more exciting look. Try to avoid placing two dishes of the same color next to each other.

Lastly, textures are a whimsical

Secret ingredient is 'Individuality.'

"If a man is not faithful to his individuality, he cannot be loyal to anything."

— Claude McKay,

way to add pizzazz to your buffet. Contrast is a sure way to keep guests coming back for seconds.

No matter what dish one is preparing, you must think of yourself as an artist.

The plate is a blank canvass. Main and supporting foods create a beautiful masterpiece that is not only pleasing to the eye but also awakens the taste buds to a symphony of flavors. Remember, the food on the plate establishes a dialogue, and you want your company to listen.

Not everyone is comfortable with making desserts. It is perfectly acceptable to purchase store bought desserts. Semi homemade and semi store bought is a wonderful combination.

If children are present at your celebration, consider candy cane ice cream sandwiches. Store bought cookies, ice cream, and crushed

candy canes are the only ingredients you need for a fun, final course that is sure to be a hit with the kids.

The cookies need to be sturdy in order to support the dessert. The flavor is up to the individual cook.

The ice cream must have a hard freeze or it will start melting before you serve it to your little ones. Simply remove it from the carton, slice it, and use a cookie cutter to obtain an even shape.

If the group is extra hungry, forgo the cookie cutter and use an ice cream scoop. Choose a flavor that pairs well with the cookies and candy canes. When undecided, vanilla is a good option.

Place crushed candy canes on a plate and roll the sides of the ice cream sandwich in it. You may have to roll it a few times to get an even coating.

Doggie bags aren't just for restaurants. I always send my guests home with a little bag that has a few treats and a recipe from one of the dishes that were served. It's the little touches that mean so much.

In closing, be true to yourself when entertaining. It's the love and special times that determine a memorable occasion. Enjoy! 🍷


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Simple Sheet Pan Suppers

FAMILY FEATURES

At times, spending hours in the kitchen can be a relaxing, enjoyable experience. However, even for avid home cooks, a busy weeknight isn't one of those times. Fortunately, solutions like sheet pan suppers make it easy to create dishes with exceptional flavor depth that come together quickly and clean up just as fast.

Keeping a variety of vegetables on hand makes it simple to pull together a family meal. Onions, for example, are versatile, flavorful, easy to store, have a long shelf-life and are available year-round from U.S. growers. An added benefit when cooking with onions is that you're serving up a good source of fiber.

For more tasty recipes to make supper a cinch, visit onions-usa.org and usaonions.com.

Spicy Sheet Pan Roasted Jambalaya

Recipe courtesy of the National Onion Association and Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee

Servings: 4-6

- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 1/2 large green bell pepper, diced
- 1/2 large yellow bell pepper, diced
- 1/2 large red bell pepper, diced
- 3 stalks celery, sliced or diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1-2 jalapenos, seeded and diced
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided

- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 link (13.5 ounces) Andouille sausage, sliced
- 1 pound large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning blend
- linguine noodles, cooked according to package directions
- 1-2 lemons, sliced in thin wedges
- 2 green onions, sliced
- fresh chopped parsley

Heat oven to 400 F.

Line 13-by-18-inch sheet pan with parchment paper.

In large bowl, combine onion, bell peppers, celery, garlic, jalapenos, tomatoes, 2 tablespoons olive oil, salt

and pepper until evenly combined. Spread out evenly on pan in single layer. Add slices of Andouille sausage. Roast 15-20 minutes, or until vegetables are tender and start to brown.

Toss shrimp with Cajun seasoning and prepare linguine noodles.

When ready, remove baking sheet from oven. Place shrimp on top of vegetable and sausage mixture in single layer. Top with half the lemon wedges. Return to oven and cook about 5-8 minutes, or until shrimp is no longer pink.

Serve over linguine garnished with green onions and parsley with remaining fresh lemon wedges on side.

Easy Drumstick-Quinoa Sheet Pan Supper

Recipe courtesy of the National Onion Association and Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee

Servings: 4-6

- 8-10 chicken legs
- 1 fennel bulb
- 1 large yellow onion, sliced
- 1 large red onion, sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, sliced
- 3 medium-sized potatoes, cubed
- 1 orange (1/4 cup juice and zest)
- 1/4 teaspoon thyme, dried
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh chopped parsley
- orange rind curls

brown rice, cooked according to package directions
quinoa, cooked according to package directions

Heat oven to 400 F.

Line 13-by-18-inch sheet pan with parchment paper.

Place chicken legs on pan. Spread fennel, yellow onion, red onion, garlic and potatoes around and in between legs.

In small bowl, whisk together orange juice and zest, thyme and olive oil. Pour mixture over chicken and vegetables. Season with salt and pepper.

Roast 45 minutes, or until chicken is cooked through and vegetables are tender. Cook rice and quinoa.

Garnish chicken with parsley and orange curls. Serve over brown rice and quinoa.



Sheet Pan-Style Buddha Bowls

Recipe courtesy of the National Onion Association and Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee

Servings: 4-6

- 2 yellow onions, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch wedges
- 1/2 head of red or purple cabbage, cut into wedges
- 2 red potatoes, cut into 1/2-inch wedges
- 1 small butternut squash, peeled and 1/2-inch diced
- 1 pound Brussels sprouts, halved
- extra-virgin olive oil
- salt, to taste
- black pepper, to taste
- 1 1/2 cups quinoa, cooked according to package directions

Tahini sauce:

- 1 tablespoon tahini
- 1/2 lemon, juiced
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2-1 teaspoon maple syrup
- 2 avocados, peeled and sliced
- fresh parsley

Heat oven to 400 F.

Line 13-by-18-inch sheet pan with parchment paper.

Place onion, cabbage, potatoes, squash and Brussels sprouts in single layer on pan. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast vegetables 40 minutes, or until tender. Add more salt and pepper if needed.

While vegetables roast, cook quinoa.

To make tahini sauce: In small bowl, whisk tahini, lemon juice, mustard and syrup until smooth.

To assemble Buddha bowls: Spoon quinoa into bowls. Add roasted veggies and garnish with avocado and parsley. Drizzle tahini sauce over each bowl and serve.

ALL ABOUT ONIONS

Knowing how to buy and store onions can make them true superstars in your kitchen. Growers and shippers of the National Onion Association and Idaho-Eastern Oregon Onion Committee offer these tips:

Buying

When shopping, buy onions with dry outer skins, free of spots or blemishes. The onion should be firm and have no scent. Avoid bulbs that have begun to sprout.

Yellow, red and white onions are available year-round from producers in the United States.

Seasonal differences like flavor and texture are noticeable and highlighted during these time frames:

Fall and winter onions (available August-April) have multiple layers of thick, paper-like layers of skin. Known for their mild to

pungent flavor profile, these varieties can be eaten raw, and are ideal for roasting, caramelizing, grilling and frying because they have less water content.

Spring and summer onions (available March-August) have thin, often transparent skins and are typically sweeter and milder than fall and winter varieties. Due to their high water content and mild flavor, they are best used for raw, pickled, lightly cooked or grilled dishes.

Storing

Store onions in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place, not the refrigerator. Do not store whole, unpeeled onions in plastic bags. Lack of air movement reduces storage life. Peeled or cut onions may be stored in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to 7 days.

January events

Adkins Arboretum offering free guided tours

RIDGELY — Adkins Arboretum's diverse plant communities is available to be explored on a guided walk led by a docent naturalist on Jan. 4 from 10-11 a.m.

Visitors can see how the bottom-

land forest and upland paths, meander through beech trees, traverse native meadows, and follow the narrow Tuckahoe Creekside path.

Guided walks are free for members and free with admission for

the general public. Tours begin at the Visitor's Center and last approximately one hour.

for more information, visit AdkinsArboretum.org or call 410-634-2847, ext. 0. ➡



Talbot Garden Club hosting native bee expert

EASTON — The Talbot County Garden Club is inviting the public to a practical lecture by native bee, bumblebee and wildlife Advocate Sam Droege of the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, Md.

Droege's talk is titled "Helping Native Bees in Talbot County: It's Easier Than You Think!"

The presentation is scheduled to take place at the Talbot County Free Library on Tuesday, Jan. 28 at 11 a.m.

According to Droege, the bee list for Talbot County includes 187 different species of bees.

New ones are discovered each year.

Some are found in Easton, others in areas like the Conservation Park in Oxford, on Poplar Island, along roadsides, and on private properties.

What ties these together are healthy populations of native flowers. Some are planted while others are just allowed to grow. ➡

Ice and Oyster Festival kicks off on Jan. 17

CAMBRIDGE — The 2025 Cambridge Ice and Oyster Festival will kick-off Friday, Jan. 17 at 5 p.m. with activities at three locations.

At the Packing House, there will live music, ice carving demonstrations, interactive ice sculptures, drinks for adults and children, oysters, fire pits, s'mores, and food

from local caterers.

At the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake Bay Resort and Spa there will a synthetic ice skating rink and winter village featuring refreshment stations including a hot chocolate station and cocktail bar, along with fire pit stations for s'mores roasting and shopping from local vendors.

The downtown Cambridge location will feature ice sculptures for viewing and interaction, including, back by popular demand, the Ice Slide that is sponsored by the Hyatt.

There will be a shuttle service running between all three locations.

For more information, visit <https://iceoysterfest.com/>.



Murder mystery party scheduled for Jan. 25

STEVENSVILLE — Get ready for a glamorous evening of mystery, intrigue and murder at this masquerade ball murder mystery party at Kent Island Resort on Jan. 25 from 6-9 p.m. at 500 Kent Manor Drive.

Attend the Billionaires' Club annual Masquerade Ball and help get this soiree back on track by trading clues with your guests, gathering information, and solving the crime before the masked menace gets away! Evening wear, ball gowns,

Venetian masks, suits, and tuxes are what to wear to this high class night of masks and murder.

For more information, visit <https://www.kentislandresort.com/>, call 410-643-5757 or e-mail events@kentislandresort.com. ➔



Two day quilting workshop in Cambridge


CAMBRIDGE—The Dorchester County Office of Tourism is hosting a beginner’s quilting two-day workshop at 1003 Greenway Drive. It will be on Jan. 25 and Feb. 1 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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The event will feature the “Ohio Star” quilt block design. The finished block will be a 12-inch square.

Materials to bring include scissors, needle, two or three straight pins, pen/pencil, cotton thread and

two or three colors of cotton fabric. The fee is \$15 per attendee.

For more information, contact instructor Sue Brenchley at 443-822-7758 or e-mail sabrenchley@gmail.com. 



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