Cheery Tables Gingerbread Houses and Santa's Sleigh

Beth Cummings
Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker
Part of the Home Economics Commons

Recommended Citation
Cummings, Beth (1936) "Cheery Tables Gingerbread Houses and Santa's Sleigh," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 16 : No. 5 , Article 6. Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol16/iss5/6

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Homemaker by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.
Cheery Tables
Gingerbread Houses and Santa’s Sleigh
by Beth Cummings

Are you already for that inevitable question from your family when you arrive home for Christmas vacation? Or perhaps your family doesn’t say patronizingly, “Well, what did you learn at college this quarter?” But if they do, you can be all ready for them this time with something of practical value. When you pack your bag to go home, pack along these suggestions for table decorations. And then ask mother if you can have complete charge of the Christmas table, for there are so many original and smart ways of decorating the table this year.

If there are going to be a number of younger brothers, sisters, and cousins at the big dinner, perhaps you will want to dress up the table for them. A miniature sleigh makes a good nucleus for such a table decoration. The sleigh with a toy Santa Claus could form the centerpiece. Small gifts for everybody could be piled in and about the sleigh. If a high decoration as a centerpiece is possible there is nothing with more sentiment than a miniature Christmas tree. Some trailing strands of red berries and silver moss add to its effectiveness. Under the tree, and arranged symmetrically, can be small boxes containing gifts for the diners. These gifts should be small, and if possible, triangular; then a double strand of red and green bebe ribbon could be led from the point of the box to each service plate.

Candles are a never-failing source of table decoration. They may be purchased in nearly any color, and the cost is comparatively small. There are many different kinds, and they all may be used effectively. At present the tall tapers in the low holders are much in vogue, but the colonial, the twisted, and the shaded candle all can be used. The important thing to remember about candles is that the flame of the candle must not come within the range of vision, as it is very unpleasant to look directly into a candle flame.

The conventional placing of candles is somewhere on the four corners of the table, but many other arrangements may be made. Candles may be placed in a design in the center of the table, or a very unusual and attractive effect may be gained by placing them at intervals from corner to corner. They may also be placed lengthwise of the table. This is particularly good arrangement if the holders are of different heights. Place the tallest in the center, and let them grade down with the shortest ones near the ends of the table. Some words to the wise about using candles might not be wasted here. A cold candle will burn much more slowly and steadily than a warm candle—it should be put into the refrigerator for twenty-four hours before it is to be used. If using a new candle, be sure that it has been lighted and snuffed before using it.

If your family is one of those to whom Christmas wouldn’t be Christmas without a tree, whether it is one of the old-fashioned evergreens with its pungent pine fragrance or one of the make-believe kind, try one of those different and original trees that the shops are offering this year. They have trees of frosted glass; trees of narrow strips of metal with colorful ball trimmings; and trees of cellophane. And for placecard holders or favors you can get little German carved figures of angels or members of the Holy Family.

Perhaps you would like to make your centerpiece from larger wooden carved figures. Large colorful angels holding candles could be used at either end of the table, and in the center small replicas of these same angels could be placed in a pattern. Scenes from the Bible can be depicted with other carved figures. Complete sets can be purchased at the gift shops portraying the Holy Family, the shepherds, the Christ Child, and many other Biblical characters.

Flowers offer no end of possibilities for effective table decorations, especially if you happen to be one of those gifted persons who can arrange flowers. One rule to remember, however, is that flowers should never be so high as to prevent easy conversation. One very striking arrangement can be achieved by using a low pottery bowl filled with flowers, placed in a horizontal line with four black onyx candleholders.

One of the very newest notes struck this year is combining candles and flowers to make one bouquet. For this purpose a special candle can be bought; it is no bigger around than the large stem of a flower. Using a flat bowl with a frog, you place the candles as well as the flowers in the frog, remembering to keep the flowers low. An exquisite effect can be gained with flowers by using these very, very new narrow pottery rings about one foot in diameter and about two inches deep. Trail rosesbuds and their leaves in this pottery circle and set two matching candleholders on each side. The candleholders are just like the large ring except that they are only about four inches in diameter, and the center, instead of being empty, holds a tall candle. Just two or three rosesbuds should be placed in these small rings.

Simplicity is your keynote in any decorating. Remember this and your fond parents will be more than surprised at what you have learned at college this fall.

A gingerbread house! How does that sound for a Christmas table centerpiece? It is something you can make yourself and have loads of fun doing. Ronnie Ronnegan’s mother does this every year for their Christmas table. Using a simple gingerbread recipe with an extra amount of flour to make it stiff, she bakes the squares just the size she will want them for the sides and roof of the house. For windows and doors, she merely cuts out squares and behind the windows puts red cellophone. The roof is two pieces of gingerbread stuck together with sticky tape, which acts as a hinge. Four small cookies pasted about a quarter of an inch apart on a piece of paper folded into a square to make the chimney. On top of the roof and about the house, Mrs. Ronnegan sprinkles powdered sugar to look like snow. Can’t you just see that little house sitting in the middle of your table with little Christmas trees furnishing the landscaping?