

Fun Decorations for the Holidays

The arrival of Santa Claus is always a vital part of Christmas. His elves, those little helpers, that make the toys and package them, do come along for the ride - in fact, they keep on working well into the night.

These elves do not have the magical powers to come down chimneys and back up again. They have to enter your home and arrange those packages under the tree, and straighten out those ornaments and lights and finish off all those cookies and milk treats.

Place an elf entrance by your front door or near your fireplace, if you have one. This is a very special entrance and can only be used by Santa's helpers. This elf entrance is simply a 26-inch piece of cardboard covered with Christmas wrap, cut in the shape of a doorway. It is attached to wall or side-door with double stick, no-marring tape, and felt and other decorations alongside to make it festive. A tiny wreath, ribbons and a doorknob made of a plastic cap painted in red and green.

A doormat is a 7-10 inch piece of cardboard covered with terry cloth glued or taped on. It can be in red or green.

A sign should also be hung out - "Elves Only" or "Elf Entrance" or whatever slogan you think appropriate. Watch the giggles and enjoy the compliments when your family and guests see that you even considered those "little helpers" that make Christmas merry.

On the outside of your home, using a spare snow shovel and a basket or bushel of some type, reserve a place for Santa to tie up those reindeer. Put a bright plastic or weather-resistant ribbon on the shovel and a sign that tells Santa to "hitch up" his reindeer and don't forget to provide some food for munching while Santa's inside "doing his thing." A bit of bird seed mixed with dried corn works really well and the fact that birds and small animals will munch will make the reindeer food disappear. A touch of nostalgia and a great outdoor decor item.

For the inside of your home - a few red and green "extra" blankets on beds, wire greenery to picture frames and use a fresh pineapple in your centerpiece - it is the symbol of hospitality and abundance. On your table - clusters of pinecones clipped to place mats, silverware tucked into mittens with a scarf as a table runner, and candy canes and silverware tied with a Christmas bow become a pleasant surprise for dinner guests.

Fill metal Christmas tree cookie cutters with one-color crushed candy and melt in the oven. When cooled and hardened, place on a mirror or silver tray. Placing votive candles behind or between the "trees" will illuminate the candy colors. Inspiring, different and festive. However you decorate - ENJOY!