

Spiders Are Responsible For Christmas Tree Tinsel

Have you ever wondered why we put shiny tinsel on the Christmas tree? Tinsel does not symbolize artificial icicles. No, tinsel is in honor of spider webs.

There are several different versions of the legend of spiders and Christmas trees, but the basic components of the story are always the same. Spiders crawled all over the Christmas tree and covered the tree with their webs.

The Ukrainian version is that there was once a woman who was so poor that she could not afford decorations for her Christmas tree nor could she afford any presents. All she had was a small tree.

When she and her children woke up on Christmas morning, they found that spiders had crawled among the tree branches during the night and the tree was covered with spider web. The web glistened with dew in the sunlight and the poor woman's tree turned to silver to delight her children.

The German version has it that once a housewife was busy cleaning every corner of her house getting ready to put up the Christmas tree. The spiders retreated to the attic to keep from being swept outside into the cold.

Once the house was clean, the family put up a perfect tree and covered it with beautiful decorations in honor of Christmas and then went to bed. The spiders then came down from the attic to inspect the tree.

The spiders had never seen anything so pretty and crawled all over the tree inspecting all the decorations. In their excitement they covered the tree with web making it look grey and dusty.

When St. Nick came, to leave presents for the children of house, he saw what the spiders had done. He knew the spiders had meant no harm. He knew the family would be upset to see their beautiful tree shrouded in dusty spider web.

St. Nick decided to solve the dilemma by turning the spider web into gold and silver. The tree now glittered in the light and was lovelier than before.

A variation on the German legend has it that once upon a time all the animals were allowed to come inside and look at the Christmas tree. Since Christ was born in a stable, the barnyard animals were also included

in this tradition. But the housewives did not want the barn spiders to participate because they always left cobwebs in their wake.

The spiders thought they should be included and took the matter before the Christ Child. He told the spiders they could see the trees late at night.

The excited spiders again crawled all over the tree leaving web just like the housewives knew they would. The Christ Child knew this would upset the housewives and he turned the web into sparkling tinsel.

Today we put tinsel on the tree to add sparkle and light never giving much thought to why. But the spiders know.

Holiday Family Visits Often Increase Stress

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When you call grandparents to announce that you'll be coming for the holidays, they may be delighted. And they may be worried.

When a large group of people get together there is a great potential for stress. Common problems include staying too long, lack of appreciation, invasion of territory and privacy, lack of parental control of small children, noise and conflicting lifestyles.

Before making a holiday trip to visit the family, it is wise to consider how to make the visit more enjoyable for all.

Keep the visit short enough to be enjoyable. Grandma and grandpa may not have toys for the children. Take along toys and games that will be safe and enjoyable.

Give the grandparents a break. Take the children for walks or for a trip to the mall so that the grandparents can have moments of

rest. Help with the work. Take a turn at cleaning up, doing dishes, vacuuming. Be considerate of the expense by helping with grocery costs.

Build in-law relationships. It's easy to be critical of the different ways that other people do things. Enjoy their qualities and express appreciation.

Notice if people are left out or are uncomfortable. Be sensitive to different needs of family members.

Plan activities to show appreciation for the grandparents. Take pictures and make recordings. Especially take pictures of the youngest family members with their grandparents to help them remember their grandparents and to show to future generations.

Express appreciation including thank you notes and copies of photos after the visit is over.

Family gatherings can be a source of satisfaction and the basis of many happy memories, if we plan them wisely.

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The Legend of Holly

The deep green leaves and bright red berries of Holly embody the colors of Christmas. Holly seems to be the very symbol of life because it remains green all winter when other plants die.

Legend has it that the word "Holly" is a form of the word "holly" because decorating with holly has become an unshakable Christmas tradition.

A Christmas carol from the fifteenth century tells how holly won its place as the legendary Christmas symbol. There was a contest between the Holly and the Ivy for the place of honor in the hall. They have an argument which is a duet in the carol. Each plant sets forth its claims

to superiority.

It is finally decided that the Holly with its red berries shall have the place of honor instead of the Ivy whose berries are black. Moreover, the birds are attracted to the Holly berries but only owls love ivy berries.

Another legend says that the Crown of Thorns was placed from the Holly. Before the Crucifixion the berries were white but afterwards turned crimson like drops of blood.

On the lighter side, legend also says that whoever brings the Christmas Holly into the house first, either husband or wife, is the one who will rule for the ensuing year.

Last Minute Gift Ideas

Are you worn out with Christmas shopping and still can't think of a thing to get someone on your list? Don't despair. Listed below are a number of last minute gift ideas that are sure to please family and friends alike.

Since none of these gifts come from a department store, you won't have to fight the crowds of shoppers. And some of the gifts don't require any shopping at all. You can give:

Promissory Notes: Give JOL's promising to do something for the recipient in the coming months such as raking leaves, weeding the garden, trimming the hedges, washing the car, cutting the grass, baby-sitting, baking, walking the dog, watering plants, washing windows, polishing shoes or altering clothes.

Share-a-skill gift. Promise to teach someone a skill you've already acquired. Some possibilities might include: auto repair, carpentry, bread-making, gourmet cookery, home canning, needlework, photography, quilting, tatting, picture framing, skiing, or sailing.

Magazine or Newspaper Subscriptions: Send off for a subscription in the name of the person on your list. On Christmas Day, give a rolled-up copy of the latest issue along with a card that tells when the subscription begins.

Bake or Make a Gift: Give a cake, bread, cookies or a box of candy, that you have made. You may want to include the recipe so that the recipient can continue to enjoy the gift all year.

Other gifts might be those that you make especially for the recipient such as a pillow, scarf, gloves, hat rack or birdhouse.

Money Gifts: Instead of simply writing a check, give your gift of money a festive look. Consider filling a see-through container or a clear-glass piggy bank with shiny half-dollar coins. Or make a money tree by clipping individual bills to the branches.

Gifts from the Post Office: Send a distant friend or relative a book of stamps, bundle of pre-stamped envelopes or postcards. Or give a

collection of decorative stamps issued by the post office.

Tickets as Gifts: Give two tickets to a special event (such as a bowl

game, a concert, movie, play, lecture, a ballet, or a dinner theater).

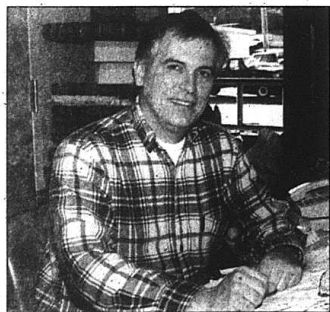
Gifts from the Hardware Store: Put together a set of nails, screws, nuts and bolts for the lady or gentlemen do-it-yourselfer. If you can afford a more generous gift, a set of basic tools including a hammer, screwdriver and saw would be appropriate for someone on your list.

Auto Supply Store: Give a set of jumper cables along with a windshield scraper, flashlight, flares and road maps for emergencies on the highway.

Fabric Shops: Make an emergency sewing kit complete with scissors, needles, safety pins and several spools of thread.

Classified Deadline
is Noon Tuesday

Happy Holidays



May this great season find each of you in health and good will for your neighbors and families.

My personal wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

Buzz Carloftis
County Judge-Executive

NOEL! NOEL!



We're Singing His Praises

...(And Yours, Too!)

We couldn't ask for nicer neighbors or friendlier folk than all of you.
Thank you for giving us something extra to sing about.
Merry Christmas!

Town & Country Chevron

Marvin Mink, Owner • 256-9634

• L.C. Mink • David Mink • Freddie Cromer • Gene Cromer • James Renner •