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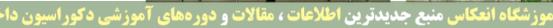
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WOOLLEN STARS

1 Cut star shapes from thick card (try brown cardboard packaging). 2 Use a hot glue gun to attach beads or bells to the points of the stars (to stop the yarn slipping off the ends). 3 Glue the end of the yarn to the card and then weave it around each point of the star. Finally, weave it around the centre until all of the cardboard is hidden. 4 Finish by tying on the reverse side and tucking the ends under the wrapped yarn. If using on the tree, add a loop of yarn to hang it with.





TATTOO BAUBLES

1 Cut out the tattoo, giving yourself space to hold the paper without touching the design.

2 If the design is large, a few little cuts along the edge will help you to apply the design over the rounded bauble surface without it wrinkling. 3 Follow the manufacturer's instructions to apply the tattoo to the bauble: peel off the plastic film, position on the bauble, then use a damp cloth to rub on the paper backing until you can see the design has come away. Carefully remove the paper.



YOU WILL NEED:

Tattoo stickers Scissors Clear baubles Damp cloth





HANGING STARS

1 Cut a paper star 10–15cm | 4–6in wide and use this to cut out a star from felt.

2 Pin the felt to the right side of the jumper, centring any pattern in the knit.

3 Sew around the outside of the shape, using a 5mm $|\frac{1}{4}$ in seam

allowance. Leave a small section $(3-4cm \mid 1-1\frac{1}{2}in)$ unstitched at the 'inside' point of the star. Trim your jumper at about $1cm \mid \frac{1}{2}in$ around its edges, leaving a little more at the opening (in case it frays as you turn). 4 Turn the star right sides out through the hole, fill it with stuffing

(use the end of a pencil to help push it into the points), then stitch the hole up.

5 For a decorative finish, use embroidery thread to blanket stitch around the outside of the star. Thread ribbon onto a darning needle to make a hanging loop.



PATCHWORK HANGING BAUBLES

1 Cut a selection of festive fabrics into small squares and rectangles. They don't all have to be the same size, but it's best if you use fabric shears so that you have neat edges.

2 Use the paintbrush to cover the fabric pieces with a layer of PVA

glue, then stick on to the baubles or polystyrene balls.

3 Repeat, overlapping the fabric pieces, until you have covered the entire surface. Place the finished baubles on a sheet of newspaper and leave until dry.

4 To create a hanging loop for the polystyrene balls, take a 20cm | 8in length of thin ribbon and fold it in half. Tuck the ends under and use a pin to secure the ribbon to the polystyrene ball.



tie a knot so that the stack is firmly

5 Fan out each layer to create a round bauble shape. Loosely tie each bauble onto the Christmas tree with the remaining twine.



1 Collect a selection of twigs and use secateurs to trim them to a length of around 15cm | 6in each. Choose twigs that are naturally quite straight.

2 Cut a piece of ribbon around 15cm 6in long. Cut five more pieces, each

around 2cm | $\frac{3}{4}in$ shorter than the previous piece. Starting with the longest piece, tie the ribbon onto the twig at its centre, 2cm | 3/4in from the bottom of the twig. Repeat with each ribbon at 2cm | ¾in intervals,

decreasing the length as you get to

3 Tie on a loop of ribbon or twine at the top for hanging, and stick on a little wooden scatter star with PVA glue to top it off.



ORIGAMI WREATH TREE DECORATIONS

- 1 Cut out eight paper rectangles with a 2:1 ratio. Fold in half lengthways.
- 2 With the folded long edge at the bottom, fold down the top corners at 45 degrees to meet the edge.
- **3** Fold in half along the centre. (you'll need eight for each wreath).
- Stick both ends of a length of twine to the inside of one fold to form a hanging loop.
- 4 Take one piece, hold the points between finger and thumb, with the open side at the top. You'll see two pockets between the folded layers.

Keeping the open sides of the segments uppermost, take a second piece and slide the points into the pockets. Repeat to form a circle of eight pieces, tucking the points of the final piece into the pockets of the first to complete the circle.











FROSTED PINE CONES

1 Mix equal quantities of the paint and water in a small bucket, so that the mixture is at least 5cm | 2in deep.
2 Use a needle or pin to make a hole through one of the stems at the top of a pine cone. Create an S-hook with floral wire and hook it onto the pine cone.

- 3 Balance your pencils across the top of the bucket and tape them in place to secure.
- 4 Dip the pine cone halfway into the paint, then pull it out and brush it to remove any excess. Hang the hook on one of the pencils over the bucket and leave to dry.
- **5** Remove the hook. Attach a loop of ribbon to the top of the pine cone, gluing it to the stem, then wrap and tie silver thread around the stem on top of the ribbon for about lcm | ½ in to secure it in place.





SPARKLING CLAY DISCS

- White air-drying clay
- Round cookie cutter
- Pen lid
- Wooden skewer
- PVA glue
- Silver glitter
- Silver string

1 Roll out a clump of air-drying clay until it's 3mm | 1/8 in thick. Use the cookie cutter to cut out discs.
2 In each disc, press the end of the pen lid in a 3 x 4 grid and use the skewer to create a hole 5mm | 1/4 in from the top. Leave overnight to dry.
3 Dip the end of the skewer in the glue and add a dab to the centre of each of the pen-lid imprints, then sprinkle a generous amount of glitter over the top. Tap to remove any excess glitter, then leave to dry.
4 Thread a loop of string through each top hole and tie securely.





GLITTERY ACORN CLUSTERS

- Modelling clay or dough
- Small paintbrush
- Dry acorn cups, complete with stalks
- PVA glue
- Glitter and paper
- Small elastic band
- Garden twine
- Silver embroidery thread

1 Make an apple-sized ball with the modelling clay or dough. Paint the inside of the acorn cups with a thin layer of PVA glue, then fll the cups with glitter. Tip any excess glitter onto a piece of paper, then pour it back into the tube. Stick the stalk of each cup into the clay or dough and leave to dry – you'll need five or six stalks per cluster.

2 Gather a bunch of stalks together, so the cups form a ball shape. Secure the ends with the elastic band.

3 Cut a length of twine about 10cm | 4in long, fold it in half and tuck the cut ends into the elastic band. Wrap silver embroidery thread around the elastic band to cover it completely.



WASHITAPE BAUBLES

I Jazz up plain and white baubles with different patterned tape.

Decorate some of the baubles with eight strips of washi tape, sectioning it into eight segments, tucking under the hanging clasp at the top of the

bauble. Trim others with just a band of tape around the middle, or cut out small pieces of tape and press them randomly onto the bauble.

2 For a snowflake design, simply cut four identical length strips of tape

and snip an inverted 'V' shape at each end. Stick a 'cross' of tape to the bauble and add diagonal strips to create your snowflake.

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These mini Christmas

trees are a simple and

speedy alternative



PATCHWORK DECORATION

- Cutting mat
- Quilter's ruler
- Rotary cutter
- Patterned fabric scraps
- Silver cotton fabric

I Using the cutting mat, quilter's ruler, and rotary cutter, trim the patterned fabric scraps into $4\frac{1}{2}$ x 13cm | $1\frac{3}{4}$ x 5in rectangles. For one tree, you need two rectangles. Cut diagonally across the rectangles. Remember to cut in opposite directions on each colour, so the triangles pair up.

2 Cut the silver fabric into 2½cm | lin strips. Then cut into four 15cm | 6in strips for the sides and two 10cm | 4in strips for the bottom.

3 Pin one 15cm | 6in strip to the diagonal edge of one of the triangles; sew together. Press seams open. Return to the cutting mat and rotary cutter to neaten the edges. Repeat until you have four pieces.

4 Place two triangles together along the straight edge and sew.

- Sewing kit (pins, hand-sewing needle and matching thread)
- Velvet ribbon
- Twine
- Stuffing

Press seams open and then neaten up the bottom edge.

- **5** Sew the last $10 \text{cm} \mid 4 \text{in strip onto}$ the bottom edge and, again, neaten on the cutting mat.
- 6 Take a 15cm | 6cm piece of ribbon and fold in half. Cut a 12cm | 5in piece of twine. Pin the two trees together, sandwiching the twine inside at the top and the folded ribbon at the bottom.
- 7 Sew all the way around, making sure to leave a small gap on one of the diagonal sides for turning through. Turn right sides out; press. 8 Fill the tree with stuffing. Turn the raw edges of the gap under by 5mm | ¼in and slip stitch closed.

QUICK-SEW OPTION

- Paper, pencil and scissors
- Patterned fabric scraps
- Sewing kit
- Thin wadding
- Twine
- Velvet ribbon

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out one half of a Christmas-tree shape and cut out for your template. 2 Fold the patterned fabrics wrong sides together. Pin the template on top and cut out. Once all the fabric has been cut out, trim down the templates by 5mm | ½in, and use to cut out the wadding. 3 Sandwich a piece of wadding between the fabric layers, slip a folded 10cm | 4in piece of twine in the top and pin. Fold a 5cm | 2in piece of velvet ribbon in half and pin in-between the layers at the base. 4 Stitch all the way around the tree decoration, about 5mm | \frac{1}{4}in from the edge. Tie off the thread ends and trim the edges to neaten.

1 On a folded piece of paper, draw







SALT DOUGH HEARTS AND STARS

1 To make the salt dough, put the salt, flour and water in a bowl and mix until it forms a dough.

2 Roll out, then make impressions with small cookie cutters or stems

from the Christmas tree. Cut out heart and star shapes from the dough, adding a hole for the ribbon, so you can hang your decoration on your tree. 3 Leave to air dry for at least a week (or pop in a cool oven for around 4 hours). Thread ribbon through the decorations, then hang.











"My Christmas characters and fairies are inspired by the world of dance"

FAIRY MAKER HALINKA FRASER

hristmas is my favourite time of the year," says
Halinka Fraser of Halinka's
Fairies, a company that makes collectable handcrafted fairies that are the crowning glory of any
Christmas tree. "My daughters and I love to unwrap the decorations, especially the fairies I make, as they remind us of Christmases past, stories or maybe films that we have watched. Each of us chooses a new little character to hang on the tree or on a branch in the kitchen. For us the decorations are about memories."

Each of Halinka's exquisite fairies is a work of art. Every one is constructed using wire armature wrapped with yarn and clothed with carefully chosen fabrics such as beautiful silks, lace and vintage evening dresses. Halinka then embellishes the figures, which are between 8cm | 3in and 32cm | 12½in tall, with hand-stitched beads, sequins and seed pearls, and gives them wonderfully expressive faces. The fairies are divided into different themes, many inspired by her ballet-dancing daughter Lottie. As well as tree-top fairies, there are Russian skaters, Nutcracker-inspired fairies and animals, all of them with lovely evocative names such as Turkish Delight, Ginger Bread, Mistletoe and Candy Cane.

A new collection of forest fairies is about to be launched. "Colours inspire me," says Halinka. "Often I'm inspired by the colours of the nearby South Downs – the intense greens and greys. I take inspiration from nature, both woodland and the beach."

Not surprisingly, Halinka has a background in design that has enabled

her to create such exquisite pieces. She graduated with a first-class honours degree in theatre design from Wimbledon School of Art and worked at the Sydney Opera House and the English National Opera, collaborating at the former with renowned stage designer Stefanos Lazaridis. When Halinka had her daughters Lottie, now 18, and Hannah, now 15, it was no longer practical to continue working in the theatre and she turned to writing and illustrating children's history books.

Then, 11 years ago, when Halinka wanted to take Lottie and Hannah to Australia to visit her brother, she was looking for a way to make some extra money and came up with the idea of making fairies for her children's school craft fair. "I was inspired by the theatre and I had been taught to sew at







WHAT I LOVE MOST ABOUT THE BUSINESS...

The freedom to be as inventive as I choose. I'm also delighted at how much the decorations have evolved since my initial idea

the age of five by my Polish grandmother, who was very exacting!" The fairies were an instant success and she raised £1,200.

Halinka returned to the idea when at the age of 14 Lottie started ballet and it soon became obvious that she was very talented. Lottie was offered a place at a school with a ballet section



run by former Royal Ballet teacher Mary Goodhew, but the cost was £15,000. "My cousin said that I should make some fairies and sell them." So, in readiness, Halinka's cousin's husband designed a website for her. That was July 2010. By October she hadn't had much luck selling from it so she took a stand at a Christmas fair. "There was one stand left costing £2,000. I took the money out of my daughter's savings account and borrowed some more from my mum. I made the money back on the first day and was able to repay them both and made a profit, but not enough to send Lottie to ballet school."

Lottie continued with her ballet classes locally and Halinka carried on with the business, selling the fairies online and at fairs with prices starting at £15. "I took some huge risks, which I wasn't aware of at the time. I thought this can't fail - let's do it."

Lottie, meanwhile, won a place at the Kirov Academy of Ballet in Washington but, having gone to summer school there, discovered that it wasn't what she expected. Her Latvian ballet teacher then took her to the Riga Choreography School in

Latvia, which doesn't normally take foreign students, and asked if they would train her. She was accepted and she started a course there in September 2013, which was funded by the business.

The fairies have evolved over time and the collection now also includes wedding cake toppers and Easter decorations. "Originally I made angels with cream wool and beads, but they have gradually developed and changed stylistically." Halinka designs a new collection each Christmas. "I sketch them first and achieve the final result after lots of test runs and tweaking." Halinka works full time on the business and has created a workshop in the basement of her Sussex home. "Making the fairies is quite time-consuming. I can make 70 fairies in a week provided they are already designed. Sometimes my friends help if I get tired of cutting out fairy wings!

"The business is fantastic for developing my creative side. The best things are the freedom of thought and design, and being able to take the business wherever I want."

halinkasfairies.com

















PAPERCUT TREE CARD

I Gently fold the face of the card in half vertically and lightly draw a $4 \text{cm} \mid 1\frac{1}{2} \text{in}$ horizontal baseline to the right from the fold, $3 \text{cm} \mid 1\frac{1}{4} \text{in}$ from the bottom with a pencil.

2 Mark a point $2 \text{cm} \mid \frac{3}{4} \text{in from the top}$ along the fold, and lightly draw a line from this mark to the outside point of your baseline. Mark $3 \text{cm} \mid 1\frac{1}{4} \text{in up the}$

fold from the baseline, and draw a line from this point to the right-hand point of the baseline (forming a smaller triangle within the original triangle).

3 From the top point of the smaller triangle, mark lcm | ½ in intervals up the centre fold to the top of the original triangle. From each mark,

use a ruler to draw a line parallel to the right-hand edge of the small triangle to meet with the right edge of the main triangle.

4 With the card folded, use a metal ruler and craft knife to cut along each of these lines, then rub out any pencil lines. Unfold the card and gently fold each point downwards.





STITCHED TREE CARD

I Find the centre of the card along the top and about 1½ cm 1½ in down use a needle to make a hole. Then in a line, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cm $\frac{1}{3}$ in up from the bottom and 2cm | 3/4 in in from each edge, make small pinholes lcm | ½in apart.

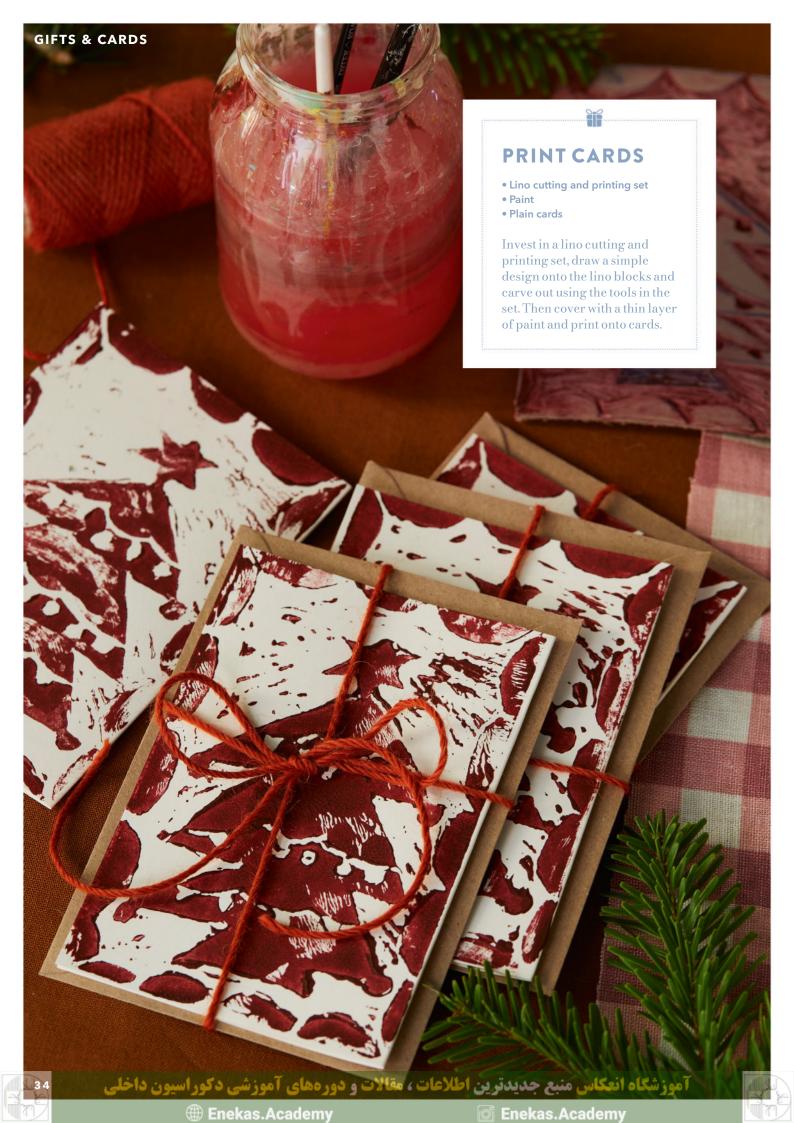
2 Start at bottom-left hole. Thread the needle through from the inside (securing the end in place with tape). Take the thread up through the top central hole, then back down through the second hole from the left.

3 Continue this process and once you have passed the thread through all of the holes, secure by tying on the reverse and trimming off any excess. Finish with a stick-on star... or five!





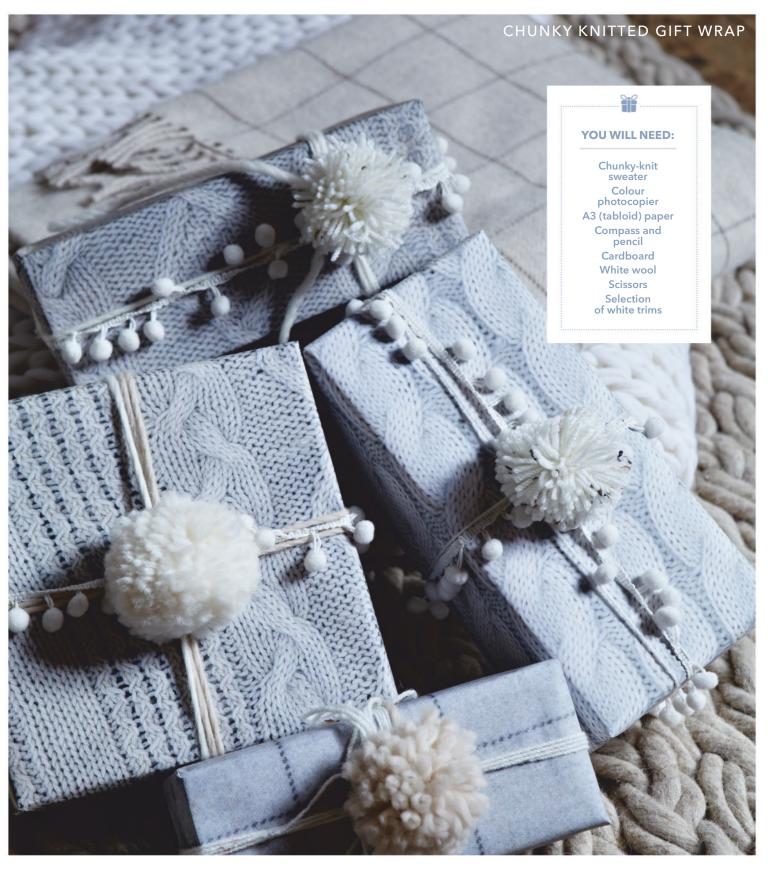












CHUNKY KNITTED GIFT WRAP

Lay your sweater flat on the photocopier and copy onto A3 paper. Wrap up your presents with the sheets.

2 For the pompoms: draw two 6cm | $2\frac{1}{2}$ in diameter circles on the cardboard, each with a smaller circle, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cm | $\frac{1}{2}$ in diameter, in the middle.

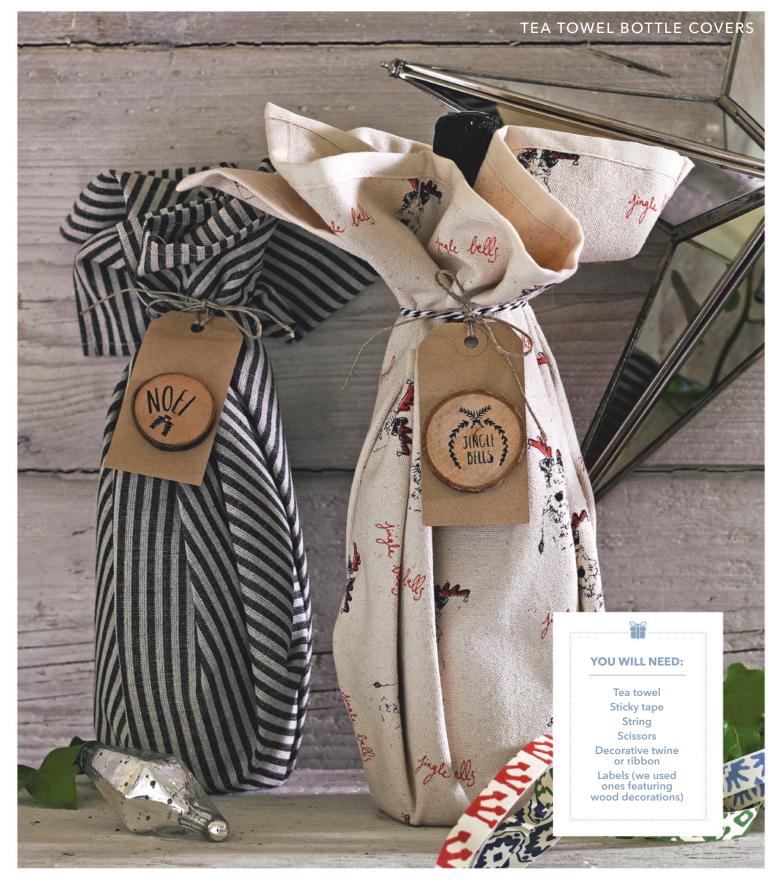
Cut out so you have two doughnut-shaped rings.

- 3 Place the rings on top of each other and wind the white wool around them until the cardboard is covered and the hole is filled in.
- 4 Using scissors, cut the wool all the way round the outside edge of the
- ring (your scissors go between the cardboard rings).
- 5 Thread a length of wool between the two rings and tie it tightly to hold all the cut strands of wool. Remove the rings and use trims to tie the pompom in place.









TEA TOWEL BOTTLE COVERS

- Lay the tea towel face down and put the bottle centrally on top. Draw the middle points of the side edges of the tea towel to the bottle and secure with sticky tape.
- 2 Cut a length of string ready to use. Use both hands to draw the front and
- back of the tea towel up and around the bottle, carefully shaping any folds for neatness.
- 3 Hold in place with one hand and wrap the piece of string around the bottle neck to keep the ends of the tea towel in place and tie off.
- 4 Take your choice of decorative twine, ribbon or string and wrap around the bottle top, knotting off at the back. Finish with a label featuring printed wood decorations.







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PHOTO TRANSFER GIFT TAGS

Take a black-and-white photocopy of a photograph, or print out your chosen image. The final image will be reversed, so if it features text, flip it before photocopying.

2 Trim your photocopy to size and cover the image side in a thick coat of transfer medium then place face

down on the wooden tree slice. Press down and smooth out any bubbles. Always be sure to follow the manufacturer's guidelines carefully.

3 Leave to dry for 24 hours then use a damp sponge to gently rub away the paper, revealing the image on the wooden slice.



PAPER GIFT TASSELS

LCut a strip of paper 21 x 10cm 8 x 4in. On the reverse side, draw a line $1\frac{1}{2}$ cm $|\frac{1}{3}$ in from the top across the width of the paper. Using a ruler and craft knife cut vertical lines from this line to the bottom edge, around 5mm | 1/4in apart, across the full width.

2 Put a strip of double-sided tape along the top edge. Take a 20cm

8in piece of string then form a loop (around 6cm $| 2\frac{1}{2}$ in) and tie. Thread a bead through the loop and tie another knot to secure the bead. 3 Place the bead on the left-hand side of the paper with the bottom knot just above the top of the cut lines. Roll the paper strip tightly. Bind the top with the longer piece of string to finish.



HOMEMADE MONOGRAM COOKIES

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- 1 Start by making cookies following your chosen recipe. Using a cookie cutter, press and cut the dough into initials and festive shapes, then bake.
- 2 When cool, place the cookies into glass jars. Wrap and stick bands of
- coloured card around the jars for extra grip and decoration – doublesided tape is ideal for this.
- 3 Add a colourful tag or create a label with a letter cookie cutter, then thread with woven name tag ribbon
- sewn with a bespoke message printed on it.
- 4 Add more decorative ribbon and tie in a bow to finish.





'PROMISE' GIFT VOUCHERS

- A4 card
- Computer or art pens
- Clipboard

Think of some lovely ideas to make or do for a loved one and document in a gift voucher. The voucher could be designed on a computer or drawn freehand. For inspiration, look at free font calligraphy websites to get ideas for lettering styles and designs (Pinterest has a good selection for a beginner), or try one of the free clip art sites on the internet. When designing your gift voucher, remember to include an introduction to the promise, a tear-off line and details of the promise itself. Print out on A4 card, if using a computer, then clip to the board.

Try your hand at calligraphy and draw vouchers by hand or add freehand sketches to printed text for a personal touch

in bed every morning.

for a week







BESPOKE CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

- 1 Make three tubes of equal diameter using thin pliable card, one longer in length than the other two, and join each one with sticky tape.
- 2 Cut out a rectangle of brown paper large enough to fit around the tubes
- when they are lined up (longest in the middle) end to end. Tape a snap at either end to the brown paper.
- 3 Place your present, joke and hat inside the central tube, then roll the brown paper around the tubes before
- gathering together where the tubes join to create the familiar cracker shape.

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4 Secure with ribbon and decorate with paper strips, using double-sided tape, before adding a name card.





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LAVENDER & ROSEMARY BODY SCRUB

1 To make the lavender and rosemary body scrub, fill a medium-sized storage jar with the granulated sugar and then tip the sugar from the jar into a mixing bowl.

2 Add the cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil, 6 drops lavender essential

oil, 4 drops rosemary essential oil and a few dried lavender flowers to the sugar. Mix together well with a wooden spoon, pour back into the storage jar and seal it tightly. Add a label and festive ribbon.



YOU WILL NEED:

Medium-sized storage jar 150g | 50z granulated sugar 120ml | 4fl oz cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil avender essential oi Rosemary essential







COSY HOT WATER BOTTLE COVER

- I Search the back of your wardrobe or drawers for an old cable-knit turtleneck jumper that you no longer wear, or pick up a bargain at your local charity shop.
- 2 Wash and dry the jumper, then turn it inside out and lay it out on a flat surface. The back of the jumper will become the back of the hot water bottle cover, and the turtleneck will be the top.
- 3 Lay your hot water bottle on top of the jumper, with the neck lined up

- with the jumper's turtleneck. Trace around it using tailor's chalk.
- 4 Remove the bottle and pin the back and the front together along what will be the seam. Hand sew or use a sewing machine to stitch the layers together, leaving the top of the turtleneck open, as this is how you will get the bottle in and out of the cover. Sew twice to guard against any unravelling.
- 5 Cut out the cover, around 1cm | ½in from the seam and apply fabric glue

- on all the edges to stop them unravelling. Turn right-side out and insert the hot water bottle through the turtleneck.
- 6 Personalise the cover by cutting out the initial or name of the person you are giving it to in felt or fabric, and appliqué it to the front. Using pretty, patterned material makes a nice contrast to the plain wool of the jumper.





HOT CHOCOLATE MUG

- Lut out a rectangle of brown Kraft paper using pinking shears, and roll up to create a mug-size cone, holding in place with a small piece of decorative tape.
- 2 Fill the cone with chocolate buttons, blocks and beans, then fold
- down the top and secure with more decorative tape.
- 3 Dip a wooden spoon into melted chocolate to generously coat, building up layers of white and dark. Leave propped upright to cool and harden.
- 4 Create a simple gift tag using a rubber stamp with a festive motif pressed into air-dry clay. Once dried, tie the tag to the mug handle with ribbon. Assemble your ingredients together in the mug to make up this tasty gift.





MOVIE NIGHT KIT

- I Fill a large glass jar with popcorn kernels and attach a sticky label on which you've written 'Movie night kit' or something similar.
- 2 Fill smaller jars with a selection of seasoning mixes that can be added to the popcorn once it's cooked.
- 3 Download a free printable popcorn box. Print a few onto card
- and cut out the popcorn boxes, then assemble them.
- 4 Place the kernels, jars of seasoning mixes, popcorn boxes and a DVD in a basket or bucket lined with tissue paper, along with a note of the corn popping and seasoning instructions.



YOU WILL NEED:

Large glass jar Popcorn kernels Sticky labels and pen Smaller herb jars Printable popcorn box template Card

Scissors Glue

DVD







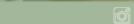
HANDMADE MINI CRACKERS

- 1 Cut out a rectangular piece of crepe paper 20cm x 25cm | 8in x 10in. Stick a piece of double-sided tape along one of the longer edges.
- 2 Position a cardboard toilet roll tube on top of the crepe paper
- (lengthways and centrally along the long edge of paper without the tape), and slip the cracker gifts into the tube.
- 3 Roll the toilet roll tube in the crepe paper and press down to
- secure the paper in place with the sticky tape.
- 4 Tie each end with Baker's twine, then finish off with a strip of wrapping paper and mother-of-pearl buttons tied on with thread.









LEMON THYME GIN

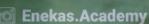
I Wash the lemon thyme and pat it dry with kitchen paper. Place the thyme, lemon zest and sugar into a large, clean, lidded glass bottle or jar. Pour in the gin, making sure the

thyme and zest are submerged. Seal the jar and leave in a cool, dark place for I week to infuse.

2 After the steeping time, strain the gin into sterilised gift bottles, adding fresh herbs for decoration, but giving strict instructions for the recipient to remove them within 1 week, to avoid the herb flavour from overpowering the gin.













"Christmas is me reliving my childhood, and my illustrations reflect that"

CARD AND ADVENT CALENDAR DESIGNER, SALLY SWANNELL

y mother always made Christmas so magical," says illustrator Sally Swannell. "My childhood was full of fantastic family Christmases. My mum was always cooking or making something, and memories of it make me glow. I love to create Advent calendars – I always made them as a child, then I started making them for my son after he was born, and I even still make one for myself every year. For me, Christmas is all about reliving my childhood!"

Sally spent a lot of her youth drawing, painting and crafting, and at school she spent as much time as she could in the art room. Later, she left home for art college in Bournemouth where she studied Natural History Illustration. "It piqued my interest because of the flora and fauna element," she says. "It was a fantastic course."

But once Sally left college, she found it difficult to find work as a full-time illustrator as, at the time, most companies were using freelance illustrators rather than hiring permanent members of staff. So for a while Sally's ambitions to become a professional illustrator were put on hold, and instead, she made the decision to move to London where she worked as a media buyer and planner in radio and magazines.

Then, after becoming pregnant with her son Toby, now 21, she left her job behind and returned to her native county of Wiltshire. "It was the natural thing for me to do as it was where my parents were," she says.

While Toby was napping, Sally started to make portraits and small

pieces of work, and once Toby started school, she decided to try and take on more illustration work. In 2002 she sent one of her designs to Phoenix Trading, which they liked, so Sally started doing more work for them, including lots of Christmas designs. From here, her popularity grew as she became known for her whimsical, often country-inspired designs, with a Christmas house design that she created in 2005 being her bestseller.

Sally eventually decided to start her own business in 2010 as she wanted more creative freedom. "It was an exciting prospect," she says. "I could work in different directions." She took some samples of cards, tablemats and canvases to the Spring Fair at the NEC. "It all spiralled from there," she says. When she went to the Harrogate Home & Gift Buyers' Festival the following





WHAT I LOVE MOST ABOUT THE BUSINESS...

"Ilove being able to create images that may put a smile on someone's face, particularly When designing for Christmas, which is my favourite time of year

July, things really took off. "I realised that was my show," she says. "It was amazing. I took 35 orders, and for me, at that time, that was fantastic. I came home reeling. I did the Harrogate show five years in a row after that."

Sally then enlisted the help of Cathy Conway who supports small independent greeting card and gift



companies, assisting in building their customer base. "Cathy had seen my cards in an outlet and loved them, so she tracked me down and was invaluable for increasing my trade accounts."

Sally also continued to exhibit at shows such as the Spirit of Christmas Fair, the Mary Howard Christmas Fair, Country Homes & Interiors Christmas and Top Drawer. "At one point, I was selling into 150 outlets, mainly small independents. It was fantastic in terms of sales, but managing the production and print runs was a challenge," she says. "I also got involved with the RHS and designed Christmas cards for them two years running in 2014 and 2015."

As a result of the business's growth, Sally started to find she had less and less time at the drawing board and was struggling to keep releasing new designs at the beginning of the season each January. Thankfully, she was soon approached by Wrendale Designs, who took over managing the trade side, so Sally could focus on the creative.

"My creativity keeps me enthusiastic," she says. "I did really love meeting customers at trade shows

but the production, warehousing and stock control had become a full-time job. I do still handle the retail side of the business, but thanks to Wrendale Designs' involvement, I can now produce a much higher quantity of designs."

Working for herself had the added benefit that she was at home with Toby while he was growing up, too. "I was able to work at 3am if I wanted to. I also had the freedom to have animals at home," she says. "It's a better quality of life - it's stressful sometimes, but worth it. You grow as a person when you run your own business - you have to learn to turn your hand to anything and you have freedom in every area. You do have to be disciplined to be at your desk first thing in the morning, but, if you love what you do, it just happens."

Sally gets a lot of her inspiration from the surrounding countryside, and brings her ideas to life in her home studio in a converted garage. "I can go in there, shut the door and start working," she says. "I love autumn and winter, but the Christmas period itself is definitely my favourite time of year

- it is so important for me."
- sallyswannell.co.uk

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FROM TABLE CENTREPIECES TO WREATHS, STOCKINGS AND ADVENT CALENDARS, ADD A PERSONAL TOUCH TO YOUR HOME DÉCOR





CHRISTMAS WISH NAPKIN RINGS

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- I Place a piece of A4 watercolour paper in portrait position, then divide it into 5 horizontal strips (measuring approx 21 x 6½cm | 8 x 2½in).
- **2** Either handwrite or print festive messages onto each strip of paper.
- **3** Use a brush to paint an abstract mark, lines or paint splatters in your desired festive colours.
- 4 Once the paint is dry, fold each napkin and tuck a paper ring around it. Finish by tucking seasonal flowers and foliage under the paper.



Enekas.Academy



TABLE CROWN CENTREPIECE

- 1 Suspend your wicker wreath from a hook.
- **2** Prepare your foliage, trimming the stems to about 10-15cm | 4-6in.
- **3** Begin by placing your bushiest foliage evenly around the wreath, tucking stems into the wicker
- structure and using florist wire to secure where needed.
- 4 Work in a circular motion, filling in with different types of foliage to create texture and fullness.

 Preserved eucalyptus and ferns will last well. Dried peppercorns add

further colour and texture to your wreath.

5 Once you're happy with foliage, add in decorations – paper honeycomb decorations are ideal as they are so light.















MERRY MANTEL FABRIC BOW

- Fabric and sewing kit
- Florist wire or elastic band
- Fabric scissors
- Iron
- I For the bow, cut a piece of fabric 100 x 56cm | 39 x 22in. Fold in half lengthwise right side to right side, and stitch along the raw edge, leaving a lcm | ½in seam allowance (leaving the short ends open). Turn the fabric through to the right side and fold so that the seam line is in the centre.
- 2 Bring the two short ends together, overlapping by lcm | ½in and stitch in place to form one big loop. Ensuring the join is on the reverse, scrunch together the centre and hold in place with florist wire or an elastic band.
- 3 For the tails, cut a piece of fabric 130 x 22cm | 51 x 8½in. Fold in half lengthwise right side to right side, and cut a 45-degree angle at either end. Leaving a lcm \ \frac{1}{2}in seam allowance, stitch from the left-hand point to one-third of the way along the top open seam. Leave a gap of approx 30cm | 12in, then start stitching along the top open seam and down to the right-hand point. Using the central gap, turn this through to the right side. Press and make sure the points are sharp.
- 4 Fold your tail piece in half (so that you have two tails) and adjust to your desired lengths. Place the bow piece
- **5** Cut a third and final piece of fabric approx 20 x 18cm | 8 x 7in. Fold in half lengthwise, right sides together, and stitch along the raw edge, leaving a lcm | ½in seam allowance (leaving the short ends open). Turn this through to the right side and fold so that the seam line is in the centre. Wrap round the centre of the bow and the centre fold of the tails. Hand stitch in place on the reverse.

Elevate your seasonal

décor with bows



FELT TREES CENTREPIECE

1 Wrap a 2cm- $|\frac{3}{4}\text{in}$ -wide strip of felt around the base of a polystyrene cone. Secure using a hot glue gun.

2 Cut out, then glue on felt triangles (with the point down), working from the base up and overlapping them so that the right-hand corner sits halfway across the centre of the next triangle. Continue in rows around the cone, all the way up to the top.

3 To finish the top, cut a circle of

3 To finish the top, cut a circle of felt around $3 \text{cm} \mid l_4^1 \text{in}$ in diameter. Cut a slit to the centre then wrap around the top of the cone, securing in place with a hot glue gun. Finish with a final row of triangles, then cut out two identical stars from silver card, glue a toothpick between them and stick that into the polystyrene.



YOU WILL NEED:

Felt
Polystyrene cone
Hot glue gun
Scissors
Silver card star
and toothpicks
painted silver

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These ideas will

bring a natural

look to your décor

-

NAPKIN RINGS

- Thick jute twine or rope
- Sparkling thread
- Hot glue gun
- Sprig of eucalyptus
- Pine cones

For a set of rustic napkin rings, plait lengths of thick jute twine or rope, adding a strand of sparkling thread. Use a hot glue gun to secure the ends, creating a loop large enough to fit your napkins through. Finish with a sprig of eucalyptus and arrange with a couple of pine cones for a natural place setting.



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YOU WILL NEED:

Chalk board Chalk lvy Secateurs or garden scissors

FESTIVE MENU BOARD

Holly is an obvious choice for Christmas, but for a trailing look, like on this chalk menu board, ivy will give you the best drape. When cutting back your plant for the sake of a short-lived Christmas display take care not to clip off too much foliage.







- Terrarium bauble
- Sand and compost
- Mini cacti and succulents
- Spoon
- Fine gravel
- Small paintbrush

Bring a festive element to your houseplant displays with a terrarium bauble or two. Sprinkle the base with a layer of sand and compost, then arrange mini cacti and succulents on top. Gently push each plant down into place, leaving a little gap between each one. Next, use a small tool or spoon to carefully add a layer of compost around your plants. Add a splash of water to each plant and finish with a layer of fine gravel to help with drainage. Gently remove excess soil from leaves with a small paintbrush.



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RATTAN WREATH

- I Use a rattan wreath frame and pack it with fresh moss (source this from a florist or garden centre). Hold the moss in place by binding with string or twine around the frame, securing the moss onto the frame.
- 2 Cut little sprigs of green foliage use ivy, pine, bay and dried heather - and poke the stalks under the string
- or twine used to secure the moss, working your way around the frame until all the moss is covered.
- 3 Next, weave in a few twiggy branches and then add pops of colour by including some dried hydrangea.
- 4 Finally, add a ric-rac bow and it's ready to hang up. In the new year,

remove the bow and the wreath can be added to your compost heap or recycled in the green waste as it's completely natural and organic, or you could remove the flowers and foliage, and reuse the base for an Easter wreath.









INDOOR PRESENT WREATH

- 1 Cut out a circle 35cm | 14in in diameter from cardboard, and then cut out a smaller circle, 22cm | 9in in diameter, from the centre, to form a flat wreath.
- 2 Wind wide satin ribbon around the whole of the cardboard wreath
- base so it's completely covered, fixing the ends with a hot glue gun.
- **3** Wrap each small box, 10 presents in each of the three wrapping paper designs, and finish with ribbon.
- 4 Attach the presents to the wreath using a hot glue gun, making sure to
- distribute the different designs evenly across the wreath.
- 5 Finish with a large ribbon bow in a complementary colour. Leave the two ends of the bow long so they can hang down the whole back length of the wreath for a stylish finish.



FRESH HERB WREATH

- I Dip the wreath in water until it's damp but not fully saturated, or it will drip when you hang it.
- 2 Visually divide up the foam wreath base into four equal sections using chalk to mark it each section will be used for a different herb.
- 3 Cut sprigs of your first herb with kitchen scissors, keeping the stems short, and insert them into the foam base to fill the first quarter of the wreath, making sure to overlap the leaves so that they cover the base in that section completely. Plenty of
- leaves will make the wreath look lush.
- 4 Repeat with the remaining herbs in each of the other sections until all four quarters of the base have been filled with the foliage. Hang from satin ribbon.





SEWN STOCKINGS

- I Fold your chosen fabric so that it's pattern on pattern. Use a cardboard template to cut out a stocking shape approximately $43 \times 22 \, \text{cm} \mid 17 \times 9 \, \text{in}$ (33cm | 13in at widest part of boot); this includes a lcm | ½ in seam allowance.
- **2** Sew the pieces of fabric together down the straight side.
- **3** To prepare the ruffle, cut a piece approximately 86×17 cm | 34×17 in. Sew a folded hem along both edges.
- 4 Now open out the stocking and sew the frill along the top of the stocking, this time have the open stocking pattern side up and the ruffle pattern side down, gathering as you go to create the frilly look.
- 5 Then turn the stocking again pattern on pattern and sew around the boot shape, go up along the two edges of the ruffle.
- 6 Next turn out and fold the ruffle down. At this point you can add a ribbon hook by sewing it into the inside of the stocking. Then it's ready to hang up on the mantelpiece.





JUMPER STOCKING

- I Draw a template of a stocking shape onto a large piece of paper, then draw a line where the ankle seam will be. Cut the template out, then cut along the ankle seam line.
- 2 Lay the jumper in front of you, making sure any stripes are level. Use the templates to cut two pieces of each shape, adding a 1½cm |½in seam allowance all round. Use the ribbed hem as the top of the stocking.
- **3** With right sides together, pin each foot piece to each leg piece. Stitch the ankle seam, then press open.
- 4 Lay a piece of felt at the heel, pin in place, then use wool to over stitch it in place. Add a toe piece in the same way. Repeat for the second side.
- **5** Pin the stocking together with right sides facing, taking care to match the pattern and the edges of the felt. Sew around the outside, leaving a $1\frac{1}{2}$ cm
- ½in seam allowance, leaving the cuffed top open. Turn right side out, press.
- 6 Fold over the cuff at the top and thread narrow ribbon in a running stitch pattern at the edge as decoration. Thread on the beads and finish by sewing a loop of ribbon to the back seam.





SANTA STOCKING

- 1 Cut out two stocking shapes from white linen. Using your stocking shape, cut out two toe and two heel shapes from patterned fabric. 2 Iron double-sided fusible interfacing to the wrong side of each piece of fabric, then, following the instructions, fuse to the right side of
- each stocking piece. You can stitch around the patterned fabric edges to make a sturdier stocking.
- 3 Cut two cuffs for the top of your stocking pieces. With right sides facing, machine stitch on each cuff.
- 4 Place your two stocking pieces together, right sides facing and cuffs

opened up. Pin and machine stitch around the edges, leaving the top of the cuff open. Turn right sides out, fold over a lcm | ½in top hem and machine stitch. Then fold over the rest of the cuff. Sew a loop of ribbon to the top for hanging. You can also add a tag and a toy Santa.

























MINI CONES ADVENT CALENDAR

- 1 Cut a cardboard toilet roll tube lengthways and roll it up to create a cone shape. Use sticky tape to secure the cone shape in place, then cut off the uneven top. Repeat until you have 24 cones.
- 2 Wrap a piece of gift wrap around each cone, securing with sticky tape
- or glue. For a neat finish, snip into the gift wrap overhanging the top of the cone at lcm | ½ in intervals, fold over the flaps, and tape inside the cone.

 3 Finish with a number sticker, or make your own numbers by writing or stamping numbers onto paper circles.
- 4 Glue wooden stars to 24 mini pegs and clip one to the back of each cone. Stick to the wall using mounting putty. Create a tree shape with nine cones on the bottom row, seven on the next row up, five on the next row, and three at the top (with the middle cone slightly higher than the other two).





HOME DÉCOR







"These days natural Christmas decorations are my go-to"

LIFESTYLE COLUMNIST, DIANA YATES

ur first Christmas at
Greenfields was a party for 20
hosted in the most
accommodating room in the house,
which would later become the living
room. Two tables were placed end
to end and draped in simple
white tablecloths.

I added a touch of greenery with some fresh eucalyptus woven along the centre, in among a mismatched collection of antique brass candle sticks, including my favourite trumpet-shaped pair. A Christmas tree adorned in lights, laden with baubles made at school, ribbons and years-old ornaments in the shape of skates, sledges, presents and angels sat iridescent in one corner of the room.

Anyway, a raucous afternoon and evening ensued, noisy in the best way. The playlist I'd spent a few hours

making came into its own when the dancing began. I remember standing next to Andrew in our frigid front porch, tired but happy, waving off our guests as they stumbled into a waiting taxi sometime in the wee hours, just as snow began to fall. Little did we know the snow would continue on and off for weeks before eventually culminating as the 'Beast' from 'somewhere in the East'.

Since then I have catered for every variable and configuration of Christmas at home – with family and friends, just us, lively gatherings, and more relaxed affairs. The one constant is my love for all the little details and traditions that have become the backbone to a truly festive season. I'll choose a handful of things to focus on each year, a few established traditions, and something new to get the family and me truly in the festive spirit. These

days I try to avoid the 'do it all' mentality because where's the fun in that?

In early December, I'll make time to pot up some Narcissus 'Paperwhite Zivas' in a variety of vases and pots to











A SIMPLE NAPKIN TUTORIAL

- Pre-washed fabric to avoid shrinkage later and fabric scissors
- A sewing machine or needle and coordinating thread

SIZE GUIDE

Cocktail 12-22cm | 5-8½in square Lunch 35-40cm | 14-15in square Dinner 45-55cm | 18-21½in square

- **1** Choose your napkin size. Measure and cut out the squares of fabric adding an additional $2 \text{cm} \mid \frac{3}{4} \text{in to}$ each side for the hems.
- 2 Place the fabric right side down and fold in one side by 2cm | ¾in; either finger press or iron to form a crease. Unfold and fold in the same side again up to the crease line, then fold over again to create a double 1cm | ¼in hem. Repeat these steps on all four sides. Sew around all four sides as close to the hem crease as possible.
- **3** Repeat with the rest of your fabric, iron your napkins and you're done.





ات و دورههای آموزشی دکوراسیون داخلے

WHAT I LOVE MOST ABOUT DECORATING...

"The one constant is my love for all the little details and traditions that have become the backbone to a truly festive season. I'll choose a handful of things to focus on each year"



display around the house. I plant them close together for impact, top the soil with pine cones or moss, and intersperse with twigs that will act as stakes if needed. Sometimes I time it right and they're blooming on Christmas Day, sometimes they flower early in the new year, offering something fresh and pretty to look at while the garden is bare or under snow.

Their scent is far-reaching, a favourite of mine, but has been known to divide a household! For a more subtle fragrance, N. 'Inbal' is a good alternative. Placing them by a draughty window to keep them cool, and giving them lots of bright natural light will help prevent floppy stems. A shot of vodka added to the water prior to watering will also help keep growth in check.

These days, natural Christmas decorations are my go-to: dried orange slices, strung cranberry garlands, clove pomanders, a decadent dried pomegranate or two, and bows formed from hessian are a few of my favourite things. Usually, they are crafted by available hands while watching the first Christmas movies of the year, with

a glass of something 'warming' nearby. We usually start with *The Holiday* and end up with *Home Alone*.

The winter cutting garden I planted a few years back has recently come into its own, giving a decent supply of Christmas 'ingredients' for homemade garlands and wreaths. I included shrubs such as skimmia rubella, hypericum, holly and red dogwood. Potted trees from Christmases past are also planted in the vicinity after the festive season is over. A few stems make an excellent base for a door swag. Cleaning up a mossy roof last winter quickly went from a chore to enjoyable when I realised I had enough for two wreath bases. Perspective is everything.

A fresh set of napkins for the Christmas table is also on my to-do list this year. The fabrics I choose are usually remnants from my sewing studio – cotton or linen fabrics work best and wash well. If I don't have enough of one fabric to make a square, I'll mix in a stripe or gingham in a matching or coordinating colour to create an informal yet cohesive set.

Right, the halls are decked, the table is set, pass the Celebrations...







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Festive Food

MIX YOUR CREATIVITY WITH YOUR COOKING SKILLS TO CRAFT THESE DELICIOUS BAKES



CHOCOLATE COINS

- Melt the chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Stir until smooth.
- 2 Put Itbsp of chocolate in the base of each mould. Firm up in the fridge for
- 5-10 mins, but ensuring the chocolate is still a little tacky so that your toppings will stick.
- 3 Add toppings. Return to the fridge until fully set, then remove from the

moulds. Before gifting them, store coins in an airtight box in a cool place.

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MULLED WINE MARSHMALLOWS

MAKES 50

- 3tbsp icing sugar
- 3tbsp cornflour
- 125ml | 4fl oz smooth orange juice
- 20g | ¾oz powdered gelatine
- 1tsp vanilla extract
- 1tsp mulled wine syrup or cordial
- 400g | 14oz caster sugar
- 50g | 1½oz liquid glucose
- 2 egg whites
- Zest of 1 orange
- Edible glitter

YOU WILL NEED:

- Sugar thermometer
- I Sift 2tbsp icing sugar and 2tbsp of the cornflour over a baking tray lined with baking parchment.
- 2 Pour the orange juice into a saucepan and sprinkle in the gelatine. Cook on a very low heat and stir until the gelatine has dissolved. Turn off the heat and stir in the vanilla extract and mulled wine syrup.
- 3 Put the caster sugar and liquid glucose in a clean pan over a low heat and add 225ml | ½fl oz water. Stir until the sugar has dissolved. Put a sugar thermometer in the pan and turn up the heat to boil. Once it reaches 100°C | 212°F, whisk the egg whites to a stiff peak in a heatproof bowl and set aside.
- 4 When the sugar reaches 118°C | 245°F, turn off the hob and remove the thermometer. Stir in the orange juice/gelatine/syrup mixture and stir until combined. Start whisking the egg whites again as you begin to pour in the syrup mixture, avoiding the beaters.
- 5 When the mix starts to thicken, beat at a higher speed for 10-15 mins until it's almost cool. Pour the mixture onto the baking tray. Top the marshmallow with orange zest and glitter. Leave to set in a cool place.
- 6 Dust a board with the remaining icing sugar and cornflour, then turn the set marshmallow onto the board. When it's cooled, cut it into squares and coat them in the icing sugar/ cornflour dusting. Store in an airtight container.







MINI CHRISTMAS GINGERBREAD HOUSES

1 Draw house-shaped templates onto baking parchment. For each house, cut 4 rectangles around $10 \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ cm $|4 \times 2\frac{1}{2}$ in for the large house; 9×5 cm $|3\frac{1}{2} \times 2$ in for the smaller ones. Then cut 2 rectangular ends, shaped into a triangle at the top to make the pointed roof shape – these should measure 5cm |2in at the base, 8cm |3in tall, with the side walls 5cm |2in high, then cut into the triangle shape.

2 Put 3tbsp water into a saucepan with the sugar and syrup, stir until

the sugar has dissolved, then bring to the boil. Remove from the heat, then add the diced butter and stir until melted. Whisk in the bicarb (it will foam a little), add the flour and spices, then beat well to make a soft dough. Tightly wrap and chill for 3 hrs or overnight, until firm.

3 Heat the oven to 200°C | 400°F | Gas 6. Dust the work surface with flour and roll out the dough to the thickness of a £l coin | 2 dime coins, then cut out your house shapes. Bake

for 10-15 mins until just turning darker brown at the edges. Cool completely before transferring to a wire rack.

4 Make the royal icing according to pack instructions. Put into a piping bag and snip the end. Pipe a thick line of icing around the edge of each gingerbread piece to 'glue' them together. Leave to set overnight. Pipe windows, doors and roof tiles on each biscuit, then decorate with gold leaf, if using.



CHRISTMAS TREE COOKIE STACK

- 175g | 6oz golden syrup
- 200g | 7oz dark muscovado sugar
- 80g | 3oz unsalted butter
- 350g | 12oz wholemeal plain flour
- 1tsp baking powder
- 3tsp mixed spice
- 100g | 3½oz mixed peel
- 1 medium egg, beaten

FOR THE DECORATION:

- 300g | 10½oz royal icing sugar
- 100g | 3½oz Jelly Tots or Smarties
- Cocktail stick
- Put the golden syrup and sugar in a pan, stir to dissolve the sugar then bring up to a boil. Take off the heat, add the butter and stir to melt.
- 2 Weigh the dry ingredients and mixed peel into a mixing bowl. Stir in the syrup mixture followed by the egg. Scoop on to a small tray lined with cling film, then chill until cold and firm.
- 3 Roll out the dough on a wellfloured surface to a 5mm $| \frac{1}{4}$ in thickness. Cut out one small star for the top of the tree and about 15 equilateral triangles, starting with 16cm | 6½in edges and gradually getting smaller. Repeat until the dough is used up, arranging them on lined baking trays as you go.
- 4 Heat the oven to 200°C | 400°F | Gas 6. Bake the biscuits for 12 mins, then leave to cool on the baking tray.
- 5 For the decoration, put the icing sugar and 3tbsp just-boiled water in a bowl and use an electric whisk to beat for 5 mins. Spread each biscuit with icing and stick a sweet on to each point. Use icing to stick a cocktail stick in the star - like a lollipop.
- 6 Leave to dry or heat the oven to 120°C | 250°F | Gas $\frac{1}{4}$ and put the biscuits back in for 5 mins to set the icing. Once cool, stack the biscuits in size order, poking the star in the top.

This impressive stack

is easier to constuct

than it looks







JAM SANDWICH STAR BISCUITS

- In a large bowl, beat the butter and sugar together. Mix in the eggs, one at a time, along with the vanilla.
- 2 In another bowl, sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. Mix into the wet ingredients.
- 3 Divide the dough into two and shape each half into a disc. Wrap in cling film and chill for 1 hr. Preheat the oven to 180°C | 350°F | Gas 4. Line two baking sheets with parchment. Dust a worksurface with flour.
- 4 Take one disc of dough and cut it in half. Keep the remaining dough in
- the fridge. Roll the first quarter out to $\frac{1}{2}$ cm | $\frac{1}{2}$ in thick. Using a $\frac{7}{2}$ cm | $\frac{3}{2}$ in biscuit cutter, stamp out circles, dipping the cutter in flour to stop it sticking to the dough. Put the biscuits on the baking trays, leaving some space inbetween.
- 5 Using a 5cm | 2in star-shaped biscuit cutter dipped in flour, stamp out stars in the centre of half the rounds. Repeat the process with the remaining dough to make about 40 biscuits, 20 whole and 20 with stars
- 6 Bake for 8-10 mins, until lightly golden. Leave to cool and firm up on the baking sheets for a few minutes, then transfer to wire racks to cool completely.
- 7 Spoon a jam of your choice over the centre of the whole biscuits, spreading it out evenly. Top with the stamped-out tops and dust with icing sugar to finish.
- 8 The filled biscuits will keep for three days in an airtight container, or frozen for up to three months.







POMEGRANATE AND BLACK CHERRY JELLIES

- Line a 20 x 20cm | 8 x 8in tin with cling film. It should reach at least 3cm lin up the sides as well as across the base. Put the gelatine leaves in a bowl of cold water, one by one, and leave to soften for 5-10 mins.
- 2 In a pan, mix the pomegranate juice with the sugar. Bring to the boil and stir until the sugar dissolves. Add the
- black cherry jam to the pan and stir through.
- 3 Bring the mixture back up to the boil, stirring well, and cook for about 4 mins, until slightly thickened. Remove the pan from the heat, add the gelatine leaves and whisk until dissolved. Pour the mixture through a fine sieve; transfer to the lined tin.
- 4 Chill for at least 3 hrs, until set (though the jelly can be covered and left in the fridge for up to two weeks at this stage). Place the remaining sugar in a shallow bowl. Cut the fruit jelly into 3cm | lin squares and toss in sugar to coat just before serving.





CLEMENTINE SPRITZ MARMALADE

- Lut the skin and pith from the grapefruits and discard.
- 2 Wash the oranges then cut off and discard the very top and bottom 'peaks' and cut in half. Put the grapefruits, oranges and sugar into a large, tall-sided pan. Pour over the Aperol and 500ml | 17fl oz water.
- **3** Bring to the mixture to a boil and reduce to a simmer for 2 hrs, stirring occasionally.
- 4 After 2 hrs, use the thermometer to check the mixture's temperature, it
- should be at $150^{\circ}\text{C} \mid 300^{\circ}\text{F}$. Remove the pan from the heat and being careful not to splatter yourself with the hot jam, use a hand blender to blitz until the orange is broken down and the marmalade is your desired texture.
- 5 Cool for 15 mins then ladle marmalade into a jug and pour into warm, sterilised jars through a funnel. Seal lids. The marmalade will last for around 6 months when stored in sterilised jars.



MAKES 11/2L | 21/2PT

2 red grapefruits 1¼kg | 2½lb oranges 1kg | 2lb bag jam sugar 500ml | 17oz Aperol

> YOU WILL NEED: Jam thermometer Hand blender Funnel Sterilised iars





WHISKEY & CRANBERRY SALTED FUDGE

- I Grease the base and sides of a 20 x 20cm | 8 x 8in tin with vegetable oil and line with non-stick parchment paper.
- 2 Soak the dried cranberries in the whiskey for 1 hr, drain.
- 3 Half-fill the sink with cold water, for when you need to quickly cool down the fudge.
- 4 Place all the remaining ingredients, except the salt, in a large

heavy-based saucepan. Place over a low heat, until the butter has melted and sugar dissolved. Put the sugar thermometer into the pan, increase the temperature slightly and bring the mixture to the boil. Stir frequently, until the temperature reaches $114^{\circ}\text{C} \mid 237^{\circ}\text{F}$, then immediately cool the base of the pan in the sink of cold water, for about $1\,\text{min}$.

- 5 Using a rubber spatula, beat the fudge vigorously for 2-3 mins, until it thickens and starts to look grainy. Beat in the soaked cranberries and spoon into the prepared tin. Spread the mixture level, and leave in the fridge to cool before covering with cling film.
- 6 Leave overnight before cutting into rectangles, then sprinkle with a little salt. Store in the fridge.





MINCEMEAT MACARONS

- In a food processor, blitz the almonds and icing sugar until fine. Whisk the egg whites to soft peaks, add the caster sugar half at a time, whisking between inclusions until the mixture forms firm peaks and is a thick and glossy meringue. Add the cornflour and mix through.
- 2 Gently fold the icing sugar and almond mixture with the red food colouring into the meringue, half at a time. Put the mixture into a piping
- bag fitted with the nozzle. Pipe rounds the size of a £2 | 50¢ coin on to a lined baking tray, leaving space between them. Sprinkle over the bronze crunch if using. Leave to dry out for 30 mins until the tops are dry to the touch.
- 3 Heat the oven to 170°C | 325°F | Gas 3. Bake for 16 mins, rotating the tray halfway through.
- 4 To make the filling, beat the butter and the icing sugar until light and

- fluffy. Mix in the brandy and spoon into the other piping bag fitted with a nozzle.
- 5 To assemble, pair up two of the shells that are a matching size. Pipe a circle of the filling around the edge of one of the shells then spoon ½tsp mincemeat into the centre. Place the other shell on top and gently press together to push the mixture to the edge. Dust with gold lustre.

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CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

Heat the cream, sugar and a large pinch of salt together gently in a saucepan until steaming. Allow to cool slightly. Chop the chocolate into small pieces, then place in a bowl and pour over the warm cream. Allow to stand for a few mins, then stir to combine. You should have a smooth,

glossy ganache. Chill for around 1 hr, until the mixture is set.

2 Place each topping in separate bowls. When you're ready to make the truffles, first coat your hands lightly with cocoa powder, then roll teaspoon-sized lumps of the ganache into smooth balls. Roll

them in the different toppings to coat thoroughly. Remove to a plate or plastic container, handling the truffles as little as possible. Chill for a few hrs, then place in gift box. They will keep for up to I week in the fridge.





WHITE CHOCOLATE, CRANBERRY, CITRUS PEEL AND HAZELNUT SLAB

1 To temper the chocolate, place $300g\ |10\frac{1}{2}$ oz of the chocolate in a heatproof bowl and heat in the microwave on a low heat for 30-sec intervals until the chocolate is melted and the temperature is up to $40^{\circ}C\ |104^{\circ}F$. Once the temperature starts approaching $40^{\circ}C\ |104^{\circ}F$, heat it for 5-sec intervals, as the temperature can start to rise more rapidly.

- ${\bf 2}$ Pour the remaining $100g \mid 3 \frac{1}{2} oz$ chocolate into the melted chocolate and stir until it has melted and the temperature has dropped to $30^{\circ}C \mid 86^{\circ}F.$ The chocolate is now tempered and ready to use.
- 3 Pour the chocolate onto the baking parchment and spread it out evenly with a spatula. Sprinkle over the dried cranberries, chopped

hazelnuts and mixed peel. Set in the fridge for 10-15 mins before breaking into shards.

4 Fill cellophane bags with the chocolate shards, varying the toppings and the chocolate to give as a personalised gift.



ICED TABLE DECORATIONS

- I Preheat the oven to 180°C | 350°F | Gas 4. Between two sheets of baking parchment, roll out the dough to the thickness of a £l coin, moving between rolls so it doesn't stick.
- 2 Cut out 8 circles large enough to act as a base to stick the other shapes onto. Cut 8 Christmas trees and 8 reindeers. Place them all onto a lined baking tray and bake for 10-12 mins. Set aside to cool.
- 3 Turn the oven to the lowest setting. Put some royal icing into a piping bag and cut a small hole at the end.
- Pipe an outline onto each of the tree biscuits. Put some of the remaining icing into a bowl and mix in water, a little at a time, until it has the consistency of honey. Spoon into a clean bag and fill the spaces within the outlines. If there are air bubbles on the surface, pop these with a cocktail stick. Put iced biscuits onto a baking tray and return to oven for 15 mins to set. Brush a diluted solution of green food colouring over the icing and put back in the oven briefly to dry.
- 4 As the iced tree biscuits set in the oven, using the royal icing, pipe outlines onto the bases, decorate the reindeers and leave them all to set. Then position reindeers and trees onto the bases, attaching them with more royal icing. We find scrunched-up foil is useful to hold them in place as they set.
- 5 Finally, using some of the thinned icing, as before, pipe it so that it neatly covers the bases within the outlines.

GINGERBREAD BISCUIT DOUGH

- 150g | 5oz Trex (vegetable fat)
- 150g | 5oz soft light brown sugar
- 110g | 3½oz molasses or black treacle
- 360g | 12¾oz plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 2tsp ground ginger
- 1tsp ground mixed spice
- 1tsp salt
- (For chocolate gingerbread, add an additional 1tbsp water at step 1, and 20g | ¾oz cocoa to the dry ingredients)
- I Cream the Trex and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add in the molasses and 2tbsp water and mix until smooth. Scrape down the sides of the bowl.
- 2 Mix in the dry ingredients to form a smooth dough, adding more water if it's too crumbly.

HOW TO MAKE ROYAL ICING

Use an electric mixer on the lowest setting to combine 250g | 9oz sieved icing sugar with l egg white until thick (approx 5 mins). Cover with a length of damp kitchen paper and store in the fridge to avoid it setting. If the icing is too thick for piping, add a small amount of water or lemon juice to loosen it.







ORANGE-SCENTED SHORTBREAD WREATHS

- I Whizz the sugar and almonds in a food processor to a fine, sandy texture. Add the flour, butter and orange zest, then whizz again until the mixture forms fine crumbs. With the motor running, add the egg yolks and vanilla, then pulse until the dough comes together.
- 2 Divide the dough into 2 equal pieces and roll each between 2 sheets of baking parchment to about 4mm | \frac{1}{4} in thick. Chill for 1 hr until firm.
- 3 Heat the oven to 180°C | 350°F | Gas 4. Using the larger cutter, dusted with flour, cut out as many biscuits as you can. Use the smaller cutter to cut a hole in the centre of each biscuit, to form wreath shapes. Re-roll and cut the off-cuts too. Arrange, spaced slightly apart on lined baking trays. Bake for 8-10 mins until firm and pale golden. Cool on the trays.
- 4 For the icing, whisk the egg white in an electric mixer to soft peaks, add

the icing sugar, a bit at a time, and beat until smooth and glossy. For a marbled effect, colour half the icing with green food colouring, then ripple together with the white.

5 To decorate, dip each biscuit in the icing to coat in a thin layer. Sprinkle with some edible glitter or sprinkles, then set aside to dry for at least 2 hrs.



CHRISTMAS PUDDING CAKEPOPS

- I Whizz the cake in a food processor to fine crumbs. Place in a large mixing bowl.
- 2 Melt 300g | 10½oz of white chocolate over a pan of simmering water or in the microwave. Add to the cake crumbs with the Baileys, if using, and mix it into a dough-like consistency.
- 4 Dip the cake balls in the melted dark chocolate, fully coating. Stick the cakepops in a piece of polystyrene or similar so they stand upright, then chill for a further 20 mins.
- 5 Melt the remaining white chocolate and with a small spoon carefully pour over the top of each cakepop to create a Christmas pudding. Put back in the fridge, standing up again if possible, for 20 mins to set. Finish with holly decorations and give as edible gifts.









"I bake beautiful biscuits from my Northamptonshire barn"

ARTISAN BAKER REBECCA HONEYWELL-WARD

've been baking for family and friends since I was eight years old," says Rebecca Honeywell-Ward. "My baking skills came from my mum, who always had a fresh cake coming out of the Aga when we were children." Those honed baking skills have now been put to good use with Rebecca's business, Honeywell Bakes, which produces and delivers beautiful handmade iced biscuits, including seasonal Christmas ranges and pretty biscuit sets to celebrate a birthday, baby or new home. "Our emphasis is on style as well as taste everything looks almost too good to eat!" she says.

Originally, Rebecca started off as a photographer specialising in portraits and weddings. Then, after her daughter Isabella, now aged six, was born, she held a christening party and laid out a bakes and dessert table with her sister, Rosie. Rebecca and Rosie enjoyed baking so much they started doing dessert tables for people as a hobby. "We were keen to move into baking to try and turn it into a business," Rebecca says. "I was working anti-social hours as a photographer, doing evenings and weekend events. I realised that a biscuit business would work as biscuits have a good shelf life and would be easy to post to people."

Rebecca and Rosie started their eponymous business five years ago working from Rebecca's kitchen table at her home in Yorkshire. "We set out to create beautiful, design-led biscuits that are delivered directly from our door to your doormat at the click of a mouse. From the beginning we wanted our biscuits to be fun –

unusual shapes or designs you wouldn't expect to find on biscuits. Our biscuits stood out from the very start in terms of style and packaging. It is vital to us that everything is nicely finished."

Soon after they began their business, Rebecca and Rosie joined Notonthehighstreet.com. "It worked really well for us," says Rebecca. "Because I'd been a photographer, I knew how to do lovely product shots and that made a big difference."

Notonthehighstreet.com also led to some important clients for the business. In the first year of trading Honeywell Bakes sold biscuits to Selfridges. "Selfridges found us on Notonthehighstreet.com," says Rebecca. "We made Halloween and Christmas sets to sell and our first ones went into store in September.





WHAT I LOVE MOST ABOUT THE BUSINESS...

"Ilove that its a creative outlet and that I'm my own boss. I have the flexibility to work during school hours so I can still spend time with my children"

This happened to be just a few weeks after my second daughter, Jessica, was born in August so it was a hectic time!"

Two years ago, Rebecca, her husband Colin and the children moved to a beautiful home in Northamptonshire complete with horses, donkeys, goats, sheep, chickens

HONETWELL BAKES

and ducks, as Rebecca wanted to be nearer her parents. The business was continuing to grow organically so Rebecca decided to look for premises for a bakery in 2016.

"I wanted to work in a nice environment," she says. "I didn't want a corporate unit in the middle of town. Then I found a beautiful 18th-century barn right in the heart of the countryside. It's ideal because it is light, big and easy to work in." That same year, Rebecca also had her third baby, Edward.

Earlier this year, Rosie left to become involved in a social enterprise business, so Rebecca took on two fulltime staff, Michelle Pears and Deanne Young, as well as Hollie Davis, who works part-time. "The business has built up reasonably slowly because of having children," she says. "A lot of our success I put down to the fact I am very active on social media. This has helped to boost our website sales, which now match our sales on Notonthehighstreet.com." Corporate clients also make up a large part of the business with Honeywell Bakes making biscuits for Elizabeth Arden, SuperDry, White Stuff, Clarins and Instagram.

"It's a challenge running the business with children," says Rebecca. "I work school hours, and am part-time at the bakery and also do work at home. I've always got something to do. I have to wear a lot of hats! I still do all the photography and I enjoy the development and coming up with new ideas. I love being creative. I've always got an excuse to be on Pinterest and I love being on top of the trends and incorporating those into my biscuits. It is a thrill to make things look nice. I find business development exciting and seeing the turnover grow. This year we're up 50 percent on our previous year. I feel proud that the business has grown in the way it has, and that it's now at a good point. I love that it is a hive of activity and I have lovely members of staff to work with."

As well as doing Christmas gift boxes, Rebecca also does a monthly biscuit subscription as a gift for £18 a month or £54 a quarter. "We deliver the first week of the month and have a seasonal theme each time," she says. "I particularly love biscuits at Christmas time as they dress the table so well. Biscuits always make such a nice gift."

• honeywellbakes.com

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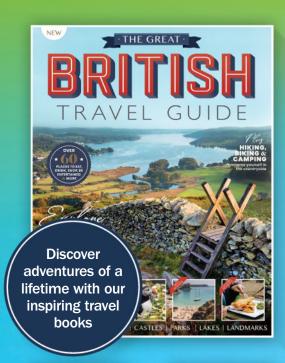








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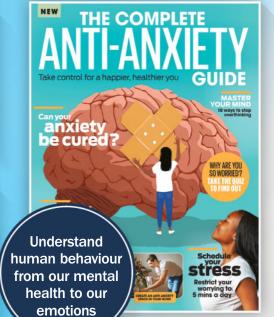






















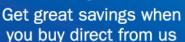














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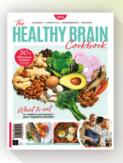














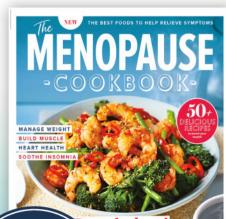
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