



Department of
Primary Industries and
Regional Development

Journal of the Department of Agriculture, Western Australia, Series 3

Volume 7
Number 6 November-December, 1958

Article 18

11-1958

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Recommended Citation

Cleeve, Brenda (1958) "Farm and home - Some novel Christmas decorations," *Journal of the Department of Agriculture, Western Australia, Series 3*: Vol. 7: No. 6, Article 18.

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Some Novel Christmas Decorations

By BRENDA CLEEVE

CHRISTMAS decorations can be quite an expensive item and could place extra strain on an already over-taxed budget, but some attractive novelties can be made very cheaply by anyone willing to devote a little time and trouble.

Pine-cones, gum-nuts, banksia nuts and other types of bush vegetation plus a small quantity of plaster-of-paris or patching plaster can be combined with odds and ends of ribbon, holly leaves, candles, miniature dolls, etc., to produce delightful effects.

PREPARATION

Wash the cones or nuts in hot water to remove mud and dust. Trim off any unsightly portions, then rinse in fresh water and stack to dry with the tops downward to facilitate draining.

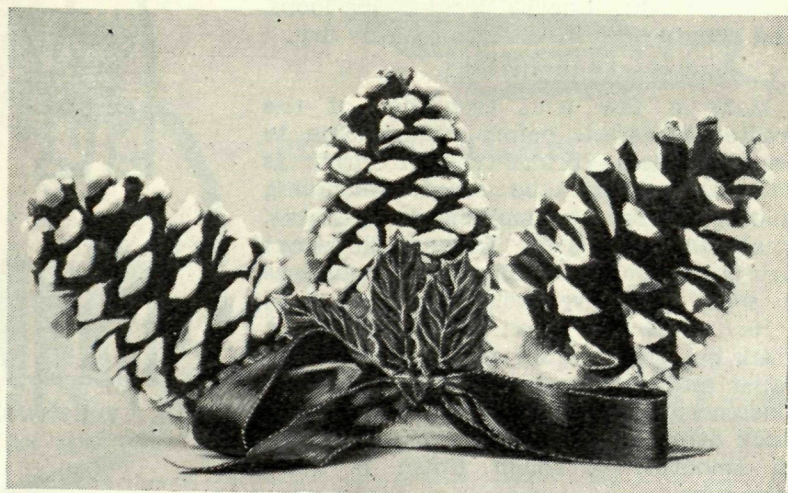
When dry, attach a loop of twine or string to the base of each cone to give added support when they are set in plaster.

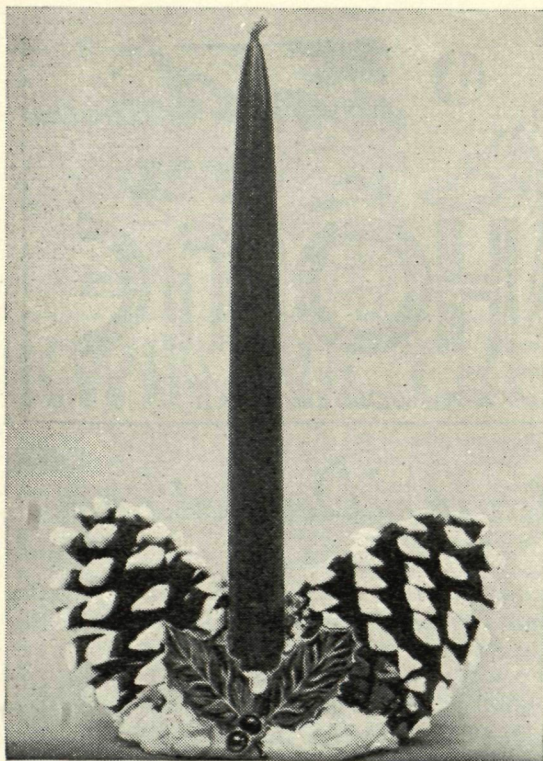
TIPPING

To simulate snow, the tips of the cones may be coated with a thin solution of plaster—or a similar effect may be obtained with white paint in which case a matt-finish paint is preferable.

If plaster is used, it should be mixed to the consistency of thick cream in an old plate so that there is about a half-inch depth of plaster. Hold the cone by the

Three pine-cones, some imitation holly leaves and a ribbon bow are used in this attractive table decoration





Two pine-cones, a holly spray and a coloured candle

ends and rotate it in the plaster till the tips are suitably coated. Paint can be applied in a similar manner or a brush may be used.

While the plaster or paint is still tacky, it may be sprinkled with tinsel "glitter" material for added effect.

The treated cones should be hung on a wire or clothes-line by pegging the loops, and should be left until thoroughly dry.

ASSEMBLING

Make a few trial groupings of the treated materials before commencing to assemble them. Various types of Christmas decorations can be used, including coloured ribbons, cellophane, holly-leaves, small fairy dolls or Father Christmas figures. Coloured candles lend themselves to some attractive groupings.

Having decided upon a suitable design, mark out the base on cardboard or thick paper and cut to shape. Prepare a stiff plaster mixture and spread it about $\frac{1}{4}$ in. thick over the base. It need not be put on smoothly—a rough finish is quite attractive.

Now take each cone separately and push the wire or string loop into the plaster then pack the base with more plaster so that it stands firmly in position. When the main items are in position, tidy up the plaster neatly to give a pleasing shape.

Bows of ribbon or cellophane may be attached by pins pushed into the plaster while it is still damp but not wet enough to stain the material.

Candles, dolls, etc., may be pressed into the plaster while it is still soft. Suitable twigs may be coated with plaster and adorned with paper flowers, leaves or strips of tinsel. Small models of pine-trees can be cut out in cardboard or wood and the little china figures obtained cheaply at chain stores can be used to good effect.

Put each group aside until the plaster has dried and hardened, then, if necessary, touches of colour may be applied using quick-drying enamels.

Attractive wall-plaques, hanging ornaments, or decorations for the table or mantelpiece may be made in this manner and you will get much satisfaction from exercising your creative powers and giving full rein to your imagination.



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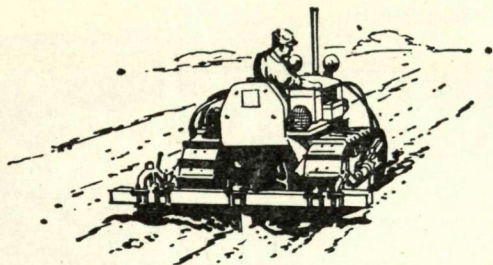
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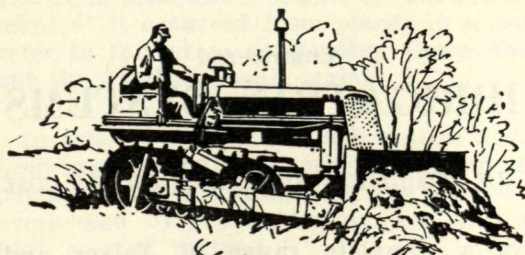
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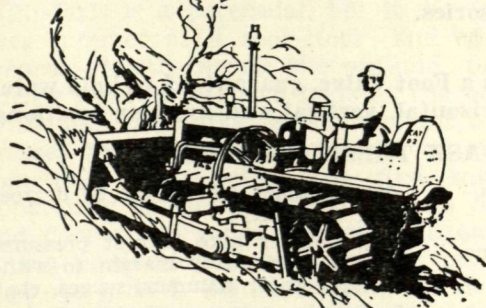
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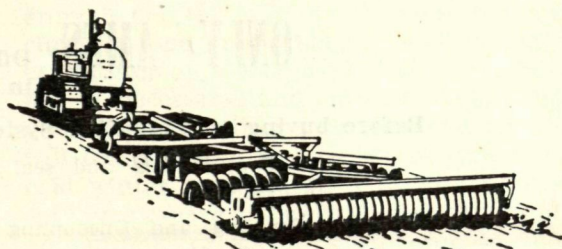
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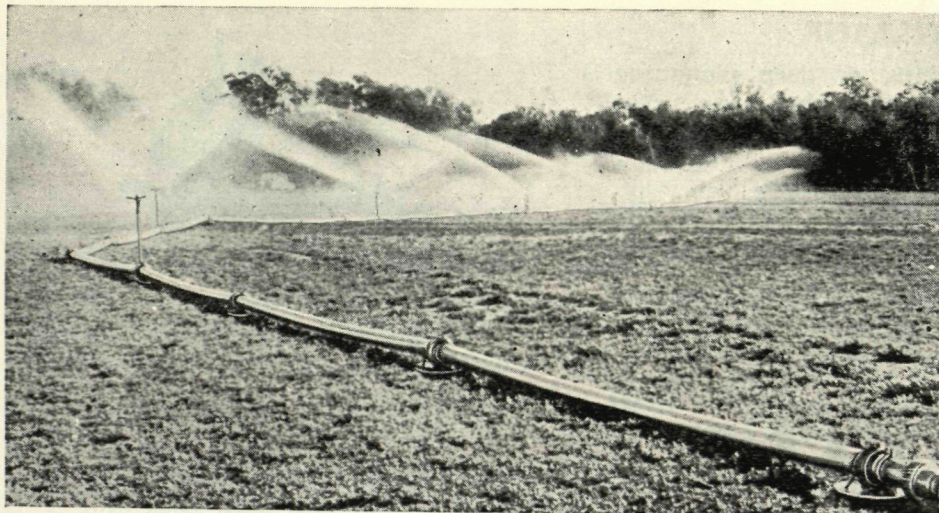
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