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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE

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QUESTION BOX

How make Yule log?

How fireproof Christmas tree?

ANSWERS from Forest Service, U. S. Department
of Agriculture

There are jingle bells and a sprig of holly on our homemakers' question box today. Your letters are filled with Christmas questions.

Here's one letter about a Yule log. Another requests directions for fireproofing the Christmas tree. In just a minute, I'll answer these questions.

But first, you'll be interested to know that the supply of Christmas trees is good this year. Large enough to meet the demand. That's the word we have from foresters of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. They say you're not likely to have any trouble finding just the right little evergreen for your living room.

Have you ever wondered how many Christmas trees it takes to brighten the homes and schools and churches and hospitals of the United States? Well, I don't have the exact figures, but I can assure you the tree in your living room is one of a great forest of Christmas trees.....between 10 and 15 million in all. Most of them come from the Pacific Northwest. And woodsmen have already cut millions of them for shipment to other sections of the United States. Some of our Christmas trees and greens come from the Lake states and New England. And we usually import around 5 million trees from Canada at Christmastime.

To get on with the letters in our mail box of the air, here's one from a homemaker, who says, "I used to hear my mother talk of the pretty Yule logs they made for Christmas decorations when she was a girl. I'm giving a Christmas dinner for some men in the service and I think a Yule log would make a nice centerpiece but I'm not sure I know how to make one. Can you give me directions?"

Yes, the foresters have given us directions for making the Yule log. I agree with you that it will make an attractive centerpiece for your Christmas dinner table. Since Yule logs are so easy to make, you may want to make several. Use them for window pieces too. They lend a nice note of decoration at the window.

For those of you who've never seen a Yule log, let me say that it's simply a rustic candle holder. Simple to make and pretty as a picture.

To make a Yule log, select a very small log..oh, about 3 or 4 inches thick and not over a foot long. That's the size that makes for easy handling. Just about right for a centerpiece too. You'll need a brace to drill the holes for the candles. You need hammer and tacks. And you need two sturdy little twigs to nail to the bottom of the little log. They serve as supports and keep it from rolling over.

The traditional Yule log has two candles. They're red candles, of course. Bore the holes for the candles on the top side of the log and about an inch from each end.

For decoration in the space between the candle holes, tack a pretty spray of evergreen and brighten it with a sprig of red berries...holly or kinnikinnik. That's the way your mother made a Yule log when she was a girl. Insert the candles and your Yule log is ready to be lighted for Christmas dinner.

Yes, it's easy to make a Yule log. Just bore the holes for the candles. Tack the twigs on as supports at the bottom of the log. Decorate with a spray of evergreen and a sprig of holly. And put in the two red candles. And you have a mighty pretty rustic centerpiece for your Christmas dinner table.

Now for the other letter in today's mail box. It asks for directions on fireproofing the Christmas tree. We've had many requests for these directions. Much as we enjoy our Christmas trees, we know they're fire hazards. In the old days, when we lighted our trees with candles it was worse. Even now, make-shift

wiring systems may cause a short. May start a fire. Or the tree may be placed too near a fireplace. Or someone may drop a lighted cigarette on a dry Christmas tree.

A freshly cut tree still has moisture in it. There isn't so much danger of it's catching on fire. But as the tree stands in the warm room, it dries out. And the chance of fire becomes greater.

So for your peace of mind and to protect your family, it's a good idea to treat your Christmas tree with one of the fire resistant chemicals. Ammonium sulfate's about the best. It's cheap and effective and easy to get. You can usually buy it at a seed store.

It would be hard for me to give you the formula for fireproofing Christmas trees in this broadcast. Instead, I'm going to suggest that you write to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the leaflet, "Fireproofing Christmas Trees."

This printed leaflet tells how to apply the treatment to your Christmas tree. It also gives directions for fireproofing cotton.

You may have a copy of the leaflet free simply by sending your request to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C. Give your name and address and ask for the leaflet, "Fireproofing Christmas Trees".

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