

# Love Luddenden Newsletter

The  Friendly Village

*Britain in Bloom & Yorkshire in Bloom Village Gold Medal Winners*



## How to make a Christmas wreath

### History of the Christmas Wreath

The hanging of evergreen wreaths at the entrance to our homes is a long-established way of welcoming visitors at Christmas. Steeped in ancient symbolism, evergreens were believed to possess powers of eternal life. Branches were exchanged as gifts and givers believed they were bestowing health and wellbeing upon the recipient. To make them more decorative, these evergreen branches were formed into rings or wreaths. So forget plastic imitations – adorn your front door with a real berry wreath made from natural material that you can find in yours or friends gardens.

### What you'll need

- 3 to 4 120-150cm lengths of hazel, willow or similarly pliable stems
- Conifer clippings for padding
- Garden string
- Florist wires
- A selection of berries and fruits The best berries to use are those of the tree forms of cotoneaster, such as C. 'Cornubia', or hollies. They last far longer than pyracantha, sorbus or skimmia. Try to use natural materials – they look far better than synthetic ones. Small fruits and vegetables including limes, chillies and baby aubergines, among others, make interesting decorations.
- 1m of wire-edged ribbon to make a bow (optional)



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## Making your wreath.

### 1 Make the hoop



Make a 25-30cm diameter hoop using pliable twigs such as hazel or willow – soak beforehand to make them more flexible.

Interweave the stems to make the hoop as strong as possible and then secure the ends with wire, string or tape. Alternatively, buy a wire or twig hoop from the florist or garden centre.

### 2 Attach the conifer



Pad the hoop with conifer clippings such as Leyland cypress. Alternatively, you could use a synthetic moss substitute sold for hanging baskets.

Tie string to the hoop and wrap around tightly, securing the clippings in small bunches as you go. Once the entire hoop is covered, wind the string back in the opposite direction before tying-off.

### 3 Add the berries



Bind bunches of berries to the hoop by wrapping garden twine tightly around their bases. Use a mixture of berries and add in a few short birch twigs for contrast.

Keep working in one direction, laying each group of berries over the bases of the preceding ones to hide bare stems. Tie-off the string, leaving a short loop for hanging.



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## 4 Tidy up and finish off



Fill in any gaps in the finished wreath with bunches of berries secured with florist wire. Wrap one end of the wire around the stems of the berries and push the other end into the hoop.

Pull the wire through to the back of the hoop and secure. Once hung, spray the wreath occasionally with water to keep it looking fresh.

## Other decorating ideas

There are dozens of ways to decorate the basic wreath so you can let your imagination run riot. Try out your ideas by placing items temporarily in position before securing them. **Twinkle star** Join five lengths of bamboo cane or straight twigs with florist wire or string and spray with silver paint. Before the paint is completely dry shake over some silver glitter. **Chillies and sprouts** An evergreen oak and eucalyptus base is brightened up with red chillies and sprouts attached with florist wire. **Ivy ring** To create this natural effect, attach ivy to the basic wreath and decorate with twigs, berries and seedheads.

Examples of home made wreaths from around the village:

