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Halloween Tidbits

By Arleen M. Kaptur

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By now, many of us have ideas decided upon for our Halloween decorations. Our yards and front doors, porches, decks, etc. are bearing the colors of the Season and are displaying pumpkins, apples, gourds, and other seasonal delights. All pumpkins do not have to have a Jack-O-Lantern design to shine into the night and welcome little trick-or-treaters. Try carving star shapes, squiggles, circles, bats, cats, and witches. Metal cookie cutters with Halloween designs work too. Just use a soft mallet to pound the cutter into the flesh of the pumpkin until you can easily remove it with the flesh intact in the cookie cutter. You can bake these shapes in an oven (350) until tender with some cinnamon sugar or butter sprinkled over.

You have a wonderful pumpking creation as well as Halloween "garnish" for mealtimes.

Cutting out Halloween designs from black paper or cardboard painted black and put in windows will "light" up when we turn our inside lights on. These shadowy figures will be emblazoned in the windows – and your creativity did it.

Decorate an "old" pail or bucket – hope you didn't throw it away just because there was a small "hole" in it and it couldn't hold water – all kidding aside, paint your bucket brown or orange and contrast with a pumpkin design or other Holiday emblem. Stencils work great –

Fill with apples, gourds, baby pumpkins, fall flowers, and foliage, and tie raffia strands at either end.

Stuffed animals can be included in our Holiday planning as well. A cat especially can be dressed in a pointed hat, and cape and a simple dowel stick with tied yarn in yellow or orange makes a great broom.

Felt can be cut into two triangles and glued or sewn together for a hat, with a band of orange material around the circle brim. A felt cut out of a bat or other accent can be attached to the hat.

Your friendly critter can hold a white felt ghost or a green toad. Trace a pattern on the felt and cut it out.

Change your "pal" with the seasons and yo have a great Holiday decorating item.

Using your Halloween cookie cutters, cut out shapes of pumpkins, ghosts, etc. out of cardboard, attach to a yarn or ribbon garland and intertwine with acorns, cut-out stars and moon shapes or whatever your creativity directs you to and finish off with fabric bows. Great on a mantel or from a shelf.

Aluminum pie tins can be spray-painted orange with black paint faces painted on. Eyes, noses, mouths with smiles, frowns, etc. whatever you choose.

Hang several on a weather-resistant cord or rope and let the wind "rattle and roll" these tins.

An old picket fence can be spray-painted orange or black and then appropriate faces painted on each slat. A green leaf or two can be added to the top (painted green-use stencils or free form or trace a leaf pattern and fill in with green paint). Use your Pumpkin Screen around your shrubs, trees, or just as a

decorative touch in yard or garden.

The weather, the Season, and the Holiday excitement – let them all bring your creativity to life and enjoy the experience. Patterns and store-bought items can give you additional ideas – but make your own.

Join in with children, friends, neighbors and have a "decorating" party. Everyone can think of things to create from cast-away items (such as old pails or pieces of fencing). Serve some mulled cider, apple juice, snack items – an instant get-together.

ENJOY!

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Fun & Healthy Halloween Treats

By Sherri Allen

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It's almost time for Halloween. Little ghosts and goblins will be running through neighborhoods across the country, going door-to-door, calling out the same three words, "trick or treat!" Of course, they'll be hoping for and expecting treats. This year, instead of handing out the usual candy treats, consider trying an alternative. Here are some Halloween treats the children will enjoy that won't leave them bouncing off the walls:

* Small bags of pretzels or chips

* Mini-bags of microwave popcorn

Halloween Tidbits

- * Fruit–Roll Ups
- * Fruit juice snacks
- * Small packages of nuts or sunflower seeds
- * Individually wrapped beef jerky or Slim Jims
- * Snack–size graham crackers, animal crackers or Goldfish crackers

You could even consider non–food items. Here are a few:

- * Stickers -- kids love stickers
- * Halloween (or other cool, colorful) pencils
- * Plastic whistles
- * Spider rings
- * Brightly–colored toothbrushes or flavored dental floss

Be creative and help the children in your neighborhood have a healthier Halloween!

Sherri Allen is the editor of SherriAllen.com, an online publication devoted to topics such as family, food, garden, house & home, and money. For great articles, information, tips, recipes, reviews and coloring pages, visit

www.sherriallen.com

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