

Take the Expense out of Your Easter Celebration

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By Nancy Twigg

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The Easter celebration can be expensive, but it doesn't have to be. Here are some ideas to help you simplify and replace the commercial aspects of the holiday with activities that are more in keeping with the spirit of the season.

- * Do some research on how Easter is celebrated in other cultures. Turn your celebration into a learning experience by enjoying traditional Easter foods and activities from another country.
- * Instead of buying greeting cards, make your own. Use your computer's desktop publishing program or crayons, markers and construction paper to make personalized Easter cards for friends and relatives.
- * If you buy gifts for the children's Easter baskets, use moderation. Select one item each child will truly enjoy and supplement with inexpensive filler items. If you usually buy a new Easter basket or bucket each year, choose a smaller one this year that will require fewer items to fill.
- * Instead of buying decorations, choose a few craft projects to do together as a family. Do an Internet search or check out books from the library for ideas. Use your completed projects to decorate your home for your family celebration.
- * If you use flowers as part of your celebration, keep arrangements simple. A modest corsage or arrangement of flowers from your own garden is much more meaningful than an expensive purchase from the floral shop.
- * Instead of spending a great deal of money on chocolate and prepackaged candy, make homemade cookies and other sweets to be enjoyed as part of your celebration. Your kids will enjoy making and decorating these goodies together as a family.
- * If receiving new clothes is part of your family tradition, consider sewing them by hand to save money. If making an outfit is too big of an undertaking, consider making one special accessory like a hair bow, tie, sash or piece of simple jewelry to adorn an outfit you already have.
- * Rather than serving an elaborate meal with all the trimmings, consider serving a modest meal and donating the extra money you would have spent to an organization that feeds the hungry.

Adapted from Nancy Twigg's book, *Celebrate Simply: Your Guide to Simpler, More Meaningful Holidays and Special Occasions* (www.celebratesimply.com) Nancy is a speaker and author who loves

inspiring others to live more simply. Visit Nancy online at www.countingthecost.com

Tips For Buying Easter Lilies

By Gray Rollins

Give the gift of Easter lilies

Easter lilies are one of the most popular of all holiday plants. They are gorgeous little flowers that will bring joy into the home of anyone who is lucky enough to receive them. If your home needs a little oomph this year then pick up some Easter lilies and if you are invited to an Easter dinner or Easter party, consider bringing along some Easter lilies to give as a hostess gift. They will simply light up the room!

What makes Easter lilies so wonderful is their complete versatility. You can grow your Easter lilies in your home for as long as you want, you do not ever have to plant them outside if you don't want to. But if you do decide that your garden would be better for the Easter lilies then you can simply plant them in the garden when the weather gets a little warmer. They will change the entire look and feel of your garden. They will add a light and airy feeling filled with love and hope. That is the magic of Easter lilies and why so many people have fallen in love with their lovely little trumpets over the years.

<http://www.youreaster.com/easterlily/>

So how do you choose the Easter lilies that are right for you or someone close to you? It is easy, follow the steps below and always come away from the store with the perfect Easter lilies for any occasion.

Look for lots of healthy green leaves.

The more leaves that the Easter lilies have on the plant the healthier they are going to be. These leaves should be plentiful all around the plant and should go right down to where the Easter lilies meet the potting soil in the pot.

Do not choose the Easter lilies with the already blooming flowers.

Many people make the mistake of choosing the Easter lilies that already have many open buds. Try to choose one with a couple opened and even more unopened. This way you will be able to enjoy your Easter lilies much longer. If you buy them already bloomed in a couple of days those will have died and there will be no buds to take their place.

Choose the Easter lilies that look good on all sides

Try to choose the Easter lilies that look just as pretty from the back as they do from the front. This is the best way to choose the Easter lilies that are right for you this year.

Gray Rollins is a featured writer for

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more visit

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