

Wreath adds seasonal luster

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leisure Columnist

Before there were farmers and gardeners there were hunters and gatherers. They harvested the bounty nature set before them with no labor or worry aforethought.

Now is the time of year when those who have not nursed and tended gardens all spring and

summer can still reap some rewards and decorate their houses with striking arrangements made from dried weeds. All along the roadsides and in the fields you can collect exploded milkweed pods and the dried blossom heads of all those nameless weeds and grasses that grow over the countryside.

Many wildflowers like goldenrod, Queen Anne's lace and yarrow make excellent additions to dried ar-

rangements.

If you have tended a garden, you may have some bonuses you had not counted on. You may have planted silvery artemisia and delicate statice knowing they would be welcome when it was time to make up holiday decorations. They are, but check your garden for seedpods of bachelor buttons, columbine, iris and others.

Herb gardeners have a wealth of wreath material at their disposal, fragrant bible leaf (costmary) for the base, chamomile, tansy and chive blossoms and oregano for the finishing touches. These will not only create a beautiful wreath, but an aromatic one.

To make a wreath you will need not only your decorative materials, but a wire wreath frame that you can find at most florists and variety stores and some plain long dried grass or straw as well.

Fill the wire frame with the straw or dried grass and hold it in place

wreath again with more of the same weeds or a different selection. If your materials are very fine, you may find that it will take a third layer to cover the frame and base and give you a good, full wreath.

Now add interest points. You may want only one, just as some people prefer a plain evergreen wreath to be decorated with only a single bow. Or you may want three or four. Milkweed pods, bittersweet berries, rose hips, dried flowers and seed pods all make good interest points. You will want to combine materials to your own taste and desires.

The wreath is nearly done. The final touch is to "feather" the inner and outer edges of the wreath with bits of fine weeds, grasses or blossoms. This will give a soft, natural look to the wreath. You don't want it to look just like a geometric circle. The feathering will also help to hide the base and frame of the wreath.

Your finished wreath will be



The following information is provided by the Franklin County Extension Service:

Now is the time to:

- Isolate new houseplants and check for pests.
- Preregister for Holiday Program by contacting the Franklin County Extension Service. This will be Dec. 1 at 7:30 p.m. at the courthouse in Greenfield.
- Oil your tools and store them.
- Save wood ashes for the garden.
- Force an amaryllis bulb into bloom.

Note:

- Be sure leftover fertilizer does not get wet over winter.

with string or even sewing thread. Tie the thread to the frame and then wind it around until you have circled the wreath frame. This straw forms the base of your wreath and it will hold all the stems of your decorative material in place so make sure you have packed the frame full.

After your base is in place, take a selection of your dried weeds and going around the wreath once and in the same direction, slip the stems firmly into the straw base.

Once you have a layer of dried material in place, go around the

beautiful and unique. There will be none other like it. Even if you feel you don't have any artistic talent, you will be able to create a beautiful wreath because all nature's materials are so lovely that it is impossible to combine them in an unattractive way.

Look at your garden and the roadside with a new and careful eye. You will find many plants that you can use to create a wreath that will give you pleasure all through the holidays, and with care, it can even be saved for another year.