



Dole Diet Center

Crafty Cranberry Christmas

Deck the Halls with DIY Decorations



What's red, shiny, so bright you'd even say it glows? Trick question (no, it's not Rudolph's nose). It's that other Christmas hallmark, the cranberry! Good for your body — full of fiber, vitamin C and manganese — cranberries are also a visual delight. DIY crafters have become increasingly creative from the day when many of us remember stringing cranberries and popcorn for tree decoration. We've curated several cranberry decoration ideas on the [Dole Nutrition Pinterest board](#). Here's a sampling of the best:

Cranberry Vase Base

Why settle for plain, unadorned cut flowers when you can add a splash of holiday color by filling your clear glass vases with cranberries? The berries help hold the arrangement — whether evergreen branches or white roses. Or, use cranberries around the base of a candle — layering them over pure, white Epsom salt to intensify the redness.

Cranberry Wreaths and Mistletoe

Likewise, cranberries can be used to give wreaths or mistletoe a kick of color. Variations are as endless as the imagination — use all berries, or add sprigs of mistletoe or other greenery. Start with a foam loop, and use toothpicks to hold cranberries fast. Get creative with patterns but don't go so cranberry crazy that you forget to leave some room to attach a hook so it can be hung properly.

For another DIY project try this holiday indulgence: [Cranberry Facial Scrub](#). Vitamin C acts as a good topical antioxidant, but despite beauty product claims, it's hard to keep it shelf stable. Solution: Break out the cranberries and unleash the free radical fighting benefits fresh from the bog, or bag, as the case may be.

Of course, these ideas presume that you'll have any cranberries left over, after you've made delicious crisps, stews, breads and salads. Fresh cranberries are also great for juicing — or experiment with freezing them and using them with your Yonanas® frozen fruit processor.

Cranberries contain proanthocyanidins which may help prevent (not treat) urinary tract infections. Lab analyses suggest these protective compounds may also help suppress herpes outbreaks. Another cranberry compound – quercetin – may help reduce Alzheimer's risk and alleviate prostatitis. Finally, cranberries might also help promote dental health by hindering bacteria from adhering to tooth enamel.

Hot News



RIND TIME

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Holiday Salad Wreath

Just Do It

Mood Benefits from Exercise -- Even When You're Not in the Mood!



Don't feel like exercising? Do it anyway. Research shows you will feel less stressed, regardless of whether you're looking forward to hitting the gym, or dragging yourself there with dread.

Previously it was believed that being inclined to activity will make working out beneficial — nurturing the false belief that not wanting to exercise equates to a good reason to “give it a rest.” Well, for all you couch potatoes, the bad news is the GOOD news that you don't have to feel like exercising to feel better afterwards.

A recent study published in the *European Journal of Neuroscience* compared the stress reactions of mice after various conditions — think of these conditions as 1) dormant/inactive, 2) voluntary activity and 3) activity under duress. After several weeks of this, the exercised mice exhibited less fright or flight under stress compared to the sedentary mice. The decrease in anxiety occurred regardless of whether the mice moved for the sake of moving or were forced into action.

Does the same hold true for us humans? While further research is needed to confirm equivalence, previous studies suggest the mental benefits of being active. British researchers found that employees tended to work faster and more efficiently on days they exercised during their lunch breaks. Nor does this necessarily require running the equivalent of an exercise wheel: Yoga was found to reduce anxiety, improve outlook and heighten mood.

So, next time you're feeling trapped in the rat race, with working out the last thing on your mind, stop with the excuses, and get moving. Eager or averse, you'll be better prepared for the trials and tribulations of daily life

Ban The Trans?

US Government Moves to Eliminate Trans Fats from the American Diet



Trans fats are trouble. So said the Food and Drug Administration last month, pronouncing trans fats NOT “generally recognized as safe” — a move generally recognized as a precursor to reclassifying them as a “food additive,” in turn a segue to federal regulation. Of course, stricter regs could be seen a mile away.

The FDA first required trans fats labeling in 2006. Cities, counties and states began banning trans fats in restaurants and foods soon thereafter. Still, further research is not a slam dunk in terms of popular opinion. According to one Pew Research poll, 52% oppose the ban — while 44% favored it.

Trans fats are the product of hydrogenation — processing liquid vegetable oils into solids. Junk foods are jam packed with these pernicious fats — as are greasy fried foods. According to the American Heart Association, not only do trans fats raise the level of bad cholesterol (LDL) they also lower levels of good cholesterol (HDL). Trans fats hurt the heart in other ways — encouraging fat migration to the midsection, which in turn raises blood pressure.

So steer clear — and look forward to food science innovation, as regs nudge manufacturers into a healthier direction.

Nutrition News Desk

Rind Time

Five Neat Ideas For Pineapple Rinds

To most folks, pineapple rinds are just a thorny problem — a rough exterior that needs to be carefully trimmed away to get to the juicy, sweet pulp inside. Worldwide pineapple production is estimated at roughly 17 million tons and of that just 60% is used – translating into almost 7 million tons of pineapple rinds being tossed each year.



What a waste! But wait — what if there were ways to use the rinds? Well, guess what? We've found five fabulous ways to put pineapple “waste” to work:

1. Juice ‘Em

Did you know the peels and rinds of fruit and vegetables are often the healthiest part? Kissed by sun, rinds concentrate the antioxidant protection that helps them ward off predators and help you ward off disease. So why toss “the best part” into the compost? If you own a powerful juicer you can juice the rinds (and the core) to enjoy “neat” -- or mixed with other fruit and veggies. You might even try freezing the juice in ice cube trays to cool and flavor other beverages. Cheers!

2. Ferment

Move over apple cider vinegar — how about pineapple vinegar? Place pineapple rinds and ¼ cup of brown sugar in a quart jar, covering contents with water (though leaving room at the top). Cover the jar with a lid or cloth, place out of the sunlight and let the sugar, water and rinds react for anywhere from three to eight weeks. Pineapple vinegar makes a nice dressing -- but try experimenting with other recipes using vinegar.

For a twist, try “Tepache” — a Mexican brew made from fermented pineapple parts, including the rinds. Recipes vary, but most call for pineapple rinds, water, brown sugar, cinnamon and cloves. Mix it together, let nature take its fermenting course for 48 hours.

3. Pineapple Potpourri

The smell of pineapple inspires some people to get all misty-eyed and sing “Aloha ‘Oe” and hula their way to the computer to look up roundtrip flights to the Hawaiian Islands. One way to keep that inspiration wafting through your house is to add some aloha to your usual potpourri mix. This [recipe](#) explains how to add pineapple rinds to orange, apple, pears and other fruits to make a potpourri with a Hawaiian punch.

4. Pineapple Foot Tenderizer

Bromelain is an important ingredient in meat tenderizer, but can also be used to soften callouses and other tough skin on your feet. Instead of throwing the rinds and core and other pineapple parts away, place them in a blender or food processor and whip them into a paste. Place that paste on the rough parts of your feet and leave it there for 20 minutes while you sip your pineapple juice and watch reruns of Hawaii Five O. Rinse the pineapple paste away, and savor the softness!

5. Clean Up After

Cutting boards can take a lot of abuse, leaving stubborn stains. But did you know you could use the pineapple rind to clean the board? Sprinkle coarse salt on the cutting board and then use the fleshy side of the rind to rub the cutting board. The pineapple juice will sanitize the board – just rinse it with warm water and dry it.

While these ideas should inspire more appreciation for pineapple rinds — it's of course the inside that really counts. One cup of pineapple contains 130% vitamin C and 80%

manganese. Fresh (and frozen) pineapples are the only known source of bromelain, an enzyme under study for support of skin and joint health. Preliminary research shows bromelain may also help reduce the inflammation associated with asthma symptoms, inhibit the growth of malignant lung and breast cancer cells, and possibly counter colitis, thus playing a role in preventing colon cancer.

Vitamin C Irony

Supplements Increase Kidney Stone Risk

Kidney stones are a painful rite of passage — literally — for all too many men, and some women. Compact accumulations of dietary minerals, some kidney stones can pass without much discomfort, while others can require pain medication, shock wave therapy or even surgery. Ouch!



Dietary risk factors include too much meat, sodium and refined sugars — things you already knew weren't good for you. But ironically, many Americans take supplements — including vitamin C — in the hopes of health benefits, while mounting research points to adverse health outcomes, in this case, increased risk of kidney

stones.

A study published earlier this year in the prestigious *Journal of the American Medical Association* analyzed diet and lifestyle data for nearly 50,000 middle-aged men. Zeroing in on supplement intake — including vitamin C — researchers found a 90% increase for kidney stone incidence, adjusted for other factors, during the 11-year follow-up period. Moreover, risk appeared to be dose dependent — in other words, the more supplements men took, the greater the risk: daily pill popper's risk was 123% higher, vs. a 66% increased risk for those who took supplements only a few days a week.

These results echo previous evidence of supplemental dangers: Increased risk of prostate cancer for multivitamin users, beta-carotene pills and cancer risk, as well as a concerning correlation between folate fortification and colon cancer. Fortunately, getting more than enough vitamin C from whole foods is easy — and delicious. Consult the chart below for top sources:

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------|------|
| Guava | 1 Cup | 630% |
| Red Bell Pepper | 1 Cup | 320% |
| Kiwis | 1 Cup | 280% |
| Broccoli (cooked) | 1 Cup | 170% |
| Brussels Sprouts (cooked) | 1 Cup | 160% |
| Orange | 1 Cup | 160% |
| Papaya | 1 Cup | 140% |
| Pineapple | 1 Cup | 10% |

Since red bell peppers perform “best-in-class (not to mention 10x their Christmas-y red hue) you might want to try our Featured Recipe, Seven Layer Vegetable and Quinoa Salad.

Put Your Green Genes On!

Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Kale, Cabbage Help Genes Defend & De-stress



When we are told someone has “good genes,” it sounds as if longevity and youthfulness were simply luck of the genetic draw. Well, recent research suggests you can bring out the best in your genes with a better diet.

Norwegian scientists looked at 100 obese, male smokers -- subjects who were, if you will, abusing their genes by subjecting them to carcinogens, unhealthy food, and adipose-induced inflammation.

They then divvied the men into three groups. Group one was given a weekly basket of antioxidant-rich foods, including kale, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, berries, pomegranates, plus nuts, seeds and olive oil. Group two was given a weekly sack of kiwis (equivalent to 3 a day). Group three, the control, followed their regular diet.

After two months, blood tests were administered to randomized sub-groups from each category. Compared to the controls, the antioxidant-rich diet group had the highest number of altered genes (44), roughly five times more than the kiwi group. Specifically, these were genes associated with how cells communicate, defend against free radicals, and cope with inflammation. In practical terms, this translates into a reduction in disease risk, and the negative effects of aging.

What’s behind such benefits? According to Dr. Bruce Ames’ “triage theory of DNA damage,” a nutrient-rich diet allows the body to attend not just to immediate needs, but to long-term DNA care. For example, vitamin B6, supplied abundantly by bananas, red bell peppers, and walnuts — might help support DNA repair. Beyond micronutrients, certain plant compounds — for example, the sulphoraphane found in cruciferous vegetables such as kale, cabbage, and cauliflower, activates the body’s own antioxidant defense systems, reducing disease risk, even in the face of genetic predisposition.

Bottom line: Don’t resign your health prospects to genetic fate. Genes — good, bad, or middling — can be made better by the choices we make daily in diet and lifestyle.

Featured Recipe

Holiday Salad Wreath

Ingredients

- 1 package DOLE® All Natural Spinach Cherry Almond Bleu Kit
- 1 Bosc pear, washed, skin-on, cut into thin slices
- 1 cup whole red seedless grapes
- Salt and freshly-ground pepper to taste
- 4 crusty baguettes (optional)



Serves: 4

Total Time: 20 min.

Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine all DOLE All Natural Spinach Cherry Almond Bleu Kit ingredients except Bleu cheese crumbles; toss well.
2. Place a 4-inch bowl upside-down in the center of a larger round serving platter. Using the small bowl as a guide, neatly arrange salad in a wreath form around the bowl.
3. Fan 3 to 4 pear slices at 5 equal spots around the wreath. Place 4 to 5 grapes in-between. Sprinkle the reserved Bleu cheese crumbles in-between the pear and grapes (optional).
4. Top salad with freshly-ground black pepper, if desired. Carefully remove the bowl from center. Serve with baguettes, if desired.

Family Friendly Tip:

If you prefer apples over pears, or are looking for seasonal options, try a green or tart apple (sliced skin-on) in place of the pear.

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