

Clean Talk



“Helpful Hints & Shortcuts for You”

Flora & Fauna

A Rose by Any Other Color

As one of the most enduring symbols for love and appreciation, it's no surprise that roses are among the most admired and evocative of flowers. It is estimated that 189 million stems of roses are sold in the U.S. on Valentine's Day and 1.2 billion are sold throughout the year. Though most people think of the traditional red rose, roses actually come in a multitude of colors, each with a different, specific meaning.

Red roses are, by far, the most universal symbol for love and romance, and a time-honored way to say, “I love you.” The red rose has long symbolized beauty and perfection. A bouquet of red roses is the perfect way to express your deep feelings for someone special.

Pink roses are one of the longest existing roses known to us. When roses first began to be cultivated, the majority of them existed in various shades of pink. As a symbol of grace and elegance, the pink rose is often given as an expression of admiration. Pink roses can also convey appreciation, joyfulness, sweetness and poetic romance.

Yellow roses were discovered around the 18th century growing naturally in parts of the Middle East. In many Eastern cultures, the color yellow represents joy, wisdom and power. However, in Europe at the time of the introduction of these roses, the color yellow carried much more negative overtones and were long used as a symbols for jealousy and dying love. Today, however, the bright, sunny color of yellow roses evokes feelings of warmth and happiness associated with the joy of true friendship.

White roses, with their pristine appearance, symbolize purity, innocence and secrecy. There are myths and legends from several cultures relating to the origin of the first rose, which is initially white in color and is made to blush from a kiss. Also known as the bridal rose, the white rose represents unity, virtue, and the pureness of a new bond of love. White roses are also associated with honor and reverence, which makes them a fitting memorial for a departed loved one.

Orange roses possess a fiery color that immediately conjures up passionate thoughts of romance. Being a literal mixture of the colors yellow and red, orange roses were often seen as a bridge between the feelings of friendship symbolized by yellow roses, and love associated with red roses. Giving a bouquet of orange roses could be a sign of emerging romantic feelings and the desire to move a relationship beyond the stage of friendship.

Lavender roses have captured many hearts and imaginations. With their fantastical appearance, they are a perfect symbol of enchantment. The lavender rose is also traditionally used to express feelings of love at first sight. Those who have been enraptured by feelings of love and adoration have used lavender roses to express their romantic feelings and intentions. The color purple also has a traditional association with royalty. In this regard, shades of lavender roses can suggest an air of regal majesty and splendor.

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Simple Household Deodorizers

Lingering household odors can be frustrating to get rid of, but they don't have to be. Here are a few simple tips for getting rid of those pesky household odors in a snap.

- **Lemon Juice.** Use lemon juice to get rid of odors like fish, onion, garlic and spaghetti sauce from hands, cooking utensils and pans. Use lemon juice on a wet dish rag to wipe countertops and cutting blocks to remove any lingering odors. Stinky garbage disposal? Grind up any citrus peel while running hot water into your sink.
- **Baking Soda.** Keep a box of baking soda in your refrigerator and in your freezer to absorb odors. You can also place a box of baking soda in your bathrooms behind the toilet. Toss a tablespoon of baking soda onto any nasty spill to absorb some of the mess and cut odors.
- **Vinegar.** Use a cup of vinegar in your washing machine when doing a load of laundry to remove odors from clothing and from the washing machine itself. You can also boil about a half a cup of vinegar with two cups of water on your stovetop to remove pesky, lingering odors in your kitchen.

February

Put a smile on the face of someone you love!
Just in time for Valentine's Day!



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Health Tips: Simple Household Cures for Common Ailments

Before you run to the nearest pharmacy to spend money on pricey, over-the-counter medicines, try a few of these at-home remedies. Of course, if symptoms persist or worsen, see a doctor immediately.

- **Achy muscles from a bout with the flu** – mix 1 tablespoon of horseradish with one cup of olive oil. Let the mixture sit for 30 minutes, then apply it as a massage for instant relief for aching muscles.
- **Arthritis pain** - mix 2 cups of Quaker Oats and 1 cup of water in a bowl and warm in the microwave for one minute. Allow it to cool slightly and then apply to your hands or other area suffering from arthritis pain.
- **Boils** – cover the boil with Hunt’s tomato paste and a warm compress. The acids from the tomatoes soothe the pain and bring the boil to a head.
- **Broken blisters** – to disinfect a broken blister, dab on a few drops of Listerine.
- **Bruises** – soak a cotton ball in white vinegar and apply to the bruise for one hour. The vinegar will reduce the blueness and speed up the healing process.
- **Burns** – apply a bit of Colgate toothpaste.
- **Headache pain** – drink two glasses of Gatorade. The pain will be relieved almost immediately, and there won’t be any unpleasant side effects caused by traditional pain relievers.
- **Skin blemishes** – wash the blemish with soap and water. Then, cover it with a dab of honey and place a Band-Aid over it. Leave it on overnight. Honey kills the bacteria, keeps the skin sterile and speeds healing.
- **Splinter** – just pour a drop of Elmer’s Glue-All over the splinter. Let it dry and then peel the dried glue off the skin. The splinter will stick to the glue!
- **Sore throat** – mix 1/4 cup of vinegar with 1/4 cup of honey. Take one tablespoon six times a day. The vinegar will kill the bacteria irritating the throat and the honey will hide the unpleasant vinegar taste.
- **Stuffy Nose** – chew on a couple of curiously strong Altoids peppermints. The strength of the mint will open up and relax inflamed nasal cavities in no time!
- **Toenail fungus** – soak your toes in Listerine mouthwash for a few minutes. The powerful antiseptic leaves your toenails looking healthy again!
- **Urinary tract infections** – dissolve two Alka-Seltzer tablets in a glass of water and drink at the onset of symptoms. Alka-Seltzer begins eliminating urinary tract infections almost instantly.

Kid Corner: Cash Rewards for Good Grades - A Slippery Slope

Trying to figure out how to motivate kids to do well in school has prompted some parents to try monetary rewards for good grades. The system seems simple enough – earn an A, get \$100; earn a B, get \$50; earn a C, get \$10; earn a D or an F, get nothing. What’s wrong with that? While it may seem like a good idea, paying children for earning good grades will get you into more trouble than you realize.

Child psychologist Sylvia Rimm points out that for high achieving students, money doesn't matter. A truly clever student may even ask for retroactive pay for all the good grades earned before the system went into place. And, in the case of siblings with radically different grades, introducing monetary rewards can cause rivalry, resentment and jealousy. The under-achieving student will feel woefully inadequate when seeing a high achieving brother or sister being rewarded for good grades that seem to come so easily, while all his hard work and struggling barely yields a C+ and a few measly dollars.

And, Rimm says, kids who are underachievers don’t necessarily fail because they're not motivated. There may be attention deficit problems, learning disabilities or problems in their social lives that make it difficult to concentrate (e.g. break up with a girlfriend/boyfriend, parents’ divorce). In those situations, money is better spent on professional or medical help, not cash rewards.

For some children, inconsistency is the problem. If they slip and get a poor grade, they figure that they’re not going to get the reward and give up. Sometimes, parents end up paying them for half measures and the system backfires. And once kids get old enough to earn their own money, you lose leverage. Cash for good grades truly is a slippery slope.

So what’s the best motivator? Experts agree that paying a compliment is better than paying cash. Reward good grades - or consistent effort - by giving your kids a hug, a word of encouragement, or a spontaneous treat - anything but money. That way kids learn the personal satisfaction that comes with a job well done. Studies show that children who receive more positive attention and guidance from teachers and parents do better in their schoolwork. Having an adult take an interest in their progress generally prompts a child to want to do better.

Take a lesson from Hollywood. In every film about kids overcoming odds to reach a goal (think *Akeela and the Bee*, *Dead Poets Society*, *Remember the Titans*, *Hoosiers*, *Coach Carter*), the hero is either an inspirational teacher or a tough-as-nails coach who achieves success by holding the kids to a higher standard - not by holding out a paycheck.

Homestyle Recipes Just for you!

Chocolate Valentine Hearts

Ingredients:

- Plastic heart-shaped candy mold
- Red, white and cocoa colored candy melts
- Sandwich bags (zipper, not pleated)
- Scissors
- Spoon
- Wax paper
- Plate
- Wooden skewer or clean craft paint brush

Directions:

1. Put a handful of candy melts into an open zipper sandwich bag. Microwave candy in bag for 30-40 seconds or until melted. Cut one corner of the bag with scissors to squeeze melted candy through.
Caution: Bag may be hot, so use paper towel or a pot holder to handle it.
2. Gently squeeze chocolate out of bag and into the molds.
3. Tap the side of the mold tray to knock out any air bubbles and flatten chocolate.
4. Place in refrigerator until set.
5. Pop out of molds and serve.

Candy Decorating Tips:

Polka dots - Use the flat end of a wooden skewer or a clean craft paint brush to dip into melted chocolate. Dot onto molds, then refrigerate. Remove mold from refrigerator when solid, then add contrasting color according to directions on the left.

Drizzles - Use a spoon to drizzle melted chocolate across the molds by sweeping a spoon back and forth and allowing chocolate to fall in streams. Refrigerate until solid. Add contrasting color according to directions on the left.

3D Drizzles - Use the spoon method above, however this time drizzle the chocolate over solid candy that you have already made and let set, rather than drizzling into the molds.

Tips for Organizing Your Kitchen

The kitchen is considered, in some cultures, to be the “heart” of the home. So to help make sure the heart of your home is neat and organized during this season of love, here are a few tips:

1. Designate cabinets in your kitchen for certain items such as plates, bowls, dry goods in boxes, dry goods in cans, spices, etc. This will help you locate things later, and help you unload the grocery bags faster. Plus, when it comes time to making your grocery list, it'll be easy to see which items are missing.
2. Store appliances that you don't use on a regular basis in cabinets instead of keeping them on your counter where they take up a lot of space. If you use your toaster every morning, it makes sense to just leave it out. If, however, you can't remember the last time you used your blender, stash it away in a cabinet. You'll be amazed how much bigger your kitchen will seem when things are put away.
3. Get a paper towel holder. The ones that hang from a wall or from underneath a high cabinet are the best. They save counter space and are easier to use if you're reaching over to grab a paper towel with one hand. There are even magnetic paper towel holders which you can put on your fridge, so there's no need to break out the tools.
4. If you have a kitchen table that seats more than the number of people who regularly sit at it, remove the extra leaf in the middle if possible. Also, remove extra chairs and store them elsewhere if you don't ever use them. This will instantly make your kitchen seem larger.
5. If you like to keep your keys in the kitchen, consider buying a key hook for them. This will prevent everyone from throwing their keys on the counter where they can get lost.
6. Keep your refrigerator organized. Whenever you go grocery shopping, make it a point to also clean out your refrigerator beforehand. Toss any items that have gone bad or are past their expiration date. This will help you make a better shopping list, too. Also, consider purchasing simple wire baskets or plastic bins to organize your shelves if you don't have a lot of extra drawers and organizers built in to your fridge. Keep cheeses in one basket, meats in another, and separate fruits from vegetables.

Upholstery Cleaning

Upholstery cleaning is not something most homeowners think about. Though they take special care of their carpets (like vacuuming regularly and having professional cleanings once a year), they often neglect the one place where they spend a lot of time – the couch!

Upholstered chairs and couches collect many of the same dry soils as the carpeting, *plus* body oils, hair, food and beverage spills, dust mites, and more. It's a good idea to have your couch and chairs professionally cleaned in addition to your carpets to ensure a healthy environment for you and your family.

In between professional cleanings, try this homemade preparation to keep your furniture looking clean.

1. Combine 1/4 cup liquid dish detergent or laundry detergent and 1 cup warm water.
2. With a hand mixer, whip until dry suds form (the suds will look like whipped cream).
3. Test upholstery in an unnoticeable area by applying dry suds with a cloth or soft brush and lightly scrubbing.
4. Allow to dry. If the area looks the same but cleaner, the entire piece of upholstery may be cleaned in this manner.
5. Shampoo only a small area at a time and use a spatula or rubber scraper to lift off dirty suds.
6. Repeat if necessary, then wipe area with a clean cloth dipped in clear water and wrung nearly dry.
7. Dry completely.

Tip: Keep upholstery as dry as possible while shampooing to prevent damage. For quick drying, open windows or turn on an electric fan, a dehumidifier, or an air conditioner in the same room. Most upholstered furniture sold today has a label or tag telling how it should be cleaned. Follow those instructions for best results!



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