

cheer du jour

A little cheer to forget your troubles, and better yet, to toast with a glass of bubbles!

NOV 26

When life gives you gumdrops...

BY CHEERDUJOUR ON NOVEMBER 26, 2012

Now that Thanksgiving has left us over-stuffed, and Black Friday has left us over-shopped, it's time to concentrate on THE holiday. We celebrate the winter solstice (more on that in future posts), but the series of posts I propose to follow, to highlight inexpensive, handmade decorations and gifts, can be used by followers of any of the season's holidays. I have seen gumdrop trees adding their colorful presence to several holiday magazine photos. This year, I decided to make one for myself. No instructions were readily found, but I figured it couldn't be terribly difficult to stick gumdrops on a branch.



(<http://cheerdujour.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/gumdrop-tree1.jpg>) This will be no surprise to anyone who knows me, but I indeed ran into some difficulties. I am a bit of a craft clutz, though I harbor grand dreams. Many times I have admired Martha Stewart's wizardry, only to be stymied at the first step (though to be fair, I'm not sure any mere mortal can perform her handmade miracles). To be honest, a nun (a cousin at that!) lost her temper while attempting to teach me to knit. So, you get the idea. Still, I persevered on my initial if-I-can-do-it-anyone-can project.

A few lessons I learned:

- Assorted color spice drops are not so easy to find, though my local Dollar Tree came to the rescue.
- Branches are not as sturdy now (at least not in the northern U.S.) as in the summer. Twigs snap easily, especially when weighted down by the seemingly lightweight gumdrop. "Gumdrops keep falling on my head" keeps playing in my mind.
- Be sure to find a balanced branch with a long base. Once I finally found a sturdy branch with enough twigs to support a rainbow of gumdrops, I happily skewered the colored candies. Unfortunately, I only realized when I was done, that the twig was hopelessly unbalanced. even a weighted vase

wouldn't stay upright with my grand creation. Fortunately, improvisation struck, and I now have a lovely gumdrop wall decoration. Of course my husband is slightly less impressed when he has to manipulate the delicate (read precarious) branch when opening and closing the drapes. Still, it is a bit of festive fun that the kids and the kids-at-heart can enjoy making.

- If you are looking for an outlet for your extra gumdrops (besides the joy of eating them), you can try the gumdrop fudge recipe at **Taste of Home** (<http://www.tasteofhome.com/Recipes/Gumdrop-Fudge>). I haven't tried this yet (we gobbled down our leftover candies), but the recipe looks easy and delicious.

For my simple example, I just used a branch (free) and a half bag (including some for snacking – fifty cents). In trying to find the origin of the gumdrop tree, I stumbled upon **Oregon Live** (http://www.oregonlive.com/hg/index.ssf/2008/12/sweet_memories_a_holiday_gumdr.html), which includes steps to make a much more substantial gumdrop forest.

So, go forth – be crafty and thrifty!

Posted in Festive Crafty Ideas

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