



Appassionata  
flowers

Loves Christmas



How to make a Winter Wreath

# THE WINTER WREATH STORY ...

## SCÉAL AN FLEASC NOLLAG ...

**W**reath : The word "wreath" comes from the Old English "wriþan," meaning "to twist," and over the centuries, wreaths have been associated with a variety of cultures. It's believed that wreaths date back to the Persian Empire, ancient Egypt, Greece & Rome where they were believed to be signs of victory

**C**hristmas wreaths are also connected with the pagan holiday of Yule, marking the winter solstice, which was celebrated by ancient Germanic and Scandinavian peoples. This 12-day festival, also called midwinter, was held to honor the returning of the sun & the seasonal cycle. The wreaths used during Yule symbolized nature and the promise of spring. They held candles that were lit in hopes of the return of the warmth and the sunlight.

**B**ut perhaps the most widespread and well-known use of wreaths comes in connection with Christmas and with Christianity, as their circular shape is said to symbolize eternal life and the unending love of God. In the 16th century, the use of wreaths during Yule was adopted by Christians and became a custom in the form of Advent wreaths. These wreaths were traditionally made of evergreens, which also symbolize eternal life, holly, oak, and red berries...

**H**owever nowadays a Christmas wreath symbolises an invite to the spirit of Christmas to enter one's home & it is supposed to bring good luck. December the 8th has always traditionally marked the day to decorate your home in Ireland and then you are supposed to keep your wreath until Nollaig na MBan on the 6th of January.

# HOW TO MAKE A WINTER WREATH

## ALL YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR DOOR THE BEST DRESSED ON YOUR STREET :

### INGREDIENTS

A circular straw base (available in most florists/garden centres)

#### Base Foliage

- Noble pine for definite (Try to get Irish grown pine or else cut the base branches from your tree)
- A mix of seasonal foliage - whatever you have to hand, with each stem measuring between 10 and 25cm (4 - 10") long (I used a predominant mix of spruce)

#### Leaf Foliage

- Cypressus, eucalyptus, pittisporum, fern, ivy (You need greenery that can last well without water)

#### Shrubbery & Berries

- Skimmia, garden thistle, rosemary + ilex Stems, hypericum, viburnum

#### Lovely Bits

- Pine cones & moss (go for fresh air in a woodland near you & find some fallen cones on a forest floor), dried apples & oranges, cinnamon sticks

#### Twiggy things

- Add your bits of birch, beech, pussy willow, lichen twigs you find when you are breathing in the air amidst a forest of trees & winter things

#### Ribbon & String

- Gather your favourite textures from gifts received & pieces you found to create your own individual finish.

### TOOLS & MECHANICS

A good flower/garden scissors/secateurs – The only way to cut your stems correctly!  
A ribbon scissors (Don't let anybody use your good scissors for anything else!)

Reel wire - German Pins (Every florist or garden centre will have them) : These will help to secure your foliage & elements to your base

An old newspaper / compost bin / thin gardening gloves for your lovely hands!

# HOW TO MAKE A WINTER WREATH

## LET'S GET STARTED

### ONE



### TWO



### TIMING

Give yourself an afternoon or evening so you can enjoy making your wreath. It's a lovely activity with friends and family.

### SET YOUR TABLE

Cover your kitchen table with old newspapers (this will speed up the cleaning up afterwards and will protect your table too)

Lay out your wreath elements and prepare them as if you were cooking

This aids making the wreath you have envisaged to make and also speeds up the production too.

### YOUR WREATH BASE

We like to use a straw base. This is then covered with 2 layers of mixed noble pine & cypress. The straw holds enough moisture to keep the wreath fresh for the festive weeks.

Cut the foliage into suitable pieces for the kind of wreath you would like to make be it tight or wild & loose.

We like to create a shorter stem set for the first layer as this acts as a base layer.

You can then cut your other evergreens and place them on top to create a nice full look.

# HOW TO MAKE A WINTER WREATH

## TIPS & TRICKS WHEN STARTING

### THREE



#### TIPS

Clean your stems so that you can place them diagonally into the straw. The trick is to only go in 1 direction. Keep turning the wreath as you cover the front and sides with pine. You should hear a 'crunch' as the stem fixes into the base (German pins are useful here)



### FOUR



#### FOLIAGES

I love to use mixed Irish eucalyptus but you could also add in pittosporum, berried ivy, dried hydrangea (note how to do that), ferns too.

Again, clean the stems, cut the ends diagonally and stick into the straw. If the stems are being stubborn, you can use the German pins to fix them in – they can help direct your foliage too especially if you like a voluminous look and feel with wild & trailing foliage.

Make sure you fill in the side of the wreath all the way around as this is the part you will see as you arrive and leave through your front door.

And ensure your foliage is stuck in tight to survive door bangs from the wind, teenagers, kids & adults alike!

# HOW TO MAKE A WINTER WREATH

## FILLING WITH FOLIAGE & MORE

FIVE



### STRING AT TOP OF WREATH

After all that foliating, now it is time to decide where the top of your wreath is. I cut string & pulling a double length, tie it around the wreath top - then leave it until it is wreath hanging time. This spot is at your eyeline when you arrive home each day & where you will fix your ribbon & finishing touches.



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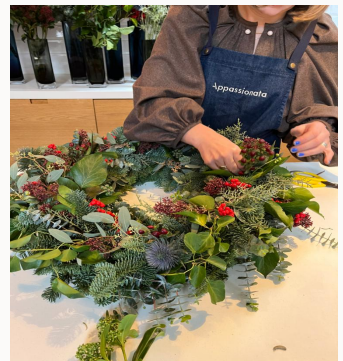
SIX



### SHRUBS & BERRIES

Now it is time to add your favourite berries and shrubs. Skimmia & thistle are wonderful shrubs that can be grown in your garden or in pots. They add gorgeous texture & filling to your wreath. Place them into the foliage and straw using the pins wherever you would like to see them as you pass through your door.

Lots of colour can be created then by adding in holly/ilex berries, hypericum, viburnum or perhaps stems from a branched tree or shrub you have growing at home?



# HOW TO MAKE A WINTER WREATH

## ALL THE EXTRA FLOURISHES

### SEVEN



#### FRUITS

Now for the fruity fabulosity. Dried oranges, apples, cinnamon are easy to pick up in a florists/garden centre or bulk food store. Large cinnamon sticks can be broken up by cutting the long pieces into 3. Wrap reel wire around them to fasten and cover up your work with ribbon or stylish twine.

Use your German pins to fasten these lovely accessories onto your wreath. It is worth giving your wreath a bit of a shake at this point to make sure all of your ingredients are well fastened on.



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### EIGHT



#### CONES, LICHEN, MOSS & TWIGS

Making a wreath can give you a great excuse for a good forest walk.

The woodland floor is a generous place and you will find fallen pine cones, lichened birch, gorgeous twiggly bits & perhaps moss, all of which are brilliant to add into your wreath as you please.

# HOW TO MAKE A WINTER WREATH

## FINISHES & HOW TO HANG IT

NINE



TEN



### THE ICING ON THE WREATH

And now for the grand finale – everyone has their own favourite way to add the ribbon.

I tend to keep and collect various ribbons through the years and then I combine a few for a textural approach. If you like a bow, lay the ribbon flat, fold each flap and wire the centre together. Attach your ribbons with a German pin or bind it on with reel wire.



### HOW TO HANG YOUR WONDER WREATH

Now to hang your masterpiece...

Using the twine at the top of your wreath, fasten it to your knocker with a good knot to keep it secure. Fix any elements that might have come loose.

Stand back and admire all you have made and feel so proud of your creative self. Take a photograph and make sure you that you milk the praise for the brilliant festive individual wreath piece you have made!





# HOW TO MAKE A WINTER WREATH

## MINDING IT & AFTER TAKEDOWN

### ELEVEN



### MINDING YOUR WREATH

Spray with water ...every few days to keep the foliage fresh.

If creating this as a table centre, keep it somewhere cool until you need it for the kitchen or dining table. Otherwise the foliage will dry and become brittle and the berries will ferment.

### A NOTE ABOUT BERRIES

Berries can be poisonous for animals so please check that none have been left on the ground for your favourite pet to swallow.

### THE AFTERS ...

What to do with your wreath in the New Year... Ideally you should be able to keep and compost all elements from your door wreath.

### TWELVE



### FOR KEEPING :

Dry your eucalyptus by hanging it upside down for several days, then this can be used in any room as a fragrant addition as well as those bathrooms missing any daylight.

Dry then wrap your straw base in brown paper or newspaper & store in a dry place for next year.

Reuse all twigs and moss to dress small vessels and corners at home. Keep your cinnamon and cones or use them to dress glass lanterns at home.

Ribbons, string, wire and pins can all be put away in a keepsake box to use next Christmas.

### FOR COMPOSTING :

Pine can cut up into tiny pieces & composted with all the foliage, berries, shrubs, dried fruit so that your soil can be even better in the summer!

# HOW TO MAKE A WINTER WREATH

## OUR VIDEO & ONLINE TUTORIAL



We hope that you enjoy making your own wonderful Winter Wreath.

Our video tutorial is available here :

We have also put our wreath-making instructions on our website in case your dog or kids chew or crumple this set of pages!

Wishing you all a merry merry Christmas & a million thanks for all of the Appassionata Flowers love again this year.

Ruth, Rachel & the gang in our gorgeous team in Cornelscourt. X