

Holiday gifts that keep on giving



An amaryllis in full bloom.

Photo/Gardener's Supply Company

By Melinda Myers

Terrariums have made a comeback and make wonderful do-it-yourself projects and gifts for beginning and experienced gardeners. They enable gardeners to continue to grow no matter the weather outdoors and can be updated and used as decorations throughout the year with some simple updating for holidays and other special occasions.

Just add a few ceramic items like a Christmas tree ornament, ceramic bunny or other adornment or two that represent the season.

Don't know where to start? No problem. You can create your own from an old glass jar or vase or purchase an elegant terrarium with copper bottom guaranteed to create the perfect stage for your tabletop garden. Or purchase a terrarium kit

that includes the plants, container and all you need.

For the artist, young or old, and avid birder, consider a green birdhouse. These biodegradable birdhouses are made from 100 percent recycled paper and designed to last through one nesting season. You will have fun decorating it with stickers, markers or paint, making this a gift you and the birds will enjoy. Plus, once the season is over, there's no need for cleaning. It can simply be added to the compost pile.

Not feeling artistic? No worries. Give a decorative treat for the birds. Those with live Christmas trees can extend their enjoyment by decorating the tree with colorful birdseed ornaments once it is moved outdoors. Make your own ornaments from suet, peanut butter and birdseed or purchase ready-made ones.

And no green thumb is needed for this DIY holiday beauty. Easy care waxed amaryllis bulbs are self-contained and easy to grow. The bulb is sealed in gold or silver wax, making it both decorative and low maintenance. There's no watering or container needed. Just set it in a bright location and wait for the floral display to appear before your eyes. You'll be enjoying big blooms for several weeks.

Stay on your diet as the holiday approaches with a sugar-free advent calendar. You can make your own from felt and fabric glue or start a family tradition by purchasing a handcrafted advent calendar like the wooden bird cottage advent calendar that celebrates nature and the holiday. Each day leading to Christmas you'll remove a bird from its cubby in the cottage. Peg it to the birdhouse and watch the flock grow.

Your friends and family will know Christmas is coming each year when you break out the calendar. It's sure to provide years of memories and could soon become a family heirloom.

Gardening expert, TV/radio host, author and columnist Melinda Myers has more than 30 years of horticulture experience and

has written more than 20 gardening books.