

# Vine swinging, done the environmental way

By BARBARA HALSALL  
Herald Special

As you plod on your way to becoming a staunch environmentalist, the most important thing to carry with you is a sense of humor.

After taking the fabulous tour of homes decorated for Christmas, I came home with new resolve to somehow make time to decorate the house and of course to do this from an environmentally sound perspective. This meant using natural materials which of course should have been gathered in the early fall. One can't be saving the world from garbage and also be out collecting materials at the right time of year, but I was not about to let a little thing like timing stand in my way.

We have a large beam for our mantel and although cedar rope would look great, I worried about it drying out

and I couldn't bring myself to spray it so I struggled to think of some other natural material. At last I had it, grape vines. I have made grape vine wreaths and I was sure that after all the creative things that I had seen on the house tour that I could fashion a garland.

I bundled up and headed out to a road side where I had seen trees being choked out by grape vines. There was no shortage of vines but the vines were not inclined to give up their home easily. I found the end of one vine, cut it off at the ground and began to pull and tug, first from one angle and then from another. It was firmly wound around and well attached to the cedar trees. I don't quit easily, so I persisted. The vine suddenly came loose and I found myself sitting in a snow bank. It is always embarrassing to find a but to do it as one is swinging from vines adds a new dimension to the embarrassment. I looked around and sure enough a car was stopping a short distance down the road. The driver got out with a camera, and just as I was about to protest that I didn't want this event recorded on film, he turned and took a picture of the home across the road as it was apparently going on the market. I carried on with my harvest of vines, coiling them up as best I could for the trip home.

At home I discovered that untangling the vines was much like undoing one thousand knots in a fish line. With my gloves off it

soon became apparent that it was far too cold in my garage to get the job done so I began dragging sections into the middle of my kitchen floor. The once supple tendrils were now hard and fixed in position. They stuck out and caught on other tendrils. My two house cats, whose greatest problem is boredom, came to the rescue. They immediately decided that decorating was for their entertainment, as they chased through the vines with ears back and eyes wide.

After much struggle I was able to wind the vines into a base for

the garland but not before Ben Dummett called to say that the ENVIRO-SENSE article that someone else was writing hadn't arrived.

The garland base is now waiting for further decoration. Fortunately a friend donated some cones to the cause, but I still need to harvest some milkweed pods out in some snowy field. I don't know whether the decorations will be up before Christmas Eve or whether I'll be bumping into Santa as I try to get them up at the last minute. I do know that I would never get through these crazy days if I

didn't keep thinking about the funny side of what I am doing. I step back and picture what I must look like and I keep smiling.

**YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE** to the environment and to yourself; it's all in your attitude. Keep smiling. If you don't want a dump in the middle of Halton Hills, be sure to write a letter to Environment Minister, Ruth Grier. This is your only chance to comment. P.O.W.E.R. will collect the letters and make an event of the delivery.

Merry Christmas!



## POWER executive

Local environmental group, Protect Our Water Environmental Resources, (POWER) recently selected the group's new 1992 executive. Picture above, (backrow, left to right) John Crispin, Paul Hynds, (Vice-President), Rob Barlow, Michelle

Fisher, David Noble, Fraser Robin. (frontrow, left to right), Ruth French, Donna Robin, (Secretary), Barbara Halsall, (President), Marjorie Kirkwood, (Treasurer) and Linda Noble. (Missing, Mary Shier). (Photo submitted)

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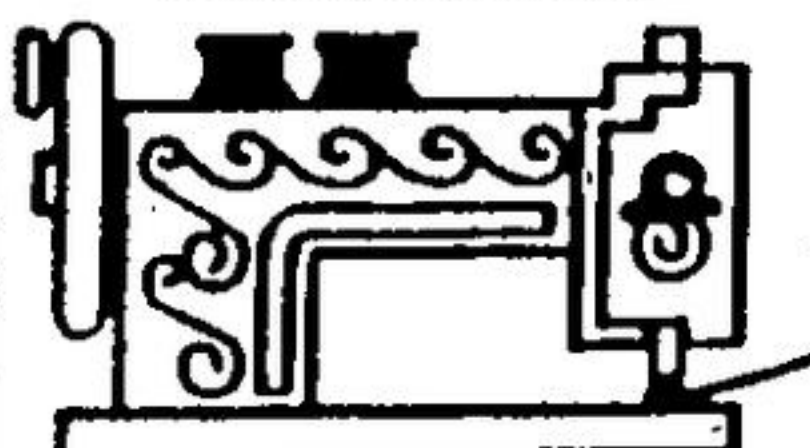
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