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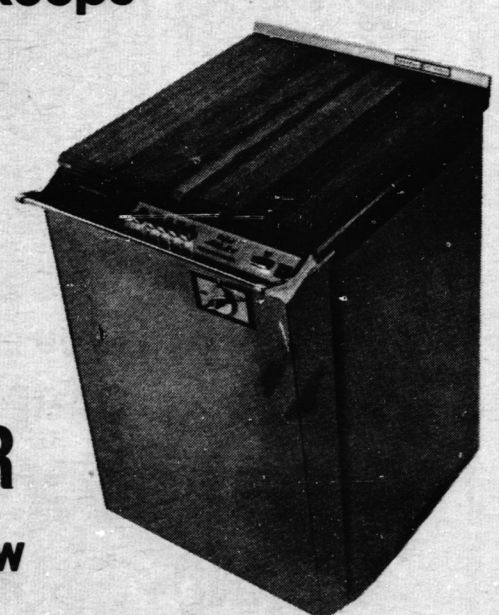
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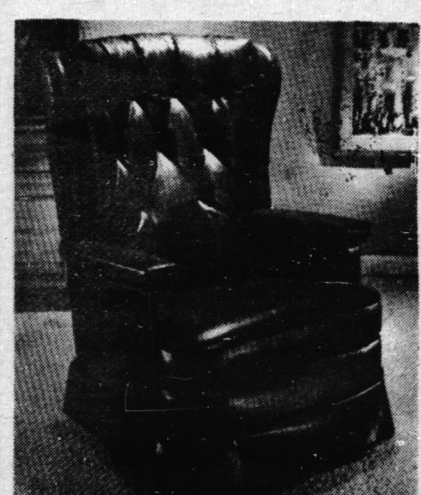
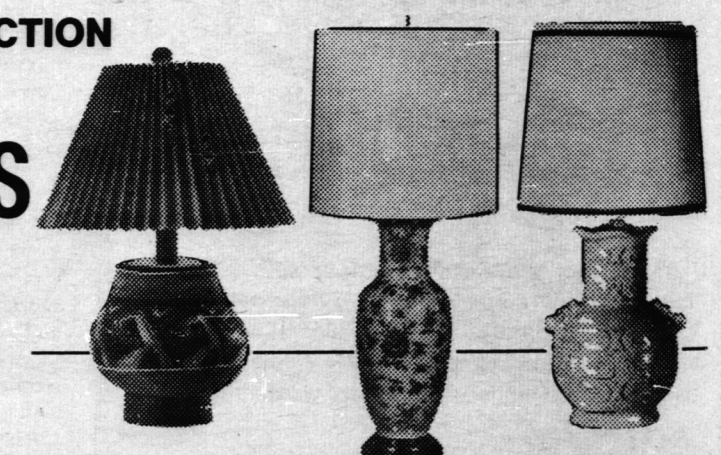
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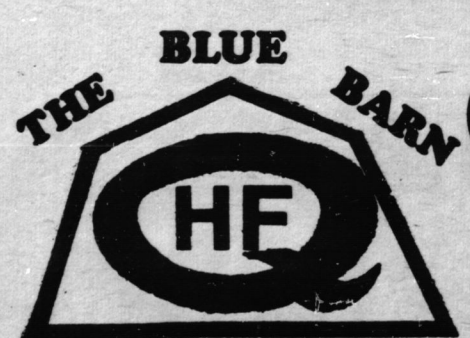
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## Trees Flourish In Festivities

Of all the customs of the Yuletide, none flourishes more merrily than the Christmas tree. It's a happy holiday tradition to set up a tree, string it with lights, deck it with ornaments and crown it with a star.

Legendary suggestions about the origin of the tree are plentiful. Just about every country has one to offer.

The pine trees of the Roman Saturnalia, the great tree of Yggdrasil in Norse mythology and the evergreens the Egyptians used to adorn their homes at the winter solstice are but a few of the possibilities.

In Scandinavian mythology, the three roots

of Yggdrasil bound together the home of the gods, the land of mankind and the underworld.

Though where the Yule tree began can't be pinpointed, it first showed up as an accomplished fact in the 16th century.

Strasbourg manuscripts of that era describe decorated trees as a regular, established part of the Christmas season.

The custom of the tree was probably brought to the New World by Hessian soldiers fighting for the British in the Revolutionary War.

The chronology of the Christmas tree in America reveals these highlights, as

compiled by the editors of Encyclopedia International. 1856 - First Christmas tree in the White House introduced by President Franklin Pierce.

1909 - People of Pasadena, California erected a towering tree on Mount Wilson.

1912 - Community trees decorated in Madison Square Park, New York City, and on the Common in Boston.

1913 - "Children's Christmas Tree" placed in Independence Square, Philadelphia.

1920 - Giant cedar cedars create a mile-long panorama of lighted trees, on "Christmas Tree Lane" in Altadena, California.

1923 - First National Community Christmas Tree inaugurated by President Calvin Coolidge.

1926 - National Christmas Tree designated by U.S. Department of Interior. It's a "Sequoia gigantea," or coniferous evergreen, in King's Canyon National Park, California.

1933 - First Rockefeller Centre Christmas tree erected - a 70-foot high Norway spruce with 1,200 colorful lights. Since then, huge Christmas trees - usually Norway spruce - have been a tradition in this New York business-entertainment complex. Tallest ever was a 90-footer, in 1948.

1947 - Minneapolis celebrated with a tree made of waterpipes. 135 trees placed in the pipes served as limbs.

1950 - A Seattle shopping centre set a record for the highest tree, with a 212-footer.

Canadians celebrate with a National Christmas Tree on Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

## Christmas Decorating

Indoors, outdoors, all around the house - Christmas is the season for decorating, and what a wealth of decorations there are!

The tree seems to be just the beginning. Its ornaments and lights become continually more varied and delightful.

Wreaths and greens, plants and bouquets, table centrepieces and window adornments appear in the home.

Outdoors, decorations range from a string of lights and a wreath on the door to manger scenes to such creations as Santa, sleigh and reindeer up on the roof-top.

Some of the yard and roof embellishments are real works of art - no wonder communities give prizes for outdoor decorating and lighting.

A diversity of designs for decorating are ready-made, offering welcome help during the bustling holiday season.

Still, it's fun to use personal ingenuity and creativity in making unusual Yule decorations, suggest the editors of the Grolier Universal Encyclopedia.

One thought might appeal to bird-lovers: Place a wreath, ready-or hand-made, outside a window. "Decorate" it with foods tasty to birds, such as peanuts, popcorn, cranberries and bits of suet.

Simple, personal touches make a difference. For instance, greens, ribbons

and glittering balls can be attractively arranged on a table or shelf.

Just putting some colorful ornaments and pine cones in a big glass bowl brightens things up.

Set the kids to stringing cranberries and popcorn in the good old-fashioned way. It's surprising how pleasingly they blend with the modern marvels of tree ornaments.

Every area of the home deserves some holiday accents. How about fastening candy canes to a broad, bright ribbon and draping it around the kitchen bulletin board?

For the more ambitious, there's the kissing bunch, an old English tradition.

An easy way to make one is to buy a ball of plastic foam. Greens - red-berried holly for color, mistletoe for kissing - can be inserted in the foam ball. Then a gala red bow and length of ribbon to hang it by are all that's needed.

Too late for this season? Much of the joy of Christmas is planning for the next one.

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