

I admit, this time of the year, I do not like the crowds at the malls or the traffic near any shopping area. People are not paying attention to their surroundings and I'll leave it at that.

I enjoy making things so this year my gifts will be mostly garden related and being a gardener I have a variety of ideas for gift giving. I intend to give my mother a flower arrangement with greenery that will last the whole holiday season, but I will add a touch of color with red roses with instructions that they can easily be replaced as they fade. My sisters will receive everything from wreaths to handmade baskets with Poinsettias or a potted plant. By adding an ornament, pine cones or nuts to the arrangement (though I have plenty of nuts already in my family), I intend to convey my happy holiday wishes. Of course I will have to buy a thing here and there but let me say, you'd be surprised where you can shop to avoid the jumble of people and traffic. I will be visiting local artists and crafters to purchase their wears that are Made in USA. Oh, and I know of a greenhouse in Jackson TN that has some really nice Begonias.

Try this.....

Ever think of making a holiday wreath or a table center piece? What a wonderful hostess gift for those special dinners and meals that friends and family put on. Besides being a gardener, recycling nature seems to be the way to go. All you have to do is go out in the yard and use your imagination. How would you build a center piece from what Mother Nature has to offer? Some items you might find: pine cones, pecans, chess nuts cedar, holly, or pine cuttings. If you have corkscrew (curly) willow or contorted hazelnut, Nandina and their berries, dried ornamental grasses and their seed heads all make interesting arrangements or add to wreaths. Load a vase with cedar or pine cuttings and drop in a bow on a twig or a flower. Add to your potted plants or a Poinsettia. Have fun. Be creative.