

HOLIDAY PET SAFETY



Clean up dropped leaves, petals or berries immediately and spray the plants with Bitter Apple.

If you know a present contains food, keep it in another place, away from

under the tree and inquisitive noses. Households with children have presents requiring lots of batteries, which roll around enticingly like toys. The corrosives in batteries can cause ulcerations to the mouth, tongue and intestinal tract if chewed or swallowed. Put away toys after the children open their gifts to remove the temptations of small plastic pieces. To keep fire and hot wax dangers at a minimum, use fireplace screens and place candles on high shelves.

For many families, the kitchen becomes a frantic place as goodies for family and friends are produced in quantity. With dogs in particular, all chocolate, but most specifically, dark baker's chocolate, is dangerous. Uncooked yeast dough can rise in the stomach and cause severe abdominal pain. Other foods to watch out for include coffee, macadamia nuts, grapes, raisins or onions.

Alcohol is moderately toxic. One ounce of a 20 to 40-proof beverage can cause alcohol poisoning or coma in a small dog. Place unattended drinks where pets cannot reach them. Tobacco products can be fatal to dogs and cats if eaten.

Two important phone numbers to keep handy in case of emergency are those for your veterinarian and the Animal Poison Control Center. The Animal Poison Control Center, 1-888-426-4435, is a unique hotline providing 24/7 assistance to vets and animal owners. There is a \$50 consultation fee.

If Santa's workshop is in an accessible area in your house, keep close watch on wrapping supplies. Ribbons and bows, tape, twine, pens, price or merchandise tags, rolls of wrapping and tissue paper are all fun for your pet to bat around on the floor or chew. Minimize your pet's exposure by cleaning up the space at the end of each wrapping session.

Even if holiday preparations are a familiar, if infrequent, experience, the level of tension and excitement ratchets up for everyone in the family as the end of the year draws near. Try to maintain some semblance of normalcy for your pet with exercise routines and feeding schedules as close to the regular schedule as possible. A happy pet, and one less likely to get into trouble, is one who has an opportunity to get the springs out and who gets loving attention from its owner. ■

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Some people just can't wait for festive occasions so they can expand on the theme by decorating the house inside and out. Our daughter puts up her Christmas tree the day after Thanksgiving. I can't keep up with my business neighbor either. My friend Theresa, of Tresses, is always at least one week ahead of me, not only at Christmas, but throughout the year.

Regardless of your personal decorating timetable, if you have a pet, the annual rituals of preparing the house for the holidays, along with the presents and food might be old hat to you, but they are a curious and exciting opportunity for adventure to our pets. They must marvel at the strange things we do and at the unusual items that appear in the house. I don't want to sound like Ebenezer Scrooge, because Christmas certainly is a time to be enjoyed by one and all, but we need to be aware of seasonal trappings that can be potentially hazardous to our pets.

The centerpiece for Christmas celebrations in many households is the gaily decorated tree. Whether real or artificial, it can offer fascinating opportunities from your pet's point of view. Place it in a wide and stable base that will resist tipping over. If you have some particularly rambunctious cats or kittens, you might want to anchor the tree with fishing line to a nearby curtain rod or ceiling hook for stability.

Avoid using tinsel, which can cause intestinal obstruction and internal cuts if ingested. Place your most treasured items high up on the tree, using unbreakable wooden, metal, plastic or natural decorations such as pine cones on lower limbs. Instead of the fine metal hangers, use loops of ribbon or yarn to fasten ornaments to the branches. Garlands of popcorn or cranberries are best enjoyed by the birds outside.

Pets can be tempted by the extra cords and plugs for the tree lights. Tape down cords, or run them under carpet or large furniture to avoid shock hazards. Keep the lights away from tips of branches and place more into the core of the tree. Pine needles, when eaten, can puncture holes in a pet's intestine and Christmas tree water can contain dangerous fertilizers or if stagnant, can harbor bacteria. You can discourage under-the-tree foraging by placing a tightly wrapped tree skirt around the base, or use decorative little fence to cordon off the area.

Many holiday plants have toxic leaves or berries. The poinsettia has a bad reputation for being dangerous, but in actual fact, its toxicity is overrated and might cause only mild vomiting or nausea if ingested. Other plants that can cause gastrointestinal distress are the leaves and berries of mistletoe and holly, Christmas cactus and many commonly used lilies.

Identify This

Georgen Gilliam Charnes

The Nantucket Historical Association houses the most complete visual record of Nantucket history in existence. The image here is from our collections, and may be one we cannot identify, wish for more information about or just want to see if people can identify. Many more images are available for viewing and identification at www.nha.org.



If you know the address of the house in this photograph, or if you'd like to see a larger image for closer examination, email: georgen@nha.org or call 508.228.1894, ext. 301, by Friday noon.



Last week's image remains unidentified.

THE GRINCH

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being published in 1937 by a friend. Once again, Seuss rose to the challenges presented to him, and with the help of his wife Helen, he continued to write children's books. "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" was published in 1957, the same year as "The Cat in the Hat." Unlike the animated classic, the original Grinch was not green. Seuss' signature black and white pen drawings introduced America to the images that lived in his mind. It was not until 1965 that collaboration with Chuck Jones allowed the Grinch to step off the page and into our lives.

Chuck Jones, the animator for classic cartoons starring the Road Runner and Pepe LePew, had worked with Seuss on wartime training shorts. Seuss trusted him and Jones admired Seuss' talent. Jones chose the color mustard green for the Grinch, a color that has come to represent all things grinchy for those of us who remember the original, despite the recent recoloring that gave the Grinch a neon green tint. The television version was a "who's who" of the animated world, with June Foray, the voice of Rocky the flying squirrel and Natasha Fatale in the "The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show" cartoon, bringing Cindy Lou Who to life. Boris Karloff, the scary movie icon and original Frankenstein, narrated the story and was the voice of the Grinch. The original Tony the Tiger, Thurl Ravenscroft, sang "You're a Mean One, Mr. Grinch." On December 18, 1966, America tuned in and

watched the magic of Christmas turn the Grinch into a cultural icon that took the place of the Dickens' classic Scrooge.

Seuss did not have any biological children but his books have made him the favorite uncle of generations. He was very close to the children of his second wife, Audrey Dimond Geisel, and his stepdaughter Lark Dimond created the sculptures in the Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden in Springfield, Mass.

Even though the Grinch was the same age as Seuss when the original book was written, Seuss would neither deny nor confirm that he was the basis for the character. Whether the Grinch is Seuss in disguise or a being directly from the netherworld of Who-ville, every year, thanks to Seuss' imagery, we get to experience with the Grinch:

"And the Grinch, with his grinch-foot ice-cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling: "How could it be so? It came without ribbons! It came without tags! It came without packages, boxes or bags!" And he puzzled three hours, 'till his puzzler was sore.

Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before! "Maybe Christmas," he thought, "doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!" ■

— "How The Grinch Stole Christmas" will be shown at the Nantucket Atheneum Great Hall on Sunday, Dec. 16 from 2 to 3 p.m. Admission is free, and Cindy Lou Who's favorite cake will be served.