

Christmas Greens Make Christmas Merry

WHAT is Christmas without Christmas greens? Half the sentiment and the charm of the festive season is associated with the use of greens in the home. They contribute more than all else to make Christmas a time of good cheer.

The mistletoe, as a Christmas decoration, seems to be indispensable. In the



Under the Mistletoe

'Hang up Love's Mistletoe over the earth
And let us kiss under it all the year round;
Hail it with joy in our yule-lighted mirth,
But let it not fade with the festival sound.'

past it has been associated with many superstitions and highly extolled for its medicinal purposes. Legends of Scandinavia associate the mistletoe with Freya, the goddess of love and beauty. From this sentimental association arose the custom of suspending the mistletoe in halls and drawing-rooms with the privilege that custom confers. Even to the present day the idea of a kiss under the mistletoe bough has not lost its ancient mystic meaning as a glance at the scene on this page readily shows. Let us not forget the custom.

From whence comes the mistletoe? It grows as a parasite on trees, preferably the apple. The American mistletoe is found from New Jersey to Florida, and is shipped to northern parts during the holiday season. The eastern cities of Canada and the United States use small quantities of mistletoe, brought over from England and France. It is liable to injury from frost, but being more showy, and having larger berries than the American sort, it has greater decorative value.

Another important Christmas green is Ilex, or holly, of which there are many species and varieties, comprising both deciduous and evergreen shrubs with

many colors of fruit. The common American holly is found in dry and barren fields from Maine to Florida. It differs from the English holly in many respects. It is hardier but less handsome, leaves are more oval and not so waved and crinkled; fruit, a dull, deep scarlet, and usually solitary; while in the Old Country holly the berries are bright and shiny, and occur in clusters. English holly is imported into Canada occasionally, but seldom with commercial satisfaction. In this country we have no true native holly, but a closely allied species is the winterberry, found in our swamps and low grounds.

Lycopodium (also known as ground pine or club moss) is one of the oldest and most common of our decorative materials. The best of this is found in moist woods and rough, spongy swamps. It is found in drier situations also, but of a lighter and yellowish color. Selaginella is sometimes mistaken for lycopodium, but, as the latter is identified by the coniferous habit and the single form of its capsules, they can readily be distinguished.

The leucothoë, or "branch ivy," is coming rapidly into favor as an artistic bit of greenery. For grace and elegance it is unsurpassed. For making up designs, sprays of leucothoë are often used in connection with galax leaves. Its native haunts are the moist ravines of the southern states, but some of the hardier species are grown in Massachusetts and western New York.

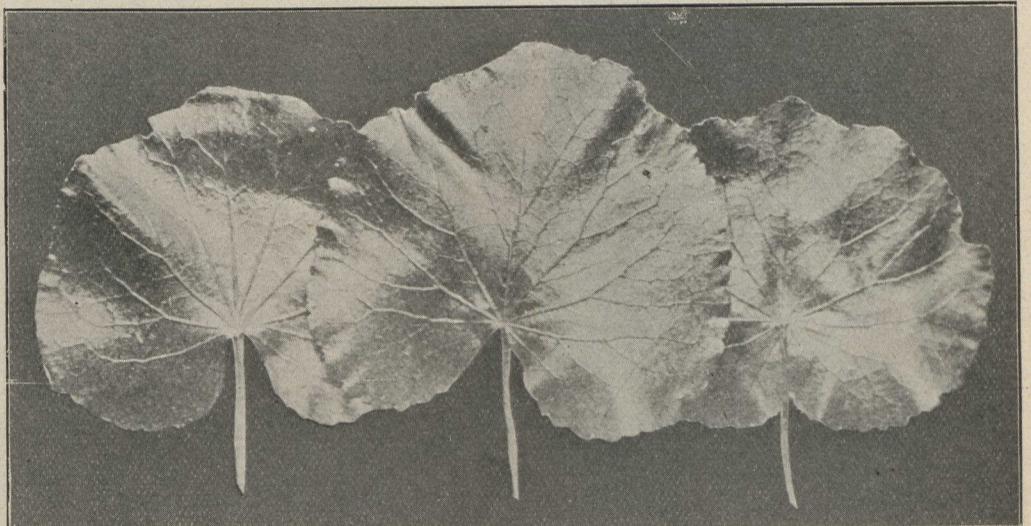
The pretty little galax, or "colt's foot," with its rich-hued leaves, tinged with shades of red and bronze, is an-

ful wreaths, crosses, and other designs for holiday purposes. In spring they are used for bunching violets and mayflowers. They are gathered in the mountains from North Carolina to Georgia, and are shipped in large quantities to the cities and towns of the north.

Another highly-prized green is the wild smilax that comes from Alabama and Georgia. Like the mistletoe, it requires a little attention to prevent injury from frost. When used for decorating, its luxurious festoons are charmingly free and striking. Besides this and some of those already mentioned, the south contributes palm leaves, dagger ferns, magnolia branches, and Florida moss, with individual characteristics, peculiar in themselves, which are effective for special purposes.

The north also contributes its share of Christmas greens in hardy ferns, needle pines, hemlock clippings, and many others. Clippings of cedar, hemlock, and yew, for roping and massing in large churches and halls, are used with effect and economy. Our common hardy ferns gathered from the woods give strength, when well arranged, to any plan of Christmas adornment. For the sake of contrast and variety, branches from some of our hardy decorative shrubs may be used. For this purpose, the bright scarlet berries of the burning-bush are particularly desirable.

One of the most appreciated of all the Christmas greens is the Christmas tree, as it plays the most conspicuous part in the all-pervading fun and frolic of the occasion. A favorite Christmas



Galax Leaves are Excellent for Christmas Decorations

other recent decorative introduction. Galax leaves have largely displaced the English ivy, as it furnishes long, wiry stems, is less expensive, and is easier handled and kept. They make beauti-

tree is the balsam fir. Certain types of spruce and other conifers also are in demand. The fir is favored for its pyramidal shape. When young it is very striking and pretty, with its