

Over the Fence

NEWS FROM YOUR REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONAL...

Fireside Homes

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Celebrate National Poinsettia Day! Fun facts and tips:

- Poinsettias are native to Mexico, but 90 percent of all poinsettias are now exported from the United States.
- These gorgeous flowers were first introduced in the United States in 1828 by the first U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, Joel Roberts Poinsett.
- Poinsettias are the number one potted plant in the U.S. which is amazing considering they are only sold during the six weeks before Christmas.
- Over 80% of the poinsettias purchased are purchased by women!
- A fresh plant shows little yellow pollen on its flower clusters in the center. Plants that drop their pollen will shed their leaves soon afterward.
- Don't expose your poinsettia to temperatures below 50 degrees. They enjoy bright indirect sunlight but not direct sun, for about 6 hours a day. Avoid cold drafts (near doors) or hot dry air (near heater vents) and water the plant when it is dry to the touch.

Advantages of LED Holiday Lights

LED holiday lights have many advantages over ordinary incandescent lights:

- Running LED holiday lights on one 6-foot tree for 12 hours per day for 40 days can save 90% or more energy when compared to traditional incandescent holiday lights:

Type of Light	Electricity Cost *
Standard C-7 (125 bulbs, 4 watts each)	\$27.21
Mini incandescent lights (300 bulbs, 0.4 watts each)	\$6.53
LED holiday lights (280 bulbs, 0.04 watts each)	\$0.61

*Assumes an electricity price of 11.26 cents per kilowatt hour.

- LED holiday lights last longer; they have an operational life span of roughly 20,000 hours, enough to last for 40 holiday seasons
- LED holiday lights are cooler than incandescent bulbs, reducing the risk of fire and personal injury
- LED holiday lights are more durable than incandescent bulbs, with lamps typically made out of solid plastic rather than glass
- Because they use less power, it is safer to connect multiple strings of LED holiday lamps end-to-end without overloading the wall socket.



For full article and more information visit:
www.energysavers.gov/your_home/lighting_daylighting/index.cfm/mytopic=12032



Christmas Baking— Freezing Cookies and Cookie Dough

by Rachel Paxton—rachel@Organized-Mom.com

If you're looking ahead to the holiday season and wondering how you're going to get all your baking done, consider freezing your cookie dough or fresh baked cookies ahead of time. When the holidays get closer you can get that last bit of shopping done or last present made instead of spending all your time in the kitchen.

Freezing Cookie Dough

Cookie dough will freeze well for 4 to 6 weeks. Rolls of dough should be sealed tightly in plastic wrap (chill in refrigerator first before freezing). Other kinds of dough should be stored in airtight containers. Drop cookies (unbaked) may be frozen on cookie sheets and transferred to freezer bags. Let stand at room temperature for about 30 minutes before baking.

Don't try to freeze soft meringue-type cookie dough. Chocolate chip, brownies, peanut butter, and sugar cookie dough (or anything similar) freezes well. Let the dough defrost in the refrigerator (about 2-3 hours). Make sure to label the container with the date and type of cookie dough.

Freezing Baked Cookies

Almost any baked cookie freezes well. Let cookies completely cool before freezing. Wrap cookies individually in plastic wrap then store them in a Ziploc freezer bag or

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If you are thinking of buying or selling a home in the near future, please call for a personal interview and property assessment with no obligation.



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Cookies

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storage tin (coffee cans or holiday tins work great). You can also just layer the cookies between layers of waxed paper in the container, but the individually wrapped ones will store longer.

Freeze frosted cookies uncovered first until they are firm. Then pack them in an airtight container lined with plastic wrap or foil. Make sure to label the container with the date and type of cookies. Unfrosted cookies can be frozen up to 6-12 months (frosted, about 3 months). Frozen cookies thaw in about 10 minutes at room temperature (if you can wait that long). If cookies should be crisp when thawed, remove them from the container before thawing.

DECEMBER

- December 1:** Hanukkah begins
- December 7:** National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- December 12:** National Poinsettia Day
- December 24:** Christmas Eve
- December 25:** Christmas Day
- December 26:** Kwanzaa begins
- December 31:** New Year's Eve

GINGERSNAPS

- 1 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup butter
- 2 eggs
- 3 cups flour
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. ginger
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. cloves
- 1/2 cup molasses

In a large bowl, cream sugar and butter. Add eggs. Stir in flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, and cloves. Add molasses, stirring well. Refrigerate dough for an hour or two to chill. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Roll dough into 1-inch balls. Roll each ball in a little sugar and place 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake for 10 minutes.



SNICKERDOODLES

- 1 cup butter
- 1-1/2 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2-3/4 cup flour
- 2 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt

In a large bowl, cream together butter, sugar, and eggs. Stir in flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, and salt. Refrigerate dough for an hour or two to chill. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Roll the dough into 1-inch balls. Roll each ball in a mixture of cinnamon and sugar. Place 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes.



Rachel Paxton is a freelance writer and mom helping other moms to organize their families and their lives. For other organizing hints visit <http://organizedfamilies.com>.

www.christmas-cookies.com/bakingtips/freezingcookies.php