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In shades of white, golden yellow, pink, rose, coral and red, the flowers of holiday cacti look like exotic birds in flight. It is no wonder that these fall and winter blooming plants have become holiday favorites.

People group holiday cacti together under the term "Christmas cactus." Actually, most holiday cacti are derived from the Thanksgiving or crab cactus, Schlumbergera truncata, family Cactaceae. The true Christmas cactus is Schlumbergera bridgesii. The main difference between the two is the shape of the leaf-like stem segments. In the Thanksgiving cactus, the edges of the segments are toothed or pointed; in the Christmas cactus, the segments are smaller and have rounded lobes. The Thanksgiving cactus tends to grow more upright, while the Christmas cactus tends to be more pendulous, or drooping.

Both species originated in Brazil, where they grow as epiphytes in plant debris trapped among tree branches or in decaying humus on the ground. Therefore, plants grown in the home do best in a light, 'humusy' or peat-based potting soil and containers with holes for drainage. Avoid potting in heavy mineral-type soils (garden soil), where over watering will quickly lead to root rot and plant death. The once recommended practice of keeping holiday cacti quite dry in the fall to stimulate flower-

Holiday Cactus Accents the Holiday Season

ing probably grew out of greenhouse growers' attempts to prevent fungal diseases in plants grown in heavy soils under cool, moist conditions.

Don't fall into the trap of constantly repotting into a bigger pot. Holiday cactus likes to be root-bound, so repotting every 2-3 years (even back into the same pot) is plenty. If you repot, use a sterile, well-draining potting soil such as those packaged for African violets, orchids, or bromeliads.

Though holiday cacti naturally flower around Thanksgiving and Christmas, commercial growers take no chances -- they manipulate light levels and temperatures to guarantee timely flowering. Holiday cacti bloom in response to short days and/or cool temperatures. In the greenhouse or in the home, expose them to nine hours of light and 15 hours of darkness each day, starting in September, to cause plants to set flower buds. Holding temperatures between 50 and 59 degrees Fahrenheit will stimulate flowering despite day length. Kentucky gardeners that re-flower their holiday cactus each year, simply leave the plants outdoors through September and protect the plants from frost if necessary. When the plants are brought indoors in early October, flower buds are set and the plants flower around Thanksgiving.

Temperature above 75 degrees Fahrenheit, sudden changes in temperature or light levels, and over watering plants in heavy soil will cause unopened flower buds to fall off. Besides controlling the growing environment, greenhouse operators use chemical growth regulators to increase stem branching and flower bud formation. That is why the plants you see in florist shops and greenhouses have many short

lateral branches loaded with flower buds. One to two flowers at the end of each stem are normal, but treated plants may have three to five. (Source: Alexis Sheffield, UK Extension Service)

For more information about houseplant care, contact the Estill County Cooperative Extension Service at 606-723-4557.

2019 Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference

Fruit and vegetable producers will find much information to help their enterprises at the 2019 Kentucky Fruit and Vegetable Conference January 7-8th at Lexington's Embassy Suites Hotel.

Preconference sessions on Sunday, Jan. 6 will begin with a vegetable roundtable discussion from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m., and a tree and small fruit roundtable from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

During the conference, participants may choose from several concurrent sessions with topics that include farmers markets, small fruit production, vegetable production,

tree fruit production, high tunnel production, marketing and business management, organic production, the Grape and Wine Short Course and updates on Produce Best Practices Training and the Food Safety Modernization Act.

Conference preregistration is \$40 per person, while registration after December 14 or at the door is \$60. Registration includes a one-year membership in the Kentucky Vegetable Growers Association, Kentucky State Horticulture Society or the Organic Association of Kentucky and entry to the Grape and Wine Short Course. The conference program and registration information are available online at <http://www.uky.edu/hort/node/1985> or call 859-257-3374 for more information.

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A Christmas Cactus grown by Wilma Wise of Ravenna

Wishing Well®

8	2	4	6	5	7	4	8	7	3	4	2	3
A	V	B	C	R	Y	E	P	O	V	G	I	A
2	8	6	2	8	4	6	8	7	3	5	2	3
C	P	A	T	L	E	U	Y	U	R	E	O	I
4	5	7	6	3	5	3	5	6	7	3	7	5
N	M	R	T	E	A	T	I	I	E	Y	A	N
7	3	7	2	4	3	7	5	7	4	8	2	7
P	I	R	R	E	S	E	P	W	R	N	Y	A
2	7	2	4	7	8	5	2	7	3	5	2	6
I	R	S	O	D	E	O	N	S	Y	I	E	O
8	6	8	6	4	6	4	6	3	6	3	6	2
W	N	S	A	U	D	S	V	O	I	U	S	A
3	8	6	5	6	8	3	2	5	8	5	8	8
R	K	E	S	D	I	S	R	E	L	D	L	S

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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CryptoQuip

This is a simple substitution cipher in which each letter used stands for another. If you think that X equals O, it will equal O throughout the puzzle. Solution is accomplished by trial and error.

Clue: J equals E

AJ HSC EPSL MJZJS HR

OJJZJ RDS OPSJMHQ. PTHJS

PNN, AJ ARDNLM'H APMH HR

SDTTNJ PMC TPHEJSQ.

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CryptoQuote

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each week the code letters are different.

SQL BPRMNU CJQ KIRBQ UX

QEGCJJCUURMN CU LCBFPRMN

HXIJ GXUU VX UXEQBPRMN

HXI ZIUB UCRV FXIDVM'B GQ

VXMQ. — XJRNRM XGUFIJQ

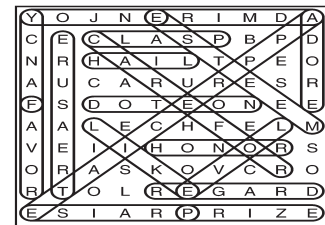
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Puzzle Answers

December 26, 2018

Puzzles4Kids

Answer



Riddle Answer:

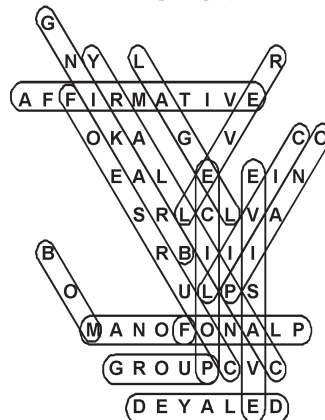
Because he is so cool.

Letter Box

Solution

A	G	O	F	I	P	T	N	E
E	F	T	O	N	A	G	I	P
P	N	I	E	G	T	O	A	F
N	T	G	I	E	F	P	O	A
O	P	E	N	A	G	I	F	T
F	I	A	P	T	O	E	G	N
G	O	F	A	P	E	N	T	I
T	E	N	G	F	I	A	P	O
I	A	P	T	O	N	F	E	G

— ACTION



FEAR & KNIGHT

answer



Even Exchange

answers

- Score, Scare
- Marlin, Martin
- Peach, Perch
- Laurel, Lauren
- Reveal, Repeal
- Bring, Brink
- Truck, Track
- Falter, Filter
- Ankle, Angle
- Dandy, Daddy

Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

3	4	8	7	9	2	1	6	5
7	6	9	4	5	1	8	2	3
1	2	5	3	8	6	9	7	4
9	1	3	5	4	7	6	8	2
2	7	4	1	6	8	5	3	9
8	5	6	2	3	9	4	1	7
4	3	1	8	7	5	2	9	6
5	9	2	6	1	3	7	4	8
6	8	7	9	2	4	3	5	1

King Crossword

Answer

Solution time: 25 mins.

S	U	D	S	B	L	T	S	P	A	M
A	T	O	P	E	E	R	H	A	L	E
P	A	R	A	N	O	I	A	A	R	M
S	H	A	D	O	W	S	P	L	A	S
E	M	U	H	I	L	L				
Z	I	P	E	L	F	P	O	L	L	S
A	D	A	M	F	E	W	W	E	E	P
P	O	R	E	S	Y	A	M	L	E	A
A	D	O	S	V	I	N				
W	A	D	D	L	E	R	U	P	T	S
E	V	I	L	P	A	R	A	K	E	E
R	O	S	E	I	L	E	R	N	E	
E	W	E	R	A	I	D	D	U	S	T

The Garden Bug



Flower offerings

According to cultural traditions that pre-date the Christian era, the goddess Iemanja has control over the waters of Brazil, and offerings must be made to her on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day. On the beach, some light candles and toss flowers toward the sea. Some choose a basket or a small float, put flowers and other items in it, and send their offering out on the tide. If the goods come back, the offering is not accepted, and one must try again.

Source: www.newyears-brazil.com

Birding BITS

BY Cindy Brook

Welcome to Backyard Birding! Want to identify that red bird that just flew across your yard? Backyard birding begins with birdseed. Try black oil sunflower, safflower or white proso millet either in a feeder or tossed on the ground. It won't be long before songbirds start flocking your yard. And you'll be hooked!

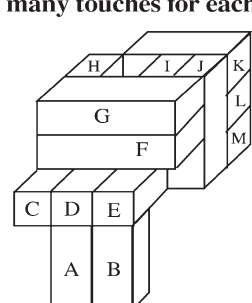
E-mail: birdingbits@cfl.rr.com

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Stickeler's Puzzle



In the figure below, how many times do the faces or sides of each block touch other blocks? To get you started, Block A has two touches on Blocks B and D. Block B has two touches on Blocks A and E. How many touches for each block?



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Stickeler's Answer on Page 11

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Bible Trivia Answers

Now available by Wilson Casey! 2017 Bible Trivia box calendar loaded with daily teasers.

ANSWER: (1) Established: Moving forward: (5) 7th; (6) Wisdom (2) Pass: (3) Leviticus: (4)