

## OCTOBER TEA BUDS

October is truly autumn. The flowering plants are largely at rest, the trees have lost most of their leaves, the air is filled with the aromas of fall, ripened fruits and harvested fields. A bud vase with 2-3 mums in yellow and white colors, or single mums at each place setting would add beauty and character to the party.

The tea table should reflect this beautiful season of rest before winter. The table cover could be harvest colors or it could reflect Halloween, depends on what time of the month you hold the tea party. If late in the month, Halloween décor would be wonderful. If early in the month, you might want to use colors of brown, orange, yellow, and green.

Inexpensive table covers in a variety of colors are available at the dollar store. Use contrast for interest; place an orange table cover diagonally atop a green. Be creative. Use paper plates and napkins of contrasting fall colors. (Or, use all black and orange; very dramatic !)

The “buds” of this month’s tea party are Chrysanthemums. Mums are a favorite fall flower and often bloom until freeze. The flower originated in China and now boasts over a thousand varieties ! Mums come in several colors;

red, white, purple, pink, yellow, and lavender and several bi-colors as well.

The Mum symbolizes different things in different parts of the world. In Asia Mums are a symbol of life and rebirth but in Europe Mums symbolize death and sympathy. In America Mums represent joy and honor and in Japan the Mum is the crest of the emperor.

## MENU

The tea for this party is certainly Pumpkin Spice. Serve it with sweetener available as most prefer a sweeter taste in pumpkin.

Prepare a platter with thin wedges of apple arranged in a circle around the edge. Make a batch of pumpkin fruit dip, (recipe below) place in a clear bowl or one of fall colors and provide a small serving spoon.

Purchase a small pumpkin bread from the market, slice thin and arrange the slices on a second platter. You may want to provide a small bowl of softened butter.

You could use the same menu for Halloween but it would be more fun to create special Halloween treats if the tea party is late in the month.

## PUMPKIN FRUIT DIP

1 can of pumpkin pie filling

1 cup cream cheese

1 ½ tsp. cinnamon

½ tsp. nutmeg

Mix these ingredients together until smooth

¾ cup sugar, added a little at a time until you reach desired sweetness. Serve immediately, left overs can be refrigerated.