

## May Tea Buds

It's spring time and Mother's Day, time for soft colors. Set the table with a white table cover, perhaps a white crocheted cloth over a dark pink plastic cover. A simple white cloth will look nice when accented with napkins and plates in shades of pink; pastel napkins, dark pink plates, etc.. Choose tea cups and saucers that have the most pink colors. The "buds" for this tea party are lilacs. They go especially well with pink and their fragrance is wonderful as well.

Crocheted items can be easily found at second hand stores. It is also possible that some of the ladies might have pieces of their own that they would like to share.

## TEA BUDS; CROCHET

It is believed that crochet developed in the sixteenth century, sometime in the mid 1500s. There is no evidence however on how old the art of crochet really is.

It is believed that crochet developed from ancient Chinese needlework. There were no needles, however, for the early artists. They used their fingers to tie the many small knots and make the designs. As the art form grew, needles were fashioned from animal bones, horns, wood, or wire.

The first participants of crochet were men. They used the patterns to make fish nets, bird traps, snares, and game bags. The uses were all practical. Then the art expanded to include personal decorations on clothing. The rich wore lace procured through trading but the poor emulated the rich by making their own style of "lace" which was called

"the poor man's imitation of the rich man's lace".

There were no patterns. Each individual made his or her own designs. Others would copy them. Later, pieces were made and then sewn into a cloth book of patterns that was handed down for generations. The earliest patterns did not appear until 1824 and these were for purses made of gold and silver thread.

There are 22 basic stitches but more intricate ones are being developed all the time. With 22 you can crochet most anything. Irish crochet was a life saver and pulled them through the potato famine 1845-1850. Men, women, and children all did crochet. They opened schools to teach crochet. Over 1 million died during the famine but still the Irish survived. They sold their crochet abroad and saved their money so they could immigrate to America. When they came, they brought their crochet and those American women who had been spinning and weaving were introduced to a new form of needlework.

The Crochet Guild of America was formed in 1994. There are over twelve chapters around the US and abroad. The guild provides learning opportunities, patterns, support services, buying information and more all related to the art of crochet.

The finest crochet hooks are made by a company called Furls. The hooks are handmade from the finest woods to fit the sewer's own hand. They can cost over \$100.00 each. Other fine sets (8 needles) can be purchased for \$85.00 or \$100.00. Of course we prefer to go to K-Mart and buy a crochet hook for \$1.19

## TEA BUDS; CROCHETED ITEMS & LILACS

Many of our ladies learned to crochet when they were young and have crocheted doilies, table covers, towels, baby clothes, etc.. Some continue to crochet after

entering long term care, others can no longer handle the needles. Sharing crocheted items is always enjoyable. If you do not have items of your own, keep your eyes open when visiting the second hand stores or ask fellow staffers if they have something to share.

In the photo pictured, I have used a plant stand as a clothes tree.

I was also able to display the lilacs by sitting the vase on a plate set on the plant stand. Together the clothing items and flowers made a very nice centerpiece easily viewed by all.

## MENU FOR MAY TEA BUDS:

It's spring and a cool garden variety sandwich is in order.

### **Radish Floral Tea Sandwich**

You will need:

- 4 Tablespoons of butter, soft
- 2 Tablespoons crumbled Feta cheese
- 1 Tablespoon chopped mint leaves
- 6 radishes
- Frozen bread slices

Combine butter, cheese and mint

Cut frozen bread into shapes using a 3" scalloped cookie cutter

Place in a ziplock bag to thaw

Trim radishes then thinly slice and cut the slices in half so you have a half circle.

Spread bread with the cheese mixture.

Place half radish slices so one tip of each is in the middle of the bread and the other tip is near the outer edge, forming a flower.

Serve sandwiches with hot Oolong or Chamomile tea.

(Chamomile Honey is an especially nice tea.)