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THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary to Mrs. Ford

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This year's White House Christmas decorations reflect Mrs. Ford's interest in American hand crafts. She has tried to emphasize decorations that can be made at home out of inexpensive materials and items around the house.

Decorations focus on a return to the crafts--centering around patchwork and quilts--and stressing the country's early Christmas customs.

The theme of crafted quilts and patchwork is carried out throughout the State Floor but is predominant in and around the Christmas tree in the Blue Room. Red quilted bows add color to various wreaths and greens, and Crazy Quilts are used in the Red Room and will be used in decorations during the Ford's Christmas parties. All fabrics are American-made.

A wreath of mixed greens appears in each window on the State Floor and in each of the windows of the Family Quarters on the north side of the White House (a total of 34 wreaths). The wreaths are 36" in diameter and are fashioned of noble and silver fir, incense cedar, and blue juniper. The firs come from Washington and Oregon.

#### The Blue Room

The Christmas tree, a 19 ½ foot concolor fir, is located in the center of the Blue Room. It is decorated with the following ornaments: patchwork balls made by senior citizens and Appalachian women; hand-made natural-wood baskets which contain nuts or gumdrops; hand-crafted wooden toys; patchwork bows, wreaths, and ribbon garland which cascades from the top of the tree. In addition, there are 600 tiny mirrors in oval and rectangular shapes which hang from the branches; dried statice (California heather) on the branches which creates a snow-like effect; and 50 spice sachets made from a combination of cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, allspice, and a touch of orange.

The patchwork Christmas balls. There are 550 patchwork balls in four shapes: round, pentagon, orange-peel, and Christmas lantern. They are made of two fabrics: a small-printed cotton in a variety of patchwork designs; and a water-stained moire.

The cotton patchwork balls were made by women in the Appalachian area of North Carolina who were commissioned by Blue Ridge Mountain Industries.

The moire balls were crafted by senior citizens across the country, coordinated through The Quilters Workshop in Bayside, New York. The moire was donated by Cohama Fabrics of New York. The Christmas lantern pattern of patchwork ball is a design originated for the White House this year by Mauve Greenbaum of Whitestone, New York, working through the Quilters Workshop.

The wooden toys. There are 50 handcrafted wooden toys on the tree donated by Bill Mueller Wooden Toys, Inc. of Telford, Pennsylvania.

They were selected to demonstrate hand crafts as well as an early American tradition in which toys were tied to boughs or hidden in the branches.

The toys are made from sugar pine and are assembled with glue and dowel construction (no nails, screws, metal, or plastics). Designs include turtles, mice, elephants, whales, trucks, cars, alligators, and irons. The toys are not made in a factory, but in the homes of individual craftsmen. The wheels on the trucks and train cars are made by the handicapped at the Kurtz Training Center in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania as occupational therapy.

The toys will be given to underprivileged children after Christmas.

The wooden baskets. There are 75 handmade wooden baskets. Some of the baskets are on loan from the Department of the Interior and were made by Cherokee Indians in North Carolina. Other baskets came from a retired Williamsburg craftswomen in Luray, Virginia. The baskets are filled with nuts or gumdrops, both of which were used decoratively in early Christmas celebrations. A total of six pounds of nuts and 20 pounds of gumdrops were used.

Encircling the tree is a 300-foot garland of printed cotton patchwork fabric lined with blue moire. It was put together by volunteer florists working on the decorations over the past week.

The 18 handmade patchwork wreaths on the tree were made by Mrs. Bea Starling of the Farm Womens Cooperative Market in Bethesda, Maryland. Six boxes of ribbon candy hang on the boughs.

Decorative lights have been limited to those on the Christmas tree. They are tiny white bee lights and consume about 1,000 watts of power (equivalent to 10 100-watt bulbs). They will be turned on during regular White House tours and for social events during the Christmas season.

Surrounding the tree is a braided rope of blue moire with large patchwork ribbons on each stanchion. Wreaths in the windows are suspended with blue moire ribbons, and bowls on console tables in the room contain juniper topped with patchwork ribbon.

#### The Green Room

The main centerpiece is an arrangement of sugared fruit. The fruit is real, but tasters will soon realize the "sugar" is not. Salt has been substituted in an economy-minded year.

Bowls contain holly arrangements, and ivy cascades loosely from the mantlepice.

### The State Dining Room

In the four corners of the room are 12-foot topiary poinsettia trees in antiqued wooden boxes. Noble fir acts as a cushion for the poinsettia plants. The poinsettia plants were grown in the White House greenhouse which is run by the National Park Service. Needlepoint ivy tops the antiqued wooden boxes. Red moire bows are attached to the base of the trees.

On the table, a loose arrangement of ivy and poinsettia plants echoes the arrangements on mantelpieces throughout the White House. Vermeil bowls on the consoles in the room are filled with Oregon holly.

The cornice around the Dining Room is garlanded with 250 feet of mixed greens. Vertical swags drop from the crown molding into the gold wall scones, which contain red candles. The gold chandelier is garlanded with mixed greens and contains 60 red candles.

### Red Room

Loose ivy arrangements cascade from the mantelpiece, and holly arrangements fill the bowls. Wreaths suspended with red moire swags fill the windows.

For information on quilt, see background sheet on quilts.

### East Room

Like the State Dining Room, the East Room contains four topiary poinsettia trees (one in each corner). Loose ivy and poinsettia arrangements top the mantelpieces, and a wreath of mixed green firs decorates the wall on either side of the entrance from the Grand Hall.

The focal point of the room is the 18th Century Italian Creche (see separate release) which is flanked by tall Virginia cedar trees and small juniper bushes.

### The Grand Hall and Foyer

The north entryway to the White House is filled with natural greens and red berries, with a touch of patchwork and quilts.

Four ficus trees with red berries and red moire bows line the Grand Foyer. Gold torchiers throughout the Grand Hall are encircled with a garland of noble fir topped with antique gold metallic foil angels lined with patchwork fabric. Console tables are topped with holly arrangements in vermeil bowls.

The niches to either side of the Blue Room are garlanded with noble fir and topped with 5-foot angels of antiqued gold metallic foil lined with patchwork fabric.

A combination of mixed greens and quilted red moire bows garland the bannister of the Grand Staircase, and a gold angel looks down from the top of the Staircase.

The entryway from the Grand Hall to both the State Dining Room and the East Room contains a sprig of mistletoe.