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Moraga Garden Club cherishes old traditions, creates new memories

Submitted by Linda U. Foley



Photo provided

The Moraga Garden Club annually decorates the local library with garlands, bows and wreaths in December. The star of the decoration effort, however, is a tree festooned with 'critter' ornaments, adding a hint of the mystery of the forest.

The tradition for critter ornaments was started by Moraga Garden Club member Jamie Bonetto in a workshop at her home about 30 years ago. Dried pine cones, leaves, twigs - with the imagination of the creator - were turned into miniature quirky animals and whimsical dolls.

The history of these ornaments can be attributed to the Brandywine River Museum in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, in 1972 to emphasize the museum's role in protecting the natural, cultural and historical resources of the region. All ornaments were made of completely natural components (i.e. dried flowers, acorns, Queen Anne's lace, pods and spices for eyes).

The Smithsonian Institute also created a critter tree. In 1984, Nancy Reagan invited volunteers to decorate a natural tree and because she loved red, lots of cockscomb and euonymus were used.

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