

christmas in the *country*

Craft-making, cookie-baking, and hall-decking—it's all happening at this Vermont farmhouse that holds eight grown-ups, seven grandkids, and one fun grandma.

An evergreen wreath studded with shiny ornaments and handmade pom-poms decorates the front door of Christie Summer's new-but-looks-old farmhouse. Daughter-in-law Emily hangs simple white lights on potted trees.



THE ATTACHED GARAGE IS DESIGNED AND PAINTED TO LOOK LIKE A CLASSIC OLD BARN.





COOKIE
ADVENT
CALENDAR
AND FRINGED
FELT TREES

Family togetherness is what it's all about for Christie Sumner. It even prompted her to replace the farmhouse where she lived for 40 years with an open-floor-plan, white-walled version—all the better for hosting her grown kids and their families for crafty afternoons and cookie-baking marathons. Large uncovered windows let in winter light and long views across snow-covered pastures and hills. “I’m always hoping for snow so we can have adventures,” she says. “We’re outdoor people.” Christie’s embrace of wild nature shines in her decor: local evergreen garlands, a few gingerbread bears and reindeer, and of course, those grandkids.



GET CRAFTY FELT TREES

Create a snowy forest, *above*, using foam cones, 2-inch-wide strips of felt, and sewing pins. Fringe the felt strips with 1½-inch-deep cuts, and wrap around the base of the cone; pin at the back. Work your way to the top, taking care to overlap the layers. Complete with a pom-pom topper.

Make these crafts

Find how-tos and recipes at BHG.com/VermontChristmas.



GINGERBREAD
COOKIES

BAKE SHOP

A pullout table on wheels extends the island work surface, *above*. Its lower height makes it easy for Clara to help make cookies for the Advent calendar, *top*. “I first saw the idea 25 years ago and took it from there,” Christie says. “Yikes, that’s a lot of calendars!”

GET CRAFTY COOKIE CALENDAR

Fill a large photo frame with black foam board then affix cutout cookies with a dollop of royal icing, *top*. It’s an edible work of art and, Christie says, “a lesson in sharing” for the grandkids.



FELT ICICLE ORNAMENTS



RUCHED FELT GARLAND

FAMILY PROJECT

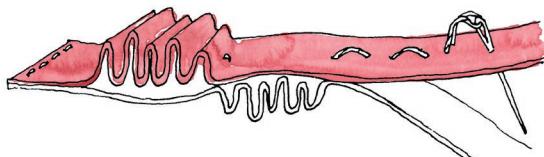
Grant, Lila, and Will make felt icicle ornaments with Christie's son Chad at the made-in-Vermont farm table, *above*. Paired with a bench and mod chairs, the low-profile combo works equally well for big family dinners as it does for spreading out craft projects.

GET CRAFTY FELT ICICLES

Using three colors of felt, cut triangles that are 10 inches long and a maximum of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch wide at top. Soak felt in a mix of 3 parts water to 1 part white glue; squeeze out excess. Stack three triangles. Tack widest part to a corkboard. Twist, then tack point to corkboard. Let dry; poke wire hanger through top.

MAKE A FELT GARLAND

WHAT YOU NEED 2-inch-wide red and white felt strips • Strong thread • Embroidery needle



- 1 Layer one red and one white felt strip. Sew ends together.
- 2 Take five $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-long running stitches down the center of the red layer only. Create ruching by pulling thread between each stitch.
- 3 Proceed with the next five stitches and ruching through the white layer only. **4** Repeat down length of strips. Sew ends together.
- 5 Create additional garlands, and sew together to desired length.

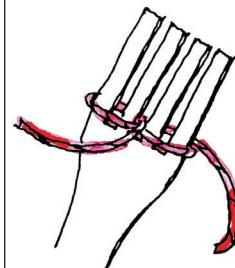
Get your craft on

Find tips and how-tos for the projects shown here at BHG.com/VermontChristmas.



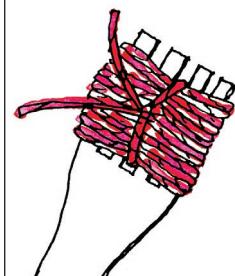
MAKE A POM-POM

WHAT YOU NEED
2-3 yards yarn • Large four-tine fork



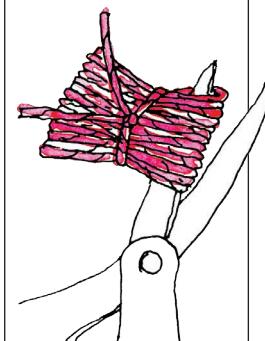
WRAP

Wrap yarn around tines in a figure eight, crossing through the center each pass.



CINCH

Repeat figure eights, making as many layers as your fork can hold. Cinch a piece of yarn tightly around the central intersection.



FINISH

Remove from fork, cut through loops on each end, and fluff into a ball. Trim any errant fuzzies.



HEART OF THE HOUSE

Framed by salvaged beams and a swag of greenery, the open living room, *left*, is a hub of activity. Son Travis lights a fire in the woodstove while his wife, Sarah, and daughter Piper put finishing touches on the tree. The train set circling the base of the tree is a family heirloom given to Christie by her brother.

ON THE WAY UP

Stockings made from old sweaters hang via cup hooks from the bottoms of the stair treads. Pom-poms cleverly conceal the hooks. Make your own small pom-poms with the fork method, *right*. For larger ones, you'll need a pom-pom maker, such as the Clover extra large, \$10; joann.com.



A DUTCH DOOR OPENS TO A BALCONY ABOVE THE LIVING ROOM.



BETTER TOGETHER

The deep window seat, above, provides plenty of snuggle space and a perch for story time. Below it, built-in cubbies with baskets corral clutter and extra firewood. Clockwise from Christie: Liv, Clara, Lila, Grant, Henry, Will, and Piper.

NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

The attic loft, left, has narrow built-in bunks with trundle beds, “so all the grandkids can sleep there—if they would actually go to sleep,” Christie says. ■