

Tips for Decorating your Tree

General

- ensure tree is stable in its base and standing perpendicular (particularly important for a 'live' tree)
- position tree in a well-lit spot and, if possible, with space around it
- to assist the water absorption of a live tree, cut 2cms from the end of the trunk before placing it in a tree stand which can hold water or wet sand (some suggest that the tree will last longer if a little sugar is added to the water)
- obviously, if the tree is in a corner or against a wall, it is not necessary to completely light or decorate the hidden part of the tree
- there are no hard and fast rules to decorating - allow your tree to let your own personality shine through
- try to make decorating the tree an all-the-family tradition
- to really get you in the Christmas spirit, play your favourite Christmas CD whilst decorating the tree
- take a photo of the decorated tree each year for some pleasant memories and also so that you can remember what looked great and envisage where improvements can be made (don't forget to also have a family photo around the tree)



Decorating

- decorating sequence
 - lights (and don't forget to check again!)
 - tree-top star, angel or finial (see ADDITIONAL NOTES 1 below)
 - garlands (see ADDITIONAL NOTES 2 below)
 - ribbons or bows
 - hanging ornaments (see ADDITIONAL NOTES 3 below)
 - add some foil shred
 - for a special finishing touch, add a tree skirt

- check and repair all lights before putting on the tree

Most of today's light sets work as series or loops of bulbs, especially the chasing or sequenced varieties. This means that, if one bulb is missing / broken / faulty, that loop or section may not work. If single globes are not lit, replace them as soon as possible so that the others are not put under additional stress. When a complete section of bulbs are not working, it is almost certain that this will be due to only one or two faulty globes. Although it may seem a tedious process, the best way to find the faulty globe/s in a series is to remove ALL non-glowing globes. If it is a chasing set, adjust the lights to be permanently on. Remove just one globe that **is** working and use this position as a test socket. Then insert the suspect globes one-by-one into the test socket until you've checked all globes and discovered the faulty one/s. Remember to remove the bulbs by pulling straight out of their sockets - do NOT twist them - and make sure that the wires are running down the sides of the plastic base properly so they will make contact with the socket connectors.

NOTE: a) Some micro-globe sets have the bulbs hard-wired and cannot easily be replaced

b) Light sets with LEDs (light-emitting diodes) should never need to have replacements fitted but, if one LED is removed for any reason or physically broken, it is important to re-insert it with the correct polarity (there is often a polarity indicator on the plastic base). Check by examining the direction of the LEDs in a working section.

- use plenty of lights

A rule of thumb is to use around 150 lights for every metre of tree.

This is very much a personal choice but we recommend that for a 2-metre tree, about 250-300 standard fairy lights are used. If using rice or micro lights, this number should be increased. A great effect can be achieved by using a combination of steady-burning and twinkling sets or standard-size fairy lightbulbs with micro or rice lights. Also a mixture of clear and coloured bulbs can be quite effective depending on the colour of the tree and decorating theme.

Try to position the globes so that they are pointing upwards and outwards at an angle of about 45 degrees. As much as possible, zigzag the lights in and out of the branches rather than just going around the branch tips as lights within the tree will give it much more depth. If you want the wires to be better concealed - and possess the patience - wind the light string around branches starting from the trunk.

NOTE: a) **Only if the lights are low-voltage** (outdoor type with transformer), have the lights on as you work so that you can see any dead spots and adjust accordingly.

b) If the lights are mains-voltage powered (that is, indoor only, with NO transformer), any globes with broken glass will have lethal voltage (240V) on the exposed wires. It is **extremely dangerous** to handle the light string while turned on - just check them every now and then.

- themes and colour schemes

A design theme could be anything from a colour palette or a unique ribbon to a favourite hobby or silk flowers, such as holiday poinsettias, magnolia blossoms or hydrangeas. Fresh roses, cut down to 3 inches and inserted into water tubes look absolutely stunning on a Christmas tree. Water tubes are available at your florist supply or local craft store.

Always hang the predominant colour first. Then fill spaces with decorations in the accent colour.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

1. Although it may feel that it's breaking tradition by putting your treetop decoration on before other decorations, it really does make sense because it means there is less risk of bumping or breaking your other ornaments while trying to reach the top of the tree. A magnificent tree can be spoiled by a treetop that is not vertical. It will help to stabilise the treetop decoration if you double over the top stem on which you are placing it. Or, if necessary, use a piece of straightened coat-hanger wire cable-tied to the tree trunk.

2. There is really no right or wrong way to put garland on your tree, it just depends on personal preference. You will need approximately 3 metres of garland per 300cm of tree height. To begin with, garlands (such as strings of tinsel or beads) should be placed at roughly 300mm intervals starting from the bottom of tree. Adjust and space from this.

Here are a few alternatives to just wrapping your garland around the tree:

- swag your garland on alternating branches for a more traditional style
- double-up or triple-up the garland using different colours
- cut the garland into long pieces (using the height of your tree as a guide) and then anchor the pieces to the top of your tree and run them down the sides

3. Before you put any ornaments on the tree, sort them by size, colour and type. A mixture of different sized ornaments is great, but smaller ornaments are better within the top half of the tree (medium-sized ornaments can be used over the entire tree). When hanging ornaments, start by placing the bigger ones throughout the tree, and then use smaller ones to fill up any remaining holes. Trim items, like ribbon and candy canes, can also help to fill out your tree. Don't be afraid to use one or two extra-large ornaments at about eye level to make a bold statement or emphasise a theme.

4. Some green foliage needs to show through, so avoid over-decorating!

Some further Guidelines

Tree Height (feet/cm)	Miniature Lights (Number of Bulbs)	Garland Length (m)	Ornaments (pieces)
2' (60cm)	35 to 70	1.5-3	25-30
3' (90cm)	70 to 100	2-4	30-40
4' (120cm)	100 to 200	3-6	40-50
5' (150cm)	150 to 250	6-8	50-60
6' (180cm)	200 to 300	5-10	60-80
7' (210cm)	400 to 500	10-15	80-100
8' (240cm)	600 to 800	15 - 20	150-200

Enjoy your beautiful tree !