



Festive Tree Trimming Tips

Nothing brings the Christmas spirit into your home like putting up the tree. Every year's tree is special. Many family traditions center around the Christmas tree and its trimming. Some traditions originated generations ago in foreign countries and others are peculiar to a region or a family today.

You can create your own tree trimming traditions by weaving in some of our suggestions. A look at store windows and displays, friends' homes, bazaars and the numerous holiday issues of magazines should arm you with enough ideas to last many Christmases.

Preparations for a truly sensational



tree should begin early and deciding on a theme can be done from an easy chair. A recent holiday edition of a popular magazine could have been titled 101 ways to trim a tree. For example, you can recreate an historical period such as Early America or Victorian England with beautiful tree decorations. A white-flocked tree covered with fabric flowers, leaves, doves and lace-trimmed fans is breathtakingly Victorian when done in pastels. Create a tree similar to one of the first English Christmas trees

by hanging tiny sweets wrapped in velvet and brocade and shiny silver baskets of fruit and candies. Prince Albert gave one to his Queen, Victoria, in 1841.

Draw upon your national heritage to trim your tree. Delightful wooden ornaments painted in bright colors, straw crafts depicting religious symbols, toys and animals and garlands of mini-Swedish flags make a statement about one family's origins. Larger straw and wooden figures are used to decorate the base of the tree.

Scotch plaids are natural for tree trimming with all of those luscious reds and greens. Picture a tree decorated in ornaments of one plaid. Here's how: gather plaid fabric with a metallic thread in the weave around same size styrofoam balls. Wind around gold stretch gift cord and attach bells to the ends of the cord. Top with a gold foil star.

Go back to Germany for Christmas tree origins. Homemade paper cornucopia are filled with candy, fruit or nuts to hang from the tree. Nuts are wrapped in foil, gilded, dipped in flour or painted as tree trimmings. Chains of dried apples add the finishing touch to an old-fashioned German tree.

Charming calico prints create a country Christmas. Ornaments in the shape of animals in red and green calico hang from the tree. Striped and solid colored balls hang among the animals. A double ruffle calico tree skirt completes the country look.

Display a straw "dollie" collection on the tree. Traditional symbols of the harvest celebration are fashioned out of the last sheaf of straw taken from the field. Animals, birds, angels, stars, wreaths, fans and pitchers adorn a Christmas tree tied with red gingham bows as filler.

Recreate the old German custom of a miniature manger scene and village under the tree. These creations became quite detailed as new pieces were added each year. Another under-the-tree scene we've seen uses child-sized tables and chairs with teddy bears or large Raggedy Ann and Andy dolls seated for a tea party.

A favorite Christmas fantasy, the Nutcracker Suite, can come to life on your tree with ornament-sized character dolls.

Use your favorite color to fashion striking tree trimmings. For example, peppermint striped balls, red gingham balls, red cherries and long lacy white bows are very festive. Different shades of blue ornaments trimmed with blue fleurs-de-lis is sophisticated. Another variation on the color theme is to decorate with only one subject of orna-

ments. Angels of all sizes and styles are in keeping with the season. Stockings are playful for a home with children. Let your taste and imagination be your guide.

Food was used to decorate the early German Christmas trees. Today you'll find trees trimmed with painted "cookies" cut in whimsical shapes made from a long lasting hardened dough. Even the cookie cutters can be tied to the tree. The Easter egg now becomes the Christmas egg ornament dyed in red or green and decorated with stars and snowflakes. Tie on tawny plaid bows to fill.

We've mentioned fillers several times. These ornaments or bows go between the bare spots of your other decorations. Whether you use gold balls, crocheted snowflakes or stained glass ornaments, these fillers give your tree a unified look no matter what your theme.

After selecting a decorating theme, you should go through your existing ornaments to see what will or will not work. Decide what you'll need to make or buy. Make designing ornaments a family affair. There are all levels of patterns to fit your family's abilities and interest. There are designs for those who save anything from tin cans to paper clips. Those who crochet or sew can do beautiful things for the holidays. Kits cater to all degrees of ability. Or use things from Nature to glue and spray paint.

Supply lots of Christmas cookies and candy and make a party out of tree trimming. Maybe you'll want to follow the old custom one Christmas. Originally Santa Claus, or St. Nick, brought and decorated the tree on Christmas Eve. The children looked forward to January 6 when a party was held to take down the tree and eat the decorations.

How you decorate a tree is a fun way to express yourself. However, one of the nicest things about the Christmas tree is that it looks good no matter how it's decorated!



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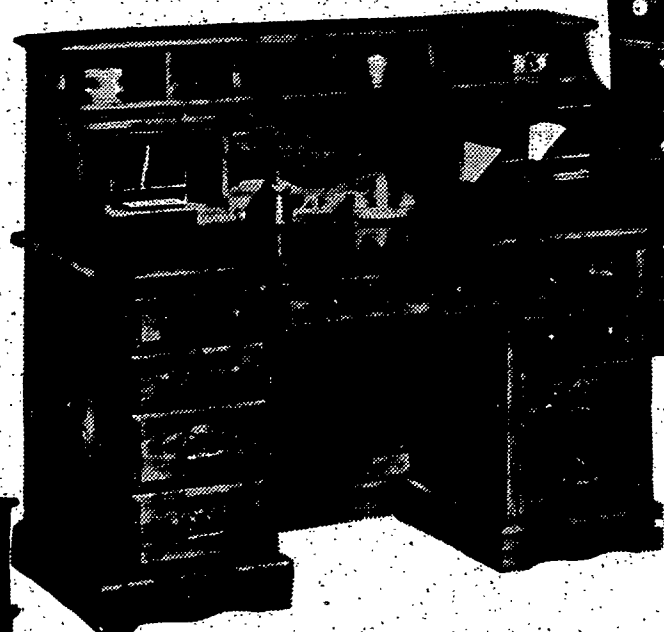
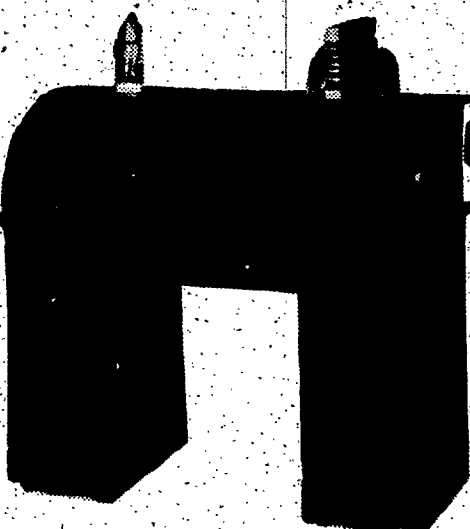
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