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home: Holiday décor: Less is MORE

Silandara Bartlett

You're old enough to know it's the spirit of Santa Claus that comes alive during the holidays, not the man himself. But mysteries of the season still remain, like what's going to be the next big thing in lights and decorations — and why.

By now, nearly everyone has a fiber-optic tree for their tabletop and icicle and swag lights to hang around their roof edge. But do you have penguin decorations? Or moose? That's the decorating dynamo for 2004.

"Why that is we'll never know," says Nancy Gee, events coordinator at Michaels Stores, Inc., 300 Hylan Drive in Henrietta.

There may be no rhyme or reason behind popular holiday décor, but that doesn't mean anything and everything you put up will look good. Gee offers these hints for creating a holiday look that works.

1 Pick a theme

When it comes to decorating the home, picking a theme to carry throughout all the rooms is the way to go, Gee says.

If penguins aren't your style, try the classics. Icicles, candy canes and the Victorian style remain popular both inside and outside the home at holiday time.

2 Coordinate colors

Your theme can extend to colors, too — right down to the wrapping paper for the gifts under the tree.

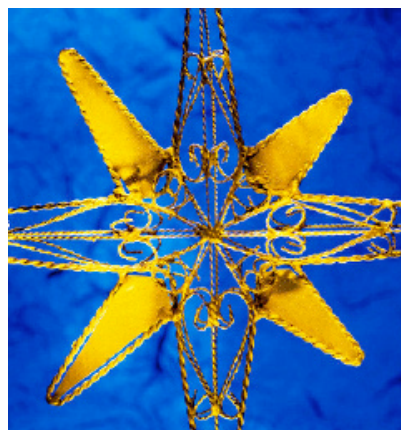
What are popular colors this year?

"Green and red will never go away, but more and more I see people adding blues and purples, gold and silver," Gee says. "People that are really into feng shui know that you put gold and silver together" to create balance.

3 Tips for small spaces

For a small apartment or townhouse, Gee recommends a grouping of tall, narrow trees.

"They tend to be narrower, so they don't spread out into the room and still have that



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Christmas-tree feel," she says. They also hold a good number of ornaments.

No tree? Decorate your houseplants with lights and ribbons.

In the windows, try a single electric candle in each pane or a trio of candles in one window.

For apartments with a balcony, Gee suggests wrapping the railings with garland (real or fake), hanging a wreath from the middle and, if you have an external electrical outlet, draping outdoor holiday lights around the garland for added effect.

4

Tie it all together

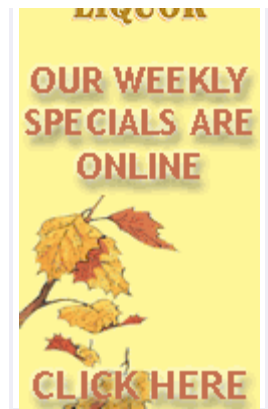
To complete the look, tie adjoining rooms together. Make bows from wired ribbon in your chosen color scheme for the backs of your dining room chairs and a centerpiece for the table.

And get small table-topper trees for each room, "just to keep the merriment going through the house," Gee says.

Whatever you do, don't just string up everything you have. Says Gee, "Less is more — appealing."



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Where to find...

- Tall, narrow trees

Tall, narrow alpine trees, set of three, \$19.99 to \$34.99 at Michaels stores Slim tree, seven-foot, \$89.99 at Christmas Traditions, Eastview Mall, Victor

- A candle in the window

Indoor window candle lamp, pack of two, \$3.99 at Michaels stores

- The Victorian look

Wide ribbon, 2½ inches by 100 feet, \$9.99 at Target stores Wired ribbon, 2 inches by 5 yards, \$3.99 at Target stores Miniature pink glass tree ornaments, box of 20, \$6.99 at Christmas Traditions, Eastview Mall, Victor

- Candy canes

Candy cane rope lighting, 18 feet, \$9.99 at Target stores Indoor candy canes, large \$19.99, medium \$9.99, at Christmas Traditions, Eastview Mall, Victor Indoor/outdoor lighted grapevine candy canes, set of four, \$29.99 at Michaels stores

- Penguins

Penguin tree ornaments, \$7.99 each at Christmas Traditions, Eastview Mall, Victor Penguin stocking holder (also comes in moose), \$9.99 at Target

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