



# The EVERYTHING Guide to TRIMMING Your Tree

If there was ever a year to put a tree in every room, this is it! Here, three fresh takes on branching out, each with a different sensibility and palette. Whether you're a red-and-green traditionalist, have a soft spot for Shiny Brite ornaments, or tend to flock to pastels, you'll find a Tannenbaum to suit your tastes in this tip-to-trunk tutorial.

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# for the NOSTALGIST

This cheerful design lets candy-colored ornaments shine and turns vintage prize ribbons into a winning garland. Tinsel and velvet round out the #tbt (throwback tree) style, best executed while dancing to holiday albums on vinyl.

## a tinsel tale

Lore has it that tree tinsel stems from an Eastern European folktale. Long ago, a pine cone became rooted in the earth of a family's hut and grew into a tree. They couldn't afford to decorate it, but woke up on Christmas morning to find the tree covered in spiderwebs, which sparkled in the morning light. From then on, the family was blessed with good fortune. Spiderwebs became a lucky symbol, and tinsel was created to evoke a web-like sparkle.



## Make It Merry

Create your own tinsel balls by wrapping a 7-inch piece of garland around three fingers. Connect the ends with floral wire, then fluff. Hang with ornament hooks.

"Twinkly" lights can be color-customized and synced to music via an app. \$169; [balsamhill.com](http://balsamhill.com)



## RETRO REQUISITES

First created in the late 1930s, **Shiny Brite ornaments** are essential for a midcentury-mod look, whether new (\$25 for 20; [westelm.com](http://westelm.com)) or vintage. A gold **velvet star tree topper** (\$15; [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)) and a red **pom-pom tree skirt** (\$30; [target.com](http://target.com)) provide joyful pops of color to the top and bottom, while Old World Christmas's **ribbon candy ornaments** (\$15; [wayfair.com](http://wayfair.com)) add sweet touches throughout.



## Fir Facts

Firs tend to have more space between branches—ideal for showing off ornaments—and needles that are soft, flat, and fragrant. Douglas, balsam, and Frasers are the most popular U.S. species.

**GET THE LOOK:**  
"European Fir"; [balsamhill.com](http://balsamhill.com)

## stylist secret

Create a striking garland by stringing together prize ribbons or other colorful collections (try pennants, scouting badges, or vintage travel tags) with floral wire. Choose a wide tree, so the garland has space to stretch across.

## for rockin' around the tree...



**PLAY:** Swingin' holiday tunes from Brenda Lee's "Merry Christmas"

**SIP:** Punch or spiked eggnog. "Night Before Christmas" glass, \$17; [catstudio.com](http://catstudio.com)



**WEAR:** A festive sweatshirt. "Tinsel in a Tangle," \$35; [shop.countryliving.com](http://shop.countryliving.com)



ILLUSTRATION BY MELINDA JOSIE; TINSEL BALLS AND TWINKLY LIGHTS, BRIAN WOODCOCK



Hang vintage album covers with removable hooks for holiday art.





Continue the look on your mantel by wiring red and gold glass balls into your greenery. Hang your stockings just below (\$12; [bedbathandbeyond.com](http://bedbathandbeyond.com)).

ILLUSTRATION BY MELINDA JOSIE; GINGERBREAD GARLAND AND CLIP-ON CANDLE LIGHTS, BRIAN WOOD COCK.

## for the TRADITIONALIST

Never one to stray from a red-and-green scheme, you prefer a tree rooted in rituals, whether it's an annual trip to the tree farm or a handcrafted gingerbread garland. Ornaments strike a familiar note, courtesy of their shape (candy canes) or material (felt).



### Spruce It Up

Stately spruces have sharp needles and stiff branches that bear ornaments well. The Colorado blue spruce is particularly popular for its silvery blue hue, symmetrical form, and needle retention.

#### GET THE LOOK:

"Colorado Mountain Spruce"; [balsamhill.com](http://balsamhill.com)

### stylist secret

When embellishing your tree with garland, begin at the top, draping loosely on branches at a slight angle, working toward the bottom. Add your ornaments beginning with the largest, then use smaller ones to fill in empty spaces.



### TIMELESS TRIMMINGS

Focus on handcrafted ornaments like **quilled paper snowflakes** (\$16 for 3; [quillingcanada.etsy.com](http://quillingcanada.etsy.com)), **felt trees** (\$17; [silkroadbazaarshop.etsy.com](http://silkroadbazaarshop.etsy.com)), and **jute candy canes** (\$7 for 6; [factorydirectcraft.com](http://factorydirectcraft.com)). A **straw tree topper** (\$12; [ingebretsens.com](http://ingebretsens.com)) adds subtle texture up top, while this **quilt-patterned tree skirt** (Country Living Home collection "Angelina," \$50; [overstock.com](http://overstock.com)) provides a homespun-feeling base.

### test your tree

If you're choosing a precut tree from a farm or lot, the National Christmas Tree Association suggests a quick test before you buy: Gently run a branch through your closed hand to be sure needles don't come off easily. Check that branches are flexible enough to bend—if they break, the tree is already too dry. To help absorb water, cut an extra half-inch off the trunk's bottom before placing it in a stand.



### Bake a Garland

Cut gingerbread salt dough into stars with cookie cutters; punch holes in the centers. Bake, trim edges, add icing, and string with twine.

### for festive hang time with family...



**PLAY:** Nat King Cole's iconic "The Christmas Song"

**SIP:** Hot chocolate. "Tree Camper" mug, \$13; [shop.ensco.com/collections/country-living](http://shop.ensco.com/collections/country-living)



**WEAR:** Plaid flannel PJs. \$70; [lbean.com](http://lbean.com)



Layer clip-on candle lights (\$63 for 10; [hillcrestcollections.com](http://hillcrestcollections.com)) over white string lights for extra sparkle.





# For the GRANDMILLENNIAL

This design aesthetic—think granny chic meets modern prep—celebrates feminine design details (bows, beading, pastels, velvet) and estate sale-esque heirlooms like mercury glass, ginger jars, and needlepoints.

## tree trivia

You can thank Queen Victoria and Prince Albert for the tree tradition as we know it. In 1848, the pair was at the height of their popularity when a sketch of their family decorating a tree ran in the *Illustrated London News*. Soon, everyone wanted one, even in the U.S., where trees were first sold in 1851. President Calvin Coolidge began the White House's National Christmas Tree Lighting tradition in 1923 with a 48-foot Balsam fir from Vermont.



## Easy Upgrade

Gussy up plain glass balls by swapping wire hooks with loops of pretty velvet or double-sided satin ribbon. Keep the knot ends long for extra flourish.

These twinkling LED lights are housed in silver mercury glass. \$30; [batteryoperatedcandles.net](http://batteryoperatedcandles.net)



## CHIC AND CHEERFUL BAUBLES

While you'd happily source your decorations from your grandparents' attic, **mini ginger jars** (\$23 for 4; [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)), **needlepoint ornaments** (from \$50; [lycettedesigns.com](http://lycettedesigns.com)), and **antique mirror glass stars** (\$14 each; [parkhillcollection.com](http://parkhillcollection.com)) act as instant heirlooms. **Glass-bead garlands** (\$40; [christmastraditions.com](http://christmastraditions.com)), **beaded balls**, and a **velvet tree skirt** ([areohome.com](http://areohome.com)) round out the luxe look.



## Flock This Way

For the most natural look, sprinkle bonding flock (Peak Seasons Sno-Bond flock, from \$27; [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)) through a sifter onto damp branches. Begin at the top of the tree and work your way down.

**GET THE LOOK:**  
"Frosted Yukon Spruce"; [balsamhill.com](http://balsamhill.com)

## stylist secret

For a prim and proper topper, make a velvet bow from two-inch ribbon. Tie it just as you would shoelaces to evoke an effortlessly chic French-girl vibe. Let the ends flow a third of the way down the tree, and trim at an angle.

## for brunching and bedazzling...



**PLAY:** The Berliner Philharmoniker's performance of "The Nutcracker"

**SIP:** Mimosas and bellinis. "Eve" coupe, \$8; [cb2.com](http://cb2.com)



**WEAR:** A pretty, flouncy pink sweater. \$30; [hm.com](http://hm.com)



ILLUSTRATION BY MELINDA JOSIE; GLASS BALLS AND LED LIGHTS; BRIAN WOODCOCK.



Tuck a chair and pretty garden stool ([wayfair.com](http://wayfair.com) for similar) near the tree to easily hand out gifts on Christmas Day.