

Christmas

Shopping Guide 2012



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Ways to make your home festive this season

Though one of the best parts of winter is getting out of the cool, crisp air and into the cozy, comfort of your home, trendsetting crafters are bringing the beauty of nature inside their houses when decorating for the holidays this year.

"This holiday season, the outdoors are in," says Nicole Long, Manager of Inspiration for Jo-Ann Fabric and Craft Stores. "Pine cones, evergreen, moss and grapevine can give your traditional décor a rustic, natural look." If you're having trouble getting inspired, here are some ideas from the experts at Jo-Ann:

- Dress up the entrance of your home with an especially festive look. Wire a small twig wreath to a larger grapevine wreath and then decorate with dazzling embellishments, stems and greenery.

- Give your mantel a cozy makeover by hanging knitted stockings, embellished with berries and leaves. Then fill them with gifts galore!

- Deck the halls with pictures of loved ones and celebrations past. Turn a traditional

pine garland of berries and pine cones into a personal keepsake of fond memories by adding handcrafted wire frames of your favorite family photos.

- Paint pine cones red, gold, burgundy and green. Don't be afraid to add a little glitz with a coat of clear glitter on each one. Showcase them in a simple glass container for a beautiful centerpiece or side table decoration.

- Fashion a hanging basket out of grapevine wreath. Place battery-operated lights within the basket and fill with ornaments.

- For a delicious holiday goodie bag, dip peppermint sticks in melted chocolate and decorate with sprinkles or chopped nuts. Place them in treat bags with ribbon then give to family and friends throughout the season.

- Print Victorian-era designs onto paper, then decoupage onto wood shapes. Glitter the edges and tie on a shiny ribbon to create a lovely, vintage-inspired ornament.

By bringing a bit of nature into your



home this season, you can evoke its spirit all throughout the house. (StatePoint)



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**Parker's Maple Barn Restaurant closing for the season on
12/23/2012 at 4PM. We will re-open 02/06/2013. Gift Shop will
close on 12/24/2012 at 2PM. Also closed Thanksgiving Day!**

Nick-of-time tips to make your home holiday ready

The home improvement experts at Lowe's recommend updating five key spaces:

■ 1. Entryways

Start by making a great first impression and setting the mood by enhancing the entryway and improving curb appeal.

By adding a new doormat and painting the front door an inviting, rich jewel tone, you'll be sure to make a statement year-round about the personalities inside your home. Next, step inside and consider lighting upgrades. The foyer is the perfect spot to add a dramatic pendant light or chandelier to welcome guests with a warm glow.

Add some festive holiday decor by layering a centerpiece of paperwhites - a fragrant, fast-growing seasonal flower -- paired with pinecones on a foyer table to create a look that combines two popular seasonal stand-bys.

■ 2. Kitchens

The kitchen is the hub of the home, especially during the holidays. Giving this room a refresh can be quick and easy, regardless of budget. Painting is one of the simplest, most cost-effective ways to completely change the look of a space. Experiment with rich, food-



and spice-inspired hues that will provide an appealing backdrop for holiday decor and remain relevant when the seasons change.

■ 3. Guest bath/powder room

After the kitchen, the guest bath or powder room will likely see the most holiday traffic. These rooms will benefit from a simple de-cluttering.

■ 4. Guest bedroom

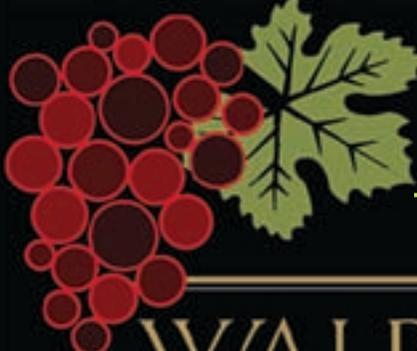
Get guest bedrooms ready for visitors



by clearing out closet space, adding freshly laundered blankets and providing plenty of pillows. Keep in mind the importance of a variety of lighting options in this room. Simple decor projects like new area rugs and window treatments can have a big impact on the room.

■ 5. Living room

Changing accent pillows, throws and window treatments to seasonal patterns and colors are a great way to start. A decorated mantel is also a classic holiday decor touch. For a fast and easy festive look, place loose evergreen branches along the mantel and intersperse with brightly colored Christmas ornaments. (BPT)



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Fire safety tips for your Christmas tree



Don't let Christmas ever heat up too much – with fire that is. Did you know that Christmas trees alone result in 13 million dollars, annually, in property damage? More importantly, these fires present real risk towards family and friends. When showcasing a live tree in your home, the combination of tree dryness, electrical malfunction with lights and poorly located heating sources can make for a deadly combination. But if your holiday is just not complete without a live tree, follow these safety precautions to keep threats at bay:

Fresh trees are less likely to catch fire, so look for a tree with vibrant green needles that are hard to pluck and don't break easily from its branches. The tree shouldn't be shedding its needles readily. Always place your tree away from heat sources like fireplaces, radiators, candles, heat vents or lights and keep the tree base filled with water to avoid a dry out

Make sure all your indoor and outdoor Christmas lights have been tested in a lab by the UL or ETL/ITSNA for safety and throw out any damaged lights.



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Any lights you use outdoors must be labeled suitable for exterior placement and be sure to plug into a ground-fault circuit interrupter protected receptacle. Keep all your holiday candles away from your Christmas tree, surrounding furniture and décor. Bedtime means lights off don't forget to turn your Christmas tree light switch each night

When your tree begins to drop its needles, it's time to say goodbye to your evergreen foliage until next year. So this year, follow our guidelines to avoid being another statistic in the National Fire Protection Association or United States Fire Administration report during the upcoming holiday season.

Top tips for Christmas tree decorating

Now that you've found your perfect tree that will showcase all of your lovely Christmas decorations, it's time to get decorating! So where to begin?

First, determine the overall look you're trying to achieve. If it is simplicity you're going after, stick to one or two colors and start with stringing your lights. Add on decorations and ornaments slowly and as you see fit. If your style is more dramatic and colorful, outline your

plan of attack first, lay out all of your decorations and go one step at a time.

Generally, follow this order to get the best overall look out of a Christmas tree. First, start with the lights. Go from the base of the tree and wrap the lights all the way to the top. Use one or many colored strands this is entirely your preference. It's best to use about 100 lights for every vertical foot of tree.

Next, it's time to layer on your tree garlands. Again, there are no rules on keeping all the garlands the same; uniformity is not the name of the game here. This time, start stringing from the top down, and make sure to space the garlands out evenly and hang loosely on your tree. From ribbons to beads to tinsel, use about 2 strands of garland per foot of tree length.

Now it's time for the best part: the ornaments! Start with hanging your most important ones, then go on to the largest ones and then finally fill in the gaps with small and medium size "fillers" such as icicles or shiny balls. Create depth in your tree décor by hanging your ornaments both on the branch tips and closer to the trunk. Most importantly, have fun with the process. There is no right or wrong in tree decorating and you can always move things around to your liking. So gather the family, spin those CD's, sip that mulled cider and get decorating!

CREDIT AMERICAN CHRISTMAS TREE ASSOCIATION



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www.therocks.org

At The Rocks Estate, it always feels like the holidays!

BETHLEHEM, N.H. - The Rocks Estate, with its neat rows of Christmas trees and spectacular views of the White Mountains, gets visitors into the holiday spirit like no place else. This year The Rocks has added a few new twists to its tried and true holiday favorites.

For decades The Rocks has offered fragrant farm fresh Christmas trees and beautiful handcrafted wreaths. The Christmas tree farm, owned by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, also strives to keep things fresh by introducing new holiday ideas each season.

"Each year we try to bring something new to Christmas, while holding onto the traditions that people expect when they come to experience the season at the farm," said longtime Rocks Estate manger Nigel Manley. Over the years, Manley and his staff have added new features to create an atmosphere of fun and festivity around choosing a Christmas tree. Visitors to the Christmas tree farm are invited to enjoy a horse-drawn wagon ride through the picturesque estate and visit with The Rocks' own "Green Santa," who presents each child with a fir tree seedling.

The more adventuresome visitors may try a dogsled ride courtesy of the dogs from Muddy Paw Kennel in Jefferson. Those looking for the perfect gift or a one-of-a-kind ornament will find plenty of options at the new Rocks Estate Market Place, introduced last winter and featuring unique offerings from dozens of New Hampshire artisans.

New this year, The Rocks has added Canaan Firs to its traditional Fraser Fir and Balsam Fir Christmas

trees. Guests may cut their own tree from the extensive fields around the estate, or choose a fresh-cut tree in the lot. Families visiting The Rocks this holiday season will also find a large birch deer – made of birch logs and nature's other offerings – which makes a perfect perch for children for a family photo.

Among the beautiful holiday wreaths, handcrafted right at The Rocks, are a Chris Moose wreath decorated with cones, canella berries, statice flowers and a whimsical stuffed moose. The Christmas Star wreath is adorned with pepper berries and statice. A limited Trees For Troops wreath features a stuffed bear in military fatigues and dog tags, with proceeds benefitting the Trees For Troops program, which delivers thousands of trees each Christmas to military service members and their families.

The Rocks Estate opens for the Christmas tree season Nov. 17 and will remain open every day from 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m. through Christmas Eve. Wagon rides and dog sled tours are offered Nov. 17, 23, 24, 25, Dec. 1, 2, 8, 9, 15. Reservations are recommended for both. The Rocks' Green Santa will be at the farm each Saturday, joined most days by a family of beautiful and friendly Bernese Mountain dogs.

Owned by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, the landmark 1,400-acre Rocks Estate includes numerous buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, extensive walking paths, and 45 acres planted with Christmas trees. For more information and a full schedule of events, please visit www.therocks.org.