



Christmas decorations to make you glow

Do decorations in style this Christmas. Get together with friends and family to add sparkle and cheer to your home

- Parcelling up gifts should be fun... so why does it often feel like a big, fat chore? Get together with a friend or two to make it more festive. Collect several tape dispensers and pairs of scissors, and club together for sticky tape, plain gold or brown paper. Then bring a selection of decorative bits and pieces to personalise your parcels. Put some carols on, warm some mulled wine, and get chatting and wrapping.
- Don't get in a tangle with your tree lights. Use two strings – one shorter than the other. Wind the shorter length around the trunk of the tree, working from the top, ending up with the plug at the base near the socket. Start the longer length at the top of the tree, winding lights around the tips of the branches – using green garden wire to if you need to secure lights that won't stay in place. Et voilà: a twinkling tree.
- Give kids a Christmassy job while you faff around getting the tree straight and stringing lights up. They could stud small oranges with cloves to make pomanders, thread gold-painted star anise (available in the supermarket spice aisle) onto lengths of cotton or make traditional paper chains to match your Christmas colour scheme.
- Let your children decorate the tree, without turning it into a style disaster. The secret is to give them a box of pre-edited decorations to choose from – stick to a basic two-tone colour scheme. Their mish-mash of baubles and homemade decorations will still look great if they are all in just two colours.
- The night before Christmas let the kids hang foil-wrapped chocolates on the tree.
- Want to brighten up your windows? Suspend outsized baubles on different lengths of ribbon from the ceiling in front of the window.
- Display your Christmas cards in plain picture frames of varying sizes. Wrap several lengths of coloured ribbon round each, to create a woven effect. Tuck cards between ribbons. The effect is neat and colourful
- Older children could help you make a home-made tree. Spray branches with fake snow, then tie on red-and-white gingham ribbon in bows, and hang with homemade gingerbread hearts and stars, decorated with icing. String up with white lights for sparkle. Magic.
- Decorate your table with something a little different... paint old placemats (the kind made of hard board) with blackboard paint. You can write guests' names at their places, and provide colour-

ful chinks so they can doodle while you get dinner ready. Or get the family baking edible napkin rings. Use a ready-made bread mix, follow the packet instructions. When it's ready to bake, roll the mixture into 25cm long cylinders, 2-3cm thick, and form each into a loop, pinching the ends together. Bake until golden and crusty. Yum.