



No tannenbaum? Here's the solution

Small homes, condos can look festive without fir, say the experts

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SPECIAL TO THE STAR

If your cozy condo or small home is too cramped for a Christmas tree, there's no need to despair. With a touch of creativity you can capture the festive season in a number of innovative ways. You may not even notice that the tree is missing.

Three experts were consulted for holiday decorating tips: interior decorator Sandra Gayle, owner of Pillow Talk, and interior designers Tracy Kundell of Avalon Interiors and Lynelle Madison from Design In Vision. All are known to viewers of the W Network design show, *The Decorating Challenge*, currently in reruns.

- To save on floor space, Tracy Kundell suggests hanging three identical wreaths vertically on a wall or bare window.
- Add holiday colour and texture with a tiered grouping of poinsettias and votive candles on a table, she suggests.
- Fashion a forest scene with assorted tabletop trees in one colour with different finishes. Light some inside for impact. They can be used as a centrepiece or in an entranceway in front of a mirror, says Kundell.
- Sandra Gayle creates the illusion of a tree shape by weaving strands of mini lights suspended from the ceiling by a C hook. Choose a corner location or in front of a window,

she says. The more lights, the better.

"Gather the strands of lights from one point at the ceiling; this will create the treetop. Then pull each strand outward tightly to the floor — creating a two-dimensional look. Secure the strands with decoratively covered patio stones on the floor," she says.

You can either flare the lights out to the floor for a tree shape in a semi-circle; or if space is at a premium, place the lights straight across at the base, parallel to a wall or window.

Complete the look with your favourite tree topper or dress it with cherished ornaments.

- Lynelle Madison thinks the perfect spot to place presents when there is no tree is under a silver and glass pedestal table. She suggests adding some fancy silver fabric trim to the edge of the table with double-sided tape and hanging glass crystals, perhaps from an old chandelier, around the perimeter.

On top of the pedestal place glass apothecary vases in various heights filled with silver Christmas balls, white frosted pinecones and platinum sprayed acorns. For extra drama and height, add a well placed white peacock feather or two.

- Silver and shimmer is hot for the holidays and for the coming year. Keep your arrangement elegant by using silver, white or crystal — the more shimmer, the better, she says.
- Create the illusion of a fireplace with a free-floating shelf about six inches deep. Hang a large mirror over top and then place several standing candlesticks with chunky candles on the floor below the shelf. (Make sure they aren't directly under the shelf when they burn.)

Along the length of a faux mantel spread a pine garland, white twinkle lights, pillar candles, silver dipped pinecones and urns filled with Christmas balls, says Madison.

- Add the aroma of gingerbread or cranberry with burning oils to fill the house with the decadent smell of the holidays, she suggests.
- To book holiday decorating appointments call Tracy Kundell, Avalon Interiors at 905-889-0763, Sandra Gayle, Pillow Talk at 905-472-3679 or Lynelle Madison, Design In Vision at 416-485-9382.

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