

December 4, 2009



## Tip of the Week

### Tips for installing holiday lights



If you're braving the cold weather this weekend to put up holiday lights, we have some tips that might get you back inside a bit sooner.

**Keep it simple.** As with most artistic efforts, simple is usually best. White lights are always elegant, but color can be used to carry off a variety of styles. Since both basic white and colored lights look equally great against a backdrop of snow, whether to use color really comes down to personal preference. If you use colored lights, limit the number of colors so that you make a visual statement that's not busy. As the photo above shows, combining just two colors can be stunning.

#### **When lighting trees, use different techniques with evergreen and deciduous trees.**

Evergreens like Austrian pine and Colorado blue spruce should be wrapped "tornado" style so that the lights are wrapped all the way around the tree. The key is to space the strands at equal distances so that the lighting is uniform. As the photo above also shows, if you have two or more trees of the same size close together, they should be wrapped in the same direction and with the strands at corresponding heights. Achieving this symmetry will set your display off from the ordinary.

Wrapping deciduous trees tornado style won't work because the limb structure doesn't lend itself to regular spacing and

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coils. Better to use the trees' natural structure to advantage by extending lights out the length of the limbs. As the photo above shows, deciduous trees have their own distinctive character when decked out with lights.

**More reminders:**

- For new light purchases, buy LEDs because they last much longer and use significantly less electricity than incandescent lights and the bulbs never have to be changed. LEDs cost more up-front, but they bring value over time through ongoing savings in energy costs and a longer life.
- Don't coil extension cords, especially in wood-mulched beds. Coiled cords are more likely to start fires and mulched beds can ignite quickly.

Need help with holiday lighting or other winter landscape needs? Go to [www.alcc.com](http://www.alcc.com) and click on Find a Pro.

*Technical information courtesy ALCC member firms. Photos courtesy Columbine Design, Inc.*

