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PET-PROOF YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE!

By Allison Hay

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We are a nation of animal lovers, so it's little surprise that our furry friends will be a big part of our festive celebrations. Their natural curiosity might make you think twice about putting up decorations, so we asked Christmas tree expert and dog and cat mum herself, Veronika Kusak from <u>Pines and Needles</u> her advice on pet-proofing your tree...

HERE COMES SANTA PAWS...

If you'd like your tree to look as good on Christmas Day as it does in the run-up to the festivities, follow these tips to keep your pet safe and your tree looking fabulous...

Securely anchor your Christmas tree



Pic: Shutterstock

Your four-legged friend will undoubtedly be curious about your Christmas tree, and if it is not properly secured, it may tip and fall. If the tree falls, it could injure your pet, break fragile ornaments or spill the tree water on the floor. Place your tree in a secure tree stand then anchor the tree to a wall to keep it in place throughout the festive season. Loop string around the trunk higher up and secure to a hook or a screw. Placing the tree in the corner of a room might also give it more stability.

Leave your tree bare for a few days

The incredible smell of a real Christmas tree will certainly spark an inquisitive pet's investigative streak, so it's a good idea to leave your tree bare for a few days to allow your dog to get used to the tree without risk of breaking any of your ornaments.

Hide electrical string lights and wires



Pic: Shutterstock

Christmas is filled with lots of twinkly lights and colourful decorations, which all require wires. Make sure to keep long lengths of wires out of sight and reach of your pet at the back of the tree to discourage any chewing, and tuck Christmas tree fairy lights within the branches, so no loops of wire are visible

Avoid tinsel

Bright, shiny tinsel definitely divides a room with its nostalgic charm! It's certainly eye-catching and will more than likely attract the attention of your pet. For those with dogs and cats, it's probably best to avoid this as they may ingest the tinsel, which can result in intestinal blockage and a worrying trip to the vets.

Keep tree water covered and out of the way



Ensure that tree water is covered, so that your dog or cat is unable to drink from it. Not only do many people add fertilisers, which can be toxic and upset your pet's stomach, but stagnant water is a prime place for bacteria to grow, and in turn, your pet may end up with nausea or an upset stomach. Think about covering the tree base with a <u>tree skirt.</u>

Place fragile ornaments higher up your tree



Lovely Lois the pug is ready for Christmas!

Be warned – if your dog or cat knocks your Christmas tree, your favourite ornaments can be at risk! Put your delicate ornaments on sturdy branches at the top of your tree to avoid them getting knocked off and breaking.

Save the presents for Christmas morning



Pic: Shutterstock

Many people keep presents from friends and family under the tree until Christmas Day, but they will definitely get the attention of pets, especially if they are edible! Wrapped presents may contain food that's toxic for dogs such as chocolate, raisins, spiced nuts and more, and elaborate wrapping could also cause a problem. It's best to keep gifts hidden away, to be brought out late on Christmas Eve, or even on Christmas morning.

There's still time to plan <u>Your Best Ever Christmas</u>. Pick up our <u>mag</u> that's packed with festive ideas for a magical day... it comes with a Crafting mini-mag too!





ALLISON HAY

I joined the "My Weekly" team thirteen years ago and, more recently, "The People's Friend". I love the variety of topics we cover both online and in the magazines. I manage the digital content for the brands, sharing features and information on the website, social media and in our digital newsletters.

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