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A load of baubles!

We take a look at this year's Christmas decoration trends

By Will Tillotson

Once upon a time Christmas decorations at home were simple combinations of baubles, tinsel and paperchains.

These days there's a far greater range in the shops to suit all tastes.

Helen Paterson from Lakes Home Centre in Cockermouth goes to Germany to find the decorations they stock.

She knows better than most which designs are in fashion.

She says: "The colours for this year are bronze and copper, occasionally mixed with gold.

We have reds too, to complement those, with tartan patterns and stags that combine to give a Scottish feel especially if the stags are bronze and the lanterns copper.

We've also got a new range of greys and browns that create a more Scandinavian feel."

As far as illuminations are concerned, cluster lights are becoming increasingly popular as they tend to fill the

tree more effectively than traditional Christmas lights. People are also buying fibre optic villages, little villages that light up and play music.

"These days you can find a wide range of imitation trees, the main one this year being natural spruce which looks exactly like a real tree. To make it even more realistic we have Scentsicles which you hang on the tree and give off the smell of fresh pine, they're very popular."

When you're putting up your artificial tree you can make

it look its best by arranging the front branches in a star formation, then putting the side branches out to the sides and pointing the middle ones straight up.

And don't forget to put the lights on first before the other decorations otherwise you may find you have problems

Then, when you do start adding the baubles, begin with the largest ones at the bottom and work your way up.

Of course, you don't have to have baubles at all, some people prefer just to have cluster lights and glass beads or garlands.

There are so many possible combinations of decorations to be found these days that you can easily create a beautiful and unique display.

