

Environmental Guidelines for Decorating Outdoors

Environment and Parks, November 2023

Port Moody is committed to coexisting with wildlife and strives to protect and conserve natural habitats. In urbanized areas with homes, buildings, streets, and infrastructure, wildlife may be accustomed to a certain amount of human disturbance. However, to give wildlife the natural habitat they need to survive, we must take special care to preserve undeveloped areas such as forests, streams, wetlands, and shorelines. It is the shared responsibility of Port Moody residents, visitors, and businesses to preserve natural wildlife habitats, avoid unnecessary wildlife disturbance, and exercise behaviours that do not cause harm or injury to wildlife.

When decorating outdoors, we must be mindful about the materials we use in our celebrations to prevent unintended harm to wildlife or the environment. Below are some wildlife-friendly decoration ideas, and a survey exercise to check that your outdoor holiday décor is kind to nature and the animals we share it with.



Decorate potted conifers, cut trees, or ornamental planters rather than trees in the forest.



Use natural or biodegradable materials like wood, jute twine, cork, stone, and paper.



Recycle and upcycle!
Reimagine existing items to reduce waste.



Use scrap fabric to create unique and fun ornaments.



Create biodegradable garland from dried flowers and leaves.



Make a simple dough out of flour, water, and salt. Cut out fun shapes and bake.



Utilize seashells and twine to create fun hanging displays and ornaments.



Use twigs, driftwood, and paint to create unique shapes and designs.

Please Avoid ☹️	Please Enjoy 😊
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Glass (e.g., glass ornaments) and items with sharp edges Fragile or hollow plastic ornaments Styrofoam, glitter, mesh/netting, tinsel, plastic garland Loose plastic string or ribbon Ornaments with lead-based paint Edible materials, including seeds, nuts, dog treats, candy Invasive species, such as English Holly Artificial snow, including fibrous or plastic Latex or helium balloons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popsicle sticks, wooden beads, cork (painted/left natural) Paper, cardboard Plush toys Fabric, burlap, cotton, jute twine, cotton string Metal ornaments, metal wire, metal ornament hooks Clay, stones, shells Wood, twigs, pinecones Dried/fresh flowers or leaves (native/ornamental species) Salt dough art (painted or left natural) Solid plastic/rubber toys that are built to last

Outdoor Decorating Survey: Best Management Practices



Is the holiday décor edible by humans or pets?

Consuming human food can make wildlife and dogs sick. Food attractants can also lead to human-wildlife conflicts.

Best practice: Avoid using any food products, including nuts, seeds, dried fruits, dog treats, and wrapped or unwrapped candies.



Could the holiday décor entangle wildlife?

Ribbon, nets, fake snow, and strings of lights may entangle wildlife. This can cause wildlife injury or trap them, so they are unable to escape prey.

Best practice: Avoid using fake snow that could trap birds or bats. Hang strings of light more than 10ft above the ground to avoid trapping deer antlers. Hang single strings of ribbon or lights to avoid entangling wildlife.



Does the holiday décor include invasive species?

English holly and English ivy are beautiful plants, but when they escape our gardens, they can establish in (and take over) natural areas.

Best practice: Avoid using any invasive species, such as holly, in your outdoor holiday décor.



Does the material fragment or shed microplastics?

Plastic materials, particularly balloons, tinsel, Styrofoam, and glitter can deposit tiny pieces of plastic into the environment that persist for long periods of time and enter soils and streams. Plastic baubles can also shatter during freezing temperatures and fragment into sharp pieces that can injure wildlife. Wildlife may also mistake microplastics as food.

Best practice: Avoid using materials that fragment or shed microplastics. Instead, opt for sturdier materials like wood, stone, or thick plastic.



Does the décor produce light or noise?

Bright lights and sounds in natural areas at night may disturb feeding, sleeping, and other behavioural wildlife patterns.

Best practice: Avoid installing bright lights or playing loud sounds near natural areas that are otherwise dark and quiet at nighttime. Instead, install lights and sound displays in areas already lit by streetlights.



Does the holiday décor occupy a sensitive habitat?

Plugging up cavities or holes in trees with decorations may restrict wildlife from sleeping or finding shelter here.

Best practice: Install holiday décor away from bird nests, animal dens, or holes or cavities in trees that may otherwise be used by wildlife.

**Thank you for decorating
with wildlife in mind!**