

Untangling the mystery of lights

Written by Deb Egenberger

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Pleasant weather on a November Saturday is a sure sign that the giant plastic tub holding miles of green wire and clear bulbs is going to appear in the garage.

Christmas lights are God's way of testing my patience every year.

I am a neat freak and something of an organizing wizard but when it comes to 25-foot strands of twinkle, I'm a real klutz.

I take ample time putting away the lights every year and still they come out of the tub tangled.

I've used spools and I have tried wrapping the cords around cardboard and I followed advice to roll them into tight balls.

Still, every winter when I open that lid, there's a wad of wire so wild I'm tempted to snap the top back down and walk away.

How does this happen?

And why do some of the strings (or half the length) not light when I get them out of the box. They all worked fine when I put them in.

My husband says it's because those tiny little bulbs get jiggled and wiggled until they are loose and it throws off the whole strand.

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So after I've stood for an hour to untangle the wires, I tinker with each bulb. With at least 10 strands on my tree and 10 times that outside, I spend way too long piddling with lights.

Sometimes it's worth it and sometimes it's not. I have gone so far as to change those microscopic fuses in the plug but usually I end up throwing a half-lit string in the trash.

This year, in a quest for a peaceful start to the holiday season, I'm leaving the light fight up to the men in the house.

Our end of the cul-de-sac may end up looking like Clark Griswold lives there but at least I won't have to battle the bulbs.