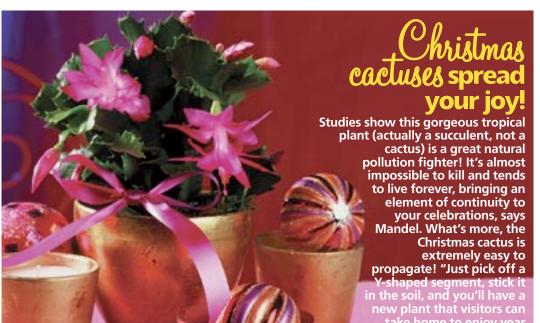


## Mistletoe gives you focus (and a stronger marriage)!

Steal a kiss under the mistletoe and it'll boost your levels of feel-good endorphins and the bonding chemical oxytocin—and even improve your concentration. In fact, couples who kiss before work have been found to have fewer fender benders en route! "And research shows that with every kiss, your guy passes some of his testosterone—a big libido booster for both sexes—to you, putting you both in the mood!" says Debbie Mandel, author of Addicted to Stress.







Studies show symbols like a star or an angel act as powerful "visual affirmations." So whether it has five points or wings, "that ornament at the top of your tree makes you feel a little closer to Heaven—and more hopeful of finding it here on Earth," says Tessina. Result: You're calmer and more optimistic—and on course for a merrier, mellower new year!

## Glowing candles and shiny ornaments brighten your world!

The latest research reveals most of us experience some form of "winter blues" as the days grow darker and colder. And the holiday's candles, shiny ornaments and bright lights are the perfect antidote for seasonal stress, notes Mandel. And it's not just because of the light and warmth they give us: "By appealing to your inner child, Christmas ornaments connect you with the excitement you felt about the holidays when you were a kid, while lighting candles adds grace and ritual to the celebration," says Tina Tessina, Ph.D., coauthor of *The* Happiness Equation.

