3D Christmas Tree User Manual

macOS

Version 1.2 | Build 41
9 November 2026

Decorate a tree and make a card

Choose a 3D tree, hang ornaments and set the scene. Turn your design into a still Christmas card or a short movie with snow, twinkling lights and music.

Start here

Open **Trees** to choose a tree and base. Move through **Decorate** and **Atmosphere**, then open **Card** to add your greeting and preview the result.

Requirements

macOS 15 or later. Tree editing and card rendering work offline. Demo background downloads and online support links require an internet connection.

Stratakernel.nl



A decorated tree placed over a photo background

Contents and quick start

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Quick start

1. Open **Trees**. To start fresh, click **Clear tree** and confirm the reset. Then choose a tree and base.
2. In **Decorate**, click an ornament tile and then click near the tip of a branch. Use **Tree top** to add a topper.
3. Open **Atmosphere** to choose a background, set the light and adjust where the tree stands.
4. Choose **Card**, then **Image** or **Video**. Select a layout and fill in **Title**, **Message** and **From**.
5. Click **Preview card**. Check the full result, then save, share, email or print it from the preview.
6. Use **File > Save design…** to keep an editable copy you can open later.

Action	Mac shortcut
Open an editable design	Command-O
Save an editable design	Command-S
Undo or redo a design change	Command-Z or Shift-Command-Z

The studio and tree controls

Find your way around

The left panel scrolls. Click **Trees**, **Decorate**, **Tree top**, **Atmosphere** or **Card** along its top. The large view shows the tree and its setting. Undo, Redo, zoom and Fit scene sit below it.

Choose a tree and base

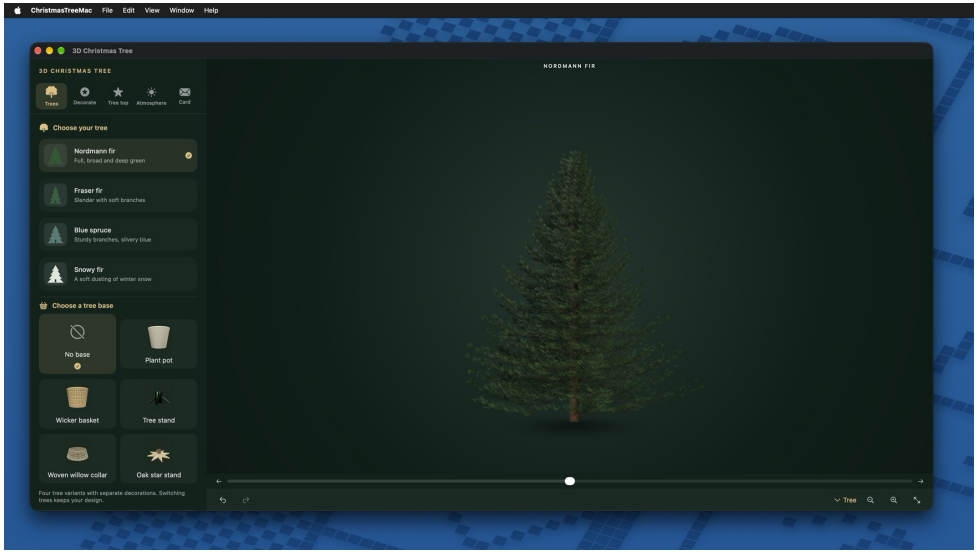
Choose **Nordmann fir**, **Fraser fir**, **Blue spruce** or **Snowy fir**. The hanging ornaments stay in the design when you switch. Under **Choose a tree base**, pick **No base**, **Plant pot**, **Wicker basket**, **Tree stand**, **Woven willow collar** or **Oak star stand**.

Rotate and position the tree

Drag sideways over the tree to rotate it. With **Move** selected under **Atmosphere > More position controls**, scroll with two fingers or Option-drag over the scene to move the tree. With **Tilt** selected, the vertical gesture tilts it forward or backward. The sliders also let you lean it left or right. **Reset position and tilt** restores the tree's default position and tilt.

Zoom the scene or resize the tree

Choose **Scene** or **Tree** in the bottom toolbar, then pinch, roll a mouse wheel or click the magnifiers. **Scene** zoom and the horizontal pan slider change the editor view. **Tree** zoom changes the tree's size in the exported composition. **Fit scene** restores the editor framing.



The Trees panel and the scene toolbar

Ornaments and effects

Working with ornaments

Click an ornament tile in **Decorate**. Set **Decoration size** from 60% to 160%, then click near a branch tip. Click a hanging ornament to replace it with the chosen type. To resize one already on the tree, select its matching tile, click the ornament and adjust the size slider. Double-click a hanging ornament to remove it. Use **Undo** to restore it.

Start from a preset or reset

Trees > Classic decorations replaces the hanging ornaments with a preset arrangement. **Clear tree** resets the whole design, including the background, effects and greeting. Save a copy before clearing if you want to keep the design. You can undo the reset while editing.

Add a topper or presents

Under **Tree top**, choose **Golden star**, **Classic finial**, **Large red bow**, **Snowflake** or **None**. At the top of **Decorate**, select **None**, **5 presents** or **9 presents** under **Presents under the tree**. Gifts move with the tree.

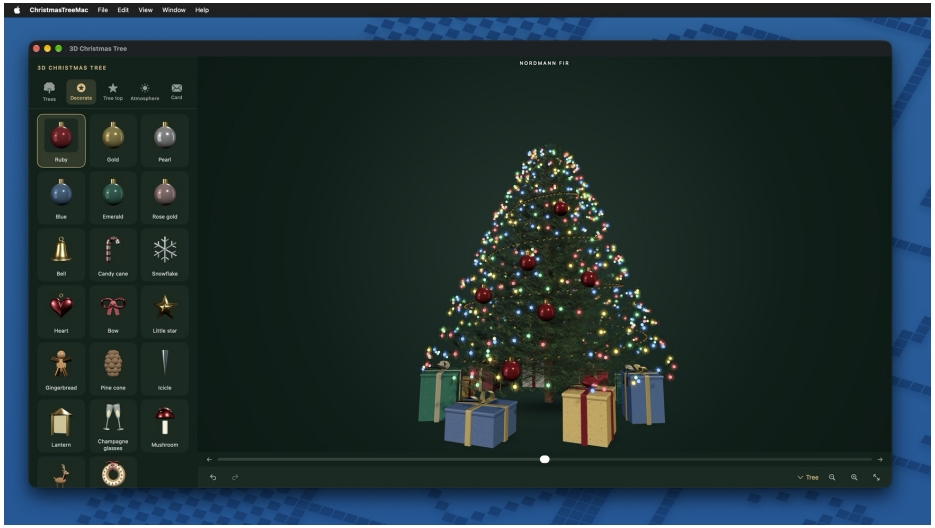
Lights and snowfall

Scroll down in **Decorate**. Turn on **Tree lights** and choose **Warm white** or **Multicolor**. Adjust brightness from 0% to 200% and the count from 300 to 1,200. **Twinkling lights** varies their brightness gently. **Golden garland** is separate.

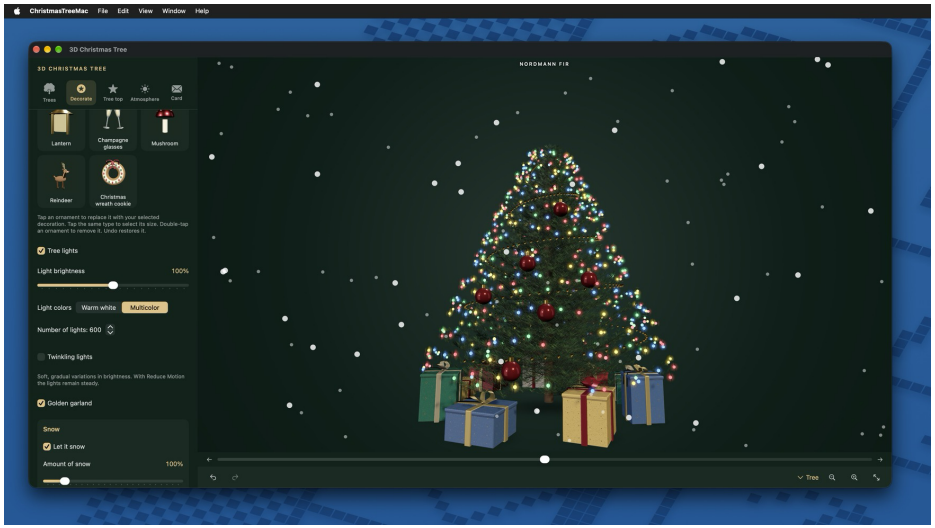
Turn on **Let it snow** and adjust the amount from 25% to 600%. With macOS Reduce Motion enabled, lights stay steady and the snowflakes stay in place.

Ornament palette

Ruby, Gold, Pearl, Blue, Emerald, Rose gold, Bell, Candy cane, Snowflake, Heart, Bow, Little star, Gingerbread, Pine cone, Icicle, Lantern, Champagne glasses, Mushroom, Reindeer and Christmas wreath cookie.



Choose an ornament from the palette



Scroll down for the light and snow controls

Backgrounds and scene lighting

Choose a background

In **Atmosphere**, click **Forest**, **Winter night**, **Warm cream** or **Winter blue**. Click **Choose from Photos** for an image in your photo library, or **Choose from files** for an image in Finder.

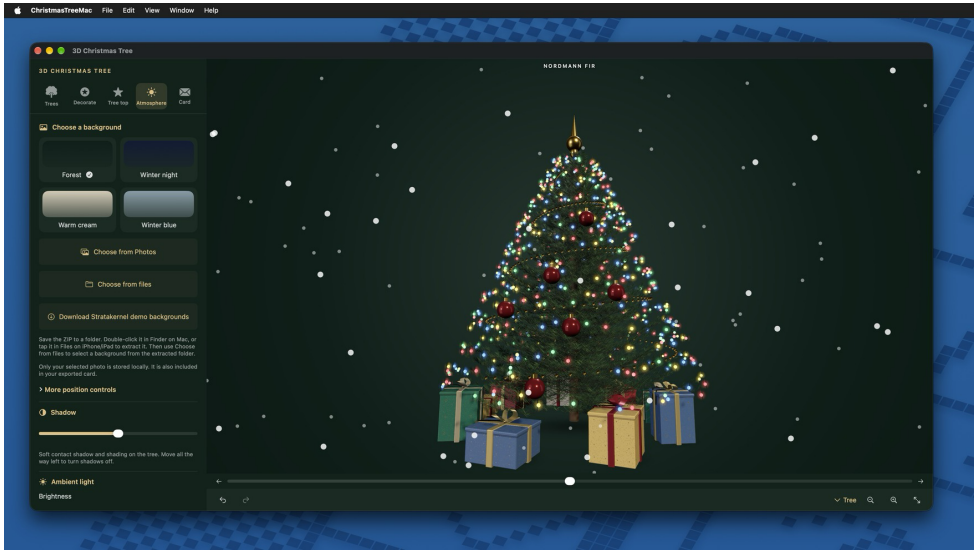
Download the demo backgrounds

1. Click **Download Stratakernel demo backgrounds** and save the ZIP.
2. Double-click the ZIP in Finder to extract the folder.
3. Return to **Atmosphere**, click **Choose from files** and select a PNG from the extracted folder. See Appendix B for the gallery.

Fit the tree into the setting

Open **More position controls** to adjust the tree's position and tilt. Use **Shadow** to control the shading and contact shadow. Move it all the way left to turn shadows off. Under **Ambient light**, adjust overall **Brightness** and move between **Cool** and **Warm**.

The app stores a resized copy of the selected photo. A finished card shows the visible background. An editable design file can include the stored photo even after you switch to another background.



Built-in backgrounds and image import controls



Position and lighting controls for an imported background

Writing a Christmas card

Choose an image or video

In **Card**, choose **Image** for a still PNG or **Video** for an MP4. Video can show snowfall and twinkling lights when enabled. Scroll down to **Card music** and choose a tune or **None**. The music picker appears when **Video** is selected.

Pick a layout

Card with scene puts your scene in a frame on portrait stationery. Scroll sideways through **Card design** to see all eight designs in Appendix A. **Text on scene** places the title, message and sender directly over the scene.

Write and style the greeting

Edit **Title**, **Message** and **From**. Each field has its own typeface, alignment, size and colour. Click the minus or plus by **Example** to browse the 16 messages. Editing the message makes it personal. Choosing another preset then asks you to confirm **Replace**.

Set the card language

Choose a language under **Card language**, or use **System language** to follow the app language. Standard greetings and the selected preset follow the choice. Personal wording and names are kept. **Restore the standard title** replaces the title with the selected language's default. The Mac interface uses the system's preferred language when supported.



Card type, layout and design controls



The greeting fields and Card language menu

Preview and placement

Preview the complete card

Click **Preview card**. Wait for rendering, then scroll inside **Your Christmas card** to see the whole result and the save controls. You can switch between image and video from the **Card type** menu in the preview. The app renders the new format before you can share it.

Move elements on portrait stationery

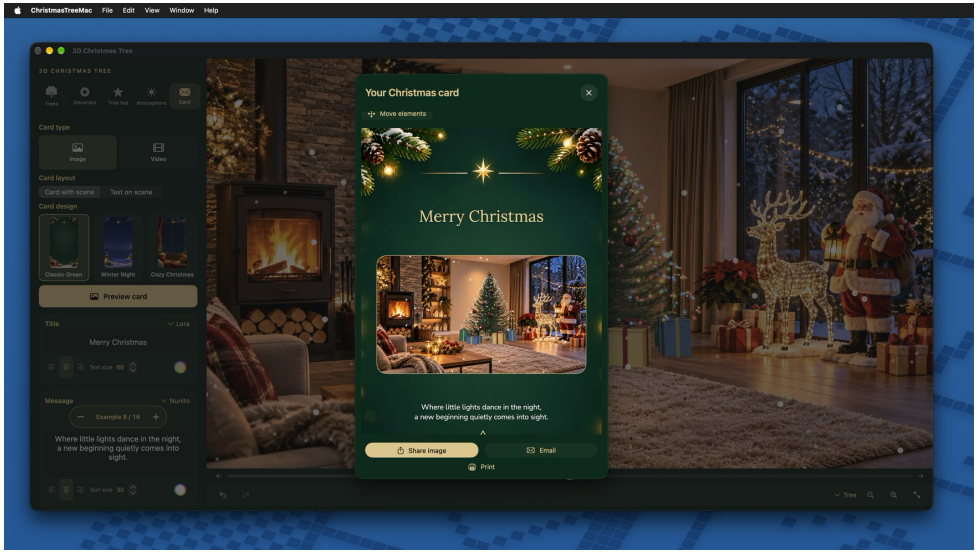
For **Card with scene**, click **Move elements**. Drag the title, message, sender or picture frame to a new position. Click **Apply positions** to keep the changes. A video is rendered again with the new layout. Click **Cancel** to leave the previous positions in place.

Move text directly on the scene

With **Text on scene** selected, drag the title, message or sender in the main scene while the **Card** panel is open. For an image, you can also use **Move elements** in the preview. For video, set text positions in the main scene before rendering.

Play and listen

The video preview has **Play** and **Pause** controls. With music selected, **Sound off** mutes only the preview. Choose **None** under **Card music** and render again for a silent MP4.



Portrait card preview with Move elements and sharing controls

Check that the text stays clear of the tree and other details. For a busy scene, move the text or change its colour in the **Card** panel, then preview again.

Card export and printing

Open **Preview card** and wait until the card is ready. Use the controls inside **Your Christmas card** to save, share, email or print.

Control	What it does
Save…	Saves the current card as a PNG or MP4. Scroll inside the preview to find the save menu.
Save picture	Saves a still PNG from a video preview.
Share image or Share file	Opens the macOS sharing menu. The available destinations depend on your Mac.
Email	Opens an email draft with the card attached. Add recipients and send from your mail app.
Save email preview	Saves a local .eml file for checking the email before sending.
Print	Opens the macOS print dialog with a still card and a fold guide.

Choose the right format

A PNG is a single picture. The **Card with scene** layout exports at 1080 × 1920 pixels, while **Text on scene** follows the scene's proportions. An MP4 can carry the animation and soundtrack together. The recipient's app decides how the file displays, whether it plays inline and whether the sound starts muted.

Print and fold

Use **Print** in the preview. **Card with scene** uses an A4 landscape sheet with a vertical guide for a side fold. **Text on scene** uses an A4 portrait sheet with a horizontal guide for a top fold. Check the paper size, orientation and front panel in the print preview. To keep the print layout as a PDF, use the PDF menu in the macOS print dialog.

Send a finished card

Use **Save…** or a sharing action for the recipient's copy. Keep an editable JSON separately if you want to reuse the design.

Design files and support

Save a design for later

The app automatically keeps your current design on the Mac. Choose **File > Save design…** (**Command-S**) to make a separate editable JSON file. Choose **File > Open design…** (**Command-O**) to reopen it. Opening another design replaces the current working design, so save a copy first if you want to keep both.

Use **Command-Z** to undo and **Shift-Command-Z** to redo, or click the curved arrows below the scene. A design file can contain your greeting, settings and selected photo.

Troubleshooting

An ornament did not appear. Click nearer to a branch tip. Rotate the tree for a clearer view of the branch.

The scene is too close. Click **Fit scene** for the editor view. If the tree itself is too large, select **Tree** and zoom out.

A demo background will not open. Extract the ZIP first and choose a PNG. If the download fails, check the connection and try again.

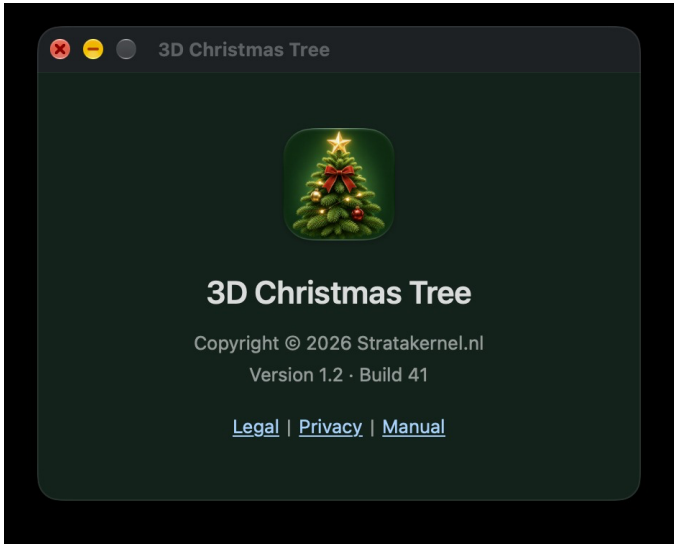
There is no music. Use **Video**, select a tune, check the preview's sound control and check the Mac output volume. When a recipient opens the file, their player controls sound.

The card looks cut off. Scroll within the preview to see the entire card. Check the saved file before sharing.

Version and support

Choose **3D Christmas Tree > About 3D Christmas Tree** to check the version and build, or open **Legal**, **Privacy** and **Manual** in your browser.

For support, email **support@stratakernel.nl**. Include your Mac model, macOS version, app version and build, and the steps that reproduce the issue.



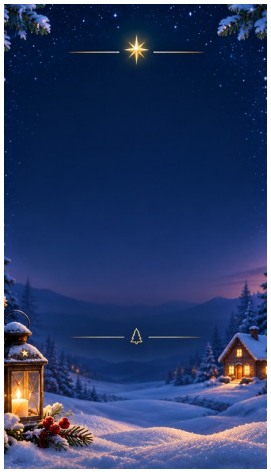
About 3D Christmas Tree

Appendix A Card designs

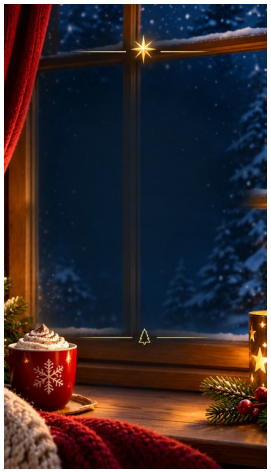
In **Card > Card with scene**, scroll sideways under **Card design** to select one of these eight portrait designs. The tree scene appears in a frame over the selected artwork.



Classic Green



Winter Night



Cozy Christmas



Aurora Lake



Snowman Sunrise



Santa's Sleigh



Christmas Village



Moonlit Forest

Appendix B Background gallery

The four built-in scene colours are **Forest**, **Winter night**, **Warm cream** and **Winter blue**. The demo ZIP contains the landscape images below. After extracting it, use **Atmosphere > Choose from files** to select one.



Christmas Carol Singers



Christmas Tree Nostalgic Interior



Christmas Tree Snowy Landscape



Church and Nativity Scene



Modern Christmas Living Room



North Pole Polar Bears



Riverside Christmas Village



Rockefeller Center New York



Santa's Collection Kettle



Swiss Alps



Tropical Christmas Island

The extracted ZIP includes the artwork credits. See the Legal and Copyright Notice for use in finished cards.

Appendix C Music and languages

The **Card music** menu is available when **Video** is selected. The seven tracks are instrumental music-box recordings by ButtonBass, supplied under CC0 1.0. Choose **None** for a silent video.

In the menu	Tune
None	Silent video
Deck the Halls	Deck the Halls
Jingle Bells	Jingle Bells
Joy	Joy to the World
O Christmas Tree	O Christmas Tree
Of the Bells	Carol of the Bells
Silent Night	Silent Night
We Wish	We Wish You a Merry Christmas

Card languages

Nederlands, English (UK), English (US), Deutsch, Français, Español, Norsk (bokmål), Svenska, Dansk, Português (Portugal), Italiano and Polski. Choose **System language** to follow the app language. The numbered examples are available in each of the 12 languages.

Card typefaces

Choose **Lora**, **Nunito**, **Dancing Script** or **Lobster Two** separately for the title, message and sender. Lora is the default for the title, and Nunito is the default for the message and sender.

Appendix D English greeting examples

These are the **English (UK)** texts as shown in build 41. Use minus and plus beside **Example** under **Message** to browse the matching numbers in the selected card language.

01 A touch of winter, a glimmer of light.
A new year of happiness shining bright.

02 Where stars shine and dreams awaken,
may the new year warm your heart.

03 A little warmth, a little light.
And a thousand lovely dreams on the horizon.

04 May Christmas fill the silence with light,
and the new year with wonders.

05 A star in the sky, a wish in the night.
May the new year bring all the joys you hope for.

06 Between starlight and winter dreams,
may the very best still be to come.

07 A Christmas full of little wonders,
a new year full of great happiness.

08 Where little lights dance in the night,
a new beginning quietly comes into sight.

09 A little sparkle, a little light.
And all the love your heart could wish for.

10 May Christmas bring you a gentle glow,
and the new year give wings to your dreams.

11 A touch of wonder, a spark of joy.
And beautiful moments throughout the coming year.

12 Beneath winter skies, bright with stars,
I wish you warmth and light through the night.

13 A little magic, a little snow.
And happiness wherever you go.

14 May every star that appears tonight
bring you lasting hope and dreams.

15 Softly the Christmas snowflakes fall,
carrying a thousand wishes for us all.

16 A Christmas full of wonder, a heart full of light.
And a thousand beautiful moments still to come.