



10 Tips for Selecting a Live Tree



Use these practical tips to be a more informed consumer and to ensure a great experience with your live tree:

1. Be sure you know what size (height and width) you need before heading to the retail lot.
2. If you want the same species you know or have always used, great. If you want to try a different species, browse the NCTA website www.realchristmastrees.org to become familiar with the species popular in your area before heading to the retail lot.
3. Go to a retail lot that is well-lit and stores trees in a shaded area.
4. Often, a tree obtained soon after its arrival on the retail lot will be very fresh because it was cut recently. Consumers should ask the retailer when he/she gets the trees: are they delivered once at the beginning of the season, or does he/she obtain several shipments during the season.
5. Do a freshness test on the trees. Green needles on fresh trees break crisply when bent sharply with the fingers -- much like a fresh carrot.
6. Pines have different indicators because of the fibrous nature of their needles compared to firs. The needles on fresh pines do NOT break, unless they are very dry.
7. Look for other indicators of dryness or deterioration: excessive needle loss, discolored foliage, musty odor, needle pliability, and wrinkled bark. A good rule-of-thumb is, when in doubt about the freshness of a tree, select another one. If none of the trees on the lot look fresh, go to another lot.
8. Some species last longer and remain fresh longer than others in different climates. Ask your retailer which tree performs best in your climate.
9. Ask the retailer about recycling Christmas Trees in your community.
10. Involve the whole family in the selecting and plan fun things for everyone to do during the trip.

Source: National Christmas Tree Association

Caring for a Holiday Tree

When a Christmas tree is cut, over half of its weight is water. With proper care, you can maintain the quality of your displayed trees. Below are a number of tips relating to the care of displayed trees:

1. Displaying trees in water in a traditional reservoir type stand is the most effective way of maintaining their freshness and minimizing needle loss problems.
2. Make a fresh cut to remove about a 1/2" thick disk of wood from the base of the trunk before putting the tree in the stand. Make the cut perpendicular to the stem axis. Don't cut the trunk at an angle, or into a v-shape, which makes it far more difficult to hold the tree in the stand and also reduces the amount of water available to the tree.
3. Once home, place the tree in water as soon as possible. Most species can go 6 to 8 hours after cutting the trunk and still take up water. Don't bruise the cut surface or get it dirty.
4. If needed, trees can be temporarily stored for several days in a cool location. Place the freshly cut trunk in a bucket that is kept full of water.
5. To display the trees indoors, use a stand with an adequate water holding capacity for the tree. **As a general rule, stands should provide 1 quart of water per inch of stem diameter.** Devices are available that help maintain a constant water level in the stand.
6. Use a stand that fits your tree. Avoid whittling the sides of the trunk down to fit a stand. The outer layers of wood are the most efficient in taking up water and should not be removed.
7. Keep displayed trees away from sources of heat (fireplaces, heaters, heat vents, direct sunlight). Lowering the room temperature will slow the drying process, resulting in less water consumption each day.
8. The temperature of the water used to fill the stand is not important and does not affect water uptake.
9. Check the stand daily to make sure that the level of water does not go below the base of the tree. **With many stands, there can still be water in the stand even though the base of the tree is no longer submerged in water.**
10. Drilling a hole in the base of the trunk does not improve water uptake.
11. Use of lights that produce low heat, such as miniature lights, will reduce drying of the tree.
12. Always inspect light sets prior to placing them on the tree. If worn, replace with a new set.
13. Do not overload electrical circuits.
14. Always turn off the tree lights when leaving the house or when going to bed.
15. Monitor the tree for freshness. After Christmas or if the tree is dry, remove it from the house.
16. Go to www.realchristmastrees.org and type in your ZIP code to find a recycling program near you.
17. Never burn any part of a Christmas tree in a wood stove or fireplace.



Prepared by Dr. Gary Chastagner and Dr. Eric Hinesley & Edited by the Scientific Research Committee of the National Christmas Tree Association

Master Gardener Training Set for February!



Interested in learning how to better manage your yard and gardens and share your gained knowledge with others through volunteer activities?

There is still time to register to attend the General Master Gardener Volunteer Program being held Tuesday evenings (6-9 pm) from February 3 to April 21 in Kewaunee County.

University of Wisconsin-Extension specialists will help participants explore the issues involved in managing trees and shrubs, lawns, landscape plants, fruit crops and vegetables and including discussions on insect, disease and weed management, cultivar selection, pruning, mulches, and other crop care activities. The programs will be brought to you via videoconferencing with

live speakers who will be including power-point, slides, overheads and video in their presentations. Sites will have opportunity for interaction (Q/A) with the speakers. Participants receive two, three-ring binders featuring reference information on topics covered during the course.

In exchange for this instruction, participants are asked to volunteer a minimum of 24 hours of time to serve as a resource to their community via their local county extension office.

The cost to attend the 12-week program is not determined at print time and is expected to be set by mid-December. The program is open to the general public. Registrations must be received by January 10 at Kewaunee County Extension Office.

For more information or to register, contact Jan Tess at (920) 388-7141.

2009 Landscaping & Grounds Short Course

The 2009 Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance Short Course will be held on Jan. 7, 22, 28 & Feb. 4 from 1-4:15 pm. It will be held at the Agriculture & Extension Service Center, 1150 Bellevue St., Green Bay, WI. The course is comprised of four weekly sessions.

The registration fee for all 4 sessions is \$50/person. If you are only interested in attending selected sessions, the cost is \$20 per session. Registration deadline is Dec. 31, 2008.

Week 1 will cover wildlife & wildlife damage management and implementing an organic lawn care op-

tion. Week 2 is identification & management of invasive plants & turf disease diagnosis. Week 3: EAB Insecticide options, proper tree & shrub nutrition. Week 4: Turf insect diagnosis 101 and groundcovers.

The goal is to provide timely education that will allow you to improve the quality of service and profitability of your business. Although this course is designed for people in the Green Industry, all interested individuals are welcome.

Call Brown Co. UW-Extension Service at (920) 391-4610 for more information.

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