

Selecting Your Christmas Tree



Photo by Beech Mountain Fraser Fir Farm: Trees such as this Fraser fir can make excellent Christmas trees if they are kept fresh and well-watered after being cut.

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The holiday season is upon us. You can feel it in the cool crisp air. I can hardly wait for the joy of gathering friends and family to fill my home. Truthfully, the holiday sensation I anticipate most of all is the scent of fresh pine from the Christmas tree to fill my home. There is something very comforting about it. All lit up, decorated with ornaments collected over the years and presents all around. Whether the right tree for you is a tabletop, live or a cut 14-footer, here is some advice on how to make the right decision for your home and lifestyle.

When choosing the “perfect Christmas tree” it is helpful to know where the tree will stand. It is important to choose a cool location out of direct sunlight in the room where it can be seen and enjoyed most by your family. Make sure there is an electrical outlet near by. Take note if the tree will go in a corner or if it will be seen from all sides. Measure your ceiling height, remembering to leave room for your tree topper and at least ten inches from it to the ceiling.

With all the placement issues assessed, it is now time to choose where you will buy your tree. This is the most important factor in ensuring you get the most satisfaction out of your tree. Inspect the places where you’re considering buying a tree! The smell of fresh trees should be overwhelming when you walk in. Make sure that the trees are stored and displayed unwrapped, hung, and in water. If the tree is fresh, the branches will be soft and pliable. You should be able to run the branch between your thumb and forefinger without getting a handful of needles. The merchant should offer to make a fresh cut on the Christmas tree when you buy it. The fresh cut is crucial to keeping the tree hydrated. If the tree has been left dry for as little as four hours it will create a sap seal over the cut, prohibiting any water to be taken up. If this happens, you must make a fresh cut...not an appealing thought after the tree has been decorated. So the Christmas tree seller should take care of this for you, and you should put your tree in water as soon as you get it home.

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It is crucial to replenish your tree's water daily. The average tree will take up to a gallon the first day, then a quart every day after. A well watered tree will be most fragrant and hold its needles much longer, keeping you from vacuuming dead needles repeatedly.

For those who like to buy a live Christmas tree and plant it in the yard after Christmas, it is recommended to buy your selected tree no more than one or two weeks before Christmas. Live trees can only survive in the house for two or three days. Unlike cut trees they need to be displayed in a sunny spot and only watered once, right before bringing it inside. It is best to plant your tree the day after Christmas and keep it well watered and mulched for the winter.

Last of all, some very important safety tips. A well hydrated tree is not a fire hazard. Be sure to keep your tree away from any source of heat. This can even mean your television set. Test all your lights before you string them. Inspect your cords for any cracks in the insulation. Never overload a socket or leave cords in a tangled bunch. Always unplug lights before bed and when you leave the house. Taking these simple precautions will make this Christmas a merry one.

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