

Christmas Tree

Living Christmas trees have much to offer the homeowner. It can be extremely rewarding to look back over the years and see the tree/trees that were part of the special occasion enjoyed each year. Live Christmas trees can be planted with a relatively high degree of success. When selecting a live tree, consider where the tree will fit into your landscape since most of these trees will eventually reach heights of 40-60 feet.

If you find that you do not have space for the tree, consider donating it to a local community center or groups, such as schools, churches or park areas. Advance notice of this decision will aid in their planning of location and available labor to plant the tree. Once you decide to have a live tree, these few steps will aid in your success.

Selection

1. Select only trees that appear in good vigor and are nicely shaped.
2. Select your tree early. You may even prepare the planting hole before Christmas and keep the tree in the hole, covered with bark mulch, ready to bring inside.
3. Select a reasonably sized tree. Larger trees may be hard to handle and prone to transplant shock.

Care of Tree in the Home

1. The root ball must remain moist during its stay in the home. Place the tree in a large tub or wrap the ball in plastic. Be careful to water the tree without watering the floor!
2. Use of anti-desiccants, available at garden centers, can greatly aid in reducing needle drop and moisture loss through the needles. These are available as easy to apply sprays.
3. Plan to keep your tree in the home for a period no longer than 7-10 days.

Planting and Care After Christmas

1. Weather permitting, you may plant the tree directly outside following Christmas.
2. If you have the proper area, trees may be kept in a cool basement or garage until the harsh winter weather has passed.
3. After planting your tree, backfill the hole with topsoil mixed with peatmoss to give your tree a good start.

4. Stake your tree for the first growing season until the roots are well established.
5. Plant the tree at the same level at which it was growing.
6. A generous layer of mulch will help to keep the soil ball moist and reduce damage from hard freezes.

With gentle care and advanced planning, you will enjoy the ever-lovely, evergreen of Christmas past.