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Horticulture News

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Christmas is coming!!! It is time to prepare! Are you ready yet? There is a lot to do before and one of those things to do is getting the tree. The appearance and aroma of a real Christmas tree makes the holiday season complete. To some, Christmas just isn't Christmas without a real Christmas tree! The following are a few hints to help you select that perfect tree, whether you purchase it from a seasonal lot or a Christmas tree farm.

- Decide on where you will place the tree. Will it be seen from all sides or will some of it be up against a wall? Be sure to choose a spot away from heat sources, such as TVs, fireplaces, radiators and air ducts. Place the tree clear of doors.
- Determine the height and width of the space you have available in the room where the tree will be placed. There is nothing worse than bringing a tree indoors only to find it's too tall. Take a tape measure with you to measure your chosen tree and bring a cord to tie your tree to the car.
- Remember that trees sold on retail lots in urban areas may have come from out of state and may have been exposed to drying winds in transit. They may have been cut weeks earlier. Buy trees early before the best trees have been sold and where trees are shaded.
- Choose a fresh tree. A fresh tree will have a healthy green appearance with few browning needles. Needles should be flexible and not fall off if you run a branch through your hand. Raise the tree a few inches off the ground and drop it on the butt end. Very few green needles should drop off the tree. It is normal for a few inner brown needles to drop off.
- Make sure the lower trunk or base of the tree is straight and 6-8 inches long so it will fit easily into the stand.
- Do a little research on different Christmas trees. Some Christmas tree varieties will hold needles longer than others.

Here are a few tips on how to keep your tree fresh throughout the holiday season.

- If you are not putting the tree up right away, store it in an unheated garage or some other area out of the wind and cold (freezing) temperatures. Make a fresh one inch cut on the butt end and place the tree in a bucket of warm water.
- When you decide to bring the tree indoors, make another fresh one inch cut and place the tree in a sturdy stand that holds at least one gallon of water, or a rule of thumb is one quart of water for every inch of diameter of the trunk.
- Be sure to keep the water level about the base of the tree. If the base dries out, resin will form over the cut end and the tree will not be able to absorb water and will dry out quickly. Commercially prepared mixes; aspirin; sugar and other additives added to the water are not necessary. Research has shown that plain water will keep a tree fresh.
- Check all Christmas tree lights for worn electrical cords. Use UL approved electrical decorations and cords. Unplug tree lights at night.
- Miniature lights produce less heat and reduce the drying effect on the tree.
- Recycle your tree after Christmas. Many communities will pick up trees and turn them into chips.