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GIFT GUIDE

Fresh Christmas tree care

Christmas trees are often the centerpiece of holiday decor and one of the hallmarks of the season.

Keeping the tree hydrated is of utmost importance and there are other steps to take as well to minimize needle loss and help ensure the tree lasts through the holiday season.

Buy a quality tree. It's advisable to buy a freshly cut tree from a local nursery or cut one down yourself. Trees available at tree lots may have been cut down weeks prior and may have already started to deteriorate. Some needle loss is to be expected, but if the tree you're considering loses lots of needles when shaken, go elsewhere.

Fit the stand to the tree. Rather than whittling down the trunk to fit the stand, choose a stand with an adequate reservoir to fit the trunk and water. Stands should provide one quart of water per inch of stem diameter. Make a fresh cut in the trunk before putting the tree in the stand. Be careful to cut perpendicular to the stem axis, not at an angle or v-shape. The outer layers of wood

are the most efficient in absorbing water, and should not be removed.

Keep it cool. Trees are used to being outdoors and not inside. Therefore, inside the home, place the tree away from a heat source to prolong its life. Avoid drafts from heating vents, radiators and fireplaces as well.

Consider a living tree. Living trees can be planted in the yard after the season, ensuring the beauty of the evergreen can be enjoyed year-round. Select a tree that is hardy to your planting zone. Live trees often need to be transitioned from the outdoors to a garage and then into the house so they will not be shocked.



Reverse this process when returning the tree to the outdoors. Do not keep the tree inside longer than 10 days, advises HGTV.

Monitor any tree's condition daily, keeping it watered regularly. Select lights that use low heat. Remove the tree if it has dried out to avoid a fire risk. Following these suggestions can help trees last the entire holiday season as they serve as the centerpiece of holiday decorations.

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