

# Real Estate and Classified **Marketplace**

## The great debate: should you choose a natural tree or an artificial one for Christmas?

Every year about this time, thousands of homeowners are faced with an annual dilemma—the Christmas tree. Should they break from tradition and buy an artificial tree or should they treat themselves to a freshly cut natural tree?

If you're the woman of the house, the thought of buying a natural tree probably brings visions of vacuuming pine needles out of your shag rug until sometime next June. Having an artificial tree is likely one of your secret Christmas wishes.

However, if you're the children of the house you still cherish the cold winter evening trek to pick up the tree and you probably can't bear to think of a Christmas without the fresh pine smell invading the house. And, if you're the family environmentalist—you probably would secretly like a fresh natural tree, but can't bear to think of the cruelty of cutting a tree down.

The dilemma is there every Christmas and every Christmas someone has to make the final decision.

If it's an artificial tree, you decide on one thing is certain, there are many different kinds ranging in price from fairly cheap to very expensive, to choose from.

If you want to please those kids, that want a real tree, but want to avoid the pine needles dropping, you can buy an expensive artificial tree that looks quite natural.

**Authentic looking**  
The larger department stores are carrying one of the most authentic looking trees in either a scotch pine or a spruce.

According to a salesman from Sears, this particular tree has branches which fold up after Christmas is over. He says "you don't even have to remove the lights."

The salesman claims that this tree is so real-looking, that when they stuck real scotch pine branches into the tree, people had great difficulty picking them out again.

This tree retails for between \$60 and \$70 and comes in heights up to seven and a half feet. The salesman says the spruce is the more popular model with about 70 per cent of the artificial Christmas tree buyers, taking one home.

Most of the other trees have a stand which is anywhere from two to six feet high, which the branches fit into. The cheaper trees have branches which are all about the same size and can stick in anywhere.

The more expensive trees, according to a spokesman from Midland's Canadian Tire, have branches of varying sizes, which fit into specific holes in the stand. These trees, she says, are more authentic.

The prices of these artificial trees range from about \$3 for a small one to \$11 for a table top four foot model, up to about \$30 for a seven-foot model.

If you buy a scotch pine, the branches will be made of wire and brush. Scotch pines are cheaper than the spruce model which have molded plastic needles on the branches.

**Can take lights**

All artificial model trees made of fire retardant materials, can have lights put on them.

However, some of the plastic models will melt with large lights, so the smallest lights on the market are advisable to use.

The artificial tree is also easy to store. The salesman from Sears says all of the trees come apart to a certain extent and the boxes they come in range from very small, to about five feet tall.

If the idea of an artificial tree turns you off, you are probably going to end up with either a real scotch pine, or spruce.

Albert Desrochers, who owns a Christmas tree farm in Lafontaine says scotch pine are the best trees to buy, since they don't lose their needles as quickly as a spruce and don't require as much water.

Desrochers says the average life of a scotch pine, once it goes indoors, is ten days. After that time they begin to lose their needles. He explains that scotch pines have to be cut in mid-October in order to look green for Christmas. He says

Scotch pines cut after this time will be yellow and will not last as long.

Mrs. Raymond Gignac who sells real trees in Lafontaine says the going price around Midland is a \$1 per foot, up to \$8. She says most people prefer a tree that is five or six feet tall.

Mrs. Gignac could not say whether Christmas tree sales were up or down in the last few years, however, she says that many people still prefer the traditional real tree. She says the dif-

ference between a real tree and a fake one is like the difference between buying real roses and plastic ones—it just isn't the same.

There is another alternative for those who are still torn between the artificial and the real tree. A spokesman from Perrin's Flower Shop in Midland suggests a potted Norfolk Island Pine. This tree solves the problem of having a real tree, without the worry of dropping needles.

Norfolk Island Pines can be bought at many places which sell plants. They range in size from six inches to about six feet tall. They are native to Australia and the branches grow in tiers which are parallel to the ground.

The cost involved is a little more than either an artificial tree or a real tree, but considering it can be used for every Christmas yet to come, it may be a bargain in the end.

Norfolks range anywhere from 99 cents

for a six-inch to about \$100 for one that is five feet high.

Keeping the tree healthy during the year is not too big a chore. They like lots of light, moist soil and humidity but adapt well to the home.

These are the alternatives. The decision is up to you. But, remember you have less than a month before Santa will be sliding down the chimney and some sort of a tree better be there for him to put the Christmas gifts around.



Artificial alternative

## How does your garden grow?

by Agnes Millward  
I trust everyone has completed all their outdoor chores, for our five inches of snow will greatly inhibit any endeavors in that direction.

If you didn't get around to planting your tulip bulbs, like myself, you can still put them in, provided you're feeling rugged and the ground isn't frozen. Tulips can be planted as late as Christmas, just push the snow aside and plant according to instructions—there's nothing to it.

On Monday night, the Horticulture Society had a guest speaker from the Royal Botanical Gardens who showed us many delightful Christmas decorations and how to make them. There was one design in particular, which appealed to me, because it was so simple and easy to do and because I'm basically lazy when it comes to flower design. The design

uses fresh materials and should keep for about three weeks, so, for some of you who may be lazy, here it is.

Firstly, go to your potato sack or bag and select a good size potato or spud of symmetrical shape—but with one flat side. Then, wash and dry it. Next, round up some foil, preferably green, otherwise any old foil will do, and wrap it around the potato, taking care all ends are tucked in neatly.

Estimated time for these two steps is 30 seconds—if you can lay your hands on the materials instantly, which isn't always possible around here.

Next, and do this first, bundle up, brave the winter and collect some handsome evergreen material, such as cedar, juniper or yew from your yard or wherever.

Bring your greens in, allowing time for snow and ice to melt—maybe this step should be done

the day before! This step should take anywhere from five minutes to five hours to accomplish, depending on what lengths you have to go to find some miserable bits of greens. A wise idea would be to collect lots, you wouldn't want to go out for more.

Now, here is the tricky part. Take your greens, find a ruler and your pruners, which you carefully put away for the winter and can't find, and cut the greens into seven-inch lengths, and place in a pile. Then, cut a pile of six-inch lengths, set aside, and then, a pile of five-inch lengths. Estimated time—fifteen minutes.

Find your foil-wrapped potato, place it flat side down on your working space, grab the seven-inch lengths and begin to jab them into the spud, through the foil, around the perimeter of potato, fitting the greens tightly together.

When you have gone completely around, the potato will have a cute green skirt. You may meet with difficulty inserting the branches and a fine knitting needle will help remarkably. Next, grab the six inch pile and begin to insert greens above the first row at an upward angle, making sure they are close together.

Lastly, with the five-inch lengths, insert above the second row at a more upright angle. When you have finished, you shouldn't be able to see the potato or foil at all, and you should have a pleasing green mound lying before you just screaming to be trimmed with a red bow, nuts, artificial grapes, small Christmas balls or, if you can find one, a small candle adapter which has a pick under the cut and may be stuck into the potato.

There is no limit to what you can use as trim,

arranged prettily in the bed of cedar and the end result is a very lovely table centre. If you feel particularly energetic and brilliant. It wouldn't be too difficult to devise a hanger, making your arrangement into a very attractive hanging for a door, wall or over a stone

fireplace. If you're a super-organized person, it should take less than 30 minutes to do this design.

If, on the other hand, you're like me, allow yourself a whole day to blow, and have fun creating!

## Musical offering

The Music Club of Huron Park School under the direction of Helga Veall will present performances of the musical play, "Pari and the Prince" by Julie Mandel, an adaptation of a 15th century Persian fable, on

the evenings of December 7 and 8 at the School. This year is the tenth anniversary of the publication of this delightful costume work and everyone is cordially invited to attend. Curtain time is 7:30 p.m.

## Happy Cooker

**Chill-Cheese Log**  
This is a joy log of a different kind. It keeps well, and served with a glass of punch will keep your dinner guests happy while you fiddle with the gravy in the kitchen.

- 1 package (4 ounce) cream cheese at room temperature
  - 2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese at room temperature
  - 1 tablespoon lemon juice
  - ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
  - dash of cayenne
  - ¼ cup finely chopped pecans
  - 1 teaspoon chili powder
  - 1 teaspoon paprika
- Combine cheese, lemon juice, garlic powder and cayenne. Beat until light and fluffy. Stir in nuts. Shape into a roll about 1½ inches in diameter. Sprinkle with a

mixture of chili powder and paprika. Chill. Let stand at room temperature for 10 minutes before serving. Serve with crackers.

An easy non-alcoholic punch may suit your entertaining plans. This one is tangy and has a nice Christmas colour:

- Cranberry Sparkle Punch**
- 1 envelope (3 ¼ ounce) Tang Lemonade flavour crystals.
- 4 cups cranberry juice cocktail, chilled
- 3 cans (10 ounces each) ginger ale, chilled
- Lemon, lime or orange slices.
- Combine lemonade flavour crystals and cranberry juice cocktail in a large pitcher. Stir to dissolve crystals and chill well.
- Just before serving, stir in ginger ale, add fruit and serve over ice.
- Makes 18 servings.

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**HOME OF THE WEEK**

Four bedroom - privacy and a rear view

The exterior of this four bedroom family home has the solid look of brick veneer, complimented by heavy textured shingles. Wrought iron gates enclose the front court yard that leads to the twin panelled front door.

A larger than normal front foyer has a guest closet, a pocket door for direct access to the family room on the left. An arch on the right leads to the bedroom wing and full bath that doubles as a guest powder room. Directly ahead the large arch-way, leads to the living room.

The dining-living room features a brick, wood burning fireplace, flanked by two large picture windows with a view to the rear.

Ideally suited for many activities the family room is designed for a sizeable family. During fine weather sliding glass panels open to the exterior and a possible patio. There is also direct access from the double garage to the family room.

Situated within hearing distance of the family room and a few steps from the dining room, the U-shaped kitchen is complete with every convenience and has a view-window to the rear.

From the family room area stairs lead to the basement, where there is plenty of room for future expansion. Roughed in plumbing and fireplace make it possible to install a full bath to service additional bedrooms and the fireplace will create a cozy recreation room.

A utility room, with washer and dryer, as well as an ironing space, keep the essential services in one area.

A good looking home of quality, designed for the growing family.

Plan for design No. 76-1803 may be obtained at a cost of \$70 for the first set and \$9 for each additional set, plus \$3.50 for postage and handling. B.C. residents please include 7 per cent sales tax.

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