

A Christmas tradition...choosing spruce

An old fashioned Christmas starts with an old fashioned Christmas tree. Throughout Ontario trees of Scotch Pine, Spruce and Balsam Fir are central to the family Christmas celebration.

Full green foliage, fragrant fresh scent, and the charm of nature's impact on the Christmas symbol all combine to create magic memories for children and stir reflections of other days for adults. Most trees chosen for Ontario homes are two to three metres tall and predominantly Scotch Pine in the tradition begun by the Anglo Saxon founders of the province. Spruce and Balsam Fir are climbing in popularity as the European and Maritime traditions of these residents are passed

through parents to second and third generations.

According to Keith Horton, Stouffville, president of the Christmas Tree Growers Association, Maritimers remember the Spruce and the Balsam Fir, as do Europeans whose family trees always came from the forests of their native country. We see the gradual shift to these trees and our plantings are reflecting the change.

There is really no difference in choosing and handling the different trees in the home. But each tree has a character of its own. The long silken needles of the pine give grace and form to the trees and they are full and stately. The fir on the other hand is a closer growth, a tighter, more compact tree with a

wonderful scent of the fresh forest. The spruce seems to bridge the characteristics of the other two. Not as tightly shaped as the fir, not quite as stately as the pine. But with graceful curving branches, beautiful with Christmas decorations, he said.

Ontario Christmas tree growers have good advice about choosing and using a tree. "Look for fragrance and good colour, bend the needles to check for freshness and shake or bounce the tree a bit to test good, healthy needles," says Horton.

And when you get the tree home, cut off about an inch of the stem before you stand the tree in its base. When you make sure the base is kept filled with water, you know your tree is fire safe. It won't burn as long as you keep it

watered. It feeds itself from the water you put in the base and that keeps the needles soft, fresh, green and pliable.

Last year 352,000 trees were sold from Ontario Christmas tree farms, most from city tree stands run by Boy Scouts troops, charity

organizations and private entrepreneurs. Some 52,000 trees were chosen and cut by city families who walked among the growing trees in farms throughout the province and selected the family tree from a forest of green prospects.

"This 'choose and cut' method, as we call it, is a wonderful start to the Christmas tradition,"

Keith Horton says, "because choosing the family tree begins the feeling of sharing and participating. Everyone helps to select the right tree, and everyone helps to cut and carry it. Then when it gets home everyone participates in decorating the family tree, the family's choice."

"Nothing decorates a home as beautifully as a

Christmas tree. Nothing says the cheer and warmth of a Christmas as well as a Christmas tree. As a grower I'm always thrilled when I see the joy a real tree brings to a child, and to many young families who mark the start of their home together with their first Christmas tree shared in a family setting," Horton says.

Lack of interest cancels show

by BONNIE ORR

Students of Elmvale District High School mourn the loss of interest in their annual Variety Night. Variety Night was cancelled due to the lack of interested students.

Kim Tuck, the president of Student's Council at Elmvale District High School, said, "Because very few students signed up to be a part in the Variety Night, we were forced to cancel Variety Night."

Although this has been a disappointment for some, the students have been quick to recover. They are already looking forward to their Christmas Formal.

The students hope this is a great success. They believe next year might bring more talent and courage for a 1985 Variety Night. The students remain optimistic.



Getting down to Christmas

Ray Cavalaire, maintenance man at the Highland Motel, is dwarfed by a 10-foot-high Christmas spruce he installed in the lobby last Wednesday.



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