



Enjoy a real tradition

Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario

Caring for Live (Potted) Christmas Trees

Here are some tips, recommended by the Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario, on choosing and looking after a live tree:

1. When choosing a live tree, the final location in your yard must influence the type you select. Most species like a sheltered area out of the wind while they are young, but all enjoy lots of sunlight. Soil types and the local environment influence which species of evergreen will grow best in your garden. Check with a reliable tree nursery or a government forester to find out which species will do well in your area.
2. Make sure that the root ball around the base of the tree is securely bound and that the dirt around it is tightly packed. If the roots have become detached from the soil ball, the tree will not grow well. Always carry the tree by the root ball, not the trunk.
3. Water the root ball as soon as you get the tree home. Let the excess water drain off for at least a full day before wrapping it in plastic to preserve moisture. The plastic will also protect your household floors. The root ball should be kept damp, but not soaking wet. Make sure the tree receives adequate water.
4. The tree should be stored in an unheated and sheltered area such as a garage or porch, out of the wind and sun. Do not expose the root ball to repetitive freezing and thawing.
5. Ten days is the maximum time that a live tree should spend in a heated house. If they stay inside any longer, they will become too accustomed to being in the warmth and will not be able to withstand the harsh cold outside again. Don't move the tree abruptly between temperature extremes either taking it into the house or back out.
6. The tree may be decorated, but with care. If lights are used, make sure that they give off as little heat as possible. Twinkle lights are best.



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7. Remember, when removing the tree not to expose it to abrupt and extreme temperature changes. Plant the tree as soon as possible. If the ground is not frozen, the tree may be replanted immediately. The spot to be dug should be mulched to prevent freezing. Some people dig the hole for their tree before freeze-up. If you are planting immediately, remove the plastic from the root ball. Do not remove the burlap and strapping. This keeps the root ball solid and secure. Set the tree in place and cover the hole with soil and straw. Earth removed from the original hole should be back-filled around the root ball. Mulch heavily over the top of the planted root ball to prevent it from freezing. Water frequently but carefully in the spring: a flooded tree may die. Stake the tree to prevent wind-tipping or damage during the first growing season.
 8. If you are not able to plant your tree immediately after Christmas, store the tree outside in a sheltered spot until spring. Pack the roots generously in straw and snow to protect them from freezing.
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