

Your Holiday Tree Guide

How to Maintain Your Cut or Potted Christmas Tree



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The Centerpiece of Your Holiday Decor

Ah, the annual holiday traditions. Hanging the stockings with care. Digging out the ornaments from the attic or basement. Wrapping the gifts.

Having a very heated discussion over what type of tree to get this year.

No need to fight - each type has benefits and requirements to consider as you decide what kind of tree you want. Cut? Potted? Artificial?

Okay, we're going to stop you right there. You don't want artificial - for a variety of aesthetic and environmental reasons. **(Look here for why →→→)**

Here's your guide to the pros, cons, and care requirements of real Christmas trees.

The Case Against Artificial Trees

Did you know that real trees are more ecologically friendly than artificial ones? That may seem counterintuitive; if I buy a fake tree, that means 10 trees that won't be cut down during the next decade. That's more environmentally sound, right?

Not really. Many "fake" trees use polyvinyl chloride in their manufacturing, producing carcinogens during manufacturing and in disposal.

By contrast, when you get your recyclable and biodegradable real tree, it most likely has been grown on a special plantation, supporting local farmers with a sustainable crop. Your tree has been giving back to nature for about a decade prior to your purchase, providing oxygen and a habitat for small birds and animals. And if you opt for a tree that you will plant in your yard after the holidays, the environmental benefits will continue.



Cut Trees

While Christmas trees are usually available the week of Thanksgiving, people often hold off purchasing a cut one until closer to the holiday, afraid it will dry out before Christmas. A few simple steps, however, will ensure that your trees stay fresh throughout the season.



- Before you place your cut tree indoors, spray it with CloudCover, a harmless, transparent film that reduces water loss, keeping tree needles fresh and moist.
- Make a fresh cut of at least a half inch off the trunk of the tree to allow the tree to take up water. Your tree needs to be placed in its stand with water immediately after that; if the trunk is not immersed in water within 15 minutes after the cut, it will seal off and not be able to take up water.
- Once the stand is mounted and your tree is properly situated (far away from heater ducts and fireplaces), fill the water tray with lukewarm water. Check the water level in your tree stand daily, ensuring the trunk is immersed in water. You can also add a preservative like Keeps-It-Green to the water to keep the tree fresher longer.

Potted Trees

For potted trees, proper care is even more important. One of the disadvantages of a potted tree is that you can only have it in your home for a brief period of time (about a week, otherwise it might break dormancy). However, you then get to plant it and enjoy it for years to come as part of your landscape.



- First, acclimate your tree by placing it in partial sunlight outside one week prior to bringing it indoors.
- The day before bringing it into your house, hose the tree down to remove dust and insects and spray with CloudCover to protect against dehydration.
- Once inside, set your tree in a large tray to catch overflow and protect your floors. It should be situated close to a window for light and far away from heating ducts or fireplaces that could sap its moisture.
- Continue watering daily. Add a few ice cubes to keep the tree cool and prevent it from breaking dormancy.
- After a week, place your tree in a shady spot outside until you're ready to plant.
- After planting, water the tree thoroughly, then once a day for the first week, then once a week thereafter.