



Living Christmas Tree Care

Buying a live Christmas tree is a great idea! You not only get a live Christmas tree in the house for the holidays and a new family tradition, but you also get a tree that you can add to your yard in spring. Here are a few helpful tips on how to care for your live Christmas tree.

Water your tree thoroughly before bringing it into your home.

Place a saucer under the tree to protect the floor or table. Some people find it works well to put ice cubes on the top of the root ball so that the tree can slowly absorb the water. Check weekly for moisture by inserting a small screwdriver into the root ball about 3 inches from the trunk. The screwdriver should slide easily into the soil when there is adequate moisture. Should you find that the screwdriver doesn't slide in easily, the tree needs to be watered. The tree may use a quart of water a day in a warm home over 72°.

One of the most important things to remember is to give the tree gradual change in temperature – move it in and out of the house in stages. For example, when you bring the tree into the house, it is best to put it in a garage or entry way where the temperature is warmer than outdoors but not as hot as in the interior temperature of the home. The same is true after Christmas. Acclimate the tree slowly, move the tree from a 70°F room to say a 40°F or 50°F room (or area, such as a garage) for at least two days, then move it to the outside.

Place the tree outside right after Christmas. Keep it in the garage until the temperatures meet or exceed 40°. You can also place the tree on the East or North side of your home until it is planted.

Protect your tree from fluctuating temperatures. The tree can be kept in a cool basement or garage all winter, and will require watering about twice a month and more often than that, if the temperature is above 55°F. You can also lay the tree down along the north or east side of the house and covered with snow, straw or some other material to protect it from fluctuating temperatures.

When the frost leaves the ground it is time to plant the tree. Dig the hole at least six or eight inches deeper and wider than necessary and put good black dirt below and all around the roots. If the tree is in a cardboard pot be sure to remove the sides of the pot **after** you place the tree in the hole for planting. If the tree is balled and burlapped (B&B) leave the burlap on and remove strings around the trunk; this will ensure that the tree will not be girdled.

Mix one part compost with two parts soil and fill the hole part way up so that the top of the root ball will be 2-3 inches below ground level. Place the tree in the hole. Backfill with remaining soil mix, and then water immediately and thoroughly. Adding root stimulator will help reduce shock, then water again. Leave a small-size well around the root ball so that the water will soak the root area. The tree will need some food starting in March. You may use a slow-release fertilizer for convenience.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out. We want you to be successful!