



## Tips and Information About Natural Christmas Trees

**It's in the air ! Christmas will soon be here !**

The fragrance and majesty of a natural Christmas tree are as much a part of the season as candy canes and Santa. Here are a few tips on the selection and care of your natural Christmas tree.

### Selecting Your Christmas Tree !

#### Plan Ahead.

Examine the room where you want to put your tree. Trees have a way of looking “taller” when you get them home, be sure to measure ceiling height and floor space beforehand. Nova Scotia growers produce a variety of tree shapes, so with a little research, you can find the perfect tree for the spot.



#### Cutting Your Own Tree.

Contact a grower who operates a “choose and cut” lot. For a fee, you and your family can have the fun of selecting and cutting a cultivated or natural tree. But resist the temptation to simply head to the nearest woods with a saw.....you may be trespassing and stealing!

#### Picking a Tree Lot.

Look for an established, reputable grower or retailer. Someone who can help you select the best tree for your requirements, and who will be there tomorrow if you have a question or concern.

#### Check for Freshness.

Lift the tree a few inches off the ground and then drop it on the stump end. If outside green needles fall off, the tree may not be fresh. However, some needle drop from a pine is not the sign of an old or dry tree.

## Check the Needles.

Bend a needle between your thumb and forefinger. If bent gently, a Balsam fir needle from a fresh tree will break, while a needle from a fresh pine should not break.

## Handle With Care.

Protect your tree from salt spray on the drive home. If you won't be decorating for a few days, keep the tree outdoors, away from the drying effects of wind and sun.

Make a fresh straight cut across the trunk about 2 cm up so the tree can absorb water and plunge the trunk into a container of water so that the end of the trunk is covered. If the water level drops below the fresh cut, a seal will form and reduce the adsorption of water.

## Get Ready.

Bring the tree into a partly heated area such as a porch or basement, the night before decorating. This will help it adjust gradually to warmer temperatures and allow the branches to "relax" to their natural shape.



## Tips for Recycling Your Christmas Tree

When your tree begins to look dull or dry out, take it down. **But don't throw it away....it still has many uses.**

### Winter Bird Feeder.

Place it in the garden or back yard and trim with orange slices, bread, cranberries, bird seed and suet. Trim off the lower branches so they don't provide a hiding place for cats or other predators.

### Garden Mulch.

The branches can be removed and used as winter protection in the garden. The trunk can be chopped or chipped too.

## Garden Ornamental.

Balled and potted trees can be planted in the yard at a later date for added years of enjoyment. Consult your local nursery or garden centre for transplant instructions.

## Pond Refuge.

Sunk into fish ponds, trees make excellent refuge and feeding areas.

## Potpourri.

Branch tips and needles provide aromatic stuffing for sachets.

## Community Programs.

Check your newspaper to see if your community offers Christmas tree recycling. Many communities conduct chipping programs. Some coastal communities use trees at nearby beaches to reduce sand and soil erosion.

