

For Immediate Release

Live Trees Ideal for Late Holiday Decorating

CHAMPAIGN, IL (December 2012) – Still haven't selected your tree for the holidays? Prefer to wait and display your tree closer to Christmas? Then you should consider a live Christmas tree. Live Christmas trees are ideal for short term decorating and also provide long term benefits for both the environment and your landscape long after the Christmas season has passed.

A live tree can be bought at a nursery. The tree must be in a container or have a root ball wrapped in burlap. More and more, this trend is catching on, so you may be able to find live trees for sale elsewhere, as well. Unlike Christmas trees that are cut at the trunk, these trees have the root ball intact and can be planted in the ground after the holidays.

Planting a live Christmas tree not only provides habitat for birds and wildlife, but it also replenishes the air with oxygen, increases soil stability, and generally makes your landscape more beautiful. Other advantages include the fact that live trees do not dry as quickly as cut trees, and, if containerized, it eliminates the need for a stand. Live trees have been seen popping up on front porches and in backyards, which is great for those with allergies, as all allergens are kept outside. Families can even start a new tradition of planting their trees as mementos which will continue to grow with them year after year. (If you don't have room for your trees, look for an organization that will accept your tree donation and plant it for you somewhere with more space.)

The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) suggests homeowners take the following steps to give live Christmas trees the best opportunity to thrive—before and after the holiday season:

- **Choose the correct species.** Verify with reliable nurseries that the species you have selected is adaptable to your region and climate.
- **Choose a moist soil ball.** Trees with frozen soil balls are more prone to die than those housed in moist and unfrozen soil.
- **Garage your tree.** Even though your tree will be dormant, you still need to let your tree gradually acclimate to temperature changes if you plan on displaying it inside. Spending a day or two in the garage before being brought indoors will reduce tree stress associated with rapid and drastic climate changes.
- **Limit indoor exposure.** Five to seven days inside is enough for any live Christmas tree. The less time spent in your home, the better the tree's chance of survival.
- **Monitor soil moisture while indoors.** Remember to check the moisture level of the soil frequently. The soil surrounding the root ball should be kept moist but not wet.
- **Garage your tree again.** When family celebrations end, repeat this brief storage period before planting the tree in its pre-dug hole.
- **Dig before it freezes.*** Then fill the hole with straw and cover it with safety boards until planting time. The soil itself should be removed from the hole and stored in an area (a garage, for example) where it will not freeze. *If ground is already frozen, dig and plant as soon as the ground thaws. As long as the tree has remained dormant and healthy, it will thrive outdoors until it can be planted.

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For More Information

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- **Think before you dig.** Most species used for Christmas trees (pine, spruce, and fir) grow to be more than 50 feet tall and 20 feet wide. Make sure you have enough space allotted for a fully-grown tree.
- **Plant and water.** Remove any burlap from the soil ball, place the tree in its designated spot, and fill the remaining hole with soil removed from the hole earlier. Water the tree thoroughly to sustain it through the winter.

About ISA

The International Society of Arboriculture (ISA), headquartered in Champaign, Ill., is a nonprofit organization supporting tree care research and education around the world. To promote the importance of arboriculture, ISA manages the consumer education web site, www.treesaregood.org, which fulfills the association's mission to help educate the public about the importance and value of proper tree care. Also, as part of ISA's dedication to the care and preservation of shade and ornamental trees, it offers the only internationally-recognized certification program in the industry. For more information on ISA and Certified Arborists, visit isa-arbor.com.



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