

CHRISTMAS TREE & WREATH CARE TIPS

A FEW TIPS FOR KEEPING LIVE TREES AND WREATHS ALIVE THROUGHOUT THE HOLIDAY SEASON.





It's that wonderful time of year when the streets are filled with lights, and people are milling about looking for the perfect gift.

This time of year also comes with a tradition of decorating our homes with beautiful greenery in the forms of Christmas trees and wreaths.

For those of us who make getting a live Christmas tree and wreath an annual tradition, we know that they require and deserve some care while they grace our homes. From picking out the tree together to decorating while sipping eggnog and listening to Christmas carols, it really is a special tradition.

As many families have learned, however, keeping a tree alive and thriving through Christmas Day can be more challenging than expected. Your family wants to be able to enjoy it throughout the month of December and avoid waking up Christmas morning

to a tree that is less than lively and festive. Well, you're in luck! We have the tips and tricks to keep your beautiful decorations fresh and alive this holiday season.

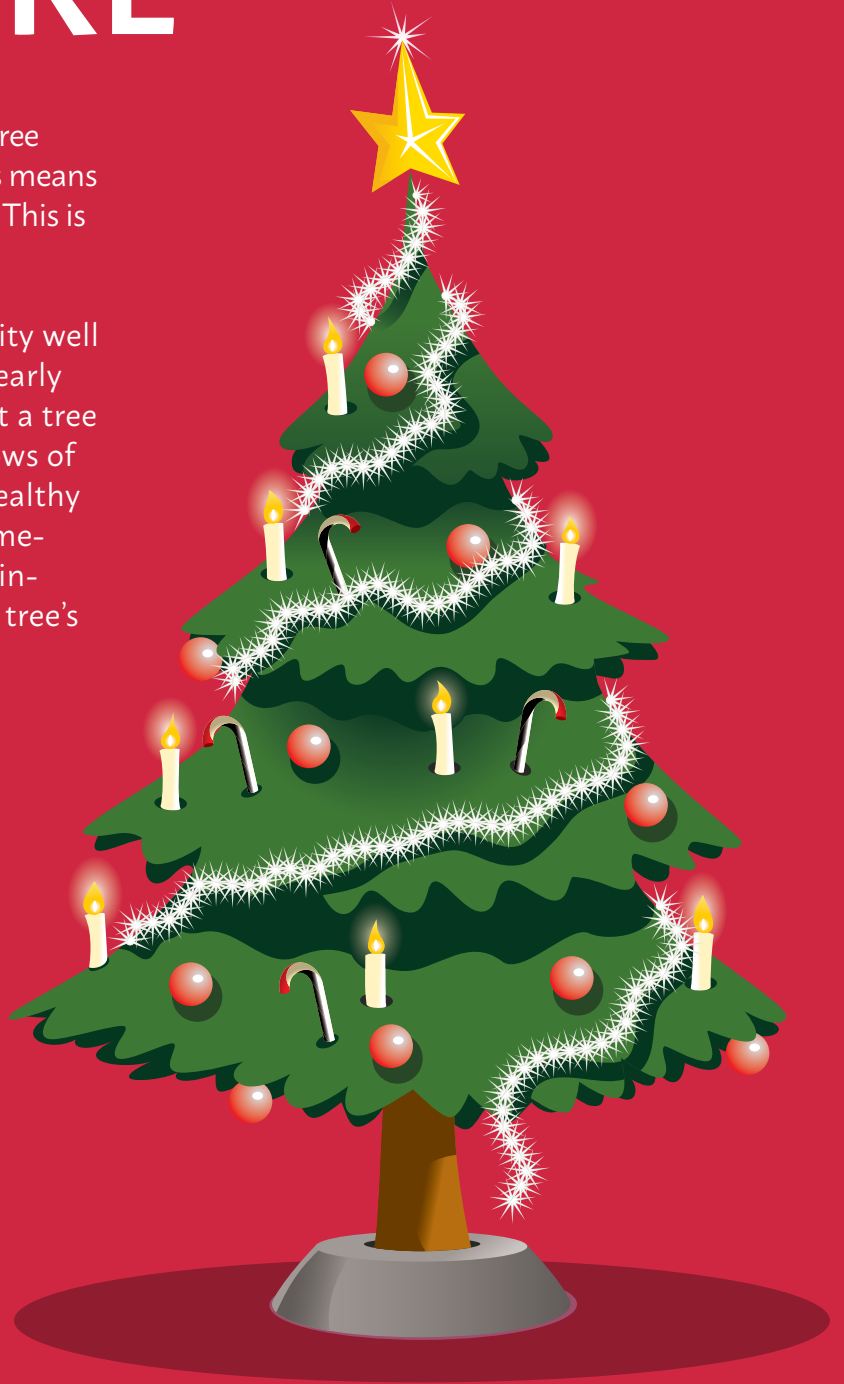
With a little TLC and the right care, your tree and wreath can last for weeks! Here are a few tips for keeping live trees and wreaths alive throughout the Christmas season.



CHRISTMAS TREE CARE

Many families purchase their Christmas tree near Thanksgiving or soon afterward, this means that your tree must last about five weeks. This is completely doable with proper care.

A Christmas tree can maintain its quality well past Christmas Day, even if you buy it early in the season. This starts by picking out a tree on the lot. You'll likely be faced with rows of vibrant green trees, all of which look healthy in their displayed state. This can be somewhat deceptive, preventing you from pinpointing problems that could lead to a tree's early demise.



Here are a few things to search for during your Christmas tree search:

Look for green!

This may sound obvious, but the first indication that a tree may not last is the smallest browning of its needles. So it's important to not only look at your ideal shape and height, but also the green of your tree's needles. If you're buying a tree that has already been cut down, it could have lost a bit of its color in the shipping process, don't let this get you down, just look for a tree that is mostly green in color.

Shake the tree gently.

Try not to get too carried away with this one. The idea here is to test if the tree is on the dry side. Some needle drop off is normal, but if a lot of the green needles are coming off with a slight shake, the tree could be dry. This could lead to your tree browning quicker than you'd like.

Bend a few needles.

Are they flexible or do they snap? Healthy needles should be flexible enough to bend when folded.

Do the finger test.

Run your forefinger and thumb along one of the branches. A healthy tree's needles will stay attached during this test. If needles are dry, they'll fall off. Go for a tree that passes the finger test to ensure a longer life for your new tree.

Ask for a fresh cut.

After you've selected your tree, ask for a fresh cut at the base of the tree. Typically Christmas tree vendors will know exactly where to

cut the tree, it should be just a few inches off the bottom to allow the tree to absorb water as it lives in your home. If the lot doesn't provide that service, do the cut yourself when you arrive home (more on that later).

Hopefully, after following these steps you're going home with a beautiful tree that will last through Christmas! Now you just have to take good care of it while it's in your home. Read on for home care tips.

At Home Christmas Tree Care

Give Your Tree a Fresh Cut.

Do this if and only if the vendor did not cut the trunk for you before you left the lot. To do this, use a sharp saw or a chainsaw to cut a couple of inches off the bottom of the trunk before placing it in its base.

Give Your Tree Plenty of Water.

Your tree should enjoy plenty of water as soon as you get it home. Place the tree in a stand with 1 quarter inch of water for every inch of the stem's diameter. Periodically check the water and if it ever drifts below the base of the tree, add more! Your tree will likely soak up quite a bit of water, so be sure to check the water level frequently.

Keep Your Tree Cool.

Your home is likely much warmer than the climate your tree has grown accustomed to. Keep your tree away from heating ducts or radiators to keep it happy and healthy. The lower the temperature, the better your tree will do.

Use these simple tips to keep your tree bright throughout the holiday season!

CHRISTMAS WREATH CARE

As with a live Christmas tree, a wreath's long life begins at purchase. Follow the above steps when determining which wreath to take home. Like a tree, your wreath should have green needles that are flexible when bent.

Pine, fir, and cedar wreaths are the best for Christmas decorations since their needles tend to last the longest.

For best results, hang your wreath in a well-shaded area that has **minimal exposure to direct sunlight**.

To extend a wreath's life, **mist it with water every couple of days**. This will give the nee-

dles the moisture they need to stay green as long as possible.

With the right care, live trees and wreaths can provide weeks of beautiful Christmas decorations. Not only is live greenery provide a more inviting scent than its artificial counterpart, but it brings the beauty of the outdoors to your own home, creating traditions your family can enjoy for many years to come.



Reusing and Recycling Christmas Trees and Wreaths

After the holiday season comes to an end, we're left with decorations that are often just tossed away.

There are many ways to reuse or recycle these items and be friendly to the environment and avoid waste. Before you toss your wreath and tree out this year, consider one of these many ways to reuse or recycle them!

Use an old tree for birds.

Put your old tree outside near your bird feeder so small birds like chickadees can use it as a perch.

Use the trunk for firewood.

Trim the branches and cut the trunk into pieces to be used in a fireplace.

Make fire starters.

Pine needles are very flammable. Trim branches into small pieces and put in small bags to use when camping or having an outdoor bonfire.

Find a Friend or a Neighbor.

Platforms like NextDoor often have people who are willing to volunteer their woodchippers to dispose of trees. You could even find someone in your area who is looking to collect old trees for wood or scrap.

We hope you found some useful tips and are on your way to having a wonderful holiday with trees and wreaths that will last throughout the holiday season!

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