



Our Christmas wish for you:

*May be Peace, Joy, and Love of Christmas
be with you in this special season
and throughout the coming New Year!*

If you'd like to read some of the history and legends of the Christmas tree, here is a lovely web site you might enjoy:
<http://morning-glow.com/holidays/xmas/xmaswish.html>

Caring for Your Christmas Tree



**Georgia Mountains
Master Gardeners**

<http://www.gammg.org>



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KEEPING A CUT CHRISTMAS TREE FRESH (AND SAFE)

Some people believe Christmas just isn't Christmas without a real, fresh-cut Christmas tree. And of course, you want your perfect tree to last for the whole Christmas season. So here are some easy-to-follow steps for keeping it fresh and lovely as long as possible.

1. When you first buy your tree, if you did not have us put a fresh cut on it, then do so by making a straight cut about an inch from the butt end, using a hand saw or chain saw, and then immediately place it in water. The cut allows the tree to drink up lots of water which prolongs its freshness significantly.
2. If you don't plan to put the tree up right away, store it in a cool shady spot, garage, or basement in a large bucket of water until you're ready to decorate it.
3. You can decorate your tree outdoors, as long as you use outdoor-grade tree lights. But if you want to set it up inside your home, choose a place that isn't too close to a heat vent or the fireplace to keep it from drying out and/or becoming a fire hazard.
4. At decorating time, place the tree in a stand that can hold at least 1 gallon of water. The tree will take up lots of water, so give it plenty the first few days until the rate of uptake slows down a bit.
5. Always keep the base of the tree in water. If the base dries out, resin will form over the cut end, and the tree will no longer be able to drink. This will cause it to dry out quickly.
6. Before putting Christmas lights on your tree, check for worn electrical cords. Use only UL-approved electrical decorations and cords. Using miniature lights produces less heat and reduces the drying effect on the tree or any chance of fire. Always unplug your Christmas tree lights at night and when you're away from home.

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CARING FOR A LIVE CHRISTMAS TREE

If you're someone who likes to have a beautiful Christmas tree you can decorate for Christmas and then plant it in your yard to enjoy year-round, consider getting a live tree – either balled-and-burlapped or in a container. Here are some tips for caring for your live tree.

1. Select a live tree that has good color and isn't showing signs of shedding needles.
2. After you get the tree home, check the soil for moisture. If it's dry, water it immediately, giving a container tree about a gallon of water or soaking a b&b tree slowly for about 15 minutes with the hose.
3. As with a cut tree, you can decorate a live tree outdoors or indoors, being sure to use the appropriate type of Christmas lights.
4. If you bring your live tree indoors to decorate it, be sure to place something under it to protect your floors. Water it about once a week as long as it's indoors.
5. After Christmas, choose a sunny well-drained sight in your yard to plant your live tree. Dig a hole only as deep as the container or ball, but three times as wide. Using a high-quality soil amendment such as Mr. Natural Woodland Soil Mix or Complete Landscape Mix, amend the soil at a ratio of 2 parts native soil to 1 part soil amendment. For a container tree, remove the container and place your tree in the hole. For a b&b tree, place the tree in the hole and fold down the top half of the burlap. Refill the hole with the mixed soil, press it down gently but firmly to remove any air pockets, and water it well.
6. For the first year, water your tree about an inch a week unless you receive adequate rainfall. You may fertilize it in the fall and spring, using an acid-based fertilizer such as Espoma Holly Tone.

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