



BUYING THAT SPECIAL CHRISTMAS TREE

By Jonathan Vickers

Finding that special Christmas tree might seem hard but with some important tips it can make finding that tree to fit into that special room in your house worthwhile. Below is some information to make your tree hunting a little easier and worthwhile for the holiday season.

Measure your room and the height of your ceiling. There is nothing worse than buying a tree that is too wide and too tall for the room you plan to put the tree in.

Depending if you buy your tree from a retail lot or a tree farm, make sure the vehicle you take can handle the tree, either on top of the vehicle or in the back of a truck. Make sure you bring plenty of rope or tie downs and red flags/cloth to let other vehicles know what you are transporting. Make sure the branches do not obstruct your vision of the road if the tree is on your roof rack.

Retail lots such as grocery stores/hardware stores/and department stores offer a simple variety of trees and they are wrapped. The prices are often lower but so is the

quality of the tree and it has probably been cut down 30-60 days prior to reaching the lot. Nurseries in our area carry a better quality tree and offer better selections of species of trees. The prices might be higher and a lot of the time the tree won't be wrapped

If you are buying a Christmas tree from a retail lot, try and find a tree that is not wrapped. The main thing to remember is freshness when selecting a Christmas tree. Take hold of a branch and pull your hand toward you, allowing the needles to slip through your fingers, they should bounce back. Most, if not all, of the needles should stay on the Christmas tree.

Lifting and gently tapping the tree on a hard surface should not result in a shower of green needles. Brown needles that have shed the previous year are fine. The Christmas tree should have a fragrance and rich green color. Branches should be pliable and bend without much resistance.

Now the best thing is to purchase the tree fresh from a local Christmas tree farm. In most cases you can find a Christmas tree farm close enough to allow you and/or your kids to cut the tree or buy one that the farm has just cut. Harvesting a tree from a local farm is becoming more and more a favorite family event. It is a great outing and a day truly to remember and a cherished Christmas tradition to hand down.

Cut one-quarter inch off the base of trunk if the Christmas tree has been harvested over 4 hours. This fresh cut will encourage the free flow of water into the tree to preserve freshness.

- ✓ Water, water, water; and don't let the water ever go below the fresh cut base. This will cause the base to seal. Christmas trees are very thirsty and will use up to a gallon of water each day. Check the stand each day for water. Did I mention water?
- ✓ Display your Christmas tree in a cool place but out of a draft. Fireplaces can dry your tree prematurely. Do not place Candles nearby!!!
- ✓ keep your pets away from the tree. Dogs like to drink from the water base and possibly (well you know... without going outside!!!) Cat's like to climb things and with all sorts of shiny things on the tree and the lights, let's just say the temptation is too much for them.

Lastly, I would recommend, like Clark W. Griswold found out in "Christmas Vacation", check for squirrels on the lot or tree farm before bringing it home!! Enjoy your tree and Merry Christmas! **LH**