

HOW TO CARE FOR A LIVE, POTTED CHRISTMAS TREE

The potted Christmas tree has many levels of appeal. Potted living evergreens can be brought indoors for short periods and decorated for the holidays. Not only are they visually appealing but they also add a delightful outdoor fragrance within the home. After Christmas, these trees can be planted into the garden.

INDOOR CARE

Potted Christmas trees require some simple but special care to ensure longevity indoors. Keep potted trees outdoors until the day they are to be decorated. Never place the tree near a heat vent or by a fireplace. Forced air heating and a lack of indoor humidity create severe moisture stress on these trees. Also indoor temperatures may trigger new buds to break dormancy, and begin to grow, therefore potted trees should be limited to a maximum of 10-12 days indoors. Be sure to water the entire pot thoroughly the day after the pot has been brought in. It will require watering every four to five days. Be sure to place the tree on a large saucer or within a larger pot to catch any excess water that drains from the pot. Also be sure to place the tree on a surface that is able to withstand the weight of the tree once it has been watered.

OUTDOOR CARE

After the Christmas season has past, it is necessary to return the tree to a cold area. There are two options one may wish to follow.

1. The first option is to water the tree thoroughly prior to placing it outdoors in a sheltered location, which protects against winter winds. An enclosed porch, garden shed or unheated garage is ideal. It is also important to water the tree while outdoors to prevent the root ball from severely drying out. With the arrival of spring the tree can be planted once the ground has thawed. One may also wish to up-plant the tree into a larger container for use the following Christmas. It may only be practical to use the tree for one to two seasons indoors before it should be planted permanently into the landscape.



WE RECOMMEND

2. The second option is to pre-dig a large enough hole in the garden before the ground has frozen, so after the Christmas season you can plant the tree. Before planting thoroughly water the evergreen. Remove the tree from the container and place into the hole. Back fill the tree hole with loose workable soil; we recommend bringing indoors a 5 gallon bucket of topsoil. Thoroughly water after planting. Newly planted trees also greatly benefit from being wrapped with burlap for the winter. This will help insulate and protect the tree against the drying winter winds. An anti-desiccant such as "Safers Evergreen Protectant" or "Wilt proof" sprayed onto the needles will further help retain moisture during the winter.