

'Tis the Season...

For Live Christmas Trees

If you're considering getting a live Christmas tree that can move from your living room to your back yard, there are some things you need to know to ensure that transition happens as smoothly as possible.

First off, it's going to be heavy. Don't forget that if you have stairs or steps to navigate. Secondly, temperatures are dropping and if it gets too cold, the top layer of soil will freeze, making digging the tree's new home nearly impossible. You might want to dig the hole now. Last, but not least, location, location, location. Don't forget to place it far enough away from buildings, overhead wires, driveways, and sidewalks. It's going to get taller and wider – maybe a lot – so be sure to plan for its mature size to reduce conflicts as it grows.

You have a choice of planting it right away or waiting until warmer weather arrives. Both ways have specific considerations. Right now the tree is dormant, so that often means the tree is less likely to suffer during transplanting. If you choose to dig the hole now, make sure to dig it at least twice as wide as the root ball, and not too deep. Key points to remember, most evergreens don't like to have their roots constantly wet, so avoid planting them where it's frequently wet. Also avoid planting it too deep in the ground. Keeping those facts in mind will help your tree flourish.

If you choose to wait to plant it, you should temporarily move it to an unheated area like a garage for a period of time to help it adjust from the warmth of your home to the cold outdoors. After a week or so, you can then move it out to a sheltered place until planting. During this time though, its roots are vulnerable. If you leave the tree outside, waiting for spring, those roots are now more likely to be injured or killed by freezing temperatures and loss of moisture. Cover the root ball with a thick layer of mulch or straw or anything that will protect the root ball through the coldest part of winter. It won't need a lot of water, but some moisture is good so it should be watered periodically.



Inside your home, try to avoid placing it too close to heat sources. The warmth will start to "wake up" the tree, and you really don't want that. You might even want to be a little Scrooge-like and keep the house a little cooler than normal. It's for a good cause. And don't leave it in the house too long for the same reason. You can even place ice cubes on the root ball to help keep the roots moist and the soil cool.

If you do all these things, you will have a very good chance of getting to watch your tree grow healthy and strong in your yard, a constant reminder of Christmases past.

LEARN MORE



The Ohio Chapter International Society of Arboriculture's mission is to advance responsible tree care practices through research, technology, and education while promoting the benefits of trees.

Over 1,000 Ohio Professionals Ready to Help!

There are over 1,000 qualified tree experts in the state of Ohio who have passed rigorous training and testing by the International Society of Arboriculture to become ISA Certified Arborists. These tree care professionals have the knowledge and experience to ensure your trees are in a safe, healthy, and functional condition. To find one in your area, visit www.trees4ohio.org.

