



# FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## 'Tis the Season... *For Live Christmas Trees*

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If you're considering getting a live Christmas tree that can move from your living room to your back yard this year, 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. Having a couple of healthy, 20 something ex-football players handy isn't a bad idea. Secondly, it's December. 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. And speaking of its new home, don't forget to place it far enough away from buildings, overhead wires, and 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. Any time you can dig a hole in the ground, you can plant a tree. 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. More trees die from being planted too deep than too shallow, and most evergreens don't like to have their roots constantly wet, so avoid planting them where it's constantly wet, or too deep in the ground and that will help them 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. When a tree is in the ground, the soil around the roots protects them. 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. Whether that comes from rain, melting snow, or you, it should at least 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.

– END –

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