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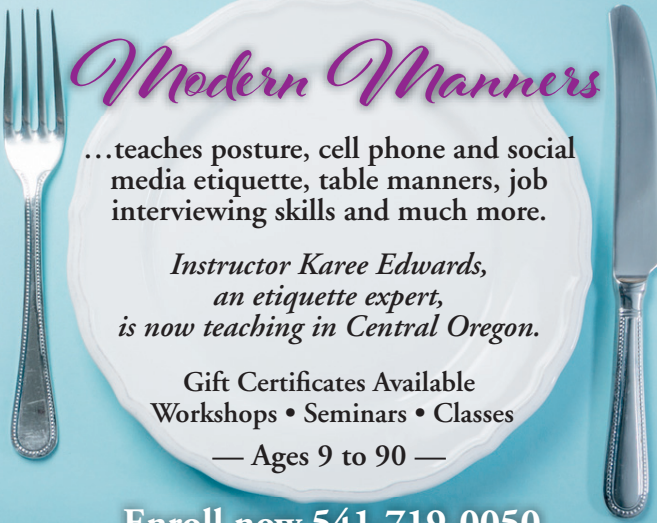


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Treat your tree to vodka?

— By Kym Pokorny, Correspondent —

CORVALLIS – From vodka in the water to I.V. tubes in the trunk, there are lots of urban myths about how to take care of your cut Christmas tree. Chal Landgren, a Christmas tree specialist with Oregon State University Extension Service, busts those myths with answers to some common questions.

Q. How do I know a tree is fresh when I purchase it?
A. Choose a tree that looks green and healthy with needles that snap like a fresh carrot. Shake it a few times to get rid of old needles. Once you're home, place the tree in water if you do not plan to put it up immediately. Choose a large, water-filled stand to display the tree indoors. Check the water level daily; trees will be very thirsty the first few days inside a heated home.

Q. Do I need to recut the stem after I get my tree home?
A. Yes, if more than 24 hours has elapsed since the stem was last cut. The fresh cut helps water uptake and the sooner you can get the tree into water, the fresher it will be.

Q. Do I need to cut two inches off the tree base for it to take up water in the stand?
A. No, cutting a 1/4-inch slice off the base is plenty for water uptake.

Q. Do I need to cut the base of the trees at an angle, drill holes in the base, or install plastic tubes so the tree can get water?
A. No. Water begins the path up the tree via microscopic tubes called "tracheids" in the wood just beneath the bark. The wood near the outer part of the stem is very efficient in conducting water and becomes less so towards the center. Simply cut the stem perpendicular to the trunk to maximize the area exposed to the water.

Q. Do I need to add something to the water to help the tree stay fresher?
A. People have added all kinds of things to water, including vodka, 7-Up, bleach, aspirin and sugar. However, clean, cold water is all that is needed. Some additives actually can cause your tree to shed needles or dry out faster.

Q. Will any tree stand work, as long as it holds the tree up?
A. No. A stand should hold a quart of water for every inch of stem diameter. A tree with a 6-inch stem diameter will need a stand that holds a gallon and a half of water. Very few stands have the capacity for today's large trees. Consider purchasing a new stand, or a smaller tree, if the water capacity is not adequate.

Q. If my decorated tree runs out of water, do I need to take it down and recut the base?
A. No. If you refill the water stand within 24 hours of going dry, most trees (Douglas fir, noble, Nordmann, Fraser) should re-hydrate. For grand fir, 12 hours may be the limit.

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Clearwater Gallery & The Open Door

Nowhere in Sisters does art, food, wine and a sense of community come together in a more integrated way than at Clearwater Gallery and The Open Door. All the elements come together there in a manner that has made the gallery, restaurant and wine bar a favorite for locals and a destination for visitors.

This holiday season, get your photos and art gifts framed in classy and classic style with custom quality frames at Clearwater Gallery. They have a big selection of ready-made frames in common 5x7; 8x10 and 11x14 sizes.

Gift certificates for either the restaurant or the gallery (or both) make delightful gifts for the stocking, and who doesn't love getting a nice bottle of wine for a Christmas or hostess gift?

At Clearwater Gallery you can find jewelry, glass art and fine art gifts ranging from \$20 on up — all from some of the finest artists in Sisters Country and the Pacific Northwest.

