

# fresh greenery

Your holidays may not be the same without the aroma of pine, cedar or fir. These plants make great wreaths, garlands and trees for your décor but need extra care to weather the holidays.

## Fresh or Faux?

If you're choosing between fresh and faux, ask yourself if the unique look and smell of live greenery is worth the extra expense and work. Fresh greenery can be two to three times more expensive than its artificial counterparts and can't be reused from year to year. Live greenery can last from three weeks indoors to several months when kept outdoors in cold climates. If you buy your greenery too early in the season or don't care for it properly, you could find yourself having to replace it, doubling your costs.

On the other hand, you can spend less and buy pre-lit faux greenery that will save you some decorating time each year. As lighting technology makes our décor smarter, the ability to easily program your greenery to light up with the rest of your decorations might be appealing.

Live greenery also requires some specific care that you might not be up to handling during the busy holiday season. Watering, trimming and cleaning up dropped needles could become an unnecessary bother while you're busy shopping for gifts, attending or hosting parties and otherwise preparing for holiday festivities.

## Types

There is much to consider about the specific type of live plant you choose for your décor. For example, white pine is soft and may droop under the weight of heavy ornaments, while a Virginia pine will thrive in a warmer environment and drop few needles. Noble fir has all-around appeal as a whole tree or cutting, while you might be surprised to learn that white spruce needles give off an unpleasant odor. Do some research about the type of tree that will work best for the intended purpose. The National Christmas Tree Association offers profiles of each type of tree on its website at [www.realchristmastrees.org/dnn/Education/Tree-Varieties](http://www.realchristmastrees.org/dnn/Education/Tree-Varieties).

## Care

Fresh greenery hung in warm or dry areas should be watered every couple of days, either by spraying with water from a bottle or by laying it in a few inches of water. A cool outdoor place is the best option for longevity and minimal care.

When hanging fresh greenery indoors, avoid areas near heat sources or direct sunlight to extend its life.

Martha Stewart recommends "conditioning" live cuttings by trimming the branches at a 45-degree angle and gently crushing the end of the stem with a small hammer, then letting them rest in water for a few hours. She also recommends spraying with an anti-desiccant spray found at nurseries to keep in moisture by sealing the plant's pores. If you plan to place the greenery in water, re-cut the branches at a 45-degree angle to help them better absorb water.

