

Christmas Tree hints

Any kind of containerized tree to be used as a living Christmas tree must be moved indoors gradually.

Even so, chances are poor that the tree will survive the move indoors and then out again.

Trees that were grown in their containers and have well-developed root systems are hardier than those that have just been dug and transplanted to large pots. If you are buying a containerized tree this Christmas, find out how it was grown before making the purchase.

Once the tree is at home, a two or three stage relocation procedure will allow the tree to adjust to warmer inside temperatures. Place it in an unheated garage for four days, then in an unheated room in the house, if possible.

Place it in the coolest location in the room where it

will be a decoration. Keep it away from hot air ducts and large windows where the sun could cause severe scald. The tree should be kept at normal indoor temperatures no more than four to five days.

The tree may respond to the higher indoor temperature by starting to grow. Test the container soil surface daily and add water when it feels dry.

Most people fail to water the tree enough and as a result it dries out and the roots are damaged.

Decorations are fine as long as they do not break twigs and branches. Keep hot bulbs away from the foliage and never use flocking or artificial snow.

When it's time to move the tree outdoors after the holidays, reverse the procedure. Move it to successively cooler locations before placing it completely out of doors.

For Oregonians, Christmas trees are only a short distance from the stump to the marketplace. That means they are more likely to be fresh.

With proper care a fresh tree will be safe and remain beautiful throughout the holiday season.

One of the easiest ways to check freshness on a cut tree is to lift it a foot or so, then drop it so the butt of the tree hits the ground. If green needles fall from the branches, the tree has probably been cut for some time.

Practically all trees will shed some brown needles from the inner part, but the green needles are the ones to be concerned about. Select a tree

whose green needles hang on.

When you get the tree home, cut another inch from the bottom of the trunk to remove dried and dead cells and expose live cells that will take in water. Put the base of the tree in a bucket of water until moving it inside for decorating. Misting the needles will help keep the tree fresh.

Before taking the tree inside, tap the trunk against the ground several times to remove the brown inner needles. Once inside, place the tree in a stand that will support the tree firmly and hold water against its trunk.

Water, which the tree absorbs, will keep the tree fresh

longer and act as a fire retardant.

Always keep the water line above the cut end. A fresh tree may use several gallons of water while it is in the house.

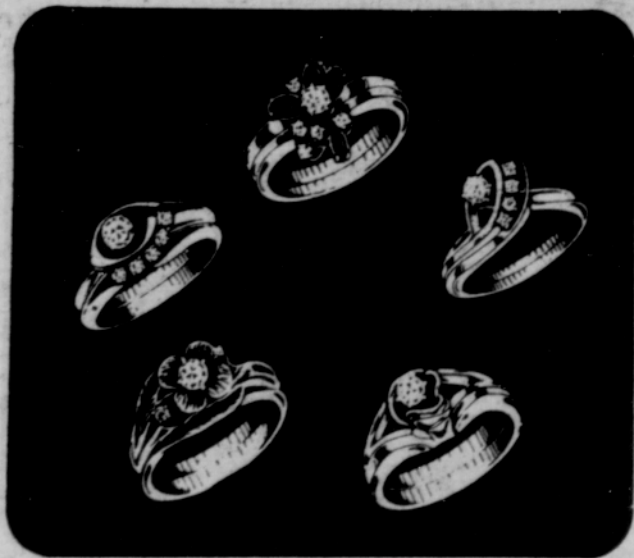
Keep the tree away from furnace vents, warm radiators, baseboard heaters, wood stoves and open fireplaces. Do not use candles or other flame decorations. Check the lights, electrical connections and cords to insure their safety.

Allowing paper or other flammable wrappings to accumulate around the tree will create a fire hazard.

A fresh Christmas tree brightens the home and blesses the house with a fragrant evergreen scent.



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