

Finding a fresh tree is as easy as...

You're ready to get out the lights, the garlands, the baubles and balls, but don't get ahead of yourself.

"Know how to choose a fresh tree and how to keep it that way or you'll be disappointed," said Chal Landgren, a Christmas tree specialist with Oregon State University's Extension Service. "It's also not safe to have a dried-out tree in the house, so it's doubly important to know what to do."

A lot of information swirls around the issue of how to purchase and preserve a Christmas tree once you get it home, some of it misleading. Landgren helps you get it right with answers to the most pressing 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. When 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 re-cut 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



KYM POKORNY
Your Garden

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 2 inches off the tree base for it to take up water in the stand?

A: No, cutting 1/2-inch slice off the base is plenty for water uptake. However, clearing the ceiling is another question.

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 conducts water efficiently and becomes less so toward the center. Simply cut the stem perpendicular to the trunk to maximize the area exposed to the water. Complicated cuts, drill holes or I.V. tubes do not help.

Q: Do I need to add something to the water to help the tree stay fresher?

A: People have added all



PHOTO BY LYNN KETCHUM

It's best if the tree does not run out of water, so check it every day, especially the first few days.

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 the tree to shed needles or dry out more rapidly.

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 re-cut 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 just fine. For grand fir, 12 hours may be the limit. Of course, it's best if the tree does not run out of water, so check it every day, especially the first few days. Your pets may be helping themselves to the water, too. If your tree becomes dry and brittle, it may be time to take it down.

MI TOWN

I know people who are so organized, their shopping was done weeks ago. Christmas cards were neatly stacked on the corner of the desk, ready to be taken to the post office Thanksgiving weekend. Others are waiting for another payday before they can begin, and most of us fall somewhere in between. At our house, some cards still need to be addressed, but somehow it will all come together just in time for happy family gatherings and good times to share with friends.

Whether Christmas plans include a splendid table set with our best china and crystal, or a warm and welcome gathering at the kitchen table with mugs of cocoa and bowls of soup, we want to



PATTY TAYLOR DUTCHER
Columnist

make this a wonderful and memorable season for those we love. So much depends upon the spirit of the season and in the happiness and good conversation shared with friends and family you love.

Bazillions of articles are written about how to "survive" the holidays, and books appear on the shelves telling us how to manage to get through the days and weeks from Thanksgiving until New Year's Day. All this makes me wonder why one

of the most joyous times of the year can create so much stress and chaos, and why we let it happen. The people we love can get lost in the madness of it all.

In Mi Town, there's time to relax with friends and enjoy time with family without turning it into a major production. We can make a big bowl of punch and have the kids string popcorn and cranberries for the Christmas tree. We can bake cookies and make candy and share it with our friends and neighbors, and brighten somebody else's day with a smile or a special compliment. If there isn't time for baking and cooking — along with everything else — our local stores have goodies available for every taste and budget.

This may be the first year your children are home from college. They'll be eager to share stories about classes and university life and their newly found independence — or they may not. They may also want some quiet time to relax and see neighborhood friends and catch up on some much needed sleep.

During this season, we need to take time to think about our families, our friends and our neighbors. It's a good time to count our blessings and to share what we can with those who have not had such a wonderful year. Our communities have a long history of taking care of our own, and what a better time than now to show that we can, and we will.

PEDEE NEWS

Recently I had the chance to see the calendars that Leonard Foltz and Fred Weisensee made of plants at Dancing Oaks Nursery, plus the one of their trip to Madagascar in September and October, and they are beautiful.

Fred and Leonard's trip to Madagascar, an island near the top of Africa, was the fulfillment of a lifetime wish of seeing the Avenue of the Baobabs on the island. Although the Baobabs are the size of large trees and can reach ages of 1,000 years old, they are actually giant succulents that survive the dry climate by storing water in their huge trunks. Burn-



ARLENE KOVASH
Columnist

ing of the forests is threatening the existence of the established trees and also compromising the habitat on the forest floor for new seedlings to survive, so now was the time to go.

Madagascar is the poorest country they have ever visited. Some put it in the poorest 10 countries of the world. Most people do not have electricity or running

water. It took 22 hours of flying time to reach the main airport at the capital of Madagascar from Portland.

While there, Fred was able to meet up with Dallas High friend Mark Flaming for several hours one afternoon and evening. They had not seen each other since 1978.

The calendars aren't actually available at Dancing Oaks, but are available at www.lulu.com, and, since they ship in three days, are a great last-minute gift. Look under Leonard's name to see all three of their calendars. On the other hand, they have T-shirts for sale at the nursery, so call them at

503-838-6058 to come by to purchase them, since they're only open by appointment during the winter.

Pedee survived the rainstorms quite well, with only a few trees down and little water over the roads.

Pam Burkhalter presented Tammy Ames, of Silverton, the patriotic quilt raffled off by Pedee Women's Club. The ticket was drawn on Nov. 14 at the close of the holiday fair. The club will be raffling off another quilt in 2016. Proceeds go toward the costs associated with monthly shipments to deployed military members.

ANNIVERSARIES

Larson - 25th



Tad and Roseanna Larson, of Monmouth, will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary with family. Tad Larson and Roseanna Chambers were married Dec. 15, 1990, at First United Methodist Church, of Salem.

The couple has lived in Polk County the past 26 years.

Tad and Roseanna love to travel. They also love to go camping with their family and riding ATVs at the sand dunes in Oregon.

Their family includes Justine and Kyle Netcher, of Mill City, Stephanie Larson, of Monmouth, and Brian Larson, of Monmouth. The couple has one grandchild.

BIRTHS

Arredondo

Ezequiel Orlando Arredondo Jr. was born to Ezequiel Arredondo and Aliyah Hayward, both of Dallas, at 7:59 a.m. on Nov. 23 at Salem Hospital Family Birth Center.

He weighed 7 pounds, 4 ounces, and was 20.5 inches long.

Ezequiel is the couple's first child.

Grandparents are Jesse and Patricia Lara, of Independence, and Elvira Landero, of Independence.

Great-grandparents are Simona Ochoa, of Independence, and Donna Carlton, of Dallas.

Schmitt

Aria Marie Schmitt was born to Aron and Andria Schmitt, of Dallas, at 10:58 a.m. on Dec. 1 at Salem Hospital Family Birth Center.

She weighed 8 pounds, 3 ounces, and was 20.5 inches long.

Aria is the couple's first child.

Trinity Lutheran Church presents
Trinity Concert - "Carols of Christmas"
Sunday, Dec. 20th • 6:30 - 7:30 pm



Features: Scripture, Adult Choir, Bell Choir, Christmas Carol Singing and special pieces by children and youth. Cookie reception follows.

dallastlc.org ~ 503-623-2233

320 SE Fir Villa Rd, Dallas

West Valley Housing Authority will hold their Regular Board Meeting on Wednesday, December 23, 2015 beginning at 11:30 p.m. at 204 SW Walnut in Dallas, Oregon via conference call with regular attendees. An Executive Session pursuant to ORS 192.660 will be held immediately following the Regular Meeting.

Agenda for the meeting is posted on the Housing Authority website at www.wvpha.org. The location for the meeting is handicapped accessible. Please advise the West Valley Housing Authority if you need any special accommodations to attend the meeting. For information, please call 503-623-8387, TDD 1-800-735-2900.



DALLAS OREGON

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Do you or someone you know need a little help? Ask for an application or go to our website to apply: www.dallascc.org

All volunteers are encouraged to bring canned goods when coming to help sort, shop & deliver food boxes on Christmas Eve at 6 am, Thursday, Dec. 24th at LaCreole Middle School

More information: 503-623-3585
Coordinators: Warren & Sue Lamb
— 5013C — Non-Profit Organization

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