

## Christmas tree varieties and care



by Metro Creative Connection

An evergreen tree decked out in lights and ornaments is one of the universal symbols of the holiday season. The Christmas tree tradition is believed to have originated in Germany in the 15th or 16th centuries, when trees were decorated with edibles, such as nuts and fruits. They were later decorated with candles and eventually lights.

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Through the centuries, in people have trekked to forests, Christmas tree farms and commercial lots to pick the perfect trees for their reholiday displays. The

National Christmas Tree Association says more than 33 million real trees are purchased each year, making the tree business a billion-dollar industry. While there are scores of evergreen varieties, certain tree types are more popular than others and thus more available for purchase. The following are some of

the more popular trees come

Christmastime.

• Eastern Redcedar:
Branches of the tree are compact and form a pyramid-shaped crown. The trees should be a dark, shiny green color. The eastern redcedar is not a true cedar tree, but a member of the juniper family. This tree can make a great cut tree with a homespun look and a pungent fragrance.

• Leyland Cypress: This cypress is one of the more popular Christmas trees in the southeastern United States. The tree will be very dark green to almost gray in color. It has little aroma. Some people choose the Leyland because it does not produce sap, which is great for those with sap allergies.

• Colorado Blue Spruce: An attractive blue-green foliage and a good symmetrical form is what attracts many people to the blue spruce. The Colorado Blue Spruce has an excellent natural shape and requires little pruning to look like the perfect Christmas tree. It's not

very fragrant, but the tree needles may give off an unpleasant odor when crushed.

• Scotch Pine: A classic conical shape and very good needle retention help make the Scotch pine a popular tree to cut for the holidays. Scotch pines also are quite prevalent thanks to the tree's adaptability to a wide range of climates.

• Eastern White Pine: A delicate green color and long needles are found on this tree. Another popular pine, the rich fragrance of the white pine may make it preferable to those who like their homes to smell of evergreen.

• Douglas Fir: The Douglas fir is one of the foremost Christmas tree species in the United States. It has soft needles that are dark green in color. Those needles radiate in all directions from the branches to give the tree a full look. The needles, when crushed, have a sweet fragrance. Douglas firstend to live long when cut.

• Fraser Fir: Another popular fir for Christmas is

the Fraser fir. The needles are bicolored, with dark green on top and silver on the bottom. More fragrant than its cousin, the Douglas, the Fraser also boasts a slender profile, which makes it suitable for smaller rooms.

Christmas tree maintenance: Nothing can guarantee the health and appearance of a tree after it is brought into a home. But choosing a recently cut tree that has good needle retention can help. Here are other tips for a long-lasting tree.

• Use a sharp saw to cut an inch off of the trunk base to remove the sappy covering that forms from cutting. This will improve water intake.

• Fill a tree stand reservoir with warm water. Expect the tree to drink heavily in the beginning.

• Keep the reservoir filled every day and check to see how much water the tree is

using.
• Place the tree far from heaters or other drying sources.