

Care Needed To Keep Christmas Tree Fireproof-Green For Holidays

TULELAKE—Keeping the Christmas tree as fresh and green as possible during its period of use is not only desirable from the point of view of beauty, but is the best method of keeping it resistant to fire, reports Ken Hagbott, Tulelake Forest Advisor. After testing a number of possibilities for making Christmas trees less flammable, the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory has concluded that keeping the tree standing in water is about the most practical, satisfactory and convenient method for reducing the fire hazard and preventing the needles from discoloring or falling. Some additional protection against fire is possible by using fire-retardant coatings as well as the water treatment if retention of natural color of foliage is unimportant.

1. Obtain a tree that has been cut as recently as possible. The needles should be fresh and green and not wilted or falling from the twigs.

Unflavored Gelatine In Relish Salad

Unflavored gelatine blends the crispness of ground cranberries and whole orange in a refreshing bottled or concentrated cranberry juice. Thus, a rich cranberry color and flavor permeate this salad. With unflavored gelatine this cranberry-orange combination is given attractiveness of design, and can be prepared a day or several days ahead of serving. Serve the gelatin salads on orange slices or salad greens.

CRANBERRY RELISH GELS
1 orange, quartered and seeded
2 cups cranberries,
1 cup sugar
1 envelope unflavored gelatine
1 cup bottled cranberry juice cocktail

Put orange and cranberries through food chopper. Add sugar and mix well. Soften gelatine in 1/2 cup of the cranberry juice cocktail; dissolve thoroughly over boiling water. Add remaining cranberry juice cocktail and orange cranberry relish; mix well. Turn into individual molds; chill until firm. To serve, unmold on orange slices. Yield: 6 to 9 servings.

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THESE CHRISTMASY PLASTIC TABLE MATS, bright holly wreaths, combine with sterling, crystal and an unusual center arrangement to make a charming Christmas dinner table. Plastic table mats are long-wearing, water-proof, stainproof, odorless and clean easily with a damp cloth. These are the answer to

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BREAD WINNERS
Wake up those sleepyheads at your house with a tempting plateful of hot breakfast muffins. Delicious and quick to prepare they are just as tasty as they look! They owe their rich, nutty flavor and tender crumb to rolled oats. These oatmeal muffins also stay fresh longer than average, for rolled oats keep them fresh for several days. Bake these oatmeal muffins today, using any one or all of the variations to please your family.

OATMEAL MUFFINS
Makes 8 to 10 muffins
1 cup sifted enriched flour
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
3 tablespoons shortening
1 cup quick rolled oats, uncooked
1 egg, beaten
1 cup milk
Sift together flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Cut in shortening until mixture resembles corn meal. Add rolled oats, blending

thoroughly. Add beaten egg and milk, stirring lightly. Fill greased muffin pans 2/3 full. Bake in a hot oven (425 F.) 15 to 25 minutes, depending on size of muffins.

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2. Keep the tree out of doors in a cool, shady place and standing in a container of water until just before it is set up in the house.
3. When setting it up on the stand, cut about an inch from the butt end on a slight angle. Select a tin can of sufficient size to accommodate the base of the tree with room to spare and place three or four blocks on the stand to keep the can from shifting. A slightly larger can nailed to the center of the stand will sometimes be simpler than the blocks.

4. Set the tree in the smaller can with some coarse gravel to keep it from shifting, brace the trunk securely to the stand to keep it from tipping and keep water in the container above the cut surface during the entire period of use.

5. Place the tree as far away as possible from a stove, register or other source of heat and do not use cotton "snow" or other decorative materials unless they have been treated with a fire retardant. A freshly cut tree kept standing in water will remain very resistant to ignition by a candle, match or other small flame for a considerable period.

For those who wish to undertake the extra trouble and expense involved in the use of a decorative coating, the following simple formulations are suggested.

Formula 1: Produces a shiny transparent colorless coating. Sodium silicate, or water glass, (9 parts). Water, containing a wetting agent, such as Dettol, Vel or Breeze, 1 teaspoon per quart, (1 part).

Formula 2: Produces a cream colored coating. May be tinted with suitable dyes. Sodium silicate, or water glass, (31 parts). China clay, (41 parts). Water, containing wetting agent, 1 teaspoon per quart, (28 parts).

Formula 3: Produces a frosty white coating. May be tinted with suitable dyes. Sodium alginate, (1 part). Monoammonium phosphate, (25 parts). China Clay, (4 parts).

water (70 parts).

Formula 3 can be prepared most readily as follows: Heat the required amount of water to approximately 180 F., add the sodium alginate, and stir until a uniform gel is obtained. Then add the monoammonium phosphate, heating gently and stirring occasionally until the chemical has dissolved. Then add the clay and stir until it is uniformly distributed throughout the gel.

The coatings may be applied by dipping or by spraying. One coat of these formulations will greatly reduce the tendency for flames to spread. Two coats are even more effective. It may be necessary to thin Formula 1 for spray application, in which event more applications are necessary.

If a coating is applied, it is recommended that the tree be stood in water anyway, to insure the added protection against fire that the moisture in the tree provides. Furthermore, experiments have

shown that the water treatment improved the adherence of brittle coatings, such as formulas 1 and 2, because the moisture-filled needles do not shrink and thus allow brittle coatings to flake off.

Do not stand the tree in a fire-retardant chemical solution of any kind. Tests have shown the use of several fire-retardant chemicals resulted in needle discoloration, needles fell and usually increased flammability. Some new chemical solutions, not fire retardants, show promise of checking drying and drop of needles but standing the trees in plain water will serve well.

The California State Fire Marshal has specified certain extra precautions for trees used for decorations of places of public assembly. He maintains a list of products available in California which are approved for the flame-retardant treatment of Christmas trees. The local Fire Chief or County Fire Warden should be consulted in this regard.

All possible precautions against fire should be in effect around the Christmas tree, including the following:

1. Discard defective electrical connections and frayed electric cords.
2. Do not use combustible decorations on or under the tree.
3. Do not allow paper and flammable wrappings to accumulate.
4. Do not set up the tree in a place where its fall will block an exit.

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by Warren Goodrich



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