



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
2320 South DuPont Highway, Dover, DE 19901



To: Newsroom Directors and Assignment Editors

For Immediate Release:
November 30, 2011

Contact Anne Fitzgerald
800.282.8685 (DE only)
302.698.4520
302.242.4092 (Cell)

Support our local growers - buy local Delaware Christmas trees and holiday items

December is here and the holiday season is in full swing. If you are looking for a fun outing with family and friends, consider a visit to a Delaware Christmas tree farm to choose and cut your own tree for the holidays. Delaware has Christmas tree farms in all three counties – with beautiful vibrant trees just waiting for a spot in your home. When selecting that perfect Christmas tree for your home, keep in mind the advantages of buying a Delaware-grown Christmas tree. When you buy from a local grower, you know that you are getting the freshest tree possible. You and your family and friends will also enjoy the experience of visiting a Delaware tree farm and the fond memories of looking for that perfect tree. Many of the tree farms have other decorative holiday items as well.

Locating a tree farm is just an *App* away! The *Delaware Fresh App* (www.Delaware.gov/apps/) has been seasonally updated with Christmas tree growers and holiday items for Smart Phone and Android Phone users. The information can also be found in the *Delaware Agricultural Directory* on the Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) website (http://www.dda.delaware.gov/pressrel/FarmMarketDirectory_FINAL.pdf). You may also call the Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) (800) 282-8685 (DE only) or (302) 698-4500 for assistance in finding a grower near you.

Today, most holiday trees are grown as a specialized crop on farm land. Christmas tree farmers plant particular varieties of trees for attractive foliage or other special features. In Delaware, it usually takes 7 to 10 years of care to grow to a good 7-foot Christmas tree.

Christmas tree tips

Choosing a Christmas tree:

Christmas trees come in many varieties, sizes, shapes, and even shades of green. For this reason, you should visit the operation only in the daytime. The shape and size of a tree will depend on where you plan to place it and the height of the ceiling in your home. Some people want a more slender tree like a fir, while others like a larger, fuller tree like a spruce, and still others prefer a fuller, bushier tree like a pine.

Although most people prefer a well-rounded and shapely tree, you may find it more practical and economical to buy one that is somewhat flat or sparsely branched in one side, so that it fits into a corner or against a wall.

While "choose-and-cut" purchasers continue to gain in popularity, many consumers still buy their trees from retail lots. Freshness of cut trees can be assured by applying these simple tests:

- Bend a needle to check its resilience. If it does not break, but springs back into position, the tree is fresh.

-MORE-

- Bump the base of the tree on the ground. If needles don't fall, the tree is fresh. (Some varieties don't retain their needles as well as others, and some trees may harbor loose needles that dropped earlier and lodge among the foliage.)
- Feel the bottom of the trunk. If it is sappy and moist, the tree is fresh.
- To make the best decision on cut trees, use a composite evaluation.

Caring for Your Christmas tree At Home:

Regardless of the type of tree you purchase, you will need to give it proper care to insure that it remains fresh, attractive, and safe throughout the holiday season.

- Keep a cut tree in a cool, shaded area, sheltered from wind, with the trunk in a bucket of water until you are ready for set up.
- Just before putting a cut tree into its stand, cut an inch or two off the butt end. This fresh cut will allow the tree to more readily take up water once it is moved inside.
- Fresh trees take up water at a very fast rate. You should check the water level two hours after setting up the tree. Then, check the water level at least once daily to see that it is above the bottom of the tree's trunk. It is not uncommon for trees to take up a quart or more of water daily.

###