

Christmas Trees

By
Scott Hininger
University of Wyoming Extension
Sheridan County
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Recently Wyoming had the privilege of having the National Capital Christmas tree come through our state. This tree came all the way from Alaska and in 2010 the National Capital tree came from Wyoming. Since 1989 the species chosen most often was an Engelmann Spruce, which is what Wyoming sent to Washington D.C.

This time of the year people are starting to look for Christmas trees. There are many options such as the variety of fresh cut trees or artificial trees. One other alternative is a live Christmas tree. If you consider this option, there are some definite things to keep in mind.

First, there is the selection of the tree. Look for a well-shaped evergreen tree not too large. The tree needs to be placed for several days in the garage, shop or covered deck to acclimate it to warmer temperatures. Then an anti-transpirant spray should be put on the tree. This will keep the tree from transpiring or giving off too much moisture and drying out while in the house. This is the same spray which can be sprayed on newly planted trees especially evergreens to keep them from drying out especially that first winter.

When you bring the tree into the house, you can treat it the same way you do a cut tree. When you water the tree, you can use ice cubes, which will help cool the roots. It would be best to limit the time in the house to not much more than a week or two. Then the same procedure should be followed as before by placing the tree in the garage or shop for several days to acclimate it to the cooler temperatures.

When placing the tree outside it would be best if the hole has already been dug and covered with leaves or a tarp. Plant the tree as at any other time, making sure to water the tree. This is assuming the ground has not completely frozen and the day you pick is not too cold. If this does not work out then the tree can be placed outside and you can mulch the base with leaves, bark, compost, or woodchips. This will help protect the roots from the freezing and thawing of winter. Make sure you check the tree from time to time and when the temperature is above freezing give it a good drink of water. Then in the spring you can transplant the tree out in the yard. This way over the years not only do you get to celebrate Christmas with a live tree but also add to the landscape and remember Christmases past.

Another option is to use a houseplant for decorating at Christmas time. This works really well for people who may have limited space, such as apartments. One that I used when in college was a Norfolk Island pine this evergreen looking plant will decorate quite nicely and can be fairly large. The biggest drawback is the branches are not very strong so most ornaments and lights will

not work but the small lights and ornaments will work very well. These types of houseplants will also work as a way to decorate other rooms of a house or business. You could use most any houseplant to decorate with lights and or ornaments. The other type of houseplant used to decorate most often is the Poinsettia. What I like most about using colorful houseplants is they last a lot longer than cut flowers, so you get to enjoy them a lot longer. The other nice thing about this would be they could be given for gifts or after the holidays they could be given to a nursing home, Senior Center, Hospital or other places where joy could be spread.

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