

LIVING CHRISTMAS TREE CARE

Celebrate the Holiday Season by decorating a beautiful living tree in your home; then enjoy it for years to come as a permanent landscape plant.

It's environmentally friendly, cost effective and easy to do if you follow a few simple but important instructions to ensure that your tree stays in good health throughout the transition.

WE RECOMMEND KEEPING THE TREE INDOORS NO MORE THAN 5 to 7 DAYS

The less time indoors, the better. Remember - your tree is dormant. If it remains indoors or too warm for more than a week, it may break dormancy and suffer damage when placed back outdoors in the cold. Also, indoors with the heat on, the humidity is much lower than outdoor plants can handle, and they can desiccate quickly. You might consider placing the tree pot on a rolling cart or dolly and moving it outside overnight or whenever you leave your home.

Before bringing your tree indoors

Water the tree well by thoroughly soaking the entire root ball, not just the outer surface. We also recommend the use of an antitranspirant such as Wilt Stop™. This helps protect the tree from the dry, warm air of the house.

Inside the house

Your room should be kept as cool as possible; avoid placing tree near heating vents, fireplaces, appliances, etc. Use only 'cool' lights (or no lights) on the tree; 'hot' lights may burn the foliage. Check moisture daily, making sure the root ball is moist, not just the soil surface or burlap. It helps to water slowly, allowing a little at a time to soak into the root ball. Ice cubes work great for this, as well as keeping the roots cool. Protect the floor or carpet from pot seepage or spills. Avoid using spray flocking, which will harm the tree. If your tree has been in too warm a location with too low humidity for too long, it will likely NOT show damage until it comes out of dormancy in spring.

Moving your tree outdoors

Once moved back outdoors the tree should either be properly planted in its permanent location, or temporarily placed where the root ball will be sheltered from harsh freezes. 'Healing in' the tree into the ground, mulch, or a compost pile is helpful. Keep it watered if the winter is dry.

If the temperature outside is continuously below about 25°F, keep your tree in a protected, but cool, area until it warms up above freezing.

Thank you! We hope you enjoy your living Christmas tree this season and outside for many years to come. Please contact us with any questions.

For more information, visit <http://gardening.wsu.edu/> (keyword search for "living christmas tree")