



Virginia Green Industry Council

For Immediate Use

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Electronic Version:

www.viriniagreen.org

CARING FOR A LIVING CHRISTMAS TREE

Each year many Virginians buy a live Christmas tree with the idea that they will plant it in their landscape and enjoy it for many years to come. A live Christmas tree has different care requirements than a cut tree, according to Lin Diacont, President of the Virginia Green Industry Council. None of the requirements is difficult, Diacont said, but they are important if the homeowner plans to plant the tree. Here are a few suggestions Diacont recommends:

1. Ask tree vendors what kinds of trees they have available. Buy the right kind of tree for your area. (Fraser Fir, one of the most popular tree varieties, doesn't do well during hot dry summers like those Tidewater region of Virginia.)
2. Keep the tree in the house for only 7 – 10 days. If the tree remains in a warm indoors environment, it will think it is spring and will break dormancy. The roots will start to grow, putting it under great stress when planted outdoors.
3. Keep the tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces and heating ducts to prevent it from drying out. This is good advice for cut trees too.
4. Keep the root ball moist while indoors; check several times a day and add water if it feels dry.
5. Dig the planting hole before the ground freezes.
6. Don't plant the tree too close to your house. Some trees such as white pine and scotch pine can grow 2-3 feet per year.
7. Don't plant in low-lying, marshy areas because the excess water in the soil can drown the tree for lack of oxygen.
8. When planting, dig a hole two times as wide and one inch deeper than the root ball.
9. Water once to settle the soil used to backfill the hole.
10. Add a 3-inch layer of mulch of pine needles, bark, or wood chips. Keep the mulch away from the trunk.

The Virginia Green Industry Council is the voice of the horticulture industry in the Commonwealth and is dedicated to enhancing the beauty of the state's environment, the well-being of our citizens, improving our state's economy, and improving the health and wellness for everyone in Virginia. The Council is made up of providers of horticultural products and services. The Council works to provide public and industry education, environmental guidelines and other information that will keep Virginia green and growing. For more information, visit www.viriniagreen.org. 540-382-0943 FAX: 540-382-2716
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