



Living Christmas Trees

Molbak's has a wide selection of living trees that may be brought inside for decoration during the holidays and then planted outside to enjoy as a permanent landscape plant. A living Christmas tree does require a little extra care when used indoors. Please follow these guidelines to ensure the health of your tree.

For Use in the Home:

1. Place the root ball in a fiber or plastic pot filled with potting soil.
2. Water thoroughly before placing the tree inside your home, and check the soil regularly for dryness. It is important to keep the roots moist.
3. Spray with an anti-transpirant (such as Wilt-Pruf) before bringing the tree inside to prevent excessive drying of the needles.
4. Limit the tree's stay inside to no more than one week.
5. If you are using lights on the tree, use only miniature lights.
6. If outside temperatures are freezing, your tree will need to have a period of adjustment before entering, and then again before leaving, the warm temperatures of your home. To help the plant acclimate, place the tree in a garage or protected area for two days where the temperatures are above freezing, yet cool.
7. In the house, avoid high room temperatures or placement near any heat source.

After-Christmas Care and Planting:

1. After being inside, your tree will need to readjust to outside temperatures. Place the plant in a garage or protected area for two days where the temperatures are above freezing, yet cool. If freezing weather persists, the tree should be kept in the garage no longer than one week prior to returning it outdoors.
2. The tree may be planted in the ground whenever the outside temperatures are above freezing.
3. Prepare for planting by checking the soil. If it is poor in structure (i.e., clay or hardpan soils), add organic material and fertilizer throughout the soil area, not just in the planting hole. Suggestions for organic material amendments include compost, steer manure, peat moss or leaf mold.
4. Dig the hole as deep as the tree's root ball. In poor soils, dig slightly deeper and firm down the backfill before placing the plant in the hole. The planting hole should be twice as wide as the root ball or container. Unless the soil is sandy, plant the tree two inches higher than the top of the surrounding soil to allow for settling. If the soil is sandy, place the plant in the planting hole with the top of root ball level with the surrounding soil.

5. Thoroughly water the tree several hours before transplanting.
6. Trees that are balled in natural burlap should be planted with the burlap around the roots for support. Place the plant in the planting hole with the top of the root ball slightly above ground. Backfill with soil to support the lower root ball. Untie the top of the burlap, removing the twine, and fold back or cut off the loose burlap. Backfill with soil and pack lightly.
7. Trees in fiber pots may be planted directly in the ground. Soak the pot thoroughly before planting. Cut away the rim of the pot and make a few cuts up the sides of the pot. Backfill with soil and pack lightly so no air pockets remain.
8. Once the tree has been planted, water it thoroughly.
9. Newly planted shrubs and trees benefit most from deep watering during the first year after planting. A soaker hose placed around the base of the plant or a hose turned on low should be left on for a long period of time to allow for the water to soak deeply into the soil and throughout the root ball. This deep watering encourages root growth into the surrounding soil. If in doubt about the plant's need for water, dig carefully around the root area to check the moisture level of the soil.
10. Watch for aphids on spruce trees in February and March. These insects are easy to control with an insecticide.

If you have any questions regarding the care, handling and growth of your living Christmas tree, please call us. Our Nursery staff will be pleased to assist you.

Happy Holidays from Molbak's!

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