

Christmas Trees

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Live Christmas trees have been brought into homes and decorated during the holiday season for more than 500 years. Every year, more than 33 million live Christmas trees are used in households across the United States. Here are a few facts on choosing and caring for a Christmas tree.

There are several species of trees to choose from. The most common types are pine, fir, spruce, and cedar/cypress. Virginia Pines are grown throughout Georgia, and are very common on choose-n-cut Christmas tree farms. Another popular tree is the Fraser Fir. These trees are grown in North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee, but they are shipped to Georgia during the holiday season and available at retail lots. Leyland Cypress trees are also common Christmas trees and they are also grown in Georgia.

When you select a tree, there are a few key points to keep in mind, whether you are going to cut your own tree or buy one from a retail lot that has already been cut:

1. Do a freshness test: Run your fingers over the branch along the needles. Needles should be pliable and adhere to the branches. The needles should bend, but not break or fall off.
2. Shake or bounce the tree to be sure that the needles are firmly attached. If the tree is fresh, few needles will fall off.
3. Check for insects and dead needles inside the tree crown, and make sure that the trunk of the tree is straight.
4. When you get your tree home, cut 1 – 2 inches off the base of the trunk and place in a stand that holds at least a gallon of water immediately.
5. Water the tree daily. Some trees will use several quarts of water per day. Never let the water level fall below the base of the tree. If this occurs, the cut end can seal over within a few hours, and prevent further water uptake. The tree will need to be taken down and a fresh cut made to allow water uptake.
6. Adding aspirin, soda water, bleach, or sugar to the water in the stand is no more effective than adding plain water every day.

If you need help in locating a Christmas tree farm, you can visit the Georgia Christmas Tree Association website at www.gacta.com to see a list of Christmas tree farms in the state.