

FROM FARM TO FIR



Consider a real tree this holiday season to **support Illinois farmers and the environment!**

Farmers take care of Christmas trees from seeds or seedlings (young trees that have already sprouted), and care for them for anywhere from 4 to 15 years until they are harvested, with the average being 7 years.

Christmas tree farms **span across all 50 states**, with over **15,000** Christmas tree farms **in the US**. There are **more than 300** Christmas tree farms in Illinois.

Christmas trees **absorb CO2** from the air and **produce fresh oxygen** as long as they are growing, which is vital to having clean air. Live Christmas trees also have a much **lower carbon footprint** than artificial trees!



CARING FOR A LIVING TREE



Like any other houseplant, Christmas trees require care and a bit of a green thumb to thrive in your home this holiday season. **Follow these steps** to get the most enjoyment out of your family's Christmas tree.

1. When you decide to bring a Christmas tree inside, make sure to make a **fresh one-inch cut** at the base of the tree to allow for better water absorption. If you cut it down yourself from an Illinois Christmas tree farm and bring it directly indoors, you can skip adding another cut.
2. Place the tree in a **sturdy stand** that holds at least 1 gallon of water. The entire time a Christmas tree is inside, it is important to make sure the base remains **submerged in water**, up to a few inches. Check the water **every day** to ensure it is full enough and that no pets have been sneaking a drink! Other ingredients like sugar or aspirin are **not necessary** to add. Research shows that **water alone keeps a tree fresh**.
3. Ensure that all Christmas tree **lights have no worn electrical cords** and **always** unplug the lights at night. Miniature lights are **recommended for live trees** as they produce less heat and therefore reduce the drying effect on the tree.
4. **Keep a close eye on your tree** and remove it from the house before it dries out. This will prevent any fire hazards and save the floors from being covered in pine needles. Fresh cut trees can **last up to 5 weeks**, if they are properly cared for. **Plan accordingly** when purchasing a tree to make sure you have it for the time you want.
5. **Recycle your tree** after the holidays! Many communities will use them for mulch or wood chips. You can also place it in your own backyard to decompose and add nutrients to the soil, or as a home for birds and a place for them to gather branches.



A NATIONAL HOLIDAY TREASURE

Christmas trees are grown in all **50 states**, with around **66,000 grown in Illinois** annually. There are 3 main types of Christmas trees you can find. Be sure to find the best fit for your family's **perfect tree**.



PINE: Pine trees are known for having that perfect Christmas tree smell that will reach your entire house. They also have excellent needle retention (meaning less on your floors!), and strong branches to hold heavier ornaments. Scotch pines are typically the most popular due to being dense with picture perfect dark green needles. White pine trees are less aromatic making it a great option for anyone with allergies, or that may be sensitive to strong smells. Pine trees are an excellent choice for anyone looking for a larger tree.

FIR: Fir trees provide a very pleasant Christmas scent and excellent needle retention for the entire season. Balsam firs are usually more popular due to their strong and lasting scent. Fraser firs have good needle retention and stiff branches to handle most ornaments. Douglas firs are also popular as they have softer needles and good needle retention, while still providing that wonderful Christmas tree scent. However, the soft needles on Douglas firs may mean you need to choose lighter ornaments.

SPRUCE: Spruce trees may not be as popular for Christmas trees as they can lose their needles easier. However, Colorado blue spruces are becoming more popular due to its bright blue color, differing from the usual dark green shade in other Christmas trees. If you choose a spruce, it is recommended to wait longer in the season to put it up as its sharp needles can find their way into every crevice of your home. Spruce's are not recommended for those with pets or small children due to the sharper needles.



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1. For **every tree cut down**, farmers plant **1-3 new seedlings** each year.

2. As trees grow and mature, they **absorb carbon dioxide** from the air and **release back fresh oxygen**.



3. On average, Christmas trees take **7 years to mature** until they are harvested, but this can range from 4 to 15 years.

4. Once a Christmas tree has done its service providing holiday cheer, it can be **recycled** to become woodchips, mulch, and more.



5. As the tree is recycled, it will decompose and **return vital nutrients** back into the soil.

