

Things to Remember

Live Christmas trees can become a fantastic family tradition. They say the best time to plant a tree is fifty years ago. The second best time is today. Keep these things in mind when deciding to use a live Christmas tree this year.

Meant to Live Outside

Live Christmas trees can be any variety that is hardy in Boise, but you should remember these trees were meant to be planted outside. Their indoor life needs to be kept short to ensure longevity. Preparation for a live Christmas tree needs to begin early, before Christmas, and preferably before the ground is frozen. If possible, you should dig the hole ahead of time where you plan to plant the tree. Back-fill the hole with straw to keep it free of snow and ice until you are ready to plant.

Acclimate

When you purchase your tree, you will want to acclimate it to being inside. At two weeks before Christmas it should be kept in a protected but unheated area. Your garage is a great place to do this. You should not bring your tree inside until about two days before Christmas. You can keep it in the house for up to a week total, but you will want to monitor the needles and soil regularly. As with a cut tree, it should not be situated near a heater or drafty area. The soil needs to remain moist, but not waterlogged. A good rule of thumb is to think of a washcloth you would use to wipe down a counter. It should be wet, but you can't wring it out.

Before You Put It Back

No more than three days after Christmas, your tree should get moved back into the garage or protected area. Leave it there for another two weeks to reacclimate it to the cooler temperatures. It will then be safe to plant your tree in the ground. If you were not able to pre-dig a hole, you should still put it outside, but you will want to cover the pot with mulch or straw to protect the roots. You will also want to water it a couple of times a month.