

# ACTON GARDEN CLUB

## HORTICULTURE HINTS

December 2024

### HOW TO CARE FOR A CUT CHRISTMAS TREE

“A healthy fresh-cut Christmas tree will last four to five weeks if given proper care that includes having enough water, the trunk is trimmed, the tree is kept away from a heat source and is removed before it dries out.”

If you buy a tree from a lot or a garden center, you can check the tree for freshness by doing the pull test. *Gently pull on a shoot with your thumb and fingers; if the tree is fresh, you should not have any needles come off in your hand.*

One of the most popular Christmas tree is the Fraser fir, because of its fragrance, sturdy branches, and needle retention. Other popular choices are the Douglas fir and Balsam fir.

“After you've chosen your live Christmas tree, keep it in a sheltered, unheated area, such as a porch or garage, to protect it from the wind and sun until you are ready to decorate it. If you won't be decorating it right away, place the tree in a bucket full of water that you refill as needed.”

“Cut 0.5 to 1 inch off the base of the tree right before you put it in the tree stand to help the tree resume water uptake. After trees are cut at the farm, the cut end will begin to dry out and resin can clog the water conducting tissues in the trunk. These factors will limit water uptake, so re-cutting the end aids in allowing the tree to take up water and keeping the tree hydrated.”

“Be sure to replace the water that is used each day and don't allow the stand to dry out. Do not add sugar, aspirin, bleach or floral preservatives to the water, **Plain tap water** is all that is needed to keep your tree fresh.”

Source: [Bert Cregg](#), Michigan State University, Department of Horticulture and Department of Forestry  
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Judy Dembsey

Environmental Education