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Add Warmth to Your Holidays. Buy a Real Christmas Tree.

LITTLETON, COLORADO – Now that Thanksgiving is past, the last vestiges of fall decorations are being put away for another year as temperatures continue their downward seasonal adjustment. While it may be getting colder and colder on the outside, here's a suggestion that will surely add warmth and beauty to any home: the selection, purchase and decoration of a real Christmas tree.

“Real Christmas trees are symbolic of this season of giving and sharing, and family gatherings,” says Tom Dull, a Christmas tree grower from Thorntown, Indiana and president of the National Christmas Tree Association (NCTA). “Nothing says Christmas better than the fresh scent, feel and texture of a real Christmas tree.”

Dull says the NCTA recommends people shop for their real Christmas trees as early as possible to ensure they have the best opportunity to find the species, size, fullness and freshness they desire for their home or office.

“Whether you prefer to select a tree as a family at your local choose and cut Christmas tree farm, or choose from a variety of trees at their retailer of choice, the earlier the selection process begins the better chance you will have of finding that perfect tree,” says Dull.

The NCTA website offers tips on how to select a real Christmas tree. Learning about the different species of trees, measuring the size of the space where the tree will reside before you purchase the tree, determining the size and weight of your ornaments, testing the tree for freshness, and making sure you have the right size stand are just some of the things you need to think about prior to selecting and purchasing a real Christmas tree.

The steps you should take in caring for a tree after purchase are just as important, states Dull.

“A real Christmas tree will remain fresher longer the sooner you can get it in water once you get home. Insist on a fresh cut at the end of the trunk before you leave the retail location, and then put it in a bucket of water as soon as you arrive home especially if you are not going to place it in the stand anytime soon,” says Dull. “The ability for a Christmas tree to take up water is severely diminished after six hours following its last fresh cut on the trunk. Keeping it in water the entire time after you get home will greatly enhance its ability to stay fresh throughout the holiday season.”

NCTA also recommends keeping the tree away from direct heat sources such as HVAC vents and fireplaces, and using a stand that is large enough for the trunk of the tree. Whittling the trunk to fit the stand is not good for the tree, and could create an unstable situation when the tree is in the stand.

For additional tips on the selection and care of a real Christmas tree, or to learn more about the different real Christmas tree species, please visit www.realchristmastrees.org.