



# Caring For Your Live Christmas Tree

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## Before the Holidays:

- Dig the planting hole for the tree before the soil freezes. Dig the hole twice the width of the pot or root ball, but the depth should be the same as or slightly less than the depth of the root ball.
- Mix the soil from the hole at a 50:50 ratio with **Petitti Planting Mix**. Store the soil mixture in a wheelbarrow, buckets or bags, in the garage so it does not freeze.
- Store the live tree in the hole, and cover the pot or root ball with mulch. It will stay outside until just before Christmas.
- Water the tree so the roots stay moist, not soggy or sitting in water.
- Two days before bringing it into the house, move your tree to an unheated garage or porch. Live Christmas trees need to make a gradual temperature switch from outdoors to indoors.
- Leave the hole filled with mulch.
- Spray the tree with an anti-desiccant spray such as **Wilt Stop®** to minimize moisture loss in the hot, dry house.

## Indoors for Christmas:

- Place your tree in a large galvanized or plastic tub. Be sure to lift the tree by the pot or root ball, and not the trunk or branches. Fill around and on top of the pot or ball with mulch.
- Water your tree as often as necessary to keep the roots moist, but not soggy.
- Keep the live tree away from heating vents.
- LED lights are the best choice for decorating live Christmas trees. Check light strands for fraying and hot bulbs before decorating. For your safety, turn the lights off when the tree is unattended.
- **For your safety and the tree's health, live Christmas trees should only stay in the home 7-10 days!**

## When Planting:

- After the holiday, move the tree back to an unheated garage or on an open porch for a week to allow it to acclimate back to the cold weather.
- Remove mulch from the planting hole.
- If the tree is in a pot, remove the pot and score the root system.
- If the tree is in burlap, remove all twine and wire. Score the burlap.
- Lift the tree by the root ball and set it in the hole, so that it is slightly above the soil surface.
- Backfill with the stored soil mixture.
- Mulch the top of the root ball with two inches of bark mulch.
- Water the tree well immediately after planting, and two or three times more during the winter.

