

Tree Talk

Believe it or not, the Christmas tree season is already upon us. From Thanksgiving to Christmas, more than 25 million real trees will be sold and displayed in homes across the United States. An additional 15-20 million artificial trees are sold annually as well. Choosing to purchase a real tree versus an artificial tree is not only more traditional, it's also more environmentally friendly. While the real Christmas tree can only be used for one season, it can be recycled into fish habitat, winter protection for birds or ground into valuable mulch. Imported, artificial, plastic tree last on average 6-10 years and end up in the landfill for hundreds of years.

There are several species available, Fraser fir being the most popular because of its long lasting pleasant scent, excellent needle retention and stiff branches for holding lights and ornaments. Balsam fir is another popular tree for some of the same reasons. Other species normally available are Scotch pine and Eastern white pine. Preferences vary when purchasing the right tree, but cost is also a factor in what is brought home for the Christmas season.

To ensure your tree has the best needle retention through the season, cut approximately 1 inch off the base and place in a stand of water within 1-2 hours. Make sure the stand does not run out of water as the base pores will plug up and the tree will not uptake enough water to ensure its viability through the season. No supplements need to be added to the water.

Although we have had some good cold snaps this fall, we are still seeing very warm days as well. Watering trees, especially evergreens should still be considered as our soils are still warm enough to absorb water. Consider watering younger and older trees especially if the soils around them are dry and have not received suitable natural or supplemental moisture. Remember, the supplemental water must be applied from the tips of the branches, outward for the tree to take the best advantage.

Please contact me for additional information or questions at aaron.kiesz@aberdeen.sd.us or 626-7015

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