



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **CT Grown Christmas Trees: A Holiday Tradition**

Hartford, CT – Few things say “Christmas” more than the fragrance and feel of a fresh-cut, CT Grown Christmas tree.

Though tromping across cold hills in search of the perfect tree requires more effort than pulling a pre-lit, foreign-made tree out of a box, it is effort well spent. According to the National Christmas Tree Association, real Christmas trees are a renewable, recyclable resource —for every real tree that is harvested, two to three seedlings are planted in its place. In addition, artificial trees contain non-biodegradable plastics, as well as possible metal toxins such as lead, cadmium and organo-tins.

Nationwide, 15,000 producers supply over 100,000 full- or part-time jobs in the industry. In Connecticut, over 300 Christmas tree farms keep some 5,000 acres in active farmland. Each acre provides the daily oxygen requirements of 18 people.

Selecting the perfect, fresh, CT Grown tree is cherished tradition for many state residents. It is a tradition that dates back at least 500 years. The first record of a decorated evergreen used at Christmastime is from 1510 in Riga, Latvia, a Germanic region of Europe. It is thought that the Germans adopted the use of evergreens to celebrate life during the winter solstice from the Romans.

Searching for a tree also tends to be a revered family activity and is an opportunity to enjoy precious time with loved ones. In fact, many families make the activity part of their annual Thanksgiving weekend plans.

According to Ron Olsen, a marketing representative for the state Department of Agriculture, “Favorite species grown locally include Balsam, Fraser, and Douglas Fir; White and Blue Spruce; and

White Pine. Regardless of which is selected, however, the key is choosing a really fresh tree and caring for it correctly after.”

Olsen emphasizes that the freshest trees have been grown locally. Trees trucked in from other regions may have been cut weeks before arriving at their destination. Cutting your own tree at a local tree farm further ensures that your tree is as fresh as can be.

The CT Christmas Tree Growers Association offers the following safety tips for enjoying your tree throughout the season:

- Select the freshest-looking real tree available.
- Make a fresh cut across the tree's base and immediately place in water.
- Keep the tree's water container full at all times, checking the water level daily.
- Be extra careful with electricity, all open flames, and other heat sources during the holidays.
- Check all Christmas tree lights, other electric decorations, and electrical appliances for wear (i.e., frayed cords). Do not use lights, decorations, or appliances with worn electrical cords.
- Use only UL-approved electrical decorations and extension cords.
- Place the Christmas tree well away from heat registers, space heaters, fire places, wood stoves, televisions, computer monitors, and other heat sources.
- Place the Christmas tree clear of doors to keep the emergency escape route clear of trees, packages and furniture.
- Unplug tree lights and other decorations when out of the room or sleeping.

Information about where to buy fresh CT Grown trees is available on the Department of Agriculture’s website at [www.CTGrown.gov](http://www.CTGrown.gov) (click on “Publications”) or by calling 860-713-2503.

**CONNECTICUT GROWN** - The Local Flavor

Visit us at [www.CTGrown.gov](http://www.CTGrown.gov)

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