

Christmas Tradition

Genuine Facts About Artificial Christmas Trees

(NAPSA)—For hundreds of years, the Christmas tree has been a popular symbol of the holidays. Most people celebrated with a real tree until the early 2000s, when artificial trees began to gain in popularity for their practicality. Advances in technology let designers make artificial trees that are both incredibly realistic and durable.

In 2015, 81 percent of the more than 99 million households that displayed a Christmas tree used an artificial tree, according to the survey from the American Christmas Tree Association, conducted by Nielsen. Only 19 percent of American homes displaying Christmas trees last year used real trees.

Artificial trees don't need water, they don't shed and they can last for years, saving you money over time. If you're looking for an artificial tree this year, go online to find the widest selection and best quality for your budget, then consider these tips.

- **Size:** Artificial trees are available in a variety of shapes and sizes to fit just about any home. Even lower-priced brands offer full (traditional), narrow and "pencil" trees in sizes ranging from 4 to 10 feet. Measure carefully and consider a "flatback" or corner tree if space is very tight.

- **Setup:** Today's artificial trees are designed for easy setup but the amount of time it takes to go from box to beautiful can vary. Check out the www.TreeClassics.com Snap Tree if you want more holiday fun in less time. Available in several branch styles and sizes, this tree is stored on its rolling stand and sets up in a snap, without heavy lifting of multiple sections.

- **Lights:** Untangling and stringing lights can be difficult, which is why the most popular artificial trees are pre-lit. "Look for 100 lights per foot," suggests Thomas Harman, CEO of www.BalsamHill.com, retailer of what have been called the most realistic artificial trees on the market. "A 7½ foot tree, the standard for most homes, should have at least 750 lights on it." Balsam Hill's unique trunk design comes with premade light connections—just stack the sections together and plug into a wall socket.

- **Realism:** Artificial Christmas trees molded from polyethylene, or PE, have what many say are the



In the past 10 years, artificial Christmas trees have surpassed real trees in popularity and are now so realistic that they can mimic real tree varieties. This Vermont White Spruce is from a company known for high quality and striking realism.

best quality, color and shape. Look for branches with a mix of brown and different shades of green in the branches. "Our designers carefully craft our trees to mimic nature using cuttings from live trees as their guides. So our Balsam Fir looks just like a real balsam fir in color and needle shape," says Harman. For a truly different look, visit www.Treetopia.com to find tinsel trees in a rainbow of fun colors.

- **Warranty:** A good artificial tree should last at least 10 years. Look for a warranty of no less than five years on the tree and no less than three years on the lights. Proper storage will also extend the life of the tree. Most manufacturers will provide a storage bag for the tree and recommend storing the tree in its shipping box to prevent crushing.

If you still want a real, fragrant Christmas tree, get the freshest one you can find—many trees sold in lots are cut in October. Fortunately, www.GreenValleyChristmasTrees.com offers premium tree species, grown in their native soil at farms across America. Pick the date you want your tree to be hand cut. It will be cut within 48 hours and shipped straight to your door.