



MEDIA RELEASE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MARKET DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

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GET LOCAL, GO GREEN AT LOCAL CHRISTMAS TREE FARMS

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - When you choose a natural Christmas tree from a local farm, you do the planet a favor – and you give yourself a holiday treat, too. Christmas tree farms grow a completely renewable and recyclable resource which contains no petroleum products and leaves a very small carbon footprint.

Natural Christmas trees can be found close to home, waiting to be transported from the farm to your living room. While they're growing, natural Christmas trees absorb carbon dioxide and other gases and emit fresh oxygen. Christmas trees are often grown on soil that doesn't support other crops, and their root systems serve to stabilize soil, protect area water quality and provide refuge for wildlife. Grown on farms just like any other crop, one to three new seedlings are planted for every tree harvested to ensure a constant supply.

Lots of people don't think about where plastics – and therefore artificial trees-- come from. Plastic is made with petroleum products. Lead, an ingredient in PVC (polyvinyl chloride) plastic and other metals, are also important parts of an artificial tree. Fake trees don't biodegrade, and chances are they've traveled a long way, leaving a huge carbon footprint to get to the store or your home. About 85 percent of them start in China, but they'll end up sitting in our local landfills for centuries.

After the holidays you can take your natural tree to a local site to be turned into mulch for area trails. Some people also like to place their old trees in their ponds or favorite fishing spots to serve as fish habitats. No matter what you do with it, it's 100 percent biodegradable.

There's also the option to buy a live tree to replant once the holidays are over. The tree farmer will be happy to give you tips on how to plant and care for your transplanted tree. Buying a live tree from a farm close to you is a guarantee that the variety you choose will grow well in your area, an assurance you can't always get other places.

Local tree growers depend on loyal customers, so they make sure you can't wait to come back year after year for a great holiday experience. Most tree farms carry freshly

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made wreaths and garlands, and many have gift shops on site with all sorts of holiday décor inside. Lots of farmers offer complimentary hot chocolate or cider, and some offer hayrides. Some growers even conduct on-farm holiday craft classes or host special events which could even include a visit from Santa.

Find local Christmas tree farms with the help of a statewide directory at www.picktnproducts.org. Always call ahead and confirm hours of operation and activities.

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