



## How to *pick*, *preserve* and *dispose* of your holiday tree

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The tradition of choosing and cutting down the annual family Christmas trees is one of the most beloved Christmas rituals.

Winding through aisle after aisle to find that evergreen with the perfect shape, color and smell creates memories that outlast the winter's cold. But the perfect tree requires the proper care if it's going to last until the new year and beyond.

No matter what kind of tree families choose, they have to make sure to give it plenty of water. Not giving trees enough water will lead to them drying and losing their needles as well as softening the fresh evergreen smell.

Chuck Berry, owner of Berry's

Tree Farm on Mount Tabor Road, said whether people buy a pre-cut tree or cut their own, they need to re-cut the base before putting it into a contained filled with water.

As soon as trees are cut, the base begins to seal over with sap, and if that happens, the tree won't be able to absorb any water. He said when a person gets ready to put the tree into the water, they need to make a fresh cut on the bottom with a saw or other blade in order to reopen the tree's veins. It doesn't matter when the tree was cut; it's still best to make a fresh cut immediately before placing into water.

Once that's done, Berry said however you choose to water the tree, whether through a bowl filled with water or some other system, it's important to make sure the base of the

trunk is always covered with water. Otherwise, the tree's resin will cover over the cut and prevent water uptake.

Berry said a properly watered tree should last up to four weeks before it starts to dry out and lose its needles.

Another important tip with any Christmas tree is always to check all lights for any faulty wiring and not to leave them on unattended. That's the best way to prevent any accidental fires.

Once the tree has dried out and begins to lose its needles, there are several ways to dispose of it. If a person owns a private pond or lake, evergreens can be placed in those to make fish habitats.

Another popular option is to take trees to the county landfill or any recycling center. At the landfill the trees are chipped up and turned into mulch.

Free mulch is available at the landfill year round.

The "Bring One for the Chipper" program is run annually by Keep Covington/Newton Beautiful, and their main tree drive will take place on Jan. 9 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. On this day only, residents will also be able to take their trees to Home Depot in addition to any recycling center.

Normally, seedlings are given away to people who bring in their Christmas trees, but because of budget cuts that will not happen this year, said Laurie Riley, KCNB's program education specialist.

Finally, residents within Covington's city limits can leave their trees out, similar to other yard waste, to be picked up by the city. These trees are also chipped up and turned into mulch. ■



Berry's Tree Farm  
photo by Brittany Thomas