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## CARING FOR HOLIDAY TREES

### Cut Trees

**Keep your tree outdoors** or on an unheated porch or patio until you decide to take it in and decorate it. Keep it protected from the wind and sun also. More importantly, keep it in a pail of water, or very wet sand until it goes inside.

**Make a straight, fresh cut** across the trunk, about an inch or two from the bottom when you're ready to bring it in the home. This cut opens up the tree's "pores" so they can take up water, much like flowers do.

**Threes are thirsty!** Keep your tree in a water bearing stand. Depending on the size and species, Christmas trees can take up to a gallon of water per day. The first two days are especially important, so check the water in the stand several times those first two days. Then keep the stand filled daily.

**Avoid placing the tree near furnace vents** if possible. Also check to make sure all lights, wires, sockets, and plugs are in good condition!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

### Live Evergreen Trees

**Determine the planting location** for the tree, and dig the hole early in the month (while the ground is still workable). The hole should be twice as wide as the ball, but no deeper.

**Store the tree in an unheated room**, such as a garage or back porch, for a minimum of 2-3 days before bringing it inside; this allows your tree to SLOWLY adjust to warmer temperatures.

**As Christmas nears, bring your tree indoors.** Keep it inside for 10 days or less. Keep it in a tub for ease of handling and watering.

**Water as needed** to keep the root ball moist. AVOID STANDING WATER!!!

**After Christmas**, store your tree in an unheated room again so it can adjust to cooler temperatures. Store for a minimum of 2-3 days.

**Now it is time to plant!** Place the tree in the prepared hole and backfill with a mixture of 1 part peat to 2 parts topsoil. Water in well.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

HOLIDAY TREE CARE

## CARING FOR HOLIDAY PLANTS

There are some plants that specialize in reflecting the beauty of this special season. And in recent years the variety in colors and plant habit has increased to include some really stunning flower colors. Below are tips on caring for these special plants. And of course Oakland's nursery experts are always available to help. If your really impatient remember the BIG THREE regarding indoor plants:

- Indirect bright light is best.
- Keep soil evenly moist.
- Avoid cold drafty areas or hot furnace registers.

### Poinsettia

At this time of year amount of light is not too important, just avoid direct sunny spots. Water thoroughly when soil surface feels dry to the touch. Drain excess water in saucer at base of pot to prevent root rot and protect furniture. (Pot Sleeves will hold water). Steady temperatures are important, 65-70 degrees during the day and 60-65 degrees at night. Avoid excessively hot or cold areas. To maintain your Poinsettia, apply fertilizer periodically. **Key Tip: Bright light and cool night temperatures will help delay flower bud drop and maintain brightly colored bracts.**

### Cyclamen

Before the poinsettia became popular as the "Christmas flower", there was the cyclamen. This tuberous plant is native to the eastern Mediterranean and Persia. There, the plant benefits from cool days and nights, bright sunshine, and well drained soil.

To care for your cyclamen, try to pick a cool location, day temperatures around 65 degrees, and night temperatures around 50 degrees. Bright indirect light is preferred, blooms will last longer if not exposed to direct light. Soil must be well drained but not go dry. So water to keep the soil evenly moist. Fertilize every two weeks.

As this is a tuberous plant, around April the leaves will wilt and yellow. Allow the soil to dry. After the threat of frost place outside in light shade. Water lightly and in August, replant in new soil, put back in shade. In September bring inside and put in morning sun. Keep soil evenly moist, fertilize and plant will re-grow!

## CARING FOR HOLIDAY PLANTS

### Amaryllis

This bulb is native to South America's tropical regions, and one of the easiest to bring to bloom. The large trumpet like flowers come in many varieties, including shades of red, white, pink, salmon and orange. There are also striped and multicolored varieties with unusual petal styles.

Until ready to plant the bulbs, store in a cool place at 40-50 degrees. To plant your bulb place in lukewarm water for a few hours, then plant in potting soil up to its neck. Do not damage the roots, but press soil firmly around bulb. After the sprout is well out of the bulb, water sparingly and place in warm spot in direct light.

Bulbs will flower in 7-10 weeks as a general rule. In winter flowering time will be longer. For continuous bloom plant at intervals of two weeks.

If you want to try and get the bulb to bloom again, grow through summer, cut back yellowing leaves, and store at least six weeks in cool spot and repeat process.

### Norfolk Island Pine

This tree is a native tropical plant of the South Pacific, Norfolk Island, and can reach 80 feet in the wild. In your home they will maintain a reasonable size. The soft sprays of foliage and symmetry of the plant make this a great addition to your home.

Norfolk Island Pine grows best in cool indoor temperatures of around 65 degrees, avoiding cold drafts or furnace blasts. Bright indirect light is best will help the tree thrive. If your home is dark, plan on adding artificial light. Turn plant frequently to even out growth.

Water thoroughly weekly, or more often to keep soil evenly moist, not soggy. Severe drying, even once kills needles and branches. Feed monthly with half strength fertilizer. Humidity is very important. Use a cool mist a couple of times each day, and use a humidifier if room gets dry.

Avoid pruning, since growing points do not recover if pruned off. Replant only every 3-4 years, Norfolk Pines resent replanting.