

Balled Tree Care From Home To Yard

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Live trees chosen to shelter Christmas gifts can also offer wildlife shelter when planted in your backyard after the holiday season. Extra attention in choosing, caring and planting your live tree will help ensure the perfect holiday addition to your backyard, said Randy Heiligmann, an Ohio State University Extension forestry specialist.

When you choose your balled Christmas tree—trees with roots and soil held together in a burlap wrap—think about where it will be in your home and backyard. Measure the allotted area both indoors and outdoors to pick the proper size, said Heiligmann.

At the nursery, remember to include the ball in the measurement of the tree's height. "Trees in the lot look smaller than they really are. You destroy the look of the tree when you cut it to fit because you got the wrong size," he said.

After selecting a tree, carefully transport it home in a covered vehicle.

This protects the foliage from the wind, which can dry the tips out, Heiligmann said. Plan to have additional help in transporting the balled tree that may weigh up to 100 pounds or more, he said.

A balled tree should be placed inside for no more than five to eight days to prevent the tree from adapting to warmer conditions. Until then, place the tree under a larger tree, on the north side of the house, or in an unheated garage where it will be out of the wind and in the shade, said Heiligmann.

When moving the tree into the house, be careful not to damage the ball, Heiligmann said. If the soil is too wet when moving the tree, the root mass could break away from the roots leaving a mess in the house. "Just like any other potted plant, you need the soil to be moist, not wet," he said.

Place the tree in a room with temperatures of 65 degrees or lower and avoid south-facing windows, open registers and fireplaces, Heiligmann said. Warm spots will dry the tree and its foliage out, resulting in dead needles and even a dead tree, he said. The tree will do better in a cool, moist room.

After the holidays, the tree should be planted outside in a pre-dug hole.

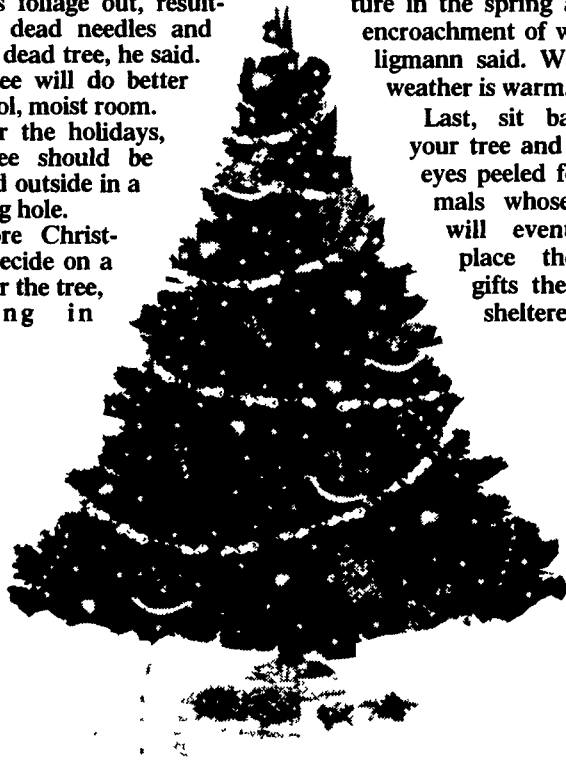
Before Christmas, decide on a spot for the tree, keeping in

mind that most Christmas trees eventually grow to 60 to 100 feet in height. The hole, which should be dug before the ground freezes, should be the height of the ball and 20 to 25 inches in diameter, said Heiligmann. Make sure to cover the pre-dug hole for safety purposes until after Christmas.

Plant the tree with the top of the ball level with the top of the hole or one-fourth out of the hole, Heiligmann said. Elevate the ball above the hole if the area soil tends to stay wet, he said. Use soil from the area or top soil to fill the hole, periodically tamping the soil down to prevent air pockets, said Heiligmann.

Once the tree is in place, add an inch or so of mulch around the tree trunk. Mulching will add to appearance, conserve moisture in the spring and retard encroachment of weeds, Heiligmann said. Water if the weather is warm.

Last, sit back, enjoy your tree and keep your eyes peeled for the animals whose presence will eventually replace the holiday gifts the tree once sheltered.



Recipe Topics

If you have recipes for topics listed below, please share them with us. We welcome your recipes, but ask that you include accurate measurements, a complete list of ingredients, and clear instructions with each recipe you submit. Be sure to include your name and address. Recipes should reach our office one week before the publishing date listed below.

Send your recipes to Lou Ann Good, Lancaster Farming, P.O. Box 609, Ephrata, PA 17522.

December

29 — New Year's Celebration

January

5 — Beef Contest Entries

12 — Beef Contest Entries

19 — Soups and Stews

Season's Greetings From Lebanon Dairy Royalty

LEBANON — Six months have gone by since the Lebanon County Dairy Princess Pageant in June. I thought I would mention what we have done in the past month. We presented 12 presentations at the South Lebanon Elementary School. We served chocolate pudding and conducted a "Real Seal Contest" for the classes. The class with the most "Real Seals" won an ice cream party or pizza party. The winning class was Mrs. Erb's fifth grade.

At Ono Preschool, there were three groups. We read a story, talked to the kids about dairy products, and taught them some new songs like, "A churning we will go," and "This is the way we churn the cream."

At the Lebanon DHIA Banquet we served milk punch, I presented my speech, and played a trivia game with the audience. At Kmart, we handed out free samples of flavored milk such as vanilla, chocolate, banana, orange creme, and regular white milk.

If you have not seen us on television, I will tell you what we did. We were in the Lebanon Holiday Parade. We designed our own Christmas float with snow, snowmen, a Christmas tree, wreath, ribbons, stockings, garland, milk cans, and signs. We even had some big attractions with a baby calf on board that had a bright red ribbon around his neck. We found out later that we won second prize with our float.

At Campbelltown Day Care Center, we read stories, made cow masks, made pudding, and listened and danced to cow music. The kids enjoyed it as much as we did.

At the Lebanon County 4-H Dairy Banquet, we were the entertainment for the night. However, we did not entertain. We had some helpers do the work. We put a skit together about two girls (Sarah Moyer and Kelly Reist), who left cookies and soda for Santa instead of milk.

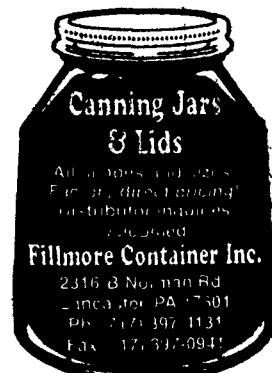
When Santa (Nelson Troutman) came and saw there was no milk, he left the girls only a bucket of coal. The audience loved it, and Nelson, Sarah, and Kelly did a great job.

The Lebanon Farm City Banquet was a blast. We served Santa Surprise and Orange Taste Twister Milk Punch. It tasted good. More than 800 people attended the banquet. I met new people and ran into some old friends. It was a great night to look our best.

Yordy's Tree Farm was an interesting place. We served Santa Surprise Milk Punch, and got to thank the owners for donating the wreaths for our holiday float.

On Saturday, Dec. 15, from 10 to 2 p.m., we were at the Lebanon Wal-Mart Store serving cheese with many holiday recipes. These are only a few things we have done, but we still have more to do. Look for us at these upcoming events. On Thursday, Dec. 20, from 9:30 to 1 p.m., we will be at the Lebanon Court House serving Milk Punch. On Thursday, Dec. 27, we will be at the Lebanon Valley Child Care Learning Center at 10 a.m. From Jan. 5-10, we will be at the Pennsylvania Farm Show. Also, listen for us on WLBR Radio as we promote the dairy industry with a few holiday announcements.

Lebanon County Dairy Royalty includes Amy Moyer, Pennsylvania alternate dairy princess; Jess Bross, dairy maid; Janelle Zimmerman, dairy maid; Chanelle Horst, dairy maid; and Louise Krall, li'l dairy miss, wishing you a "Dairy" Christmas and "Happy Moo" Year!



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