

National Christmas Tree Day is on December 2nd – will you choose a real or fake tree this year? Here are tips to help you choose the perfect real tree!

Toronto, ON, November 15, 2017 – As the holiday season approaches and families begin to decorate their condos, apartments and homes, the perennial question arises – what is better, a real or artificial Christmas tree?

Some, perhaps because of convenience, prefer artificial trees. Others question the environmental impact and carbon footprint of transporting a plastic tree from across the world.

Rob Keen, CEO at [Forest Ontario](http://ForestOntario.com) confirms that nothing beats the family fun of finding the perfect tree on a snowy weekend trip to a local Christmas Tree Farm.

For many people, the smell that they most associate with the holidays is the fresh scent of a real tree. But Christmas trees don't just provide a remarkable aroma, they are a source of employment and income for families throughout Ontario. In fact, more than 500 farmers produce more than one million Christmas trees each year.

Tree farms are carbon sinks, soaking up carbon dioxide emitted by cars, planes and our homes. One acre of planted Christmas trees produces oxygen for 18 people every day. Real trees are 100% biodegradable. And, at the end of the holiday season, Christmas trees are mulched and spread around newly planted trees. There are even free trees for the cutting – in Ontario anyone is permitted to cut one tree on Crown land for his or her own use.

If you are considering a real tree, Rob has a few **TIPS** for picking and caring for your tree.

- The most popular choices for a Christmas tree are spruce, pine or fir – spruce tend to lose their needles first, pine and fir shed them somewhat slower.
- Do the drop test – lift the tree a few inches of the ground and let it fall. Choose the tree that doesn't lose needles.
- Gently grab the inside of a branch and pull your hand toward you. The needles should not come loose in your hands.
- Buy a tree that fits your home, use a sturdy tree stand with space for water and remember to leave space near the ceiling for your tree “topper”.
- When you buy your tree, have an inch cut off the base to make it easier for the tree to take up water. Be sure the cut is straight to ensure that tree will stand up properly in the water-filled stand.
- Place your tree in a spot away from heat sources to keep your tree from drying out.
- Ensure that the tree has enough water and keep watering it – it's crucial that there's enough water to prevent the tree from drying sooner than expected.



If you live in the city and can't get to a Christmas tree farm this year, fear not, real trees are sold at many downtown and suburban retail stores. You can also support groups like the Boy Scouts who have Christmas tree fundraisers every year. If you are heading to the Toronto Christmas Market, you will find Forest Ontario selling Christmas Trees during the first two weekends of December. For each tree purchased, not only will you get one free ticket into the market, Forests Ontario will plant a tree.

Buying a natural Christmas tree is a win-win, an opportunity to bring the beauty and aroma of Ontario's forests into our homes for the holiday season, celebrate in a way that's eco-friendly and helps support Ontario tree growers and the Ontario economy. Our forests are an incredible renewable resource, that when managed well, provide a host of social, economic, and environmental benefits.

-30-

About Forests Ontario

Forests Ontario is the voice for our forests. Working to promote a future of healthy forests sustaining healthy people, Forests Ontario is committed to the re-greening of Ontario through tree planting efforts on rural lands and in urban areas, as well as the renewal and stewardship of Ontario's forests through restoration, education and awareness. Visit www.forestsontario.ca or follow us @Forests_Ontario.

For more information or to arrange an interview please contact:

Shelley McKay

Director of Communications & Development

Forests Ontario

416.646.1193 x.232

Cell: 416.619.0783

smckay@forestsontario.ca