

I'm Dreaming of a Cost-Effective and Environmentally Friendly Christmas: Why You Should Choose a Real Christmas Tree Over an Artificial One

Picture it: a family packed in a car, singing, laughing, telling stories. They are going out to buy a beautiful Christmas tree. A lovely evergreen that smells like the embodiment of the holiday spirit, and will soon be decorated in an assortment of shapes, sizes, and colors. They approach a tree farm in the middle of nowhere, but it is a winter wonderland. This family makes a long trek to a field filled with evergreens of all varieties, one that matches the personality of each family. Soon they will find their perfect tree, and it will be quite the event. They may chop it down themselves, and afterwards drink hot cocoa and warm up.

Now picture the opposite: a harsh, depressingly lit department store. Sure, it evokes Christmas, with decorations and holiday music playing over the loudspeakers, but something seems a bit off. A single person is standing in an aisle full of artificial trees, plastic and made to look perfect. No family, no singing, no laughing. With a such a stark difference in these two moods, it should be no wonder that a real Christmas tree is better than a fake one.

A large argument against a live Christmas tree is that it is harmful to the environment to cut down a tree. However, one could think of Christmas trees as a crop, much like fruits and vegetables. They are not cut down from forests, rather, they are grown for the purpose of being cut down, according to a New York Times article. A fake Christmas tree, on the other hand, is a petroleum- based product, and many families will only use a fake tree for 6-9 years before throwing it away rather than the hoped for 20 or 30 by Thomas Harman, the founder of Balsam Hill (a high- end tree company). Once a fake Christmas tree is thrown away, it will sit in a landfill for an indefinite amount of time, causing the landfill to fill with gigantic, green grotesques. A real Christmas tree can also be recycled into mulch, as done in New York's

MulchFest (Mulchfest). A fake Christmas tree, if burned, will also release toxic gases into the environment, while a well-cared-for real tree will be harder to burn, and if it does, will not release the same toxins. There is also the fact that a real tree will absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen into the environment (Fake Trees).

The average cost of a fake Christmas tree is about \$107 dollars, which can increase depending on the quality of the tree. A real Christmas tree will only cost \$75 dollars or less, depending on the height and type of tree (Fake Trees). It is also easier to haggle for a Christmas tree, and often you can get a tree for less than the original price. While you are paying yearly rather than keeping the tree, many high quality fake trees sell for more than the average of \$107, and can cost upwards of \$1,000 unless on sale (Stratford Spruce™). However, if you buy one Christmas tree per year for about \$75 for the usual 6 years, you will end up paying \$450, which is far less than the Balsam Hill trees, even when on sale.

Picking a Christmas tree from a farm is like the old Covergirl saying: “Easy, Breezy, Beautiful.” The smell of fresh pine that fills your house will warm your heart, and may smell even better than the pine-scented car freshener one would put in an artificial tree. Feel that sense of the holidays with a Christmas tree that shows the spirit of one’s family, whether it be a classically beautiful Canaan Fir or a funky Blue Spruce. And remember: buying a real Christmas tree will not only put you on Santa’s nice list but also on Mother Nature’s.

Works Cited

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