

2018 Virginia Grown Christmas Tree Month Environmental Benefits of a Real Tree

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF A REAL CHRISTMAS TREES

A real Christmas tree is a U.S. based product that is carbon-neutral, meaning it does not harm the environment.

The size of Christmas tree farms in Virginia range from less than one acre to as large as several hundred or even 1,000 acres. They are a valuable and aesthetically pleasing addition to the land and can be planted on barren slopes and difficult spots where other crops will not grow. The farms that grow Christmas Trees stabilize soil, protect water supplies and provide refuge for wildlife while creating scenic green belts.

Virginia's rich soil and moderate climate are ideal for growing a wide variety of Christmas evergreen trees including white pine, Scotch pine, Norway spruce, Canaan fir, blue spruce, Douglas fir and Fraser fir.

There are about one million acres in the United States that are used for growing Christmas trees. Each acre provides the daily oxygen requirements of 18 people. Just one Christmas tree can absorb one ton of CO₂ during its lifetime and with over 350 million trees growing in the United States at any one time, you can imagine the benefits.

For every real Christmas tree harvested, 2 to 3 seedlings are planted in its place. It can take as many as 15 years to grow a tree of average retail sale height (6 feet), but the average growing time is 7 years.

Once the holidays are over, real Christmas trees can be recycled. Check with your local government for Christmas tree recycling programs or visit <http://www.realchristmastrees.org/dnn/All-About-Trees/How-to-Recycle> for other recycling ideas.

Nothing can beat the smell of a real tree.

Advantages of Real Virginia Grown Christmas Trees When Compared to an Artificial Trees

- 85% of artificial trees are made in China.
- Artificial trees must be transported overseas which consumes oil and fuel and releases carbon emissions.
- Artificial trees are often made of harmful chemicals including metal and polyvinyl chloride (PVC), a non-biodegradable, petroleum-derived plastic, which when manufactured produces carcinogens like dioxin, ethylene dichloride and vinyl chloride. This type of pollution is a leading cause of cancer. Older trees may also contain lead.
- When an artificial tree is disposed of in a landfill, it will remain there for centuries.

