

MANHATTAN OPTIMIST TREE LOT

Christmas Tree Selection And Care Tips

Selecting The Tree

1. **Get a healthy tree** - Don't buy a tree that is losing green needles, or has dry, brittle twigs or a sour, musty smell. Excessive needle loss can be detected by vigorously shaking the tree, or dropping it onto the end of the trunk several times from a height of about 1 ft. The loss of old dead needles from the inside of the tree does not indicate that there is a problem with the tree. **Our Club Members** can shake the tree to remove these old dead needles and reduce the potential for a mess inside the car or home.
2. **Size of the Tree** - Do not buy a tree that is too large for the area where it will be displayed. Aside from paying more than necessary, you will have to cut off a large section of the lower trunk, and possibly the lower whorl (attachment of branches at a single point) of branches. This might ruin the appearance of the lower part of the tree.
3. **Bottom of the Tree** - Note the location of large branches at the bottom of the tree. Be sure that the handle (base) is long enough to allow display of the tree without cutting off the lower whorl of large branches. USDA grading rules specify trees should have a handle not less than 6 inches, or more than 1-1/2 inches for each foot of tree height. However, some species are routinely sold without pruned handles, eg, Fraser fir.

Transporting The Tree

4. **Net the tree** - Netting the tree allows for easier transport in a vehicle and also easier access to inside the home. **Our Club Members** can net the tree for transport from the Tree Lot.
5. **Wrap the tree** - If the transport time from the retail lot to the final destination is more than 15 min, it is best to wrap the tree in a tarp, or carry it in an enclosed vehicle or in the back of a pick-up. Strong wind of 60 mph on the highway, especially during warm weather, can damage a tree in a short time.
6. **Orientation on the car** - Put the bottom of the tree aiming forward to protect the needles from being blown off.
7. **Tie it securely** - If the tree is carried on the outside of a vehicle, tie it securely.

Storing The Tree Before Bringing It In The House

8. **Keep out of the sunlight** - Do not leave a cut Christmas tree lying in the sunshine for long periods of time, especially if air temperatures are warm. Fresh trees dry rapidly in those circumstances.
9. **Keep it in water** - If the tree is not going into the house soon after purchase, it should be stored in a bucket of clear water on a cool porch or patio away from wind, sun and freezing temperatures. If the tree is netted, keeping the netting on will reduce water evaporation through the needles.

Setting Up The Tree In The Stand

10. **Cut off a disk of wood about 1/2" to 1" thick** from the base of the trunk immediately before putting the tree in the stand. Make the cut perpendicular to the stem axis. Do not cut at an angle, or into a v-shape, which makes it far more difficult to hold the tree plumb in the stand, and reduces the amount of water available to the tree. Do not cut off too much trunk, resulting in a handle too short for the stand.

Do not bruise the end of the trunk or get it dirty.

Our Club Members will make a fresh cut on the base of the tree trunk before departing the Tree Lot.

11. **Put the tree in water as soon as possible** - Once a tree is cut, the sap in the tree will start sealing over the base, and this will hinder its ability to absorb water. This process takes about three hours.
12. **Use a stand that fits your tree** - Some stands have circular rings at the top, so the ring must be large enough so the trunk goes through the hole. Other stands are open, which allows more range in trunk size. Avoid whittling the sides of the trunk down to fit a stand. The outer layers of wood are most efficient in taking up water and should not be removed. Use a stand with an adequate water holding capacity for the tree. Using stands that are too small is a very common mistake.
13. **Water Daily** - Fresh trees use about 1 quart of water per day per inch of trunk diameter. Water moves into the trunk at the lower cut end, and eventually evaporates (transpires) through the needles. The stand should hold enough water to last 24 hours. Maintaining a steady water level prevents the needles from drying out and dropping off and the boughs from drooping. Water will also keep the tree fragrant. Do not allow the water pan to empty or go below the tree base. If the stand goes dry and is subsequently refilled, water uptake may stop or be severely limited, leading to premature drying.
14. **Keep Away From Heat Sources** - Place the tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces, heaters, heat vents, and direct sunlight.

Taking Down The Tree

15. **Disconnect all electrical devices** prior to removing them from the tree.
16. **Never burn a tree in a fire place or wood stove** - Pine trees have a lot of sap which can flash and also create a chimney fire.
17. **Cleanup** - Once you are done with your tree for the season, recycle it at:
 - Longs Park**
 - North East Corner**
 - South 16th & Colorado**