



Media Release – Immediate

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Top Tips for a Top Christmas Tree

A Christmas tree is the focal point of every family's Christmas, filling the house with scent and providing a place to gather your presents. So how do you ensure that you buy the perfect tree, one that is going to last the whole festive period?

The Forestry Commission sells more than 100,000 Christmas trees nationally every year. Fraser Bradbury, forester with the Forestry Commission in Market Harborough, has come up with his top tips to make sure your tree not only looks good, but also lasts!

- Stand the tree in a bucket of water and keep in a cool place, such as a garage or shed, until ready to take indoors for decorating.
- Gently shake the tree to remove any loose needles before taking it indoors
- When you are ready to decorate the tree, cut off at least an inch from the bottom of its trunk - this will encourage it to draw up water
- Pot the tree with the trunk immersed in water - many garden centres sell special stands designed to do this
- Don't use sand or soil in the tree stand as they restrict water from being drawn up into the trunk
- Stand the tree in the coolest part of the room, ideally next to a window and away from radiators and fires
- Remember to top up the tree stand with water every day, an average Christmas tree can 'drink' as much as a pint of water a day.
- Each tree has up to around 150,000 needles. You don't want those on your floor! The Forestry Commission sells Nordman Fir trees which are specially bred to keep their needles longer.

- To maintain your green credentials, buy trees that come from a sustainable source: for instance all Forestry Commission Christmas trees are grown specially to be sold during the festive season. When they are cut, they are between six and ten years old - and for every tree cut the Commission plants at least another two.

This year you can buy Christmas trees from the Forestry Commission's visitor centres. Fraser said: "The Forestry Commission only sell the very best real Christmas trees, competitively priced and specially grown and selected to our high quality standards. Every care is taken to ensure that a tree you buy from the Forestry Commission is as healthy and fresh as possible."

If you collect your Christmas tree over the weekend of December 12-13 from the Top Lodge centre at Fineshade you can enjoy the Fineshade Medieval Festival, with an array of medieval reenactments and entertainment.

The Medieval weekend is also the perfect place to pick up an unusual Christmas gift, with a range of Christmas and medieval craft stalls selling gifts and decorations. For the person who has everything, why not buy them an annual 'discovery' pass for the Forestry Commission's car parks in Northamptonshire so they can park their cars to enjoy the local woods for free all year round. Discovery passes can be bought from Forestry Commission visitor centres and also online at www.forestry.gov.uk/pass.

Events at Top Lodge, Fineshade

December 1: Christmas Eve

Free Christmas trails are available throughout the festive season by collecting instructions from the visitors' centre at Fineshade.

December 12 – 13: Festive Medieval Weekend

Activities include a free prize draw, singing bird tombola, archery games and much more. With entertainment from Companions of the Crow medieval re-enactors, Medieval displays and Longbow demonstrations. Trolls Bottom Bar will also offer a selection of meads, mulled wines and ale.

Events at Bourne Wood, Kesteven Forest

December 13: Santa in Bourne Woods

Children can meet Santa. Santa will be in the woods from 11am to 3pm. There will also be a selection of craft stalls and activities, and refreshments will be available too.

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NOTES TO EDITOR

1. For more information contact Sarah Walker on 01780 444920 or email sarah.walker@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

About the Forestry Commission

2. The Forestry Commission is the government department responsible in England for protecting, expanding and promoting the sustainable management of woods and forests, and increasing their value to society and the environment. Forestry makes a real contribution to sustainable development, providing social and environmental benefits arising from planting and managing attractive, as well as productive woodlands. Further information about the Commission can be found at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/>
3. Northants Forest District runs from Grantham in Lincolnshire right down to Ampthill in Bedfordshire, taking in many beautiful and varied woodlands.

Bourne Wood, south Northamptonshire

4. Bourne Wood is part of Kesteven Forest. On foot the woods can be accessed from Beech Avenue, Bourne. By road a car park is signposted off of the A151 half a mile west of Bourne. www.forestry.gov.uk/kestevenforest.

Fineshade Wood, north Northamptonshire

5. Fineshade Wood is part of Rockingham Forest. Corby or Stamford is the nearest town or village. Fineshade is signposted from the A43, 9 miles northeast of Corby, and 6 miles southwest of Stamford. www.forestry.gov.uk/toplodge.