

# Guide to Handling and Care of Christmas Trees in Warm Climates

The Christmas Tree Capital of the World is in Nova Scotia, Canada. NS trees are known for their fresh appearance and festive aroma which are a result of the cool, wet climate that supports the Balsam Fir species. NS Christmas Trees endure international trips to ensure that the center of Christmas can be enjoyed by all.

The tree is a living organism and any changes to its environment can cause stress, leading to unfavorable characteristics such as needle loss and browning. To limit stress, NS Christmas Tree growers have taken a comprehensive approach when preparing trees but once they arrive at their destination, ensuring the health of the tree is out of their hands. The dramatic change in climate, humidity, and handling can create unavoidable stress to the product. Use the tips in this guide to do your part in ensuring tree stress is avoided and the best possible product is available to your customers.



## Supplier: Tree care during shipping

It is the supplier's responsibility to ensure the customer receives the same quality of trees in the shipment that was initially loaded.

- Communication with the grower and retailer should be a priority
- Trees should always be handled with care
- Trees should not be directly exposed to sun or wind
- Trees should be transported in a clean, acclimatized environment
- Containers should be set to 1°C unless specified otherwise by the grower
- Approximately 45 minutes before arrival at the retailer location, the temperature should be increased to 4°C and refrigeration should be turned on as soon as the shipment enters a warm climate
- The temperature of containers should be maintained (keep doors closed)
- Humidity should be maintained to prevent drying out the product, consider refrigeration in short bursts or supplying containers of water in the reefer



## Retailer: Tree care during retail

The appearance of trees will improve sales and improve the retailer's reputation with consumers.

### Storage

- Upon arrival, the trees should be kept in the shipping container as long as possible
- Trees should never be stored in direct sunlight or wind
- Tents and tarp covers should be used to maintain humidity
- Watering the piles of trees or placing pails of water within a sealed area can increase relative humidity
- Fans can be useful to improve air circulation and reduce the ambient temperature
- A transition area should be set up to help the trees adjust to the temperature fluctuation; the area can be shaded by tarps and have fans to improve ambient temperature

### Display

- Trees on display should receive a fresh cut (butt) and be placed immediately in water
- Display environments should be kept covered and cool
- Demand and timing of sales are key, trees should remain in the container until sale
- Upon purchase, provide a fresh cut (butt)



## Customer: Tree care at home

To ensure that customers have a pleasant experience with their tree and return next year, provide resources to educate the customers on proper tree care. Their efforts can extend the life of the tree and therefore improve their experience.

- Handle trees with care; no jamming stepping or dragging
- Provide shade, air conditioning, and cover to the tree
- Cold-acclimated trees hold their needles better
- Avoid placing trees in warm or humid areas
- Ensure the retailer provides a fresh cut (butt) and place the tree in room temperature freshwater