



**OREGON  
DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE**

## **INTRODUCING... OREGON CHRISTMAS TREES**

Oregon sets the bar for Christmas tree production in the United States. More than 4 million Christmas trees (30% of national production) originate in Oregon. Christmas trees are grown on 1000 farms all located in the western half of the state, where climate, soil, and experience set the precedent for cultivating this beloved holiday symbol.

People usually think of farm crops on an annual harvest cycle. Instead, it takes years to grow straight and well-rounded Christmas trees to a size suitable for harvest.



### **GROWING CHRISTMAS TREES TAKES TIME & EXPERTISE**

Most Christmas trees are harvested at 6–7 feet tall (1.8–2.13m), meaning 6 years of growth. A few are grown much longer to produce the stately trees for department stores and public squares. Oregon Christmas trees have been selected to decorate the U.S. White House. Some trees are harvested smaller for 3–4-foot (0.9–1.2m) tabletop settings.

A lot of knowledge and effort is invested in growing perfectly-shaped Christmas trees that hold up for weeks even after being cut. The tree's ability to remain green and fresh looking after harvest and shipping is called, "keepability." Trees tested to have excellent keepability will hold their color and appearance for at least 4-6 weeks. Keepability is very important as Christmas trees must be harvested early

enough to be in stores in time for customers to purchase for Christmas. This means Christmas trees are harvested in November for the U.S. market and in October for international customers.

The work to grow excellent Christmas trees starts long before the seedling is planted on the farm. Farmers, industry associations, and university researchers cooperate to breed, select, and test different species to identify the ones that grow best in Oregon's growing conditions. Once planted, trees are carefully pruned and shaped each season to encourage full growth. Farmers and researchers also cultivate different types of evergreens to suit an array of customer preferences.

**Oregon Christmas trees are not individually harvested from forests, contrary to popular belief. They are a sustainable crop, grown together in large fields, providing years of carbon sequestration in the process.**



## DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE TYPE OF CHRISTMAS TREE?

### NOBLE FIR (ABIES PROCERA)

More than half of Oregon Christmas trees are Noble Firs. Some call it the “King of Christmas trees.” The branches are evenly spaced and offer good visibility for ornaments. Needles turn upward and vary in color from dark green to bluish green. Needle retention and keepability are excellent; Noble Firs are known to stay fresh for a long time.



### GRAND FIR (ABIES GRANDIS)

The Grand Fir is the most fragrant of all Christmas trees. These large trees are native to the Pacific Northwest. Fluffy and round Grand Firs sport many branches with abundant needles. Needles are a glossy, dark green to dark yellow-green color and lie flat along the branch.



### DOUGLAS FIR (PSEUDOTSUGA MENZIESII)

Douglas Fir has been a favorite Christmas tree species across the United States for the last century. Dark green to bluish-green needles measure 0.75–1.5 inches (2–4cm) long and splay in all directions. Needles give off a strong and sweet fragrance when crushed. They have good keepability. They continue to be a popular choice due to their fragrance, uniform shape, and lower price.



### NORDMANN FIR (ABIES NORDMANNIANA)

Nordmann Firs are favored as Christmas trees for their stiff branches, like a Noble Fir. Needles are glossy and dark green above with two blue-white bands on the underside. Measuring 1–1.5 inches (1.8–4cm), the needles feel soft and have excellent keepability. Nordmann Firs do not emit a strong scent; making them popular among people with allergies or sensitive noses.



### TURKISH FIR (ABIES BORNUELLERIANA)

Closely related to the Nordmann Fir, Turkish Fir also has excellent keepability. The dark green needles sweep upwards revealing a silvery underside along their 1–1.2-inch (2.5–3cm) length. The densely packed needles tend to shed less than most Christmas tree species. Layered and stiff branches are a great choice for hanging ornaments.



*Photo Credit: Judy Kowalski-OSU*

### Learn More

Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Association:  
[pnwcta.org](http://pnwcta.org)  
The Real Christmas Tree Board:  
[realchristmastreeboard.org](http://realchristmastreeboard.org)

10/2024

### Agricultural Development & Marketing Program



**OREGON  
DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE**

635 Capitol Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301-2532 USA  
503-986-4725  
[Ag.Market@oda.oregon.gov](mailto:Ag.Market@oda.oregon.gov)  
[Oregon.gov/ODA](http://Oregon.gov/ODA)