

Real Christmas Trees are Recyclable

After the holidays, don't throw your Real Christmas Tree in the trash or set it on the curb. **Real Christmas Trees are biodegradable, which means they can be easily reused or recycled** for mulch and other purposes. Here are some recycling options and tips on what to do with your tree after the holidays. Every community is different, but in general, you have these options:

Removing Your Tree

The best way to avoid a mess removing your tree is to place a plastic tree bag (available at hardware stores) underneath the stand when you set the tree up. You can hide it with a tree skirt. Then, when the holidays are done, pull the bag up around the tree, stand and all, and carry it outside. Obviously, you will want to remove the stand before recycling the tree. If some needles do scatter inside, it is better to sweep them up; as needles can clog vacuum cleaners.

Curbside pick-up for recycling: Most areas will collect trees during their regular pickup schedules on the two weeks following Christmas. There are often requirements for size, removing ornaments, flocking, etc.

Take your tree to a drop off recycling center: Most counties have free drop-off locations throughout the county. Usually, you may take up to two trees to a drop-off location at no charge.

Yard waste: Cut the tree to fit loosely into your yard waste container.

Tree recycling/mulching programs: Tree recycling and mulching programs are a fast-growing trend in communities throughout the nation. Check with your local department of public works for information. They chip and shred the trees, then make the mulch available for use in your garden. Your hauler will notify you of pick-up dates in your area. Be sure to check with your local hauler.

Nonprofit pickup: Call for an appointment to have a nonprofit organization in your area pickup your tree. Some Boy Scout troops offer a pickup service for a small donation (often \$5).

Other Recycling Options

Soil erosion barriers: Some communities use Christmas trees to make effective sand and soil erosion barriers, especially for lake and river shoreline stabilization and river delta sedimentation management.

Fish feeders: Sunk into private fish ponds, trees make an excellent refuge and feeding area for fish.

Bird feeders: Place the Christmas tree in the garden or backyard and use it as a bird feeder and sanctuary. Fresh orange slices or strung popcorn will attract the birds and they can sit in the branches for shelter. (Make sure all decorations, hooks, garland and tinsel strands are removed). Eventually (within a year) the branches will become brittle and you can break the tree apart by hand or chip it in a chipper. [See this article from Perdue University for more information.](#)

Mulch: A Christmas tree is biodegradable; its branches may be removed, chipped, and used as mulch in the garden. If you have a neighbor with a chipper, see if he will chip it for you.

Paths for hiking trails: Some counties use the shredded trees as a free, renewable and natural path material that fits both the environment and the needs of hikers!

Living, rooted trees: Of course, next year, you could get a rooted (ball and burlap or containerized) tree and then plant it in your yard after Christmas. (It's a good idea to pre-dig the hole in the late fall while the soil is still soft, then plant the tree into that hole immediately after Christmas.) Living trees have a better survival rate in mild climates.

Important: Never burn your Christmas tree in a fireplace or wood stove.

Source:

<http://www.realchristmastrees.org/dnn/AllAboutTrees/HowtoRecycle.aspx>