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Absolutely fir-bulous! How to keep your Christmas tree looking its best throughout the festive season - from sawing off the bottom to adding an aspirin to its pot RELATED ARTICLES Share this article

Many Brits will be gearing up to transform their homes into a festive winter wonderland this weekend - with the main feature inevitably being the tree. If you prefer a real fir over a fake, you may have found in the past that it began to droop and shed needles in the build up to Christmas Day.

With it being acceptable for festive decorations to remain on display until January 6, this is far from ideal - especially if you're hosting a New Year party.

Thankfully the experts at [Pines and Needles](#) - which is run by Tate & Lyle grandsons Sam and Josh Lyle - have shared their top tips for keeping yours looking fir-bulous.

The family-run company hit the headlines back in December 2016 when it supplied a tree to Prince Harry and Meghan Markle - who visited their Battersea Park pop-up store to pick out a £65 Nordmann Fir, their bestseller.

Here Sam shares his guide to making sure you get the most out of your tree this Christmas.

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How to choose the best tree

Choosing a tree should be something for all the family, so whether you go with your children or nieces and nephews, or godchildren, or even your parents, make the most of the time together.

Sam recommends looking for a 'handsome tree with good proportions'.

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'Avoid the temptation to wedge a giant tree into a humble living room - go for looks over size,'he added.

Transporting it home

While choosing the tree is the fun part, getting it home can prove somewhat more challenging.

If you're driving, Sam recommends flattening down the back seats of the car, or tying it to the roof.

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When you get home, remove the netting as soon as possible and let it stand for a few hours before you bring it inside.

This gives the tree time to settle into its natural form, so that when you come to decorate it, you'll know the best branches to hang your baubles.



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Treat it like a bunch of flowers

Whenever you buy fresh flowers, it's always advisable to cut at least an inch off the bottom of the stems to increase water absorption, as they may have dried out on their journey home.

Christmas trees are no different. Sam recommends sawing off the bottom three inches, which opens up the pores ready for your tree to drink.

'Remember, your tree will drink as much as you do this Christmas, so ensure you have a stand which can be filled up with water throughout the week to keep it hydrated,'he said.

'This will ensure it's less likely to droop, become brittle and shed its needles prematurely.'

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Never stand it by a window or a radiator

It's wise to keep your tree away from extremes, such as heat, which can make it dry out quicker, or cold.

Avoid sticking it next to a pumping hot radiator or a draughty window, which may also be subjected to hours of direct sunlight.

'In the days before LED Christmas lights we would have recommended turning off the lights whenever you're not in the room, as they emitted heat,' Sam added.

'Now LEDs give off a tiny amount of heat so it's not necessary, although we would always recommend turning them off at night or plugging them into an extension lead which protects against power surges.'

Give it an aspirin

Trees are living things, and like us, now and again they benefit from a pick-me-up.

Like fresh flowers, once they're cut from the ground you need to do everything you can to prolong them.

Sam pointed out that dropping an aspirin into the water can give it a boost, or even a dash of lemonade.

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Pines and Needles' Sam's guide to decorating your tree

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It may sound obvious, but when it comes to decorating, two people are better than one.



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The lights should go on first, and it's great if one person can feed them to the other as they wind it round and round, starting at the bottom.

Embed the lights in the greenery and then move out as you go up, ensuring an even spread.

When decorating your tree, it's all about textures and layering, no matter which theme you choose.

Decide on which of your decorations you would like to be featured most prominently and place those first (they tend to be the largest or most detailed) and then use those as a basis to dress your tree, using your most small simple decks as 'fillers'.

Tinsel has been dying out for a while, but ribbon is en vogue - go horizontally rather than at an angle as it's a much cleaner look.

Once Christmas is over, chipping or composting is the best way to dispose of your tree.

Some councils will collect and compost it, or take it to the tip and put it in garden waste. We collect and chip and they go to London Zoo and parks.

After that the next best option is burning it. Remember that fake trees contain mixed materials (metal and plastic) and can't be recycled - they end up in landfill where they will never degrade.

Pines and Needles was founded in 1995, with trees sourced from their family farm in Scotland, as well as an additional plantation, and sold at pop-up stores around London and the south of England.

For more information visit <https://www.pinesandneedles.com/>

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