

Keeping Holiday Greens Longer

Seasonal decorating in December usually includes some type of cut greens, especially for garlands and wreaths. We all love the smell and look of greenery until they start to dry out and drop their needles everywhere. There are some steps you can take to help your greens look fresh and last longer. Greenery needs moisture to last its longest. Whether you use your greens outdoors or inside, it is important to keep them moist.

Helpful tips

1. When cutting greens it is best to cut them after frost or at least when the cooler temperatures have arrived.
2. Before using the greens, condition them by giving the stems a fresh cut at a 45 degree angle, and place them in tepid water for several hours.
3. Using varieties that have a slower rate of drying out, like pine, fir, cedar and boxwood.
4. Try and keep the greens out of direct sunlight and away from heat sources.
5. Mist with water daily to help maintain moisture.
6. Wreaths and garlands can be soaked in a bath tub overnight in order to absorb the most water.
7. Anti-transpirants can be sprayed on the greens to help hold moisture in and keep them looking fresh. You can find anti-transpirants at most garden centers.

Although you can try your best to keep holiday greenery looking fresh, it will eventually dry out and safety becomes an issue. Never use greenery with candles or over a natural burning fireplace. If you have pets or children, avoid greens with poisonous berries such as holly, yew, ivy, mistletoe or Jerusalem cherry. Check them frequently and when they are dry and dropping needles, it's time to replace them or remove them.

Christmas Trees - Real or Artificial?

The Great Debate

There is much to be said to using an artificial tree for your holiday decorating. You can put it up early and enjoy it longer and there are no nasty needles poking you in the feet. But you can't beat the smell of evergreen in the house that you get with a live tree. You could make a case for live trees being the right environmental choice.

Real Christmas Trees ... The Environmental Choice

During the 2005 holiday season, 32.8 million Real Christmas Trees were purchased for display in homes nationwide. These consumers made the choice of a Real Tree for a variety of reasons – the fresh scent, the beauty of the evergreen, the traditions of the holidays – but what they may not have known is that a **Real Tree is also a wise environmental choice.**

Here are some facts to consider:

- # Around 98% of Real Christmas Trees are grown on farms throughout all 50 states and Canada. These trees are planted to be harvested, just as corn is cultivated for harvest.
- # The Christmas Tree industry in the United States employs more than 100,000 Americans (part- and full-time). Meanwhile, 85% of fake trees are made by factory workers in China.
- # Every acre of Christmas Trees grown produces the daily oxygen requirement for 18 people. With approximately 500,000 million acres of trees, 9 million people a day are supplied with oxygen thanks to these trees.
- # Real Christmas Trees support life by absorbing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases; they also stabilize soil, protect water supplies and provide a refuge for wildlife.
- # For each Real Christmas Tree harvested, up to three new seedlings are planted in its place. In 2006, more than 42 million new seedlings will be planted by Christmas Tree farmers all over the United States.

And after the holidays, a Real Christmas Tree is the only choice that is completely recyclable. Artificial trees typically end up in landfills, where they will remain for centuries after disposal.

- # In a national survey, 69% of consumers who used a Real Tree said they recycled theirs in a community program.
- # Real Christmas Trees are recycled for five main types of large-scale uses for post-harvest trees. These are:
 - 1) Chipping (chippings are used for various things from mulch to hiking trails)
 - 2) Beachfront erosion prevention
 - 3) Lake and river shoreline stabilization
 - 4) Fish habitat
 - 5) River delta sedimentation management

Learn more about Christmas Tree recycling at www.realchristmastrees.org!

Real Christmas Trees Have A Second Life

How to Recycle Your Tree

After the holidays, don't throw your Real Christmas Tree in the trash. 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:

- **Curbside pick-up for recycling:** Many providers will collect trees during 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. Usually, you may take up to two trees to a drop-off location at no charge.
- **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).
- **Yard waste:** Cut the tree to fit loosely into your yard waste container.

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

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. Here's an example of just such a project, called "[Balsams for Brookies](#)."
- **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.
- **Mulch:** A Christmas tree is biodegradable; its branches may be removed, chipped, and used as mulch in the garden.
- **Paths for hiking trails:** Some counties use shredded trees as a free, renewable and natural path material that fits both the environment and the needs of hikers.
- **Living, rooted trees:** Get a rooted (ball and burlap or containerized) tree and plant it in your yard. (It's a good idea to 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.

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; needles can clog vacuum cleaners.

“BALSAMS FOR BROOKIES”

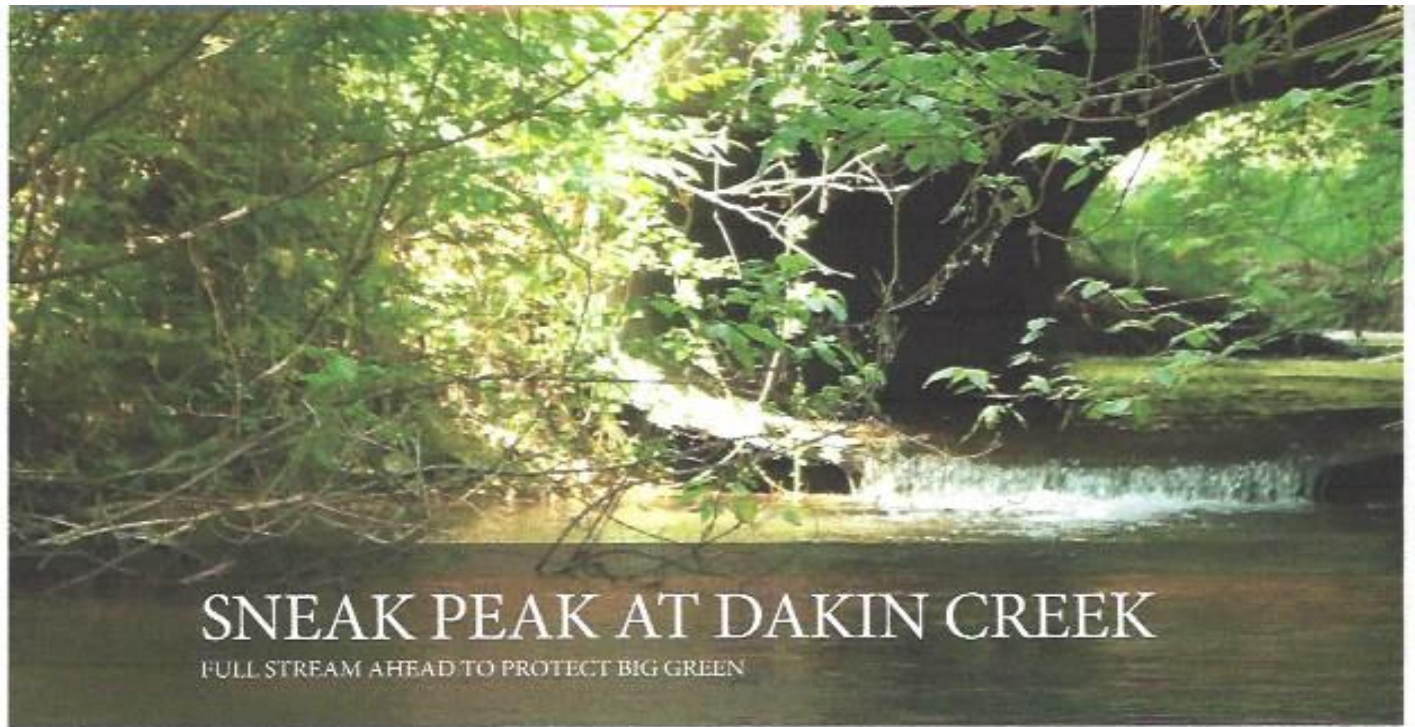
Recycling Christmas Trees for Soil Erosion

The Green Lake Association in Wisconsin began a restoration project to bring back Brook Trout to Dakin Creek. The creek had experienced degradation for several years and the disappearing trout population was an indication that the water quality was declining and unable to support adequate habitat.

The benefits of this stream restoration project also flow downstream. The project improved the water quality of Green Lake by reducing phosphorus pollution and preventing 20,000 pounds of weeds and algae from growing in the lake.

Collection of Christmas trees after the holiday were used to line the banks of the creek which helped to stabilize the banks so that previous erosion was stopped and habitat was created. Trout were introduced back into the creek where they now have a clean waterway to thrive in.

To learn more about how this project and how they used **recycled Christmas trees** for stabilizing the creek bank watch the YouTube video. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=By_IFlvFTFU



SNEAK PEAK AT DAKIN CREEK

FULL STREAM AHEAD TO PROTECT BIG GREEN

Dakin Creek is one of eight named streams in the 107-square mile Green Lake watershed (the surrounding area of land that drains towards the lake). It is a six-mile-long, designated class II trout stream that flows into Green Lake near the County Highway A bridge on the lake's east end. It is also the creek that the GLA focused its "stream restoration" efforts on this year.

Dakin Creek once supported a thriving brooktrout population, but the native fish disappeared from the creek in the mid-1950s because of poor water quality and a loss of adequate habitat.

A series of two culverts also create issues for brook trout on the creek:

- A perched culvert at Skunk Hollow Road (above) creates a barrier to fish and aquatic organism migration. The energy from this waterfall effect has created a four-foot-



This culvert Maug Road, along with a second culvert at Skunk Hollow Road, will be replaced in early 2020 as part of a larger stream restoration project.

deep scour hole. Brook trout need to swim upstream to spawn, but they cannot make the 6-inch jump at Skunk Hollow Road.

- Just 140 feet downstream, an undersized culvert on Maug Road is eroding the roadbed and causes high stream velocities that brook trout cannot navigate.

Both of these culverts cause sediment disruption, which clouds the stream water, smothers fish eggs, and sends phosphorus pollution downstream to Big Green—fueling excess algae and weed growth.

To address these issues on Dakin Creek, the GLA is in the progress of:

- 1) Completing 3,600 feet of streambank repairs by creating gently-sloping banks, armoring the soil with native plants, and using reclaimed Christmas trees to secure areas of stream erosion.
- 2) Replacing two culverts—one perched culvert that blocks fish migration, and a second culvert that constricts stream flow and is contributing to erosion. The GLA is coordinating these culvert replacements in early 2020.
- 3) Restoring fish habitat and re-establishing brook trout in Dakin Creek. Brook trout are a native fish species that indicate clean water, so their ability to survive in Dakin Creek will show encouraging progress towards cleaner water in the stream, and cleaner water making its way to Big Green Lake.

The benefits of the Dakin Creek stream restoration project also flow downstream. The project will improve the water quality of Green Lake by reducing phosphorus pollution and preventing 20,000 pounds of weeds and algae from growing in the lake.



BALSAMS FOR BROOKIES



Last January, the GLA collected Christmas trees to be used for the "Balsam for Brookies" project. This fall, those trees were taken to Dakin Creek where they found a new home.



Green Lake area students and community volunteers transported the repurposed evergreens to Dakin Creek where they were strategically placed to help reduce erosion on the streambanks and create habitat for fish.



Before and after photos, using the same root wad as reference, demonstrate in-stream improvements on Dakin Creek. Fallen trees and debris obstructed the flow of Dakin Creek, contributing to stream bank erosion. Volunteers and staff removed these obstacles and helped re-establish the stream's natural flow and path.



Repurposed Christmas trees were baled with eco-friendly twine and anchored in place with vertical wooden stakes (left and right banks) to provide streambank stability and aquatic habitat on Dakin Creek.

