

## Christmas Trees

It's the most wonderful time of the year – Christmas! We all enjoy decorating our Christmas trees with colorful lights, but beware it can also lead to disaster. There are a few simple steps we can all take to make our holiday season safer and more enjoyable.

### SAFETY TIPS:

- Make a fresh cut at the base of the tree to open up pores clogged by sap. Cut 2-3 inches off the bottom of the tree base. The fresh cut surface should be creamy white. Otherwise, the tree will not be able to absorb water.
- After the cut is made, put the tree in water immediately or the tree will not absorb the water easily. Choose a stand that holds at least 1 gallon of water. If the tree is not going into the house soon after purchase, it should be stored in a bucket of water in a cool place away from sun and wind.
- Water the tree daily because it may consume between a quart and as much as a gallon of water per day. This is important due to the act of the level of water drops below the cut end of the trunk, a seal will form and it will not be able to absorb water. This will cause the tree to dry out increasing the risk of a fire.
- Miniature lights produce less heat and reduce the drying effect. If your lights are frayed or have cracked wiring or broken sockets, throw them away and buy a new set.
- Always turn off all lights and electronic devices on a tree before leaving your home or going to bed.
- Do not overload circuits!
- Keep tree away from heat sources such as heating vents, fireplaces, television sets and sunny windows. Be careful not to block any doors with the tree or with any rearranged furniture.
- After the holidays, remove the tree from the house before it dries (remember that a dry tree can be totally consumed by fire in a matter of seconds.) Any cut tree, even those treated with flame retardant, will still dry out.
- Never burn any part of a tree in a fireplace because it burns too fast and is explosive.

### FACTS AND FIGURES:

- According to National Fire Protections Association (NFPA) data there were about 500 fires annually reported to have started with Christmas trees between 1992 and 1996.
- Fire safety for real trees depends heavily upon properly maintaining the moisture content of the tree as high as possible.

### HOLIDAY RECIPE FOR FIRE-RETARDANT CHRISTMAS TREE:

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 gallons of hot water
- 2 cups clear Karo syrup
- 2 ounces liquid chlorine bleach
- 2 pinches of Epsom salts
- One half-teaspoon Borax
- One teaspoon chelated iron (Can be purchased from a garden shop)

# SAFETY TIPS & INFO



## INSTRUCTIONS

- Place water in bucket and add all ingredients. Stir until all ingredients are completely dissolved and set aside.
- Make a fresh, level cut, 3-inches from the bottom of trunk.
- Stand the trunk of the tree in the solution and leave for 24-hours.
- Place your tree in a tree stand that contains a well for liquid.
- When the tree has been positioned in the stand, use a plastic cup to pour the solution into the tree well. Safely store remaining solution.
- Every day, top-off the well with the solution, and keep your tree hydrated throughout the season!

## HOW DOES THE SOLUTION WORK?

The Karo Syrup provides the sugar necessary to allow the base of the tree to take up water. Up to 1.5 gallons of water can be taken up by the tree over a 2-week period. Boron in the Borax allows the tree to move water and sugar out to every branch and needle in the tree. Magnesium compounds in the Epsom salts and iron from the chelated iron provide components for the production of chlorophyll to help keep the tree green. The bleach prevents mold from forming in the solution. Other benefits of the recipe include a noticeable increase in the tree's natural evergreen fragrance, plus the tendency to shed fewer needles means less mess to clean up after the holidays!