



WSU Making A Difference

Christmas tree selection... start by making it “real”!

Shelton has deep roots in the Christmas tree industry going back to the early 1900's. We are fortunate to have several local farms and places to get live, fresh Christmas trees here in Mason County. A local, fresh tree is beneficial for many reasons. Real trees support local farmers, smell and look better, and are sustainably grown and compostable.

Okay, now the hard part! How do you choose the right one? Well, it all depends on what your needs are. Do you want the house to fill up with that 'Christmas smell' or not so much? Do you need it to last because you put it up as soon as the Thanksgiving turkey is digested and keep it up until Valentine's Day? Or is only for a few weeks? Do you have lots of heavy ornaments or just lights?

Each species offers certain qualities. Typically, we are looking for a few features; needle retention (how long the tree will last), Aroma, branch structure (stiffness and angle), and in some cases color. WA State has 3-4 native species that make superb Christmas trees. Douglas-fir, Grand Fir, Noble Fir, and a couple Pine varieties. There are also a few new 'exotics' that are gaining favor like Nordmann, Turkish Fir and Corkbark Fir. Here are the qualities of each that should help you decide:

Douglas-fir *Pseudotsuga menziesii* - grows fast and is less expensive. It has good aroma and will last, but branches don't support heavy ornaments.

Grand Fir *Abies grandis* [var. idahoensis](#) - probably the most aromatic. It loses its needles the quickest, and the branches aren't real sturdy.

Noble Fir *Abies procera* – is definitely the best seller. Has great aroma, strong branches, great color, and lasts a long time. Typically, it is the most expensive.

Corkbark Fir *Abies lasiocarpa* [var. arizonica](#) Outstanding blue/green color, high needle retention, sturdy branches, less aromatic, and harder to find.

Nordmann or **Turkish Fir** *Abies nordmanniana*, *Abies bornmuelleriana* are “exotics” from the Black Sea. They have a dark green color, great needle retention and are aromatic. They are starting to be more common on Christmas tree lots.

Christmas trees have been a long-standing tradition in Mason County. Here's a link to find your perfect tree and a farm near you: www.christmastownwa.org.

Author Bio

Karen Temen is a Mason County Master Gardener and a retired forester. Karen and her husband, Wes, own Christmas tree farms in Shelton and Mossyrock, WA.



Karen Temen



Noble Fir

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