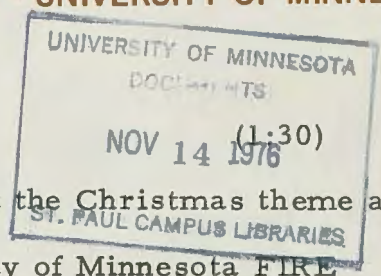


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AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE - UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA •

December 10, 1976

Christmas Safety



(612) 373-0710

consumer radio briefs

Many decorations that help set the Christmas theme also are serious fire hazards. University of Minnesota FIRE CENTER Director Frank Oberg says, "You cannot beat a natural Christmas tree to help establish a Christmas feeling in your home. But you should act to prevent the tree from becoming a fire hazard."

Extension Forester Marvin Smith recommends keeping the natural tree fresh. He says a fresh tree will not support combustion. Individual needles might, but the fire will not spread.

Smith says cut off one to one-and-a-half inches of the butt end of the tree after you bring it home. Place the tree immediately in a water-filled stand. Keep an eye on the water level and keep the tree out of household traffic areas and away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources.

Artificial trees made from plastic should carry an Underwriters Laboratory label. Some unlabelled trees will burn like torches when exposed to heat or flame. Aluminum or other metallic trees are non-flammable, but conduct electricity. Christmas tree lights should not be placed on them. Oberg recommends instead that colored spotlights be placed above or beside metallic trees.

Christmas tree lights can also be a source of danger. Make sure your lights are UL-approved. Check each light set for broken sockets, frayed wires and loose connections before you put the lights in place, and never use indoor lights outdoors.

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