

christmas trees



CHIPPEWA NATIONAL FOREST

Many families begin their holiday season by cutting their own Christmas tree from the national forests. All you need is a permit, sharp axe, thermos of cocoa and a little patience. Away from the holiday rush, families discover the peace of the forest surrounded by winter white.

Christmas tree tags can be purchased for \$5.00 from the Chippewa National Forest Supervisors Office or one of the district offices in Blackduck, Deer River, Marcell or Walker during regular business hours.

Trees can be cut on any National Forest land, with the exception of administrative sites and recreation areas such as campgrounds and within view of roads and trails. Information on cutting areas and on plowed roads is available when you pick up your permit. Forest maps are also available for \$9.00.

THE PERFECT TREE

You can find many trees throughout the forest, but be prepared to do some real searching. Somewhere out there is that ideal Christmas tree. Some of the common types of Christmas trees include:

Spruce trees are narrow triangle shaped conifers of cold climates whose dead branches are made rough by tiny wooden pegs. The needles are short, stiff and sharp and encircle the branch. The cones are woody and brown and hang down. Although they require a lot of water and needles dry and fall off quickly, they are popular choices as Christmas trees because of their shape.

Balsam fir is an important tree used for paper, whose resinous knots were once used as

torches. Grouse eat the seeds and needles, and snowshoe hares, deer and moose browse the twigs. Balsam fir has short, flat, fragrant needles that drop off readily if a tree has been up too long. They are very dense and look like a traditional Christmas tree, but are messy because of their high pitch content. This is the most popular holiday tree due to its shape, smell and longevity.

Red pine is a tall, straight tree with dark needles that are in groups of two and are four to six inches long. The cones are small, roundish and without thorns. Though sometimes called the Norway pine, it is native to North America. Red pine are very natural looking with big, open gaps in their limb structures. They keep their needles longer than other trees, but are often not as full as spruce or balsam.

TREE CARE

Attach your permit to your tree after it is cut. Trees should be cut low to the ground and avoid cutting the tops off of taller trees. To extend the life of your tree, cut a few inches off the trunk and place it outside in a bucket to allow the tree to soak up water. Once you've placed the tree in a stand, pour in warm water and keep the tree well watered daily through the holidays.

After the holidays, recycle your tree! Place your tree outside and it becomes an instant wildlife feeder and shelter for birds and squirrels. Have a wonderful holiday season!

For more information contact the Chippewa National Forest at 218-335-8600 or fs.usda.gov/chippewa.



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