“Never worry about the size of your Christmas tree. In the eyes of children, they are all 30 feet tall.”

~Larry Wilde, The Merry Book of Christmas.

**History of Christmas Trees**

According to the NC Christmas Tree Association, “no one really knows who put up the first Christmas tree, but some historians believe that even the Egyptians and Romans used some form of an evergreen to decorate their homes in late December.

It is generally agreed that the first use of a tree as part of the Christian Christmas celebration was started over 400 years ago by the Germans. The Christmas tree was brought to America by the Hessian mercenaries that were paid to fight for the British during the Revolutionary War. In 1842, a German named Charles Minnegerode introduced the custom of decorated Christmas trees in Williamsburg, Virginia homes.

By 1900, one in five American families decorated trees during Christmas and by 1930, the tree had become a nearly universal part of the American Christmas.”

**Christmas Tree Fun Facts**

- The first Christmas tree retail lot in the US was started in 1851 in New York.
- In 1856, Franklin Pierce, the 14th president, was the first US President to place a Christmas tree in the White House.
- Teddy Roosevelt banned Christmas trees from the White House during his term for environmental reasons.
- In 2002, 21% of US households had a real tree, 48% had an artificial tree and 32% had no tree.
- Thomas Edison's assistant came up with the idea of electric lights for Christmas trees in 1882.

**How to Force Amaryllis Blooms**

1. Prepare a container with sterile potting soil. Avoid using mixes that contain pine bark.

2. Plant the bulb 2/3 deep with the top third remaining above the rim of the pot.

3. Water immediately after planting with lukewarm water and continue to water once a week to keep soil moist. Avoid watering directly onto the “nose” of the bulb.

4. Grow plants at 70-75°F until roots are formed and leaves and floral stalks begin to grow. A well lit, southern exposure will encourage growth. Plants can be moved to cooler, less lighted areas when in bloom to extend life.

5. Fertilize the growing plant every other week with a complete, liquid fertilizer like 10-10-10.

6. Cut off flowers as they fade and after all flowers have faded, cut the floral stalk off just above the bulb nose.

Plant the remaining bulb outside after the chance of frost has passed.

**Caring for Holiday Trees**

Keep these tips in mind to help extend the “life” of your holiday tree.

- Until ready to bring inside, keep trees in a cool, dark area in water and mist occasionally.
- Also during this time, keep the base of the tree cut at a sharp angle to increase water uptake.
- When you decide to bring the tree inside, make a square, sharp cut in the base of the tree and put it immediately in water.
- If water dries out below the trunk, the tree will create a seal and reduce future water intake.
- Christmas trees can require up to a gallon of water per day.
- No additives are necessary to extend the life of your tree.