

The Village Garden Center's December 2008 Garden Club Newsletter



The History of the Christmas Tree

Late in the Middle Ages, Germans and Scandinavians placed evergreen trees inside their homes or just outside their doors to show their hope in the forthcoming spring. Our modern Christmas tree evolved from this early tradition.

Legend has it that Martin Luther began the tradition of decorating trees to celebrate Christmas. One crisp Christmas Eve, about the year 1500, he was walking through snow-covered woods and was struck by the beauty of a group of small evergreens. Their branches, dusted with snow, shimmered in the moonlight. When he got home, he set up a little fir tree indoors so he could share this story with his children. He decorated it with candles, which he lighted in honor of Christ's birth.

The Christmas tree tradition most likely came to the United States with Hessian troops during the American Revolution, or with the German immigrants to Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Did you know....

Animal crackers are not really crackers, but cookies that were imported to the United States from England in the late 1800's. Barnum's circus-like boxes were designed with a string handle so that they could be hung on a Christmas tree

The custom spread slowly. The Puritans banned Christmas in New England. Even as late as 1851, a Cleveland minister nearly lost his job because he allowed a tree in his church. Schools in Boston stayed open on Christmas Day through 1870, and sometimes expelled students who stayed home.

The Christmas tree market was born in 1851 when Catskill farmer Mark Carr hauled two ox sleds of evergreens in New York City and sold them all. By 1900, one in five American families had a Christmas tree, and 20 years later, the custom was nearly universal.

Christmas tree farms sprang up during the depression. Nurserymen couldn't sell their evergreens for landscaping, so they cut them for Christmas trees. Cultivated trees were preferred because they have a more symmetrical shape than wild ones.

Six species account for about 90 percent of the nations Christmas tree trade: Scotch pines, Douglas fir, Noble fir, White pine, Balsam fir, and White spruce.

Did you know.... The abbreviation of Xmas for Christmas is not irreligious. The first letter of the word Christ in Greek is chi, which is identical to our X. Xmas was originally an ecclesiastical abbreviation that was used in tables and charts.



Did you know....

Alabama was the first state to recognize Christmas as an official Holiday. The tradition began in 1836



All of us here at The Village Garden Center want to wish you and yours a very Happy Holiday Season. You will be in our thoughts and prayers, as well as our hopes for a very prosperous and healthy New Year!

Reminders

**Garden Club Meeting for December
Rescheduled to December 13th, 10am**

GARDEN CLUB SPECIALS - JANUARY

There will be no discount given in the month of January for merchandise. Instead, at our December monthly meeting the members present will receive a ten dollar gift certificate to be used in the 2009 calendar year. Make sure you don't miss the meeting on December 13th