



Oh Christmas tree, oh allergy! Live vs. artificial trees: Rent or buy?

By **San Fernando Valley Allergies & Parenting Examiner**, Shelby Valencia
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Pine Tree

Should an asthma or allergy sufferer get a live or artificial tree for the holidays? Buy or rent?

Do you love the idea of having a live evergreen tree in your home for the holidays, with its pine scent rekindling childhood memories, but have allergies? Following are some tips to consider before heading out to choose that perfect evergreen tree.

Live Tree Tips:

- Per the Asthma and Allergy Foundation, eliminate mold by making a solution of lukewarm water and diluted bleach (1 part bleach to 20 parts water) and wipe the trunk thoroughly.
- Before tying down the perfect tree to the top of your car, look for a yellowish tinge on the trunk and needles. Mold reproduces by releasing spores into the air, so you could be bringing mold into your house along with your tree.
- Before you bring the tree inside, place a mask on your face, go to a ventilated area away from your house and use a leaf blower to remove visible pollen grains.
- Once in your home, change water frequently.
- Consider only having the tree in your home for a week.

Artificial Tree Tips:

- Do not purchase a tree with the sprayed on "snow." It could contain pine-scented

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sprays or oils, which can aggravate those sensitive to odors.

- When removing an artificial tree from storage, place a mask on your face and gloves on your hands. Dust and mold will have coated the tree over the months it was in storage.
- Store your tree and decorations in plastic containers that can be wiped off, since cardboard may have mold growing on it.

Another Eco-friendly option is to rent a tree! [The Living Christmas Company](#) offers Los Angeles residents a choice of five different types of potted trees ranging in price from \$50 for a 2'-3' tree to \$135 for a 6'-7' tree. The company delivers and picks up the living tree after Christmas. Eco-friendly ornaments and gifts are also available. Sentimental? Adopt your tree and watch it grow year to year along with your family. See their website for info.

If you are mold-allergic and aren't feeling well this holiday season, your tree may be the culprit. Run an air cleaner in the same room as the tree and, if you have a live tree, change the water frequently. Also be aware that although the pine scent is one of the big lures of getting an evergreen tree for the holidays, it can irritate the allergic person's nose and sinuses.

If you buy a live tree, remember to recycle! In

Los Angeles, it is a violation of the fire code to leave Christmas trees on the curb. Call 1(800) 5Tree56 for detailed information about various locations that accept Christmas trees.

Whether you buy live or artificial, decorate with beautiful ornaments, not allergens. Take precautions and enjoy the magic of the season!

For More Information:

[Asthma and Allergy Foundation](#)



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