

Oh, Christmas tree,
Oh, Christmas tree,
how green your branches used to be...



The beautiful fresh cut Christmas tree that brought you and your family so much Christmas cheer is starting to look more like the ghost of Christmas past. What's up next for your tree? After you remove all the tinsel and decorations, you have options.

First NEVER burn a cut Christmas tree in a fireplace or a woodstove. It may cause creosote to build up and contribute to a chimney fire.

If you purchased your tree at a local plant nursery, give them a call. Some will take the tree back to use for mulch in their growing operations. Residents of Tulsa with city trash service may put cut live trees at the curb on their collection day throughout January. Trees need to be cut into 4-foot sections in order to fit in the trash trucks. Tulsa, Broken Arrow, Jenks, and Bixby residents may bring trees to the City's Mulch site located at 2100 North 145th East Avenue. You can also pick up some free mulch while you are there.

Other communities recycle trees for mulch in local parks and public gardens. Check with officials in your town for more information.

For a family friendly and Earthkind activity, recycle your tree as a bird habitat and brighten up your winter landscape. Place the tree outdoors away from the house so you will not scare the birds that come to eat. Leave the tree in the stand, put the trunk in a bucket of dirt or just tie the tree to a fence for support. The dense branches provide protection from the frigid wind, rain, and snow.



Decorate your tree with garlands of cranberries, popcorn or cereal strung on cotton or other natural fiber, which birds can use later for nest building. Hang slices of fresh apple or oranges. String small bunches of grapes. Smear pinecones with peanut butter and roll them in birdseed for a high-energy meal for your feathered friends on frigid winter days. If you have mesh bags (like for onions sold in at grocery stores) fill them with chopped fruit. Birds will appreciate a source of fresh water nearby, too.

If you happen to own a fishing pond, old Christmas trees make a great fish habitat. Sink the tree by weighting the

bottom with cement in a bucket or tie on a cinderblock to keep the tree under the water. It will provide a place for small fish to hide and a home for the invertebrates that they eat.

Recycling your old Christmas is an Earthkind way to give it a new purpose and maybe have some family fun, too.

You can get answers to all your gardening questions by calling the Tulsa Master Gardeners Help Line at 918-746-3701 or by emailing us at mg@tulsamastergardeners.org, or come see us at our Tulsa Diagnostic Center at 4116 E 15th Street, M-F, 9-4.

Sources:

“Christmas Trees for Your Fishpond,” University of Florida Extension Service

“Christmas Trees: A Gift for the Fish,” Penn State University Extension

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