



*"Beautiful Oregon Christmas trees delivered on time at a great price!"*

### **Retail Lot Guide**

Our first priority is to help our customers succeed – if you do well, we do well! These guidelines are based on 20 years of wholesale and retail Christmas Tree experience across all the western states and Hawaii. If you have more questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

#### **A. Where are the best regions to sell Oregon Christmas Trees?**

1. Christmas trees are best suited to environments similar to or warmer than where they are harvested. Oregon temperatures get down to about 30 degrees during the harvest season (November and December), so our trees will stay green and lush on your lot and in your customer's home for weeks if the conditions in your area are comparable or better. If the temperatures in your area are consistently extremely cold - in the 20s, teens or colder – Oregon trees unfortunately will not do well there. In these bitter temperatures the trees will freeze while being displayed outdoors, which will cause them to lose their needles quickly when they thaw in the customer's home. Noble Firs do better than Douglas or Grand Firs in these conditions, but on the whole Oregon trees are not naturally hardened to such extremes. You may want to consider trees from colder regions such as the far northern strip of the U.S. or southern Canada.
2. On the other hand... even in cold climates trees displayed indoors will do just fine. The ride home on the customer's car will not adversely affect their tree as long as it is brought indoors as soon as they get home. Remember though – don't leave Oregon trees outside in extremely cold temperatures even overnight.
3. In very warm areas, 80 to 90 degrees every day, the trees will need to be kept shaded and cooled by water.
4. Please don't hesitate to contact us for further advice on suitability for your area.

#### **B. Maintaining Your Trees**

1. The trees will arrive at your lot wrapped tight for shipping with a string or mesh. It is very important to keep your trees as fresh as possible after they arrive. In bright sunlight, stack the baled trees in the shade or under an awning. In particularly warm or dry areas you will need to wet the trees occasionally to keep them from drying out. Wetting down the trees on display, like misting vegetables in the market, can also make them more appealing to the customer.
2. Remind customers to cut about ½ inch off the bottom of their tree before putting it in the tree stand at home so that the trees can absorb water and stay fresh longer. You may want to consider providing this service.
3. The string that the trees come baled with can be saved and used to fasten the trees to the customer's car or truck.



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**C. Costs:** Here are some of the costs related to operating a Christmas tree lot.

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|---|--|
| 1. Trees                                | 6. Office                                |
| 2. Shipping                             | 7. Lights, electricity, ornaments, signs |
| 3. Space location and rental            | 8. Local licenses or permits             |
| 4. Fence                                | 9. Insurance                             |
| 5. Display Stands – pallets, 2x4’s, etc | 10. Labor                                |

**1. Trees: Average truckload = 800 trees**

What types and sizes will sell best in your area? Here are some suggestions.

Middle class neighborhoods

5-7 ft trees fit in houses and apartments with average ceilings.

Douglas fir are less expensive - have more of these.

A good mix would be:

		4-5 ft	5-6ft	6-7ft	7-8ft	8-9ft	9-10ft
Douglas	500	25	150	200	100	25	
Nobles	300	25	100	100	50	25	

Upper class neighborhoods

High ceilings – larger trees sell best, you will want to have more trees above 7 feet, especially Nobles.

A good mix would be:

		4-5 ft	5-6ft	6-7ft	7-8ft	8-9ft	9-10ft
Douglas	350	25	75	125	75	25	25
Nobles	450	25	100	100	150	50	25

**2. Shipping:**

Projected prices for November 2008 are approximately \$2.20 per mile for a fully loaded truck.

**3. Space Location and Rental:**

High visibility and easy access to your lot are very important.

Keep the lot rent as low as possible.

**4. Fence:**

You need to protect your trees from theft. Some type of enclosure, even a flimsy one will define the limits of your tree lot and will direct the customers to an exit where you can make the sale.



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#### **5. Display Stands:**

You need to display the trees so that your customers can appreciate their beauty and look at them individually without too much effort. There are quite a few ways to do this: Interlocking pallets or 2x4 stands to lean the trees against; individual stands made of metal or wood that provide a park like setting; or leaning them on the fencing (not the best presentation method).

#### **6. Tree Lot Office:**

You will need a place for YOU to get out of the weather occasionally and a safe place to keep your money and supplies. It is not wise to show your customers large rolls of money – too tempting! The office can be a camper, plastic greenhouse, storage shed, or even your car (not the best option). Some type of tent or awning helps as a place where your customers can pay while getting out of the weather, check writing, etc.

#### **7. Lights, Electricity, Ornaments, Signs:**

It is usually a good idea to stay open for a while in the evening for the after work and after supper shoppers. You will need bright lighting so that your tree lot looks like it is open and so that your customers can see the trees well and feel comfortable walking around. How will you provide electricity – public power or a generator?  
Holiday ornaments hanging around the tree lot make it look festive and merry.  
Don't forget signs to let the public know you're ready for business, and price signs help too.

#### **8. Local Permits:**

Some localities require licenses or permits in order to operate a Christmas tree lot - check on this first!! Most states require you to collect sales taxes and you may need a Tax ID from the state. Please don't assume anything you are not sure of – ask all the appropriate agencies and follow their instructions exactly. The more questions you ask the better these agencies will be able to help you through the process. Your local Chamber of Commerce will assist you.

#### **9. Insurance:**

Liability insurance is a good idea to protect you from accident-prone customers

#### **10. Labor**

Who will you get to help you unload trees, assist customers, and collect money? They must be trustworthy and you must pay them legally.

We hope this information is helpful to you. We want you to be successful in your Christmas tree selling adventure, a firm foundation is well worth the effort. All the above information may sound like a lot to go through just to sell some Christmas trees. Stay focused on your goal – making \$\$\$ for your family, business or charitable organization. It will be a good learning experience and after the first season it will be much easier to set things up in years to come.

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