



## Sharing the Environmental Message with Consumers

**Q: My customers already prefer a Real Tree – why bother with environmental messages?**

**A:** Consumers choose a Real Tree for numerous reasons. By continually reinforcing the environmental benefits of farm-grown trees to them, you are reaffirming that their decision is a good one – and everyone likes to feel good about their purchase.

**Q: Is the environment really that big a factor in consumers' decisions?**

**A:** In NCTA's 2007 consumer poll, 45% of fake tree buyers said they would switch to a Real Tree if they knew it was better for the environment. And 52% of the Gen Y age group said they would purchase a farm-grown tree if it was better for the environment. Even if consumers do not recognize the environment as one of the factors in their purchasing decision, it is important that the correct facts are out there.

**Q: Does anyone really still believe that Christmas Trees come from forests?**

**A:** Yes! NCTA, with the help of our members, has made great strides in recent years in breaking down the myths surrounding Real Christmas Trees, but there is still work to be done. Consumers today are farther removed from agriculture than ever before, and it is up to us as an industry to educate them. In the 2007 consumer poll, 41% of respondents said a fake tree was better for the environment, proof that not everyone is getting the message.

**Q: What can I do to help?**

**A:** Look at your farm or lot from the eyes of the consumer:

- Start by examining all of your promotional materials – from advertising and brochures to tree tags and receipts. Find ways to incorporate the environmental message, even if it's just a simple tagline, into everything your customer sees.
- Train your employees to speak knowledgeably and answer questions about Real Trees and the environment.
- Examine your Web site to be sure the environmental message is there as well. You can point consumers to more information through key links to the NCTA Web site, such as [www.christmastree.org/debate.cfm](http://www.christmastree.org/debate.cfm) or [www.christmastree.org/benefits.cfm](http://www.christmastree.org/benefits.cfm).
- Find out what recycling options are available in your community. Talk to the recycling coordinators in your area to see how you can help promote the programs – they may be willing to provide materials to use at your farm.
- When conducting interviews with the media or preparing press releases, don't forget to include facts about the environmental benefits of Real Trees.
- "America Recycles Day" is Nov. 15, 2009. This is a great lead-in to the Christmas season, and a great time to get the word out about Christmas Tree recycling. Visit [www.americarecyclesday.org](http://www.americarecyclesday.org) for more information.

## **Just the Facts**

- While they're growing, farm-grown trees support life by absorbing carbon dioxide and other gases and emitting fresh oxygen.
- Real Christmas Trees are grown on farms just like any crop. Harvesting a Christmas Tree is no more damaging to the environment than harvesting an ear of corn.
- To ensure a constant supply, Christmas Tree farmers plant a new seedling for every tree they harvest.
- Artificial trees are a petroleum-based product manufactured primarily in Chinese factories.
- The average family uses a fake tree for only six to nine years before throwing it away, where it will remain in a landfill for centuries after disposal.
- Christmas Trees are often grown on soil that does not support other crops. The farms that grow Christmas Trees stabilize the soil, protect water supplies and provide refuge for wildlife.
- American Forests, a world leader in tree planting for environmental restoration, has publicly endorsed the commercial growing and use of Real Christmas Trees.
- The polyvinyl chloride (PVC) used in most artificial trees has been boycotted by environmental groups.
- Swedish researchers found that Real Trees are five times more environmentally compatible than fake trees.
- Dr. Patrick Moore, co-founder and former president of Greenpeace, has endorsed Real Trees as the best environmental option for consumers.

## **For More Information:**

[www.christmastree.org/environment.cfm](http://www.christmastree.org/environment.cfm)

[www.christmastree.org/debate.cfm](http://www.christmastree.org/debate.cfm)

[www.christmastree.org/benefits.cfm](http://www.christmastree.org/benefits.cfm)

[www.christmastree.org/recycle.cfm](http://www.christmastree.org/recycle.cfm)