



The next time someone tells you that they have a fake plastic Christmas tree because it is better for the environmental, remind them to think of the giant plastic factory in China, belching black smoke into the air. Or imagine the trees that were sacrificed to make the cardboard box the fake one comes in and the diesel fuel that was wasted to ship it across the Pacific. Then read the warning label that cautions against breathing the toxic fumes from the PVC plastic.

Next imagine a "real" Christmas tree growing in California, converting green house gases into pure Oxygen for us to breath and providing jobs in our troubled economy. Then think for a moment about how multiple "real" Christmas trees are grown, year after year from the same stump. Finally, consider how the recycled "real" tree can be ground up for mulch to avoid the use of herbicide and how it biodegrades, to feed the soil of the farm where the tree was grown.

Ask your friend to think about the carbon footprint left by a fake plastic tree from China compared to that of a "real" one from the USA. Which kind of Christmas tree would we like to have in our living room this year?

While the environmental impact question is a no-brainer, and the scare stories about allergies and fire hazard are easily debunked, many of us still have concerns about having a "real" Christmas tree in our living room. While everyone loves the "real" tree's fresh pine aroma, most worry about keeping it fresh so the needles don't fall on the carpet. An even bigger worry is how to avoid spilling the water from the stand or worse yet, having a leaky tree stand ruin your hardwood floor.

These questions are the focus of Old Summit Forest Products, a Los Gatos Company dedicated to replacing all the fake plastic Christmas trees from China with the "REAL" thing. Four new products are being offered this year by Patchen California and Old Summit Forest Products to do just that.

The first one, called Crystal-Fresh[®] is a reusable, recyclable and 100% biodegradable product that keeps your tree hydrated through the entire season without the use of water. Just put it in the tree stand and then fill the stand with ice cubes. Why ice and not water? Because if you drop an ice cube you can pick it up - try that with water! It uses an organic polymer - similar to natural ones made from corn and potatoes. The hydrated polymer also cannot be spilled - just pick it up and throw it outside. It contains nothing toxic to kids or pets. It is FDA, USDA, and Cosmetic Ingredient Review approved. You can reuse it next year and even the bottle it comes in can be reused or recycled.

Complementing Crystal-Fresh[®] is a second product, known as the Fresh-Patch[™]. This little disk of natural wood fiber, about the size of a DVD, is attached to the freshly cut tree butt before it ever leaves the farm. It is pre-moistened with beneficial materials that keep the tree fresh through the Holiday season. The Fresh-Patch[™] stays securely in place, so when the stand is filled with water - or better yet, filled with ice - these organic materials are released to feed the

tree. Since the product is 100% biodegradable and totally non-toxic, at the end of the season the Fresh-Patch™ goes straight to the recycler, along with the tree.

Both Crystal-Fresh® and the Fresh-Patch™ can be used with a new, totally biodegradable Christmas tree stand, called the Bio-Stand™, and the combination is like none other. The stand consists of a rigid wood base, a bowl made from recycled wood fiber and a single screw that holds the whole thing together with the tree. There are no nails, no brackets, no braces and no thumb screws. It can be easily installed at home but since there is no exposed metal to scratch the car's paint job, it can even be installed at the farm or tree lot, and the whole thing tied on top without worry. While it is inexpensive enough to be thrown away after a single use, it is rugged enough to be reused, year after year. You simply remove the single screw and store the Bio-Stand™ along with the Crystal-Fresh® and Fresh-Patch™ for use again next year.

Christmas tree disposal bags have become a popular way to keep the carpet clean and make tree removal easier, but they are made in China of ordinary plastic. How can it be called a "disposal bag" when recyclers require that it be removed before they will take the tree? Like all products from Patchen and Old Summit, the new Bio-Bag® is environmentally friendly. Instead of plastic from China that gums up our environment, the Bio-Bag® is made from corn in the USA. It is completely oxo-biodegradable and its lime green color tell the recyclers that it can be ground up along with the tree.

Incidentally, at Old Summit Forest Products and Patchen California we are happy to recycle your fake plastic trees as well as the real ones. The PVC (polyvinylchloride) goes to its proper resting place in a certified landfill for the next several thousand years, while the wood chips from the real tree go back to the earth where they stimulate growth of next year's tree.

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