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A Christmas Tree to Last for Years

By Lydia Holley

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Looking for a different type of Christmas tree? Look no farther than the Norfolk Island pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*). These small houseplants are often offered for sale around the holidays, some with the addition of miniature bows or a few jingle bells added to their branches.

When small, place it on a table top to enjoy. After the holidays, remove its holiday finery and keep it inside. Eventually you will have to take it off the table top and place it on the floor. Native to Norfolk Island near New Zealand, Norfolk Island pines can grow up to 200 feet.

Do not worry, though. It may take ten years or more to reach an approximate height of six feet, since this plant grows slowly. With even more time, it may grow up to 20 ft tall indoors. Although that size is too tall for most homes, you can top the tree by cutting the top portion of it off and shaping its side branches to refresh its Christmas tree shape and keep it from scratching the ceiling.

Most trees do not do well grown indoors. But Norfolk Island pines are the exception, since it grows in a tropical climate. Considered an easy houseplant to grow, be certain to place your Norfolk Island pine near a bright window and mist it occasionally to give it the humidity it craves. It does not take well to drought, so water it as needed, but do not let its roots sit in water.

When the holidays come around each year, you may wish to place lightweight ornaments on it, taking care not to break its pliable branches which bear soft needles. With just a little bit of care, this plant should give you years of enjoyment.

For more information, call 903-675-6130, email hendersonCMGA@gmail.com, or visit txmq.org/hendersonmq.

