

The History of the Christmas Tree

The Christmas tree became popular in England in 1841 when Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, brought a Christmas tree over from Germany and put it in Windsor Castle. The Royal couple were illustrated in a newspaper standing around the Christmas tree with their children, and the tradition of decorating a tree became fashionable.

The Christmas trees, during the Victorian times, were decorated with candles to remind children of the stars in the sky at the time of the birth of Jesus. Using candles was, of course, a great fire hazard.

Christmas trees were also decorated with candies and cakes hung with ribbon. In 1880 Woolworths first sold manufactured Christmas tree ornaments which proved to be very popular.

The most Famous Christmas Tree in Britain.

In London, near the statue of Lord Nelson in Trafalgar Square, a giant Christmas tree is set up and decorated with great ceremony each year. The tree is a thank you gift from the people of Oslo, Norway. During the Second World War, King Haakon of Norway was forced into exile in England when the Germans occupied his country. Since 1947, Norway has expressed its thanks for the help of the British people by continuing to send a huge Norwegian spruce to be shared by all.

Frequently Asked Question's

1. How long does it take for a Nordman Fir and Norway Spruce to grow from seedling?

Height	Nordman Fir	Norway Spruce
1m	5 years	3 years
2m	8 years	6 years
3m	11 years	9 years
4m	15 years	12 years
5m	18 years	15 years

2. What main environmental benefits does a plantation give:
Fields of green trees for the long term good for absorbing CO2 emissions. Secure home for bird life
3. What climate do the trees like and how much rainfall per annum is the average requirement?
Up to 1000mm 1200mm max otherwise leader bolts
Frost good for trees stop growing and stand steady.
4. What other European countries grow Nordmans successfully, eg Scotland Ireland Poland?
Scandinavia Scotland Ireland Poland (parts avoid extremes)
5. What other types of fir are there?
Fraser and Noble – blue, needles differ - not so good but used for wreaths
6. Apart from aphids what are the other dangers to maturing trees?
Shropshire sheep mowing weeds grass
7. When is the development of a tree most at risk?
Seedling

What are Mistletoes – Introduction

The familiar white-berried Christmas mistletoe is just one of many hundreds of mistletoe species worldwide. All are plant parasites, and in their native lands many have similar folklore and superstitions to our own species. Most grow in the tropics and subtropics, with only a few species in northern temperate zones.

All mistletoe species grow as parasites on the branches of trees and shrubs. They rely on their hosts for water and mineral nutrient supply. Technically speaking they are only hemi-parasites as most have green leaves and can photosynthesise - but many do use some metabolites from the host.

There are a tremendous numbers of mistletoe traditions and legends - so these pages will only cover a few aspects...

The most obvious tradition is the kissing one. Hanging mistletoe and kissing loved ones, or complete strangers, below it is hugely popular Christmas custom.

It is probably a remnant of an ancient fertility tradition, helped along by some British re-invention in the 18th and 19th centuries. The European mistletoe, as a parasitic plant growing on deciduous trees, can be seen as a symbol of the continuing 'life-force' (and vitality/fertility) of the tree through the winter.