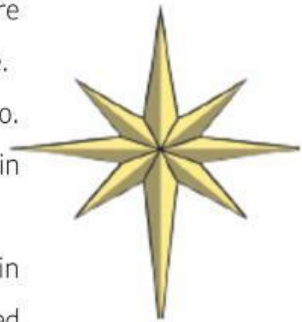


Christmas Trees

Christmas trees are seen by many as an important part of Christmas. Trees of different shapes and sizes are decorated ready for Christmas Day. There are a wide range of decorations available including coloured baubles, lights, tinsel, ribbons, beads, angels, and stars. Christmas presents can be put under the tree ready to open on Christmas Day morning.

Villages, towns, and cities may have their own Christmas tree. These trees are generally decorated with lights and much larger than those bought for the home. Decorating evergreen trees during wintertime begins thousands of years ago. These trees stayed green all winter and brought hope that spring would come again next year.

The Christmas tree tradition that we know today is believed to have started in Germany. In the 1500s, Christians bought real trees into the home and decorated them. They were first lit up with candles on the branches. (Don't try this at home as this is a major fire risk!)



During the 18th and 19th centuries, popular decorations included paper ornaments, fruit, or sweets. Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, made Christmas trees in houses very fashionable in England. People began hanging glass baubles on branches for the first time and electric lights used in the 1900s, replacing the candles.

Today, artificial and fibre optic Christmas trees are a popular choice. Many people prefer a real tree in the house at Christmas time as they can give off a woodland scent. These include fir and spruce trees. Many families have a Christmas colour theme for their tree such as silver, red or gold.

Did you know...?

- ♥ London has a famous Christmas tree which sits in Trafalgar Square. It is given as a gift by the people of Norway every year.
- ♥ The world's largest floating Christmas tree can be found in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.



1. How are Christmas trees in villages, towns and cities different from those bought for the houses?

2. What is special about evergreen trees?

3. Give an example of a popular Christmas tree decoration during the 18th and 19th centuries.

4. Why are electric Christmas tree lights a safer alternative?

5. Who donates the Christmas tree which sits in Trafalgar Square every year?

6. Which do you think is the best type of Christmas tree? Explain your answer.
