



CLEAN WATER IS UP TO YOU

By Carol Hillestad for the Brodhead Watershed Association

Real? Artificial? Choices You Make Matter

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Hands down, the Christmas tree that's best for clean water, humans, and life on earth in general is a tree that's grown, harvested and sold by a neighboring tree farmer.

Huh? Aren't groups like the Brodhead Watershed Association always telling us NOT to cut down trees?

Yes. Cutting down mature forest trees is one of the worst things we can do when it comes to clean water, breathable air, and wildlife.

But also no. That's because Christmas trees are a crop, just like corn or lettuce or pumpkins. During the eight to twelve years it takes for them to grow big enough to harvest, they're providing nesting sites, cover, and food for birds and small mammals, while purifying air and water.



Supporting local tree farmers is good for our local economy, as well as wildlife habitat, pure air, and clean and abundant drinking water.

And tree farmers are always planting for future years — at least one, and up to five new trees planted for every tree they cut. So each year's harvest is only a small fraction of the trees that remain — keeping most of their lands covered in strong, healthy forest habitat.

Buying from local tree farmers also means no long-distance carbonspewing transportation. And the money you pay stays right here, in our own community, supporting local families.

When the holidays are over, real trees can go on your brush pile to provide cover for birds and small mammals as they slowly decompose. Many townships accept them to be turned into mulch.

Artificial trees take a lot of energy to make — and many are made with PVC, a known carcinogen. They're just about impossible to recycle. Even when you use the same artificial tree for many years, the balance is still in favor of a natural tree — good for you, good for nature, and the only way to get that lovely woodsy, piney smell.

- Wm Price Nursery, Route 390 in Cresco; ph. 570 595-2800
- Leies Family Christmas Trees, Upper Swiftwater Road in Paradise; ph. 570 620-5110
- Howard's Old Fashioned Christmas Trees, Stroudsburg; ph. 570 421-2217
- AJ Nursery, Saylorsburg; ph. 610 381-2510