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## Science Weighs in on Fake vs Real Xmas Tree Debate





# The debate rages



**Fun Fact: The popularity of aluminum Christmas trees peaked in the 1960s. But did you know that the 1965 airing of *A Charlie Brown Christmas* is credited with tarnishing the foil tree's appeal?**

**According to unvetted sources, when the “sorry little tree comes to life, the spirit of Christmas conquered commercialism.”**

**By 1967 aluminum trees were no more.**

- **Disclaimer:** I grew up with real trees, but as a creature of the 60's, my family also has a now defunct aluminum tree. Left to my own devices I am a no tree/no decoration Grinch. Today, my other half prefers a real tree. Hence so do I. 😊
- Like everything in life, there are tradeoffs between choosing a real or artificial Christmas tree.
- With the price of real trees soaring, from a cost standpoint, the payback on an artificial tree is getting shorter and shorter.
- But what are the environmental pros and cons?

# A not so trivial issue



Emirates Palace Hotel Tree

**Fun Fact: The most expensive Christmas tree in history is believed to be the Emirates Palace Hotel tree.**

**Laden with diamonds, gold, pearls, sapphires and emeralds, the 2010 Abu Dhabi tree was estimated to cost \$11.4 million resulted.**

**Think that's excessive? Not for a hotel that has automatic machines to sell gold bars and use a private jet.**



- The real vs fake study was conducted by researchers at the University of Sheffield's Grantham Centre for Sustainable Futures in the UK.
- It is estimated between the U.S. and Europe somewhere around 80-100 million real trees are purchased each year. In the U.S. alone, it's estimated about 10 million artificial trees are sold annually. Thus the topic isn't as trivial as it may seem.
- The researchers identified two primary factors related to sustainability:
  1. The number of times a fake tree is used.
  2. The disposal method for real trees.



The 31-inch-tall tree is billed as the "humblest Christmas tree in the world."

**Fun Fact: In 2023, the oldest artificial tree in existence sold in the UK for \$4,000.**

**The 103-year-old tree was originally purchased for 8-year-old Dorothy Grant in 1920.**

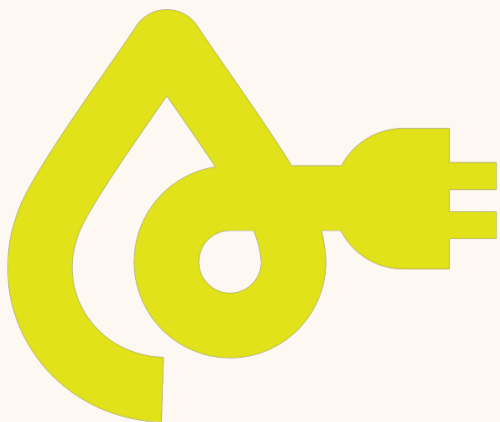
# Environmental pros and cons



- Opting for real reduces the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> trees absorb. And burning discarded trees rapidly releases carbon while also generating other pollutants like soot.
- Real trees become a more sustainable "if disposed of thoughtfully."
- "Thoughtful" ways include recycling, composting, and even replanting.
- The fake tree manufacturing process isn't particularly environmentally friendly.
- However, if an artificial tree is reused more than five times, it's carbon footprint will be lower than that of a real tree. (Note: quality artificial trees last on average between six to 10 years.)

## The Verdict?

**Based on these findings, it appears that artificial is the more environmentally friendly option.**



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## Unbiased and Unfiltered

- An honest assessment of the climate change effort.
- I cover what's working – but more important - the issues/roadblocks that the industry would prefer to ignore.
- A must-read for anyone with a desire to understand what's really going on with renewable energy and climate change.



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