



# Tree Clinic Handbook for Decorators

# Tree Clinic Handbook

*Thank you for choosing to be a part of the Saint Alphonsus Festival of Trees.  
Your participation as a decorator makes the Festival possible, and helps raise  
funds to support projects and programs at Saint Alphonsus.*

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## **GENERAL DECORATING REQUIREMENTS**

### **Trees**

We recommend that you purchase your tree through the Festival of Trees. (These trees are pre-lit, high-quality, designer trees. There is a variety to choose from (long needles, with or without pine cones, full or trim, flocked or green, etc.) but supplies are limited in each. The "Tree Menu" is available at [www.saintalphonsus.org/festivaloftrees](http://www.saintalphonsus.org/festivaloftrees). We will provide the Festival-regulated tree stand for all trees.

You may also acquire your own tree not purchased through the Festival, but if you do so, remember that you must:

- Pick up a Festival-regulated tree stand (these are specially-made to provide additional support during tree delivery) before the Festival if you intend to decorate (or partially decorate) your tree prior to Decorating Day
- Transport your tree (decorated or undecorated) to the Boise Centre
- Ensure your tree is identified by the manufacturer as a flame-resistant or flame-retardant
- Artificial tree sections must be bolted together. If you are assembling your tree at the Grove, please bring your own drill and bolts.

### **Tree Sizes**

All trees in the large tree category, whether artificial or live, must be at least 6 feet tall, but not over 8 feet tall.

### **Tree Color**

Remember that your tree will be seen and judged with dim or natural lighting at the Festival site with the tree's lights *on*. The color of your tree is very important. Since artificial trees come in a variety of colors, choose a color that blends with your theme, is attractive to a buyer, and enhances your decorations.

### **Before You Decorate**

Artificial trees purchased through the Festival office will be delivered to the Festival site and placed at your assigned location. The tree will still be packaged in its original box. Your tree decorating team will be responsible for assembly, etc. (When possible, volunteers will unpack your tree, bolt it, put it in the regulation stand, and have it ready for you to decorate, but please be prepared to do so with your team.) Reminder: do not start decorating your tree until the sections of your tree have been bolted!

### **Tree Bags**

A tree bag will be under your tree stand so it can easily be pulled up and around the tree to protect it during delivery to its purchaser after the close of the Festival. Do not remove the bag.

## **Tree Decorations**

Decorations must be acceptable for any home or business. Trees must be tastefully decorated and holiday-oriented. Trees, which are not tasteful in color, design, proportion, decoration, or are too extreme, may not sell well.

## **Tree Weight and Fragility**

Because we want to showcase your tree just the way you designed it, and we want the purchaser/sponsor to receive the tree just as they remember it, please pay close attention to the **weight and fragility** of your tree. After the Festival, all trees will be delivered to the purchasers and sponsors for display in their businesses and homes. The tree-moving process begins with volunteers wrapping the entire tree and its belongings in a big bag, lifting the tree base onto a tree carrier, loading the tree onto a semi-truck, and delivering it to its final destination. Some trees will go into elevators, up stairs, around tight corners, etc. Because of this, we ask that you keep your tree (including decorations and props) at a minimal weight and fragility. Avoid items like rock, brick, glass, thick woods, extremely fragile/expensive ornaments etc. Exceptions can be made, but we will ask that you assist us in the wrapping and delivering process. **Please note that you may be called and asked for assistance if we have any concerns about the delivery of your tree.** If you do plan to use items that may greatly increase the weight/fragility of your tree, please contact the Festival office at 367-2759.

## **Tree Boxes**

Please make sure that your tree's original box is labeled with your Sponsor Name and tree number. This box may be used to store other items that will go to the purchaser of the tree (i.e. boxes for fragile ornaments).

## **FIRE GUIDELINES**

- Only listed electrical lights and wiring shall be used on trees and similar decorations. Lights must be UL approved (lab tested). Please leave the UL tags attached and keep all light boxes, as the Fire Marshall may request to see them for manufacturer instructions.
- Connect **ONLY** three strings of lights end to end. Each set of three strings of lights must be connected to the main power strip.
- You may use any size of lights as long as they are UL listed for use on Christmas trees and for indoor use. The large-bulb outdoor lights will not be permitted, because of the heat they generate.
- Each tree will be limited to 20 amps of power (100 foot string of light is about 1/10 of an amp of power).
- Do not use old lights.
- Do not use natural materials (like straw, wheat, grasses) unless you spray them (before Decorating Day, not onsite) with a flame-retardant chemical.

## **DECORATION RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS**

### **Lighting**

All trees purchased through the Festival Office come pre-lit with clear or multi-colored lights. If you are using your own tree or choose to add additional lights, please see the following:

- Lights should enhance the tree, not detract from it. When putting lights on a tree, try to follow the contour of the branches as a way to enhance the natural beauty of the tree.
- Purchase quality lights and do not use used lights. For fire protection requirements/restrictions on lighting, please see page 5.
- The lights you purchase must be independent of each other so if one light goes out, the remaining lights stay on. Test each strand of lights you purchase to make sure this occurs: take one light out of the socket and then plug the string in to see if the others stay on. ***Test the lights before putting them on the tree and again before putting on the decorations. Bring extra bulbs and fuses.***
- Bring a heavy-duty extension cord with which to plug in your tree. The extension cords you supply will be sold with the tree.
- If you are adding additional lights, bring a power strip to wire in the middle of your tree (around the trunk) to plug the lights into.
- All lights must be wired to the tree. Use the same color of wire as the color of your tree and hide the wire so it cannot be seen. Pipe cleaner is good for this.

### **Wiring Ornaments & Decorations to the Tree**

After the Festival, your tree will be wrapped, picked up, and delivered, so decorations must be securely fastened to the tree.

### **Technique**

Needle-nose pliers with side cuts will help make wiring easier and faster. Bring these with you. Wiring decorations onto the tree with the florist wire or pipe cleaner will help prevent damage to decorations and lights. All wire should match the color of the tree. Only make one or two twists with the wire.

A four-inch long wire is needed to tie an average ornament to the branch of a tree. Wrap the wire or pipe cleaner firmly using one or two twists. Do not use loop hangers to hang ornaments to the tree. (For a pine cone, bow or larger ornaments, use a longer piece of wire or pipe cleaner to pull it through the item, then fasten it to the tree.) All decorations must be wired directly to the tree.

## **Gluing**

All ornaments with an inserted or slip-on hanging attachment usually found on purchased ornaments such as satin balls, glass bulbs, etc., must be glued where the two pieces meet so the "hanger" cannot slip out. Hot glue sticks used with electric glue guns are recommended. Be sure to bring an extension cord with you to use the glue gun, and a cookie sheet or other material to protect the carpet in case of a glue spill.

## **Decorations and Materials**

Use only materials that will withstand a vigorous move, which will include tipping, covering with plastic bags, transporting with a moving van and delivering through elevators and up stairways. Remember a standard door width is only 36".

You will be allowed a maximum 5 1/2 ft. diameter area for your tree. If your decorations are outside your allotted space, the festival staff will ask you to keep within the required diameter. The judges will disqualify trees with decorations outside the 5 1/2 ft. diameter. Trees with decorations outside the 5 1/2 ft. diameter will not be considered for auction.

### **There will be no exceptions.**

Be sure you have enough decorations. It is easier to take a few home or return extras to the store than to search for more decorations at the last minute. Use decorations of high quality, as the tree's buyer may use them for years.

Smaller decorations should be used on the top of the tree and larger ones on the bottom. Under the tree accessories should also be in proportion!

Baby's breath, broom bloom, starlight jip, or any other dried floral filler enhances the tree and gives it a professional look. Inexpensive and simple items which are used as fill-ins can be pine cones, clusters of balls or bells, holly, flowers, fruits, combinations of bows and clusters, small wrapped packages, or any other small item that goes with your tree.

## **Bows**

Bows can be that finishing touch on your tree without a great deal of cost. Some things to remember when selecting ribbon are:

- Florist satin is easier to tie than any other ribbon and comes in dozens of shades and patterns. Fabric ribbon is only printed on one side. Stiff ribbon can be hard to tie, such as velvet. If you plan to use velvet, someone experienced with bows should tie them.
- Ribbon comes in all widths. The wider the ribbon, the more yardage it takes to make a nice bow. The most common sizes are:
- #3 ribbon is approximately 3/4 inches in width. In the plain colored florist satin, there are 100 yards of ribbon per bolt. #3 ribbon takes approximately 1 1/2 yards to make a nice bow.

- #9 ribbon is 1 1/2 inches in width. This size is the easiest to work with. One bolt of #9 ribbon in the plain florist satin has 100 yards. It takes approximately 2 yards to make a nice bow.
- #40 ribbon is 3 inches in width and comes 50 yards to a bolt in the plain florist satin. It takes approximately 2 1/2 yards to make a nice bow.

Tie your bow with a pliable wire or pipe cleaner matching the color of the tree. Use an eight-inch piece to wire the bow right to the tree. Pigtail wire is excellent and it comes with white or green plastic coating making it very easy to use.

Use the larger bows at the bottom of the tree and graduate to smaller bows at the top of the tree to show good use of scale and proportion.

### **Tree Tops**

If your tree has a top that is fragile or will **extend the total height of the tree to over 8'**, we request that you construct the top so that it is easily removable and can be taken down and transported separately by the tree delivery people. If your tree top is very difficult or if fragile items are used, decorators may be asked to help with the disassembly, re-assembly of the tree.

### **“Underneath It All”: Tree Skirts and Accessories**

As a Tree Sponsor, you have the option of requesting up to 4 pallets to go underneath your tree. You must request these pallets, if you want them, on your Tree & Decorator Information Form. The pallets under the trees add a little height variety to the Festival. They measure approximately 3x4 ft. and 5 inches tall. You will need to cover these pallets with a tree skirt, drape or wrapping paper that matches your theme.

The trees sponsored at the Benefactor, Grand Benefactor, and Distinguished Benefactor levels will be on 5 ft. x 5 ft. platforms that are 2 1/2 ft. high. You will need to provide a tree skirt, drape or wrapping paper to cover the platform. **Please use materials and designs that are not difficult to remove from the platform.**

We recommend you put items under your tree, which complement your tree and the theme, and are in proportion with its size. For example, use wrapped boxes, toys, trains, stuffed animals, nativity scenes, etc. ***Any breakable items must have an accompanying box for storage purposes, which will be left with the tree when decorating is finished.*** A skirt or drape and objects placed under the tree add a finishing touch as well as increase the selling appeal of the tree.

Be certain that the items you choose to put under your tree conform with the overall look and size of your tree. They should not be too large or too small and should align with your theme and color scheme.

**REMEMBER THAT ITEMS PLACED UNDER THE TREE ARE SOLD WITH THE TREE. DO NOT PUT ANY ITEMS UNDER THE TREE YOU WANT TO KEEP. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

## **DECORATING DAY**

The Festival site at the Boise Centre will be open on Sunday of Thanksgiving Week, from 1 p.m. - 9 p.m. and on Monday, from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Enter the loading dock doors on 9th Street. The check-in desk will allow only authorized decorators and personnel in the Festival site - **no children, please.**

You will be shown where your tree is located. Please arrive with all of your decorations, essential equipment and tools, tree skirt and boxes, etc. so you can begin decorating. **Everyone must complete their decorating and leave the site by 5:00 p.m. Monday evening.**

Please know the exact name of the sponsor of your tree. This will help expedite the check-in process.

### **LIST OF HELPFUL EQUIPMENT FOR DECORATING DAY:**

*Make sure all of your items are labeled with your name and phone number.*

- ❑ Heavy-duty extension cords
- ❑ Wire matching the color of your tree and wire cutters
- ❑ Boxes for the decorations that are displayed under the tree, clearly labeled
- ❑ Boxes for any artificial tree and assembly instructions
- ❑ Glue pan and/or glue gun, glue sticks, extension cords for them and a cookie sheet or fabric to protect the carpet from any spills
- ❑ Tape
- ❑ Needle-nose pliers with side cuts
- ❑ Scissors
- ❑ A ladder to reach the height of your tree. Because of insurance requirements the convention center can not allow us to use their ladders

The Boise Centre does not allow outside food or beverage to be brought in; it will be available for purchase onsite.

## **GUARDIAN ANGELS**

Each tree will be assigned a Guardian Angel. Your Guardian Angel will be responsible for checking your tree throughout the Festival to make sure everything is in place, lights are working, etc. Make sure to make us aware about any specific areas that may need special attention. (If it needs batteries, for example, please provide extra batteries and your Guardian Angel can change them when needed.)

## JUDGING GUIDELINES

Decorators are encouraged to use creativity and originality in their designs while adhering to the Festival's General Decorating Requirements printed in this booklet as well as the guidelines listed below.

Remember, trees will be judged with natural or dim lighting while the tree lights are lit. Bare spots should be carefully hidden from the public's eye, as judges will judge trees only from the angles that will be seen during the public viewing.

Although judges will concentrate on the trees specifically, they will also view the overall setting of each display, including packages and extra items under the tree, to assure continuity and execution of theme. Items under the tree should coordinate with the tree theme and color selections. For example, if you choose silver and blue as the colors for your tree and wrap packages beneath in pink and gold, you would not receive full points for execution of color and harmony. It is not necessary, nor is it a judging requirement to have anything under the tree except a tree skirt. However, the Festival strongly encourages use of embellishments. **Balance** will be judged closely. Large, overpowering treetops are often distracting and make the tree look top heavy. Tree tops and items underneath should be in proportion to the size of the tree and other decorations.

### SAMPLE SCORE SHEET FOR LARGE TREES

Theme: (Place tree number in front of appropriate theme category)

Traditional Theme       Non-Traditional Theme       Children's Theme

**Design:** Use of color, balance, harmony, and unity with the accessories and surrounding decor. (Possible 35 points)

**Ornaments:** Originality, creativity, and uniqueness. (Possible 15 points)

**Theme:** **Traditional:** long established traditions, customs, old-fashioned.  
**Non-Traditional:** not typical of traditional; contemporary, fantasy, or invention.  
**Children's:** relating to a children's theme.  
(Possible 15 pts.)

**Execution:** Overall presentation and workmanship, beauty and interest. (Possible 35 points)

TREE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL SCORE \_\_\_\_\_

## CLASSIFICATION, AWARDS, AND JUDGING

For judging purposes there will be four classes (new in 2009!). **Make sure your tree is in its proper class!**

**1) PROFESSIONAL CLASS** - includes those trees decorated by persons paid presently or in the past for their decorating services. This includes florists, professional interior designers and artists.

**2) AMATEUR CLASS** - includes trees decorated by persons not paid for decorating or related services. This includes tree sponsor employees and families, school children and volunteers.

**3) SCHOOL/YOUTH CLASS I** - includes trees decorated on which the ornaments are primarily made by students and the trees are decorated (ornaments are hung) primarily by students.

**4) SCHOOL CLASS II** – includes trees that represent school or youth organizations and the decorating team has considerable involvement and support from parents and teachers. The tree is decorated (ornaments are hung) by adults.

The following awards will be given to each class:

<b>Best of Show:</b>	Any category, any theme.
<b>Children's:</b>	Relating to a children's theme, i.e., using children's toys or ornaments.
<b>Traditional Christmas:</b>	In accordance with long-established or old-fashioned traditions, customs, or ideas.
<b>Non-Traditional Christmas:</b>	Any form not common to a traditional view of the holidays. Includes contemporary, fantasy or invention.

A group of local "celebrity judges" will select the winners based on judging criteria developed for the National Council of Garden Club Judges. Awards will be announced the day of the Gala. A ribbon will be displayed on the winning trees for the duration of the Festival and mailed to you and the sponsor after the event.

The People's Choice award will be selected through a balloting process by patrons attending the Festival of Trees during the public viewing from Wednesday to Sunday and the winner will be after the ballots are tallied following the Festival.

## **TREE PRICING**

The Festival of Trees reserves all rights to set tree prices. It is very important that you state the approximate fair market value of your decorated tree, and describe unique features so that we may price it appropriately. A group of volunteers is given this information, then evaluates the trees before assigning a price. Prices, in general, range from \$400 - \$2,000. Consideration will be given to the time and money spent on the tree, as well as marketability. Please take this into consideration when purchasing or handcrafting ornaments, packages, etc. Trees may be purchased at the Gala. **To be compliant with the IRS, we must have you provide a good faith estimate of the fair market value of your tree including the decorations, certificates, and any other gifts that go with the tree.**

## **AUCTION TREES**

Seven-ten trees will be chosen for the live auction during the evening of the Gala. A committee of past festival volunteers and chairmen select the auction trees. The selection process begins on Monday evening (trees may be selected before they are complete).

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any further comments or questions, please feel free to contact us:

Christine Warner, Executive Chair of Tree Support	375-2468
Debbie Hamilton, Saint Alphonsus Foundation	367-3997
Nancee Bakken, Saint Alphonsus Foundation	367-5659
Jill Aldape, Saint Alphonsus Foundation	367-4997

*Happy Decorating and Happy Holidays!*