

Saint Alphonsus
Festival *of* Trees

Large Tree
Decorator
Handbook

2025

Decorator Handbook

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

Table of Contents

General Decorating Requirements	3
Trees	3
Tree Sizes	3
Tree Color	3
Before You Decorate	3
Tree Bags	3
Tree Decorations	4
Tree Weight & Fragility	4
Tree Boxes	4
Fire Guidelines	4
Decoration Recommendations & Requirements	5
Lighting	5
Wiring Ornaments & Decorations to the Tree	5
Technique	5
Gluing	6
Decorations & Materials	6
Bows	6, 7
Tree Tops	7
"Underneath It All" Tree Skirts & Accessories	7
Decorating Day	8
List of Helpful Equipment for Decorating Day	8
Guardian Angels	8
Judging Guidelines	9
Sample Score Sheet	9
Classifications, Awards & Judging	10
Tree Pricing	11
Auction Trees	11
Contact Information	11

GENERAL DECORATING REQUIREMENTS

Trees

We recommend that you purchase your 7.5 foot tree through the Festival of Trees. These trees are pre-lit, high-quality, designer trees. There is a variety to choose from (long and needles, full or trim, flocked or green, etc.) but supplies are limited in each. The selection of your tree from our "Tree Menu" is part of the process when you register online at saintalphonsus.org/festival.

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

- **Contact Rachel Flachbart at (208) 367-5659 to confirm your tree sponsorship**
- 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 Boise Centre, please bring your own drill and bolts.
- You are responsible for the tree for the duration until it's been delivered.

Tree Sizes

All trees in the large tree category must be at least 6 feet tall, but not over 8 feet tall and all the trees in the Festival of Trees inventory are 7.5 feet tall.

Tree Color

Remember that your tree will be photographed 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 Boise Centre and placed at your assigned location. The tree may still be packaged in its original box. Your tree decorating team may 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 drilled together and your tree stand has been secured to the larger plywood tree base.

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 this 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 208-367-TREE (8733).

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). No natural materials such as those or hay are allowed.

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 4.
- 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 movement, 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 ft. diameter area for your tree. The judges will disqualify trees with decorations outside the 5 ft. diameter

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 adding height to your tree by placing it on Festival-supplied risers. You will have the opportunity to select no riser, riser without a stand (approximately 3 inches in height), riser with a 5 inch stand or a riser with a 10 inch stand. You can note your choice on the Tree & Decorator Information form. The risers under the trees add a little height variety to the Festival. They measure approximately 5 feet wide. Most decorators choose to cover the risers 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 1/2 ft. x 5 1/2 ft. platforms that are approximately 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. Do not tape or glue items to your base or risers.**

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. If your tree includes special items of value, please find a way to incorporate signage communicating this information into your design. An example would be to use a decorative picture frame that would hold a sign instead of photo saying “This tree includes XXXX.”

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.

Also, please note that the liquor law has now changed and hard liquor, beer and wine can all be added to your tree as part of the decor.

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Decorations and Materials

Use only materials that will withstand a vigorous movement, which will include tipping, covering with plastic bags, transporting with a moving van and delivering through

DECORATING DAY

The Festival site at the Boise Centre will be open on Sunday of Thanksgiving Week from 1 p.m. - 8 p.m. and on Monday from 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Enter the loading dock doors on 9th Street. It works best when there are two people at drop off so one can unload and one person can move the car. We cannot leave vehicles on the loading dock. 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 3:00 p.m. Monday afternoon. 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 cannot allow us to use their ladders

The Boise Centre does not allow outside beverages to be brought in; you can bring in food but all drinks must be purchased onsite.

SPECIAL NEEDS DURING EXHIBITION

Our volunteers will be checking your tree prior to it being photographed and then again prior to delivery 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 our volunteers 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 by 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:

____Traditional Theme ____Non-Traditional Theme

Design: Use of color, balance, coordination, beauty, interest, proportion, harmony and unity with all accessories and surrounding decor. (Points are deducted for poor color coordination, minimal variation in size/depth/texture of ornaments/accessories.)
(Possible 10 points)

Theme: Originality, creativity and uniqueness as it relates to the theme of the tree:

Traditional - long-established traditions, customs, classic

Non-traditional - not typical of traditional; contemporary, fantasy, innovative or invention

Execution: Overall presentation of workmanship, continuity, follow-through of theme, quality, detail, mechanics. (Points are deducted for bare spots, unfinished components, exposed machinery, broken items or non-working lights, weak or poor representation of a theme.) (Possible 10 points)

TREE NUMBER _____

TOTAL SCORE _____

DIVISIONS, AWARDS, AND JUDGING

For judging purposes there will be three classes. **Make sure your tree is in its proper class!**

- 1) **PROFESSIONAL DIVISION** - 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 DIVISION** - includes trees decorated by persons not paid for decorating or related services. This includes tree sponsor employees and families, volunteers and school parent organizations using decorations made by children.
- 3) **SCHOOL/YOUTH DIVISION** - includes trees decorated by children using decorations made by children.

The following awards will be given to each class:

Traditional Christmas: In accordance with long-established or old-fashioned traditions, customs, or ideas.

Non-Traditional Christmas: 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. Awards will be announced on 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 an online voting 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 starting tree bids and fixed 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 starting bid and a buy it now price. 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 open for bidding and purchase at the Gala and the online auction will be closed on Saturday, November 29. **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.**

LIVE AUCTION TREES

Seven to ten trees will be chosen for the live auction during the evening of the Gala. A committee will select the trees chosen for the Auction.. 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 Holley, Tree Decorating Liaison	208-367-8182
Launa Felton, Wreath/Tabletop Tree/Holiday Décor	208-830-7242
Rachel Flachbart, Saint Alphonsus Foundation Festival of Trees Information Line	208-367-5659 367-TREE (8733)

*Happy decorating and thanks for helping
us kick off the Holiday Season!*