

# Festival *of* Trees

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Wreath, Tabletop Trees  
& Holiday Decor

## Decorator Handbook



**Saint Alphonus**

A Member of Trinity Health

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# HOW DONATING WORKS

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- No pre-registration required! Just bring your entries and donate your items during the designated drop-off days and times on page 7.
- Sponsors (schools, businesses, or individuals) purchase wreaths, tabletop trees, holiday decor, and all decorations.
- Designers decorate the wreath, tabletop tree, or holiday decor. Sometimes this is the same person(s).
- Holiday decor includes decorations, wall hangings, stockings, tree skirts, and all other items that are not trees or wreaths.
- Tabletop trees are less than 4 feet tall. This does not include the base or topper.
- All materials including tabletop trees, wreaths, garland, and ornaments must be artificial (not living and not flammable).
- There is no entry fee for any item. The only cost is what you invest in your project.
- The Festival of Trees provides free signage with sponsor and designer names.
- Decorated items are donations and become the property of the Saint Alphonsus Foundation and the Festival of Trees.
- Upon intake, donations will need to have fair market value listed for each item, which includes the retail value of the goods donated.
- Items are exhibited and sold via online auction during the event. Proceeds from the sale of all donated items are distributed by the Saint Alphonsus Foundation.

# GENERAL DECORATING REQUIREMENTS

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Items should be designed to accommodate a variety of homes and businesses. You choose your item and from where it's purchased. Secondhand or new does not matter.

## Everything Goes

All accessories that are displayed with your item go home with the purchaser. Please make sure only things that you are willing to part with are included in your donation.

## You Are Responsible For:

- Ensuring your item is artificial and identified by the manufacturer as a flame-resistant or flame-retardant
- Marking the top dead center on the back of your item or front of your item so we know how to hang or display your item at the Boise Centre
- Transporting your decorated item to the Saint Alphonsus Foundation
- Assisting with your item during the Festival in the rare case of electrical or mechanical issues

## Fire Guidelines

- Only electric lights (including battery operated) may be used. Lights must be UL approved.
- Please leave the UL tags attached as the Fire Marshall may request to see them.
- Connect a MAXIMUM of three strings of lights end to end. Each set of three strings of lights must be connected to the main power strip.
- Use quality lights that are appropriate for indoor/outdoor use and ensure they are in excellent working order.
- Natural materials like straw, wheat, and grasses may be used if sprayed with flame retardant. Hay bales may not be used.

## Item Categories & Sizes

There are a variety of item types to choose from:

- Wreaths—Circular and have a hole in the middle
- Tabletop Trees—3-dimensional, independent branches, less than 4 feet tall not including the base and topper
- Holiday Decor—Decorations, wall hangings, stockings, tree skirts, sleds/sleighs, windows, swags, tomato cages, cones, 2-dimensional cutouts, and all other items that are not wreaths or tabletop trees

# JUDGING

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The wreaths, tabletop trees, and holiday decor items are open to any theme. There will be judges who will select ribbon winners under each entry type as well as in each category of professional, amateur, and youth.

### Theme

Originality, uniqueness, and follow-through as it relates to the theme of the item—*points are deducted for lack of representation of a theme*

### Design

Balance, beauty, color coordination, harmony, interest, proportion, and (if included) unity with all accessories and surrounding decor—*points are deducted for lack of color coordination, minimal variation in size, depth, and/or texture of ornaments and (if included) accessories*

### Execution

Overall presentation of workmanship, continuity, quality, detail, and mechanics—*points are deducted for bare spots, unfinished components, exposed machinery, broken items, and non-working lights*

### Divisions

- Professional: Those who design or decorate as their livelihood or for financial gain
- Amateur: Those who design or decorate for fun or pleasure, not for financial gain
- High School: Children age 14–17
- Middle/Junior High School: Children age 10–13
- Elementary School: Children age 0–9

### Awards

Judges award the following ribbons for each category and division. This means approximately 75 ribbons are given out.

- Best of Show
- 1st Place
- 2nd Place
- 3rd Place
- Honorable Mention

# DECORATION RECOMMENDATIONS

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## Attend Clinics

We offer a clinic to assist you in learning how to be successful in your decorating technique. More information on the dates and times of these clinics will be sent to you later this summer.

## Helpful Tools & Materials

- ❑ **Gloves:** Protect your hands! Fluff each branch of the tabletop tree, wreath, or holiday décor item as well as any floral decorations
- ❑ **Needle-nose pliers:** Ones with side cuts will help twist wire easier and faster
- ❑ **Pipe cleaners:** Secure decorations to your item
- ❑ **Wire:** Helpful for heavier decorations or accessories that need extra support
- ❑ **Glue gun**
- ❑ **Baking sheet:** Use as a drip pan for your hot glue gun
- ❑ **Zip ties:** Secure surge protectors or large decorations
- ❑ **Scissors**

## Color

Your item will be photographed at the Saint Alphonsus Foundation with the lights on. The color of your lights and decorations are very important. Artificial items come in a variety of colors. Choose up to three main colors that:

- Blend with your theme
- Enhance your decorations
- Would be attractive to a purchaser

## Theme

Consider the first three ideas that come to mind when thinking of your theme. This can help to make your theme easily recognizable to judges and attendees.

## Design

Consider building your item around an attention-grabbing accessory; one that will make people want to stop and take a closer look.

## Execution

All wire or pipe cleansers should closely match the color of the tabletop tree or decor. Seams on ornaments should face side to side versus front to back.

## Lighting

All items can be pre-lit with clear, single-colored, multi-colored, or no lights at all. Lights should enhance the item, not detract from it. Consider including extra bulbs and/or fuses. If you choose to add additional lights, please consider the following:

- Use pipe cleaners or floral wire in the same color as your item to securely attach lights.
- When putting lights on a tabletop tree, follow the contour of the branches as a way to enhance the shape of the tree.
- If using battery-powered electronics, include extra batteries. Volunteers will replace them if they die during the exhibition.

## Technique

- Start with lights, toppers for tabletop trees, large items, garland or ribbon, and fill in with additional decor.
- Complete the front and back of tabletop trees.
- Light cords should be hanging from the bottom or back of the item.
- All items must be wired directly to your donation or glued where two pieces meet (i.e., so the “hanger” cannot slip out).

## Item Decorations & Accessories

Items should be inviting, focus on universal themes, or tell a compelling story. Judges will consider the overall setting of each display, including packages and accessories. These accessories should assist with execution of a theme, be in the same color palette, and be in proportion to the size of the item and its decorations. It is not necessary, nor is it a judging requirement, to have accessories under a tabletop tree or that go with an item.

Common accessories include:

- Tree skirts
- Packages
- Stuffed animals
- Gift cards (provide a copy for display; we will keep the actual version in a lock box)
- Jewelry

## Attaching Decorations to Your Item

- When using a hot glue gun or glue pillows, use a cookie sheet or other material to protect the area underneath in case of a glue spill.
- For outdoor items, hot glue will pop and break if using outdoors or in cold areas. We recommend wire and/or pipe cleaners to secure items.
- Wiring decorations onto your item with florist wire or pipe cleaner will help prevent damage to decorations and lights.
- A 4-inch long wire or pipe cleaner is the average length for a decoration to be secured to a branch of a tabletop tree, holiday décor item, or wreath. Wrap the wire or pipe cleaner firmly using one or two twists.
- For pine cones, bows, or larger decorations, use a longer piece of wire or pipe cleaner to secure to a strong structure in your item, such as the center of a tree, frame of a wreath, or rung of a ladder.

## Weight & Fragility

We want to showcase your item just the way you designed it, and we want the purchaser to receive the item just as they remember it.

Please pay close attention to the components of your design. We ask that you keep your item, including decorations and props, at a minimal weight and fragility. Consider using materials that are lightweight and can withstand vigorous movement. Materials such as rock, brick, glass, and certain types of wood can add extra weight or fragility.

At the conclusion of the Festival of Trees, your item will be picked up by the purchasers for display in their businesses or homes. The pick-up process begins with volunteers removing the item from its display location. It may also include:

- Lifting the item onto a cart
- Loading the item into a vehicle
- Driving it to its final destination
- Going into elevators, up stairs, or around tight corners

**If you plan to use items that greatly increase the weight or fragility of your item, please contact the Festival of Trees team at [festivaloftrees@saintalphonsus.org](mailto:festivaloftrees@saintalphonsus.org).** We may ask that you assist us in the display and/or pickup process if we have any concerns.

## DROP-OFF DAYS & TIMES

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**Please bring your donation to  
5119 W Irving St, Boise, Idaho 83704  
during any of these times:**

- Wednesday, October 14, noon–6 p.m.
- Wednesday, November 4, noon–6 p.m.
- Saturday, November 7, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.
- Wednesday, November 11, noon–6 p.m.
- Saturday, November 14, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.

**There is NO drop-off of donated items at the Boise Centre.** (In prior years, we would receive donations on Sunday and Monday prior to the event. This year, all wreaths, tabletops, and decor items **MUST** be donated and checked in at the Foundation during the days/times listed above.)

## FAIR MARKET VALUE

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The Festival of Trees reserves all rights to set beginning bids and “buy it now” prices. It is very important that you state the approximate fair market value of your entry and describe unique features so we may appropriately assign value. Consideration will be given to the time and money spent on the item, as well as marketability. Please keep this in mind when purchasing or handcrafting ornaments, packages, etc.

Wreaths, tabletop trees, and holiday decor items will be sold at the Gala and during our online auction.

**To be compliant with the IRS, we must have you provide a good faith estimate of the fair market value of your item including the decorations, certificates, and any other gifts that go with it.**

### Contact Information

If you have any additional questions, contact the Saint Alphonsus Festival of Trees team at  
**[festivaloftrees@saintalphonsus.org](mailto:festivaloftrees@saintalphonsus.org)**  
**(208)-367-8733**