



HEATHER GLENBOSKI/DN  
**SUSAN AND DOUG Winkelmann and their children Ryan, Monica and Erica look for a Christmas tree at Evergreen Hills Tree Farm. The farm is open Thursday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to sundown, and Sunday from 1 p.m. to sundown.**

## Pining away for a real tree or going faux: Debate burns on

BY ADAM KLINDER  
 Staff writer

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas — trees, that is.

With a month to go before Christmas Day, the race is on for people to get the most for their holiday buck in the decorations department. And no Christmas-celebrating house is fully decked out without the centerpiece: the Christmas tree.

The only question: Pine or plastic?

For the staunch traditionalists, the answer is easy. They're going to head for all the piney goodness of a real, live, fresh-from-the-farm tannenbaum.

The nature-loving Christmas tree devotees can get their fill of Yuletide bliss — complete with a trek through the woods to cut their own tree — at the Evergreen Hills Tree Farm at 15105 S. 84th St. in Papillion.

Some might be scared by memories of Clark Griswold's exploits from "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation."

Nothing like that here, reassured Bob Stevenson, manager of the farm.

"We just want to enjoy the people that want to have the experience of going out and cutting down their own tree, and creating a family tradition for their children," Stevenson said.

Stevenson, who owns and operates the farm as a family business, said all the necessary tools to bring in the family tree are provided by the farm, as well as some of the holiday charm.

At the Evergreen Hills Farm, families venture out and choose the tree they feel is right for them, Stevenson said.

They then cut it down and haul it back to the main barn, where the tree is put on a shaker to rid it of loose needles. From there, the tree can be bailed and netted for easy transportation home.

"We offer part of the tradition," Stevenson said. "part of the experiences of our grandparents who went out into the country and cut down their own tree and hauled it back home on their own."

Of course, Stevenson said, the farm competes with store-bought trees and artificial trees, which are becoming more popular with the family on the go.

But Stevenson said the Evergreen Hills Farm, in its fourth year of business, has seen an increase in its customer base.

At the Evergreen Hills Farm, hardy woodsmen and woodswomen can expect to pay \$4.50 a foot on the tree of their choosing.

Russ Plummer, an assistant manager at Lincoln's KMart Super Center, 3300 N. 27th St., said he has sold more than 20 trees in the past week.

An artificial tree at KMart Super Center runs anywhere from \$39.99 to \$179.99, depending on the size, which ranges from 4 to 7 feet tall.

At the Lincoln Hy-Vee Food Store at 48th and Leighton streets, tree buyers can get their choice of natural or artificial trees.

"It's more of an impulse item as far as Hy-Vee is concerned," said general merchandise manager Vicki Collins. "People come here to buy food, and they see that they can also get a Christmas tree."

All natural trees at Hy-Vee cost \$12.99.

Stevenson said freshly cut trees and pre-cut, store-bought trees look and smell differently in buyers' homes.

"Freshly cut trees provide a lovely ambiance for the holiday season," Stevenson said.

"They give off a fresh aroma and, environmentally, they're a plus. They cleanse the air and provide oxygen, and they're a lot better looking."

Stevenson also said that a fresh tree usually survives longer than a store-bought tree, which is often cut in October.

The verdict is still out on the holiday desirability of artificial trees.

Sure, they're easier to clean up when January comes, Stevenson said, but after a while, they start looking worn.

Some shoppers buy artificial trees to avoid the fire hazard of a drying nat-

ural tree.

But Stevenson said a fresh tree can withstand a flame just as well as most flame-retardant artificial trees.

Whichever way buyers choose to go this holiday season, they should remember one other tree option made possible by the wonder of technology.

A virtual Christmas tree is available for display at <http://worldkids.net/kids/daniel/tree.html>.

## Go surfing at Christmas without leaving the house

BY KASEY KERBER  
 Senior editor

You don't need a glass of egg nog in your hand and family members in the vicinity for cheer.

All you really need to celebrate the holidays is a few mouse clicks away.

Check out these five sites for holiday Web fun.

**The Monkees' Christmas Parody Page**

<http://www.geocities.com/HollywoodHills/4827/holiday.html>

Christmas songs set to the beat of some of the mop-headed group's greatest hits.

**Christmas Adventure Post Office**

<http://www.adventure.simplenet.com/postcards/christmas/animated.html>

Who needs to waste hard-earned cents on postage, when he or she can send friends and family members a free Christmas card online?

This site lets you pick the design, the music to accompany it and lets you include your own message.

**Christmas Tree Disposal**

<http://www.mindspring.com/~chadall/tree/index.html>

A humorous and illustrated look at how to get rid of that tree once the "fresh pine scent" is long gone.

**Santa Claus Timeline**




[http://webpages.marshall.edu/~hartwell/humor/MISC/SANTA\\_CLAUS\\_TIMELINE.HTM](http://webpages.marshall.edu/~hartwell/humor/MISC/SANTA_CLAUS_TIMELINE.HTM)

Here's a humorous look at Santa's existence from 1689 to 2011. Did you know he was a German-Spanish explorer? Check out the site to learn more.

**Mimi's Christmas Cookie Archive**

<http://www.aagt.com/vegetablepatch/cookiearchive.html>

About every type of Christmas cookie you can think of is included on this site, along with recipes on how to make each. So get cook(ie)ing!

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