Early birds flock to Frenchay Christmas Tree Farm

FOR a couple of months now, hundreds of Christmas Trees have been awaiting harvest at Frenchay Christmas Tree Farm. Peter and Simon Maughan, the proprietors of the farm, are encouraging eager customers to reserve their trees instead of cutting too soon. Early birds are visiting in increasing numbers to "Choose and Cut" their own Christmas Tree before the big rush in December.

"The benefit of reserving a tree in November means that you don't have to cut it too early, which results in an inferior tree on the big day," say Simon. "You can come back a bit closer to Christmas and cut it then. We only cut when the customer is ready, and this is what makes our trees special. It's how we can guarantee that our trees stay fresh and beautiful until January."

Here are Simon's top tips for reserving a Christmas Tree:

★ Bring lots of things to tie to the tree to make it uniquely yours. Ribbons and cable ties are ideal.
★ Make a name sign to fix securely to the tree so you can find it again when you come back.
★ Check that the tree has a straight trunk, so it is easy to stand upright when you get it home.
★ Measure the space at home before you visit, so you can be sure the tree will fit. Trees always seem a lot bigger when you get them indoors.

Already this year trees have been hand-picked for McDonald's Christmas TV campaign (filmed in various locations in Bristol) and for the concourse at Temple Meads Station. One Norwegian Spruce will appear on BBC's Victorian Christmas, and two Serbian Spruces on Philip Schofield's How to Spend It Well At Christmas. Frenchay trees also made a recent appearance at the Winterbourne Musical Theatre's production of The Christmas Schooner.

"I always get asked which are the best trees, which are the longest lasting. It's really hard to answer, because so much depends on personal taste, and so much on how well it will be looked after in the home. I always send early customers in the direction of the 'non-drop' firs, such as the Nordmann and the Fraser. Later customers will be safe with any tree, but I always recommend the traditional spruces, because these are the trees I really love."

Frenchay Christmas Tree Farm is open until Christmas Eve, 9am-5pm every day. "Choose and Cut" runs just as long as stocks last. Prices start from £20.

www.frenchaychristmastreefarm.co.uk

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