



# the good life

IN A NORTH STATE OF MIND

## Oh, North Carolina Christmas tree!



PHOTOS BY MADELINE GRAY | NORTH STATE JOURNAL

Top left, Boyce Farms bustles with people buying Christmas trees on an unseasonably warm night in Raleigh. Top right, owner Sheila Boyce sells a customer an extra large wreath. Bottom left, Callen Austin, eight months, of Wake Forest, watches as his first Christmas tree is wrapped up to get ready to put it on the car. Bottom right, Mike Boyce stands in front of flocked Christmas trees at Boyce Farms.

Christmas is not just one day. Christmas is a pilgrimage toward hope. For many the beginning of that journey involves a trek to get a tree.

By Jennifer Wood  
North State Journal

**E**VERY FAMILY has their own traditions and customs they hang onto during the holiday season, and the tree often holds some of our most powerful memories. The ornament given by a long-lost, yet not forgotten friend; the photo of a good dog who passed over the rainbow bridge; the tiny hand-shaped mitten with a now grown child's name scrawled across in fading crayon; or the heavy cross you hang each year in pride of place that's been passed down through generations reminding you that Christmas is not about that tree those ornaments hang upon.

Whatever your memories are, the smell of a real North Carolina Christmas tree has the effect of shuffling them up to the

surface. Whether you are singing "Oh, Tannenbaum" or "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree," odds are time stands still just a little bit as you toss that tinsel.

Farmers bring that joy from field to floor every year, and in North Carolina the Christmas tree business is big.

If yours is the sort of family with Norman Rockwell images of cutting and carrying a tree dancing in your head — Western N.C. is not the only place to enjoy that experience. Head over the bellline and through Highway 50, just up to the northern part of Wake County to Boyce Farms. "I grow primarily white pine and some Leyland cypress, red cedar, and Carolina sapphire," said owner Mike Boyce. "I probably have three other varieties out there

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## playlist

### December 5

Christmas with The Embers  
**Randleman**

Begin your holiday season with beach music from The Embers on a fully decorated stage of lights, trees, wreaths and snow. Enjoy world class harmonies during this holiday concert.  
[facebook.com/Randleman-Chamber-of-Commerce](https://www.facebook.com/Randleman-Chamber-of-Commerce)

### December 4-5, 11-12

Dillsboro Lights & Luminaries  
**Dillsboro**

Journey back to the days of yesteryear as Dillsboro presents its annual Festival of Lights and Luminaries. Experience the magic as the entire town is transformed into a winter wonderland of lights, candles, laughter and song. 2,500 luminaries light the way to shops and studios. Horse and buggy rides available each night from 5-8 pm (cost + tips). Shopkeepers provide live music and serve holiday treats with hot cider and cocoa. Carolers sing and children visit with Santa at Town Hall.  
[vistidillsboro.org](http://vistidillsboro.org)

### December 6

Reynolda House: 1917  
Christmas  
**Winston-Salem**

This holiday event kicks off on December 6 — day tours are scheduled for December 6, 13, and 20, with evening tours December 9 and 10 offering light refreshments and carols performed by a children's chorus. The bungalow will be decorated just as Katharine Reynolds might have. An organist will fill the home with Christmas carols and costumed interpreters playing a Reynolda school teacher, a butler, and a governess will share stories of the Reynolds family Christmas.  
[reynoldahouse.org](http://reynoldahouse.org)

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