



For Immediate Release
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OF SEA-CAPTAINS AND TINY YULETIDE TREASURES THE STORY BEHIND THE TRADITIONAL HOLIDAY TREE

Did you know that the traditional holiday fir, the [Norfolk Island Pine](#), has a back-story worthy of a Hollywood script? Actually, when you see these delicately shaped pines at your favorite retail store, you're taking home a bit of nautical history.

Norfolk Island Pines or 'Araucaria heterophylla' are native to Norfolk Island, an island in the South Pacific. Their 'romantic' history involves a famous sea captain and sultry South Sea Islands.

ROMANCING THE SEEDS

In 1774, during his second exploratory sea voyage to the South Pacific, Captain James Cook discovered Norfolk Island.

On a weary vessel named Resolution, Cook and his crew also discovered stately 200-foot giant pines they named Norfolk Island Pines. They were prized as a source of pine planks desperately needed for ship building and nearby flax for making sails.

SEED HUNTERS

Today, like modern day explorers, a few intrepid seed cone 'hunters' from Florida travel to the Hawaiian island of Oahu every two years to revisit the grand Norfolk Island Pines that thrive in the warm, tropical breezes and coastal soil.

The harvesters brave dizzying heights of 100 feet to pluck the hardiest seed cones from the whirling branches. The lime-green prickly seed cones are then shipped to Costa Farms south of Miami, where horticultural experts plant them, using 6-8 seeds per pot to assure consistently superior pines for perfect holiday decorating.

TROPICAL GEMS

The soft and compact needles, strong branches, and naturally symmetrical shape of the Norfolk Island Pine make it the ideal holiday tree. It can handle homemade ornaments and keepsakes, and provide endless decorating and gift-giving options.

According to Ethne Clarke of *Traditional Home*, "Miniature evergreens are the trend in home décor, particularly with live trees like the Norfolk Island Pine. These miniature versions are elegant in a lovely container on the mantle, or decorated in the children's room for fun."





Small enough for a table-top display or large enough to be the dramatic focal point of any room, they tuck nicely into tight spaces in apartments, dorm rooms, patios or cozy corners. And, they come in a variety of sizes from 14 to 44 inches tall for a nice floor plant.

“These living trees are affordable, eco-friendly ways to decorate and provide years of pleasure,” says Jose Smith, CEO of Costa Farms, one of the nation’s leading nurseries.

After the holidays, you can place the tree in a pretty pot to beautify your spaces and naturally refresh your indoor air.

DECORATING & GIFT GIVING TIPS: Check out these easy, fun tips to make your holidays “green” and jolly:

- Stumped on a teacher’s gift and refuse to buy another candle? Many table-top trees come fully decorated with a gift tag and fit nicely on desks.
- Holiday party coming up? They make great hostess gifts. Don’t forget your boss, friends, and colleagues.
- Express yourself! Enjoy your family time by encouraging your children to decorate their own tree. Create “theme” trees like a “tropical Christmas” for your dining and family rooms- adorned with mini flowers, tropical fish ornaments and seashells.
- Don’t forget your kids in college! Norfolk Island Pines make perfect gifts for students who want to decorate and “green” their rooms.

CARING FOR YOUR NORFOLK ISLAND PINE:

- They grow best indoors in a sunny location and prefer to be near a window- but away from direct heat. Avoid direct intense sunlight.
- Indoors they flourish in 50 percent humidity so consider running a humidifier or sit them in a tray of pebbles, watering the pebbles during winter months.
- Keep the soil moist but don’t let it dry out or stand in water.
- If you live where the temperature stays above 60 degrees, (such as zones 9-10) your Norfolk Island Pine can be planted in the landscape.
- As a houseplant, the Norfolk Island Pine naturally filters the air from indoor toxins and provides much needed moisture during the dry winter months.



Select from 14-to-44 inch tall trees, fully decorated or ready for your finishing touch, available at neighborhood retailers. For more information or to find a retailer near you, visit

www.costafarms.com.