



# Insects on Christmas Trees Are Rare and Not Harmful

## **THE FACTS:**

According to Rick Bates, PhD, Professor of Horticulture at Penn State University, it is a “relatively rare event” that an insect will make its way into your home on a Christmas tree.

If that rare event does happen, both Dr. Bates and Dr. Jill Sidebottom, an extension specialist with North Carolina State’s Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources, agree that any potential insects would be harmless. As Dr. Sidebottom explains, “Insects that might be found on Christmas trees are not harmful and don’t spread disease.”

## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:**

Insects are a natural part of our environment so it’s not impossible for an insect to hitch a ride on a real Christmas tree since they too, are a natural part of the environment. If that concerns you, just take two simple steps: shake the tree outside before setting it up, then vacuum the area around the tree after set-up.

## **REMEMBER:**

Real Christmas trees are biodegradable; they can be recycled or reused for mulch. They came from the earth and return to the earth.

Christmas tree retail outlets typically use mechanical tree shakers to remove loose needles before you take your tree home – a process recommended by Dr. Bates to help shake loose any lingering insects.