

# Fake vs. real Christmas trees

By Bruce Barcott and Michelle Lau, Sunset

When I was a child, my family adhered to a strict policy when it came to Christmas trees: We never drew from the same well twice. One year, we rolled up to the White Front parking lot in Everett, Washington, where my dad haggled with the schnapps-warmed proprietor over the price of a 6-foot fir.

In a better winter, we tramped into an Alaskan forest, axe in father's hand. During our California years, my sister and I pitched in to assemble our wire-and-plastic tree, working it like a big Tinkertoy set.

The ease with which this long-dead lumber is recalled speaks to its power. Holidays come and go, but Christmas trees stand in memory's warehouse forever. Now, with two kids of our own, my family is all about the adventure of finding the perfect real tree. We've cut our own at a farm and carted it by boat and ferry from the San Juan Islands to our home in Seattle.

But not everyone does. My mother, she's out of the real-tree game.

**Read the whole story**