

Tree of knowledge

When installing Christmas trees for commercial clients it's important to plan well in advance and consider site-specific issues and hazards, such as working at height and electrical safety. *Jodie Read reports*

Decorated trees are an instantly recognisable and much loved part of Christmas. Commercial clients such as retailers or hoteliers recognise this fact and know the value of adding a Christmas tree to encourage their customers to feel festive. Many interior landscapers provide a special seasonal service of supplying Christmas trees.

Christmas comes just once a year. To make the most of the occasion, companies need to plan ahead. Many organisations recognise that setting up Christmas trees can be a distraction from the day job, especially during what for many is the busiest time of the year.

Planning ahead

In order to secure the best price and quality of stock, interior landscapers will have placed bulk orders for Christmas trees during the summer months, and rely upon their good relationships with suppliers who understand the importance of supplying quality specimens.

Christmas seems to start earlier each year. With many organisations now displaying decorations and gifts as early as November, there is a real need to think about the longevity of a cut tree. The Nordman Fir is well regarded for having low needle drop and is favoured by many for its ability to last the season.

Installation

Once the tree arrives on site, the installation technique will depend according to size, taking

into account any site-specific hazards. Often it is useful to have a small team carrying out the installation. This eliminates lone working, reduces potential manual handling concerns and can make the job a lot easier and quicker to complete.

How tall the tree is and site-specific information will determine whether ladders or mobile work platforms are the most appropriate means of working at height.

Electrical safety is something that should not be overlooked. It's quite possible that Christmas tree lights escape normal Portable Appliance Test (PAT) regimes if they are tucked away in a box that only ever surfaces at Christmas time. Interior landscapers understand this and will therefore have a plan to ensure they are checked at appropriate intervals.

Disposal

Once the festivities are over, the spent tree



becomes surplus to requirements. By having appointed a professional team of interior landscapers, customers benefit from knowing that their waste trees will be collected, shredded and turned to mulch for further use as a weed suppressant on grounds maintenance projects.

Systematic, safe and sustainable

Interior landscapers with ISO9001, ISO14001 and OHSAS18001 help to ensure Christmas is delivered in a systematic, safe, sustainable manner.

ABOUT JODIE READ



Jodie Read is Managing Director of Penarth Management Limited; a company that helps make businesses better, greener and safer through specialist compliance consultancy and training for quality, environmental, health and safety management. She and her colleagues help to implement and maintain management systems, such as ISO9001 (Quality), ISO14001 (Environmental) or OHSAS18001 (Health and Safety).

The company is an affiliate member of the British Association of Landscape Industries (BALI) and is delighted to have been announced as a winner of a prestigious BALI Affiliate Award for Exceptional Service. Jodie is looking forward to collecting the winning plaque on behalf of the company at the BALI Awards 2012 ceremony in London on 7 December. Please email queries regarding ISO9001, ISO14001 or OHSAS18001 to Jodie at jodie@penarth.co.uk or telephone 029 2070 3328.