

GEORGIA Festival of TREES

Large Tree | DONOR HANDBOOK

Large Tree Donor Deadline

OCTOBER 31, 2026

All auction item paperwork must be submitted.

LATE REGISTRATION

We will accept late registrations until November 7, 2026 IF spaces are available & all required materials are submitted at the time of registration.

GAFESTIVALOFTREES.ORG/DONOR/LARGE

MAKING A REAL IMPACT

Thank you for your interest in donating a Large Tree to help make magic for thousands of Atlanta families.

Your donation will directly impact our community by raising essential funds to donate to organizations working to end human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of youth and women right here in Georgia. This year the festival will benefit Street Grace a local nonprofit working right here in Georgia.

This packet contains essential information you will need to design your tree. These guidelines will ensure that your tree will sell well and arrive safely at its new home. Moving fully decorated trees requires teamwork from beginning to end, and we ask that you take a few minutes to read through these guidelines to prepare your tree for the big move.

If you have any questions, please email us at auction@gafestivaloftrees.org.

With gratitude,
Your Georgia Festival of Trees Family

LARGE TREE REGISTRATION DEADLINE
OCTOBER 31, 2026

All auction item paperwork must be submitted.

IMPORTANT DATES

6TH ANNUAL GEORGIA FESTIVAL OF TREES November 21 - November 29, 2026
(Closed Nov 25 - Nov 26 for Thanksgiving)

DECORATING DAYS
Wednesday, November 18 2026 (4pm - 8pm)
Thursday, November 19, 2026 (8am - 8pm)

TREE INFORMATION FORM (REQUIRED)
Deadline: October 31, 2026
Your Tree name, height, width, cost to produce, full retail value, and other necessary auction information will be collected on this form!

***Tree story cards are not required, but are greatly appreciated by auction winners.*



DECORATING DAYS

November 18, 2026
4pm - 8pm

November 19, 2026
8am - 8pm

- The Gas South Convention Center will open to decorators on Wednesday, November 18th (4pm - 8pm) & Thursday, November 19th (8am -8 pm).
- In order to launch the auction on time, decorators must complete their designs by 8pm on Thursday, November 19th.
- Keep an accurate record of your expenses for your tax purposes. We do not need copies of your receipts - just the itemized list (see page 9). Please keep receipts for your own records.
- Come Prepared: Bring scissors, florist wire, wire cutters, step stool, glue gun, pliers, drills, screwdrivers, folding chairs, ladder, and clean up tools such as a broom, dustpan, and garbage bags with you. Please label all your supplies.
- Due to security and safety, children under 12 are not allowed at Decorating Days If your school/ youth group is donating a tree, please contact our auction team to make arrangements.
- More specific information about day-of procedures will be emailed weekly starting in October. If you are not receiving regular emails from us, please contact a member of our auction team.
- At check out, upon completion of your tree, you will receive free general admission tickets that can be used to attend the Festival any day November 21-November 29, 2026.



Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly:

Navigating the Dos and Don'ts of Large Tree Decoration

Please Do...

- Use a good quality NEW, artificial tree only. Historically,
- traditional Christmas or winter-themed designs sell the best. The best selling trees are always those that are well lit, decorated with a generous amount of ornaments and are balanced and symmetrical.
- Your tree must measure under 10 feet, including the topper.
- Decorated large trees must have a RETAIL value greater than $500. (What you would pay at full retail, not what you paid to create your tree.)
- A tree skirt MUST be included with your tree - an attractive skirt will help the tree sell at a higher price. Attach replacement bulbs and fuses to the tree skirt with a safety pin.
- Your tree will be visible from all angles, including the back. Please make sure all areas of your tree are fully decorated.
- Trees must have a large enough stand to support the weight of a fully decorated tree.
- All trees must have items displayed under the tree e.g. empty wrapped boxes, merchandise or other seasonal decorations.
- All items under and around the tree will be sold with the tree.
- All ornaments with removable tops MUST have the tops securely glued in place. (See page 5.)
- All lights, garland, picks, and ornaments MUST be securely wired to the tree using craft wire, floral wire, pipe cleaners, etc.
- If your tree needs multiple outlets, please provide an extension cord and/or power strip that will be sold with the tree.
- If you would like to dedicate your tree to an individual, please contact us at auction@gafestivaloftrees.org.
- All trees and accessories become the property of the Georgia Festival of Trees upon completion and will be priced and sold as such.

Please Don't...

- Tree stands with removable feet are not allowed. (See page 4.)
- If your tree includes a gift certificate, it must be signed by the company owner or authorized person. Please turn in the gift certificate form and gift certificates to Auction Staff before you check out. PLEASE DO NOT ATTACH GIFT CERTIFICATES OR GIFT CARDS TO YOUR TREE.
- Balloons, live plants, water-filled ornaments, hay or other highly flammable items are not allowed.
- NO advertising is allowed on the tree. Items with logos can be placed around/under the tree and in a vignette. We will ensure that your business or organization is highlighted on your tree sign, on the auction site, and in the event program.
- DO NOT overload the tree with lights. 100 lights per foot is a safe amount and will avoid electrical overload.
- NO weapons or inappropriate material are allowed on or around the tree.

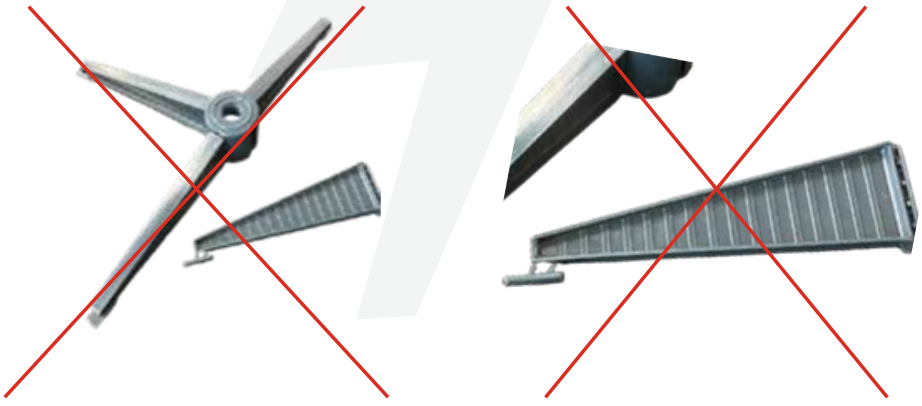


TRUNK REINFORCEMENT AND STAND GUIDELINES

Moving a fully decorated Christmas tree is an enormous undertaking. During transportation we have to ensure that the tree sections are held together, that the trunk and stand resist any bending or twisting and that the metal stand is large and substantial to suppor the weight of a fully decorated tree. The following procedures must be followed when constructing and decorating your tree. T ree doctors will be onsite to do the bulk of the reinforcing requirements for you!

- **The trunk must be secured using rebar and heavy-duty zip ties. This will be done by tree doctors on-site before you begin decorating. All necessary supplies will be provided.**
- The tree stand must be substantial enough to hold the weight of a fully decorated tree and connected to the bottom-most layer of branches with heavy-duty zip ties so that it stays connected during transport.
- When correctly reinforced, your tree should exhibit no (or very minor) separation when picked up from the top section.
- The original tree box will NOT be delivered to the auction winner. Trees will be wrapped fully decorated and transported on box trucks to their new home.
- If you need to deliver your tree fully-decorated to the Gas South Convention Center, please contact us to make arrangements to complete the necessary trunk reinforcements BEFORE it is decorated.

DUE TO EXCESSIVE BREAKAGE, THIS TYPE OF TREE STAND IS NOT ALLOWED.



We are grateful for your adherence to these guidelines. It will help us deliver trees in excellent condition to our auction winners.



GLUING AND WIRING GUIDELINES

Moving a fully decorated Christmas tree is notfor thefaint of heart. We relyon our tree designers to followthese important steps to help us deliver a tree in pristine condition. With a little extra effort on your part, you will create a tree that will not only survive the move to its new home, but it will remain intact for years to come!

Prepare Ornaments:

1.Glue the tops on all bulbs and ornaments.

A.If the top is removable, please glue it in place to keep it from separating during transport. Here's the easiest way we've found to accomplish this:

Step one:
Remove the top & hanging pin



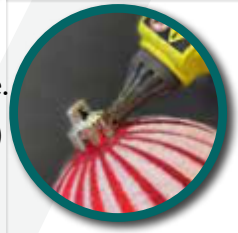
Step two:
Glue the top in place



Step three:
Replace the pin



B.If the top is not removable, please glue around the top using clear hot glue.
(Clear hot glue can be purchased at Hobby Lobby, Michael's, or Walmart.)



Decorating Procedures (Wire All Items to Tree):

- BULBS & HANGING ORNAMENTS: These MUST be hung with floral wire, pipe cleaners, or zip ties. If you are using floral wire or pipe cleaners, twist the wire multiple times to ensure it is locked in place. (Looping the wire in a hook shape or twisting only once will NOT secure it enough to withstand the tree wrapping process.)
- PICKS: Picks MUST be secured by wire, pipe cleaners, or zip ties. They can also be secured by wrapping their long wire ends around the branches, toward the trunk of the tree. Extra long picks should be trimmed to avoid showing through on the opposite side of the tree. Most picks must be secured in two or three places to ensure they remain in place.
- GARLAND: Garland MUST be wired in place using floral wire, or pipe cleaners. Tree branches can also be used to secure garland in place, but this should not be the only method used.
- RIBBON: Ribbon must be wired in place using floral wire, pipe cleaners, or zip ties. When using a cascading ribbon from top to bottom, leave plenty of slack in the ribbon to allow for branch movement during the wrapping process.
- TOPPERS: Toppers MUST be wired in place using floral wire or long zip ties. Creating a secure topper is essential for successful delivery. When in doubt, wire it again!







What does it cost to donate a tree to the festival?

There is no cost to donatea tree.We encourage donors to creatively decorate their trees to attract the highest bids, which supports our cause and charity partners.

When are decorating/drop off days?

Decorating/Drop Off Days are Wednesday, November 18, 4:00 pm - 8:00 pm, and Thursday, November 19, 8:00 am - 8:00 pm.

Where is the festival located?

The festival will be held at the Gas South Convention Center, 6400 Sugarloaf Parkway, Duluth, GA 30097. Directions for decorating day, drop-off and other detail will be provided to all donors via email.

How are tree spaces assigned?

Treespaces are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis, balanced with spatial and design considerations for the festival.

What happens if my tree does not sell?

Any auction items that are not sold during the event will be donated to local charities or families in need. To date, the Georgia Festival of Trees has never had an auction item remain unsold. We are grateful to all who continue to support this important cause.

I can't make it during the Decorating Day hours. Can I bring my tree another time?

We appreciate you making every effort to join us on our scheduled decorating days. If this is not possible, please speak with your assigned auction representative to discuss alternative arrangements.

What does Suggested Retail Value mean?

Suggested Retail Valueis the 'stickerprice' of your item; the full retail cost of your tree and all its decorations. This information helps bidders understand the value of your donation. For any items purchased at wholesale, the retail value/'sticker price' is generally double the wholesale cost.

Can I donate a gift certificate or other items with my tree, wreath, or centerpiece?

Yes, additional donations such as gift certificates or other items are welcome and add value to your auction contribution. Any items included in the tree or wreath space will be sold with the auction item.

Be sure to note any gift certificates or extra items on your submission forms and hand them directly to an auction representative at check-out on Decorating Day.

What cause does the auction support?

Proceeds from the auction go to Street Grace, a local organization working to eradicate sexual exploitation of women and children.

Can I pre-decorate my tree at home and bring it fully assembled?

Trees should be assembled and decorated on-site during the designated decorating days. We will reinforce your tree trunk to ensure it is stable for the move to its new home. Moving a fully decorated Christmas tree without trunk reinforcement can lead to devastating damage.

Small trees can be decorated at home and brought fully assembled if the tree sections are secured so they do not separate. Please refer to the decorating guidelines for these instructions.

What is the difference between a large and small tree?

Large trees range from 6 to 9 feet in height, while small trees are often between 3 to 6 feet tall. Please choose the donation that best suits your ability to decorate it on decorating day.

How do you determine the opening bid?

The opening bid for each item is set by our auction committee, which considers the fair market value, uniqueness, and potential interest from buyers. This decision is based on historical data, current market conditions, and the overall presentation of the auction item.

Will someone help me unload my supplies at the Gas South Convention Center?

Yes, we will have volunteers available to assist you with unloading your supplies.

If I'm just dropping off a wreath or centerpiece, do I have to pay to park?

No, if we have received all required information for your donation(s) in our system prior to Decorating Day, we will have an express drop-off area for wreaths, centerpieces, and nativity donations - saving time and parking fees.

Please remember that we must have all the required information for your donation in our system before you can drop it off. If this information is missing, you will be asked to park and come inside to provide the missing info. Please contact your auction representative if you have questions about providing your auction item information.

How many people can come to help me decorate my tree?

We do not have a limit on the number of people who can help decorate a tree. We know that working with friends and family is one of the bestparts of givingto the Festival of Trees. As a reminder, no children under the age of 12 are allowed on decorating day.

Will I need to pay for parking on Decorating Day? How much does it cost?

Parkingis available at the Gas South Convention Center in Parking Deck 1 for just $10.00/day. Look for signs directing you to the Convention Center designated parking area after you check-in and drop off your supplies. Our volunteer team will ensure you receive detailed directions to the parking deck at drop-off.

Can my business name be on the tree?

Please refrain from placing your business name on your tree/wreath or other donation. Your business name can be included on items around your tree/wreath and can be placed on your official auction card. Tree decorations should be free of any business names/logos.

Do I bring my own ladder, glue gun, scissors, etc, on decorating day?

Please bring all necessary supplies, tools and equipment that you will need to complete the designated drop-off days. You will receive your tree with you. We recommend bringing any necessary tools and equipment such as ladders, scissors, glue guns, and other decorating supplies as these are not provided at the venue.

Does the tree have to be pre-lit?

It is not a requirement for trees to be pre-lit. However, if you wish to include light strands or other types of lighting on your tree, they must adhere to safety standards, be in good working order and be securely attached to your tree. Please do not string more than five strands of lights together.
If you are self-lighting your tree, remember to bring any extension cords or power strips you may need.

Can I pick any theme? What's off limits?

We love creativity! You are welcome to choose any family friendly theme for your tree. Historically, traditional Christmas or winter-themed designs sell the best.
Please avoid controversial or potentially offensive material (i.e. weapons, political statements, drugs, gore, violence, etc).

What are some of the benefits of donating a tree/wreath?

- Recognition: Your nameand/orbusiness name will be prominentlydisplayedon your auction item.
- Program Acknowledgment: We'll include your name or business in our festival program. (You must provide your complete item information by the deadline to be included in the program.)
- Online Visibility: Receive recognition on our website and social media platforms.
- Complimentary Tickets: Enjoy free general admission tickets to the festival you can share with friends, family, or colleagues.



JUDGING GUIDELINES

JUDGING CATEGORIES:

- Best in Show
- Most Creative
- People's Choice

JUDGING CLASSES:

- Large Trees
- Small Trees
- Wreaths

JUDGING PROCEDURES:

•Georgia Festival of Trees invites influential community members to volunteer their time and work together to name the 2026 festival winners in categories Best in Show and Most Creative. While judging, judges will only be privy to the tree and wreath name.

•Each winner will have a ribbon displayed on their custom tree/wreath sign during the festival.

•Winners will receive their ribbon via USPS after the Festival ends.

•The Best in Show and Most Creative winners will be announced Friday, November 20th on social media, and the Georgia Festival of Trees website.

•A Festival of Trees admission ticket includes one vote per entry in the People's Choice category.

•The People's Choice winners in each judging class will be announced on November 29, 2026, on social media and the Georgia Festival of Trees website. Winners will receive their ribbon via USPS after the festival ends - and bragging rights for next year!



ITEMIZATION OF EXPENSES

Pleasecomplete this expenses formand turn it in at Check-In on Decorating Day.



To raise as much as possible for the those women and children touched by Street Grace, we intend to price all auction items to sell. To reach this goal and to comply with IRS requirements, we need your help. It is the decorator's responsibility to maintain careful records and keep receipts of costs involved with the donated item.

This form will help the Georgia Festival of Trees Executive Board determine a fair base price for auction items. The Festival of Trees Executive Board retains the right to adjust any item's price to what the market will bear. Retain all receipts for your tax purposes.

NOTE: The Georgia Festival of Trees does not collect your receipts.

Please list expenses below and bring this form with you on Decorating Day.

TREE NAME	
CONTACT NAME	
DONATING BUSINESS (if applicable)	
TOTAL RETAIL VALUE	

QTY	ITEM DESCRIPTION	Actual Price Paid	Retail Value (what you would have paid - if you had paid FULL price)
6	Red frosted picks @$3 each [EXAMPLE ONLY]	18.00	36.00

Use reverse side, if needed.

GIFT CERTIFICATE AND OTHER ITEMS FORM

If your creation includes gift certificates, gift cards or other items (anything not attached to your tree), please complete and submit this form.

REMEMBER: Gift certificates must be signed by the company owner or an authorized company representative.

NAME OF ITEM	
CONTACT NAME	
DONATING BUSINESS	

Gift Card/Certificate/Other Items Included with this Item:	**Verified by Auction Department Rep**