

Fake or fir? Your Christmas tree's carbon footprint

If you have a Christmas tree in your home, have you thought whether it's better to have a natural tree or an artificial tree? This video could help you to decide.

Tasks

Do the preparation task first. Then watch the video and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Complete the sentences with words from the box.

absorb	carbon footprint	decompose	disposal	emissions
greenhouse gas	impact	landfill	miles	recyclable

1. Aeroplanes have an on the environment – they have a strong effect.
2. Plants carbon dioxide from the air – they take it in gradually.
3. Cars produce a lot of – when you drive them, carbon dioxide goes into the air.
4. Your is the total amount of carbon dioxide that your activities produce.
5. The of rubbish can be a problem, especially if it can't be recycled.
6. Rubbish that can't be recycled is often buried underground in a
7. Vegetables easily – they break down naturally into smaller parts.
8. Carbon dioxide is a – we believe that it causes a gradual warming of the surface of the earth.
9. Most plastic bottles are – they go through a special process so that the plastic can be used again.
10. In the UK we measure distances on roads in – one mile is 1.6 kilometres.

Task 1

Match the sentences (a–h) with the groups (1–2).

Groups

1. An artificial tree
.....
2. A natural tree
.....

Sentences

- a. If it's grown in your area, it isn't transported far.
- b. If it's in a pot, you can use it again next year.
- c. If it's made in China, it's transported a long way to the UK.
- d. It can't be recycled, so it's usually buried under the ground.
- e. It's better for the environment to burn it than to bury it under the ground.
- f. The biggest effect on the environment is when it is made.
- g. The biggest effect on the environment is when you throw it out.
- h. You can reuse it year after year.

Task 2

Choose the correct answer.

1. About of Christmas trees bought by British people are grown in the UK.
 - a. 50%
 - b. 75%
2. When a natural Christmas tree is growing, it has a effect on the environment, because it takes in carbon and nitrogen.
 - a. positive
 - b. negative
3. When a natural Christmas tree is cut down, it has a effect on the environment, because carbon goes back out into the air.
 - a. positive
 - b. negative
4. If a natural tree decomposes under the ground, it produces, which is a greenhouse gas.
 - a. oxygen
 - b. methane
5. You would probably have to reuse an artificial tree for for it to have less effect on the environment than a natural tree.
 - a. 10 years
 - b. 50 years

6. The choice between a natural tree and an artificial tree to your yearly carbon footprint.
 - a. makes a big difference
 - b. doesn't make a big difference
7. Buying that is finally burnt produces the same carbon emissions as driving 12 miles.
 - a. a natural tree
 - b. an artificial tree
8. Buying that is finally buried underground produces the same carbon emissions as driving 135 miles.
 - a. a natural tree
 - b. an artificial tree

Discussion

Which type of Christmas tree would you choose and why?

Answers

Preparation task

1. impact
2. absorb
3. emissions
4. carbon footprint
5. disposal
6. landfill
7. decompose
8. greenhouse gas
9. recyclable
10. miles

Task 1

1. c, d, f, h
2. a, b, e, g

Task 2

1. b
2. a
3. b
4. b
5. a
6. b
7. a
8. b