

STORIES of New Jersey

pointed needles, and narrow cones, which bear slender prickles. While both the cedar and pines are delightful on account of their fragrance, they are not well adapted for use as Christmas trees, because of their formation: the juniper because of its very narrow shape, and the pine because of its widely spaced branches. Strictly speaking, there are no cedars growing in the United States -- the true cedars of the genus Cedrus are native to the Orient, Asia Minor and North Africa. The cedar of Lebanon, mentioned in the Bible, is one of these.

In the forest lands of Canada and New England thousands of acres have been set aside as nurseries, where, as fast as the trees are cut down, they are replaced with new growth. Were it not for this conservation program, Christmas trees would soon become as rare as holly trees, and there would be no long trains of flat cars piled high with bundled trees. Holly once grew profusely in the lowlands of New Jersey, but the trees have been nearly exterminated. State laws protect the surviving trees.

Modern chemistry has been put to use in the conservation of Christmas greens, that, like holly, are fast disappearing. Holly wreaths, permanently dyed and covered with a preservative, are just as attractive as the fresh leaves and have the added advantage of lasting through several seasons. The same process applied to other Christmas greens will make them just as practicable.

Nurserymen are learning how to grow and scientifically cut holly and laurel, so that in time we may hope to use them again as cultivated greens. For some years to come, however, nature lovers should refrain from buying wreaths and other decorations made of the rare wild materials.

The custom of using a living tree instead of one killed by the axe has become more widespread in recent years. Nurserymen supply the trees in large pots or tubs. After the lights and ornaments have been packed away, the tree can be watered and kept indoors until cold weather ends. Then, with the coming of spring, it can be planted in the yard to grow larger for each succeeding Christmas -- although it is doubtful whether Father will undertake to transplant it when December 25 comes again.