

It's never too early to think about **Festive Fundraising!**



Is your Group thinking about selling Christmas trees but don't know where to start? Competition can be fierce in the festive marketplace so here's a few tips to help you achieve some great fundraising!

1. Plan early! Many Groups start to plan around August, some even earlier. If this will be your first time selling trees, the sooner you start planning the better.
2. Find a supplier. There are plenty of Christmas tree farms around the State, build a relationship with them so you can continue to secure great trees and a good rate each year.
3. Chat to other Groups who have successfully sold Christmas trees. They can help point you in the right direction and if they're nearby, you might even be able to team up with them.
4. Determine a location. Some Groups find their hall to be a suitable place to sell their trees, others prefer busy roadside locations or even the Bunnings carpark. Wherever you are, make sure it is easily accessible and won't become a problem for transporting trees. Some Groups sell from more than one location, it is up to you what will work best.
5. Many Groups take pre-orders via websites like TryBooking. Some don't sell from physical locations at all and purely take online orders and deliver the trees. Decide what will work best for your Group.
6. Communicate with the Group. Start a roster and get as many helpful hands as possible. Don't forget to include your youth members, could you resist a Joey Scout selling a tree twice their height?
7. Be LOUD! Promote your Christmas tree sales before December. Speak to your local newspaper, post it on your Group's Facebook page or

other local area Facebook pages. If you can, some roadside signage is always a winner, chat to your local real estate office about a community board.

8. Tell Scouts Victoria! In late October or early November we'll put a call out in Be Informed for your sale details to list on our website so keep an eye out!

Words of wisdom from 13th Malvern Scout Group

With more than 40 years of Christmas tree selling experience, 13th Malvern could be considered experts. They sell in Central Park, East Malvern typically over three weekends starting in early December. While many of their customers are now third generation, their success has not been overnight, here are some of the lessons they have learnt:

- Choose a highly visible location with easy car access – parks and busy roads are ideal (don't forget a council permit).
- Quality trees will encourage repeat customers.
- Develop a professional set of signage with assistance from a local real estate agent. Our local agent funds five real estate boards and even provided a set of banners and signs to use at the sale site.
- Offer an alternative to cash payments. We used the Four Square App last year and 50% of sales went through it!
- Make sure trees are clearly arranged by size for customers. Get the supplier to colour code the trunks based on size or have something on site ready to quickly sort the trees by size on delivery. We use pre-measured old broomsticks.
- Don't be afraid to upsell, we have small and large tree stands and offer home delivery.

- Tree sales are a great opportunity for recruitment for the start of the following year, have a brochures available for each Section, include contact details and meeting times and have an offer like 'first three nights free'. Track interest with a form so you can collect contact details and follow up before Term One starts.
- Have fun! Adding some Christmas cracker humor into the mix and decorating yourself and the sale site for the season adds to the experience for both the Group and the customer.

Benefits

- Brings Leaders, parents and youth together to work on a task and gives everyone a chance to meet and connect.
- Helps to raise funds for equipment, hall upkeep and event attendance just to name a few.
- Great way to raise awareness of your Group and Scouting in the community.
- Reach potential new members (remember if your Group isn't suitable, recommend another Group or send them to our website).

How does Scouts Victoria help?

- Listing on the Christmas trees page of the Scouts Victoria website. This page receives around 13,000 visits every year.
- General promotion including sponsored posts on the Scouts Victoria Facebook and Instagram pages directing people to the Christmas trees web page. Remember to send photos to marketing@scoutsvictoria.com.au so we can share them!

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We asked some Groups their tried and tested ways to maximise their sales, and here are some of their secrets to success.

Q. How does your Group sell Christmas trees?

1st Mornington: Bunnings Mornington allow us to sell Christmas trees at the front of their carpark every Saturday and Sunday in December. It is a whole Group activity relying on Leaders, committee members, parents and Scouts to all be involved in selling. There is nothing quite like watching three to four tiny people carrying a 2.5m tree! And the older Scouts are great at reeling in the buyers with their humour.

1st Glen Iris: We sell Christmas trees outside our Scout Hall with the help of our Leaders, Scouts and parents. The stall operates for the three weekends before Christmas. We also take online orders and can deliver to homes in the local area.

3rd Sunbury: We sell our trees directly from the Scout Hall and also take pre-orders. We get the word out by advertising in local school newsletters, local papers and roadside signage.

10th Ivanhoe: We're lucky to be able to use two locations, selling trees from our Scout Hall - which is between two busy roads - and at Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School. To draw attention, we put signage out by the roads and do letter box



3rd Sunbury Scout Group

drops which our Scouts help with. Customers can also order online and have the trees delivered.

Baden Powell Park: We sell trees out of our Hall and also at our local Bunnings. Our parents and committee set up a rotation and sell them each weekend in December.

Q. What are the benefits for your Group?

1st Mornington: Selling trees is our biggest fundraiser for the year and all funds raised are spent on equipment and hall upkeep. Over the past two years we have been able to purchase almost \$9000 worth of tents plus heaps of other equipment. This year we hope to raise enough to replace our rusty leaking roof.

1st Glen Iris: Besides the obvious financial benefit, the activity is great for making the community aware of our Group. It also brings the Group together with parents, youth and Leaders mixing across Sections. And it has taught our Scouts a lot about commerce and economics.

3rd Sunbury: We have been selling trees for ten years and it is our biggest yearly fundraiser. We find that members of the community really like the idea of helping the Group by purchasing their tree from us. They are particularly impressed that we offer delivery, pick up and disposal.

10th Ivanhoe: Because of selling Christmas trees each year, we haven't increased our member fees in more than five years! We haven't raised our tree prices either, which is a great indication of what a great fundraiser it is.

Baden Powell Park: It is our biggest fundraiser of the year and is great for bringing parents together to work on a task with their children. It also gives everybody a chance to meet and connect with others in the Group.



1st Mornington Scout Group

Q. How do you source your Christmas trees?

1st Mornington: We have worked with a numerous wholesalers over the years, however our current supplier provides beautiful long-lasting trees. They are cut the morning of sale and usually a parent delivers them to the sellers at Bunnings. Sometimes we have four to five loads delivered each day.

1st Glen Iris: We have built a great relationship with a Pakenham based supplier over the years who supplies freshly cut trees each morning before we start selling.

3rd Sunbury: We have found the quality and price from our current supplier in Daylesford is unbeatable. Our customers always remark on the quality and fullness of the ones we sell.

10th Ivanhoe: We look up Christmas tree wholesalers and then hunt around for the best quality and pricing.

Baden Powell Park: We have a relationship with a local tree farm.

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Q. How many Christmas trees do you usually sell?

1st Mornington: Probably around 500.

1st Glen Iris: Around 450 trees each year. The support we receive from the community is astounding and so appreciated by the Group. This year we are aiming for the big 500!

3rd Sunbury: 180-200 over three days.

10th Ivanhoe: Last year we sold 350 trees over two weekends.

Baden Powell Park: Generally around 570.



1st Glen Iris Scout Group

Q. When do you usually start planning and then selling Christmas trees?

1st Mornington: We meet in September to begin planning. From there we contact the supplier to confirm numbers and cost. Then we work out a roster, floats, signage etc. We also reconfirm our space with Bunnings. Parents are reminded a month in advance about the roster so they will be able to help.

1st Glen Iris: Planning starts in August getting as many of the Sections involved as possible. Online orders begin in November and then selling and delivery is done throughout December.

3rd Sunbury: Our plans and prices get locked in at the start of August.

10th Ivanhoe: We start planning mid-September and require every family to get involved in selling and delivering trees. We use a scheduling program so people can pick what times they'll be available to help. This works well as nobody feels forced into it. Selling happens in December and we schedule delivery times and organize all the trees with labels on Fridays.

Baden Powell Park: As soon as we finish selling, we do a review of the sales and then we really get into planning again in July/August. We also plan our deliveries, relying on either a parent with a suitable vehicle or, as we did last year, hiring a truck.

Q. Do you have any advice for other Groups looking to sell Christmas trees?

1st Mornington: PLAN, PLAN, PLAN! Be sure to check the quality of the trees you are sourcing as quality is a big reason why our customers return every year.

1st Glen Iris: Be organised and know what everyone's responsibilities are. Plan early, make notes, get as many people involved as possible and ensure everyone knows exactly what is expected of them.

3rd Sunbury: Make sure you can supply enough for the demand. Know your market and check out the local competition!

10th Ivanhoe: Be organized with pricing and be prepared to negotiate costs if any trees get damaged, particularly towards the end of selling. You don't want to have any trees left and it is better to sell the last ones at a loss than to throw out unsold trees. Have the trees on display because nobody can resist that great Christmas tree smell! It is also handy to be able to take card payments, however most people are prepared with cash or will come back with cash if you will hold the tree.

Baden Powell Park: DO IT! It is worth the hassle. Advertise, plan and be dedicated!

Q. How can people buy trees or seek advice from your Group?

1st Mornington: gl.1stmornington@scoutsvictoria.com.au

1st Glen Iris: gl.1stgleniris@scoutsvictoria.com.au

3rd Sunbury: gl.3rdsunbury@scoutsvictoria.com.au

10th Ivanhoe: gl.10thivanhoe@scoutsvictoria.com.au

Baden Powell Park: gl.badenpowellpark@scoutsvictoria.com.au

Scouts Victoria assists Groups with promotion of all sales via the Scouts Victoria website and Facebook page. Keep an eye out for information in the weekly enews, Be Informed about this.

Thank you to Mari Albiston of 1st Mornington, Sharon Berman of 1st Glen Iris, Jason of 3rd Sunbury, Michael Free of 10th Ivanhoe and Annette Wetherill of Baden Powell Park for their assistance in putting this article together.