

O CHRISTMAS TREE

How long have you been selling Christmas trees?

Our Christmas tree farm emerged slowly, having experienced a setback in the late 1990s. Martin originally planted acres of Christmas trees under contract with a commercial company who went out of business a few years later, leaving him with thousands of trees and no market. It took him a few years to come to terms with this loss but after he dusted himself off he decided to put a sign at the end of the road for passers-by to pop in and pick their own tree. Sales grew little by little and now we have a steady flow of loyal and new customers every Christmas.

How long does it take to grow a Christmas tree?

On average it takes about eight years for a Christmas tree to grow. As soon as January comes, Martin gets into planting mode to make sure there are trees coming to maturity every year. For every tree cut down he plants three new ones so real trees are also environmentally friendly. He also spends all year working on his trees (pruning, fertilising, weeding and pest control) to make sure they are the most beautiful trees in Ireland.

What's the best thing about selling Christmas trees?

One of the most magical parts of the business is

Jacquie and Martin Lynskey have been selling Christmas trees from their farm in Athenry for over eight years. Klara Heron asks them about the magic of buying a real tree and their fondest memories of the festive season

to see families coming back every year because picking their tree has now become part of their Christmas tradition. We have had couples come to us initially and now they are arriving with their kiddies. We see whole generations every year and it's wonderful.

What makes buying a real tree from a farm so special?

The people who come to us year after year tell us that the whole experience of picking their tree on our farm is special. We give each family our signature red ribbon (and we even supply wellies), they take off out into the trees and can take hours picking one. They