

## The Scent of the Holidays

During the Holiday season, indoor air quality is impacted by the scents and aromas of seasonal decorations. This is usually considered to be an aesthetically pleasing time of year, but for many whom are chemically sensitive, breathing indoor air can be quite troublesome.

Freshly cut trees are adorned with ornaments and garlands. The aroma of terpenes is prevalent from pine trees, specifically alpha-pinene and beta-pinene. Other terpenes released by trees include limonene, myrcene, camphene, and phellandrene, but many other terpenes are present in smaller amounts (<http://www.compoundchem.com/2014/12/19/christmastrees/>). Terpenes are one of the leading causes of allergic reactions for individuals suffering from multiple chemical sensitivities (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26030111>).

Bornyl acetate has the scent of fresh pine and is used for spray fragrances used to enhance the aroma of indoor air. Also, whether purchased or home-made, many decorations emit VOCs such as tetrahydrofuran (THF) and methylene chloride, from glues and adhesives used in manufacturing or craft-making.

Since the decorations and trees used during the holiday season add to the "VOC load" on a home or business, a way to counter this load is to adorn indoor spaces with poinsettia plants, which are a type of plant that are known as xenobiotic plants, which actually help to remove VOCs from the indoor air.

Finally, when the Holiday season is over, do not hesitate to remove trees and wreaths from indoors. They dry out quickly and are a good hydrocarbon fuel source (from the terpenes, etc.) for potential house fires.

### About Prism Analytical Technologies, Inc.

Prism Analytical Technologies, Inc. is a leading consultative air testing laboratory in the United States that is devoted to the chemical identification and analysis of contaminants in the air. We are a recognized leader in the development and deployment of ambient air testing methodologies for Fortune 100 and 500 companies, industrial hygienists, and environmental consultants. Prism's science-based technologies and wide range of air testing support help clients solve indoor air quality, process control, industrial, and environmental challenges.