

## Crab Pot Christmas Trees – A True “Down East” Innovation

### SEAFOOD TRADITIONS

The area east of Beaufort, NC where a number of central coastal fishing communities are located is known by the locals as “Down East.” Here the crabbing industry was once a primary source of jobs. Unable to fend off threats posed by pollution, rising fuel costs and the global market, dozens of crab picking houses shut down over the past 15 years. In 1996, the state’s fishermen harvested nearly 66 million pounds of [Atlantic blue crabs](#), but in 2009 they caught slightly less than 29 million pounds.

Nicky Harvey of Davis, NC once made a good living as a supplier of brightly-colored crab traps, called “crab pots” by the locals, to the commercial fishing industry. Nicky once sold 3000 crab pots a season but was now lucky if he could unload 300 pots a year. With deep roots in the Down East culture where "making do with materials at hand" is a strong tradition, Nicky searched for other products to craft to keep his family business growing for his sons.



He first experimented with creating miniature crab traps for coastal decor. Then he began experimenting with triangles of the coated wire mesh of crab pots, and the Crab Pot Christmas Tree was born. Nicky continued innovating until he found a way to string lights on the tree so they could be stored in a flat position and then opened for display with the light strings remaining in place. The unique artificial tree became so popular with friends and neighbors, Nicky soon gave up on his line of crab pots to further develop his new product line.



Crab Pot Trees come in sizes of 2', 3', 4' or 6' tall and can be used indoors or out. They are outfitted with a variety of colored lights. During the Christmas season, Crab Pot Christmas Trees sprout like mushrooms in homes across the central Carolina coast. However if you aren't planning a trip to coastal North Carolina, you can also buy them online.

Contributed by Barry Nash