

VOLUME 21 | NUMBER 4

FALL | 2025

GREAT LAKES

CHRISTMASTREE JOURNAL

Prepared to Shine

**Fall Herbicides for Christmas
Tree Production**

**Hidden Killers: Belowground
Diseases in Christmas Trees**



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Cover Photo by Amy Start at Runyan's Country Tree Farm in Clio, Michigan

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Dr. Pratima Devkota, Research Specialist, Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences, Michigan State University
Bill Lindberg, Christmas Tree Educator,
Michigan State University Extension

In this article, Dr. Devkota and Bill Lindberg review healthy roots, healthy trees, and how to diagnose common root disease problems.

23 | Training Seasonal Workers and Ensuring Customer Safety on Christmas Tree Farms

Ray Heisler, Risk and Safety Management,
Michigan Farm Bureau Insurance

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Michigan State University

Topic: Fall Herbicides for Christmas Tree Production

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Order your Trees for Troops Bears today for fall delivery

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Amy Start, Editor, Executive Director, Michigan Christmas Tree Association.
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GREAT LAKES CHRISTMAS TREE JOURNAL

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For questions about editorial or advertising, please contact
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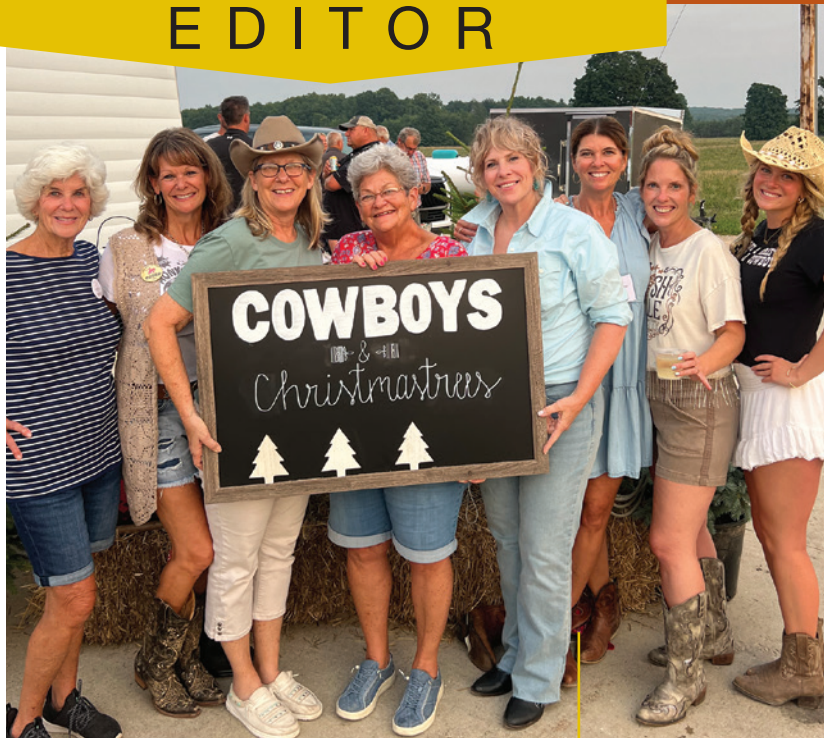
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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



Enjoying the rodeo with my awesome family!



We value your input and would greatly appreciate hearing your thoughts on the meeting. Please use this QR Code to access the post-meeting survey. We encourage you to share the survey link with anyone else from your farm or business who attended the meeting, as we would love to hear their feedback as well.



AMY START

Executive Director of the Michigan Christmas Tree Association and Editor of the Great Lakes Christmas Tree Journal

info@mcta.org

Crisp autumn air is here, and with it comes the kickoff for football season and all things pumpkin spice!

I want to extend a huge thank you to everyone who attended the National Summer Meeting – Cowboys and Christmas Trees, hosted by Dutchman Tree Farms at their Northern Pines Nursery in Lake City, Michigan. A big thank you to our hosts, owners Joel Hoekwater and Chris Maciborski, their families, Kate Dodde, Scott Powell, and the entire Dutchman and Northern Pines team. Your hard work and hospitality made the event welcoming and successful.

Planning one of the largest Christmas tree meetings in decades was both energizing and a little scary. I had many sleepless nights worrying about all the little details, so having it all come together so beautifully was a huge relief! I have to give a big shout-out to my awesome family. This meeting was an all-hands-on-deck event. From meeting prep to registration, kids' camp, and serving food and drinks, they did whatever was needed. I am very lucky to have them on my team.

Thank you to Michigan State University and MSU Extension for creating a quality meeting program. Their expert coordination of speakers and tour stops was top-notch. We value our relationship with the university and support the researchers who help advance the science of growing Christmas trees and share that information at our meetings. I would also like to thank all of you who participated in the Michigan Christmas Tree Association (MCTA) Research fundraising events at the summer meeting and throughout the year. One hundred percent of the money collected for the MCTA Research Fund is allocated to research projects that benefit the industry. Go Green! Go White!

I also want to thank all the vendors and sponsors who filled our exhibitor space and helped keep the energy high. It is through their support that we are able to provide quality programming and good food (and drinks) at our events.

This meeting gave me an opportunity to meet many of you in person finally – people I've been interacting with for eight years through this publication. It was great to connect with executive directors and board members of our state partners, advertisers, and, of course, many of our readers. Now I can finally put faces to the names!

Again, thank you to everyone who traveled to Michigan for our event. It was wonderful to see so many growers from across the U.S. and several international guests from Canada, England, Scotland, and Denmark. It is YOU who made the meeting, and all meetings for that matter, successful through your sharing of knowledge and fellowship. Christmas tree growers are the friendliest group of people, and it's an honor to work with you all.

Amy Start, Editor 🌲

UPCOMING EVENTS 2026 CALENDAR

January 18-20 WCTPA Winter Convention: "Creating Real Value" Wisconsin Dells, WI

January 30-31 ICTGA Winter Meeting will be held at the Boone County Fairgrounds, just north of Zionsville, IN

February 5-6 PCTGA's Winter Meeting

February 20-21 Minnesota Christmas Tree Association Winter Convention will be at the Braham Event Center

February 21 OCTA Winter Meeting will be at the Quest Center in Columbus, OH

February 27 Michigan Christmas Tree Association Winter Meeting will be held at the Bavarian Inn and Conference Center in Frankenmuth, MI

July 10-11

Iowa Christmas Tree Association Summer Meeting will be at Strautman's Tree Farm in Cambridge, Iowa

July 23-24

Michigan Christmas Tree Association Summer Meeting will be held at Timberly Tree Farm in Sturgis, MI

August 6-8

Heartland Christmas Convention: "The Making of an Old-Fashioned Christmas" Hosted by Hann's Christmas Farm, Oregon, Wisconsin

Visit association websites for more meeting details! 🌲

GO GREEN

GO WHITE

THANK YOU RESEARCH DONORS!

Thank you to all the member farms that donated to the Michigan Christmas Tree Association (MCTA) Research Fund. This year's **GO GREEN! GO WHITE!** campaign was designed to help boost and encourage donations to the MCTA Research Fund. To those who donated a \$100 **GO GREEN!**, and to those who donated \$250 or more we say **GO WHITE!**

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Thank you to everyone who participated in the MCTA Research fundraising events at the summer meeting. One hundred percent of the funds collected are allocated to research projects that benefit the industry. A special thanks to Jessica Korson for organizing the silent auction and booze wagon raffle.

In total, we raised \$8,579!

Updates on the projects funded through the MCTA Research Fund are shared at MCTA meetings and in the Great Lakes Christmas Tree Journal.

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August 13 at 4:38 PM · 🌐



Carpenter Farms is with Michigan Christmas Tree Association and 3 others ·
Follow
July 30 · 🌐

Christmas is just 148 days away! Check out Abby's adventure to the National Christmas Tree Association's summer meeting to tour Northern Pines Nursery and Dutchman Tree Farms to learn more about Christmas tree farms in Michigan! 🌲

GreenStone Farm Credit Services
August 5 · 🌐

Late last month, Ann Allen, Nate Buning, and Autumn Rector proudly represented GreenStone Farm Credit Services at the annual meetings of the Michigan and National Christmas Tree Associations! 🌲

Hosted by Dutchman Tree Farms at Northern Pines Nursery, the event welcomed over 800 attendees from around the globe, bringing together leaders and innovators in the Christmas tree industry.

👏 A huge thank you to Ann, Nate, and Autumn for your dedication and for showcasing GreenStone's commitment to agriculture and community! 🌱

#GreenStoneFCS #GreenStoneProud #ChristmasTreeIndustry #AgCommunity #TeamGreenStone



FACEBOOK WAS ALIVE WITH SUMMER MEETING POSTS!

North Carolina Christmas Tree Association and Northern Pines Nursery
July 28 · 🌐

Huge thanks to Dutchman Tree Farms and Northern Pines Nursery for hosting a fantastic Christmas tree meeting this past weekend. They certainly pulled out all the stops and topped it off with a rodeo! It was great to see so many growers from across the country, and out of the country too.



Northern Pines Nursery
July 27 · 🌐

So blessed to be able to share our experience and our nursery with the real Christmas tree industry. Hats off to an amazing team at the Dutchman Tree Farms family of companies and the incredible Amy Start with Michigan Christmas Tree Association for pulling off this great event.



Dutchman Tree Farms
July 27 · 🌐

What a show! We were very proud to host the National Christmas Tree Meeting this past week. I can't say enough about the team at Dutchman Tree Farms, Northern Pines Nursery,

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UPDATES FROM THE RCTB

After Labor Day, real Christmas tree growers embark upon the busy pre-holiday season. With that in mind, the Real Christmas Tree Board would like to remind growers that we have a variety of resources available on our website and social media channels to help you optimize your time, production and marketing.

Retail Locator

Thousands of consumers visit RCTB's website each year and the online retail locator is the most utilized tool. Last year the retail locator recorded more than 118,000 sessions with peak use from October through mid-December. The interactive national map allows consumers to easily search for real Christmas tree retailers nearby and filter the results based on their shopping preferences.

It takes less than five minutes for retailers to sign up for their **free** listing and make it easier for customers to find them.

- **To add a location to the Retail Locator**, register online by visiting realchristmastreeboard.com/find-a-retailer/ and then clicking on the "Are You a Retailer" button.
- **To update a listing**: Those who have been listed on the locator in the past will receive an email from RCTB, reminding them to review their listing and with instructions for making updates. Growers should respond directly to that email.

Virtual Farm Tours

Building on the success of last year's pre-holiday season and Arbor Day Christmas Tree Virtual Tours, RCTB is busy setting up two virtual farm tours for November. These tours play an important role in building awareness about real Christmas trees and the care our growers take to produce trees that are central to the holiday experience. Feedback from last year indicated

that attendees appreciated the care growers take of our environment and natural resources and enjoyed exploring the seed-to-harvest journey a Christmas tree makes. RCTB will provide additional information concerning the upcoming tours, which also will be available on the RCTB YouTube channel.

Online Resources

RCTB's online resources provide growers with easy access to assets they can use to successfully market their product. The resources, available at realchristmastreeboard.org/resources/, include:

- Printable Christmas tree handouts for consumers
- Downloadable RCTB logos, tree species photos and sustainability icons for digital and print communications
- Printable banner designs
- Talking points, interview guides and FAQs to help prepare for a media interview
- Social media images and videos
- Research and marketing

Webinars

In September, RCTB hosted two webinars that are now available online via the RCTB Webinars webpage, which can be accessed at realchristmastreeboard.org/resources/.



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The webinars include:



Transplant quality and seedling survival during planting

*Presenter: Dr. Bert Cregg,
Michigan State University*

Poor post planting survival rates increase grower expenses in tree replant costs, labor expenses, and uneven field production. This webinar focused on both above and below ground treatment options growers could implement.



Intentional Communications: How to Make the Most of the Moment

*Presenter: John Armato,
Co-Founder, Armato Barber Communications
Consulting and Coaching*

This session focused on RCTB messaging, how to effectively communicate and direct the conversation to where you want to go, and the importance of speaking with one voice while personalizing your approach.

Sharable Social Media

RCTB's Facebook and Instagram channels provide retailers with instant access to marketing messaging that can easily be shared on grower and retailer social media platforms. By following our social channels, you can keep up to date with the latest research-backed messaging and then share it with your followers.

It was great to see everyone at the "Cowboys and Christmas Trees" 2025 National Summer Meeting in Michigan. It was a unique experience that provided RCTB with the opportunity to meet with growers from around the nation. We also are grateful for our partnership with the NCTA and Christmas Spirit Foundation boards and the thoughtful discussions we had during a collaborative dinner. Moments like these are important as working together will better help us serve the needs of our growers. 🌲

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Contest Winners and Key Issues

BY RICK DUNGEY

NCTA's Biennial National Tree Contest and Wreath Contest were recently held in Michigan during the Cowboys and Christmas Tree conference.

Tree Contest Winners:



2025 Grand Champion – Rex Korson, Korson's Tree Farm (MI)
– Blue Spruce



Reserve Champion
– Paul and Pam Shealer,
Evergreen Acres (PA) –
Douglas-fir



2026 Grand Champion
– David Chapman, Silent
Night Evergreens (WI)
– Balsam fir



Reserve Champion
– Tim and Bonnie Moser,
Shepherd's Way Farms,
(NC) – Fraser fir

Wreath Contest Winners:

DECORATED CATEGORY



Grand Champion – Gary
Hague, Hague's
Christmas Trees (PA)



Reserve Champion
– Tim and Bonnie Moser,
Shepherd's Way Farms,
(NC)

UNDECORATED CATEGORY



Grand Champion - Tim and Bonnie Moser, Shepherd's Way Farms, (NC)



Reserve Champion - Gary Hague, Hague's Christmas Trees (PA)

MASC Funds Released

Background:

On April 29th, USDA announced a second round of the Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) Program providing up to \$1.3B in additional payments. USDA's action this week is fulfilling that commitment to farmers.

We were informed by USDA late last week that the \$1.3 billion in MASC funding previously announced on April 30, 2025, is being released and that growers should be receiving payments in a matter of days. We are now hearing reliable reports from growers across the country that Round 2 MASC funds are in fact being distributed.

Accordingly, we have decided not to send the letter to Secretary Rollins and have issued a letter of gratitude instead.

It is unlikely that these funds would have been released without the threat of our original letter and the willingness of nearly 75 organizations representing a wide range of specialty crop commodities across the entire United States, including several national organizations representing American agriculture more broadly, joined this effort. Thank you!

NCTA, through its Legislative / Advocacy Committee were one of those organizations.

Tariff on plastic trees from China

NCTA continues to encourage everyone involved with growing and selling fresh Christmas trees to submit a letter to their own elected Congressional Reps urging a large tariff be put on fake, plastic trees made in China. See the March issue for details or contact Rick at info@realchristmtrees.org for a template to use.

In addition, NCTA has submitted an organizational letter to the U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer and Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins urging their support for a tariff to level the playing field for U.S. Christmas tree farms.

NCTA, through its Legislative / Advocacy Committee and its partnership with AmericanHORT made this happen.

If you would like a copy of either of these letters (PDF File) just email Rick at the NCTA office. 🌲



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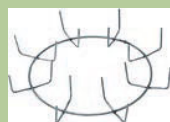


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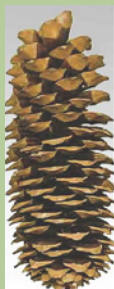
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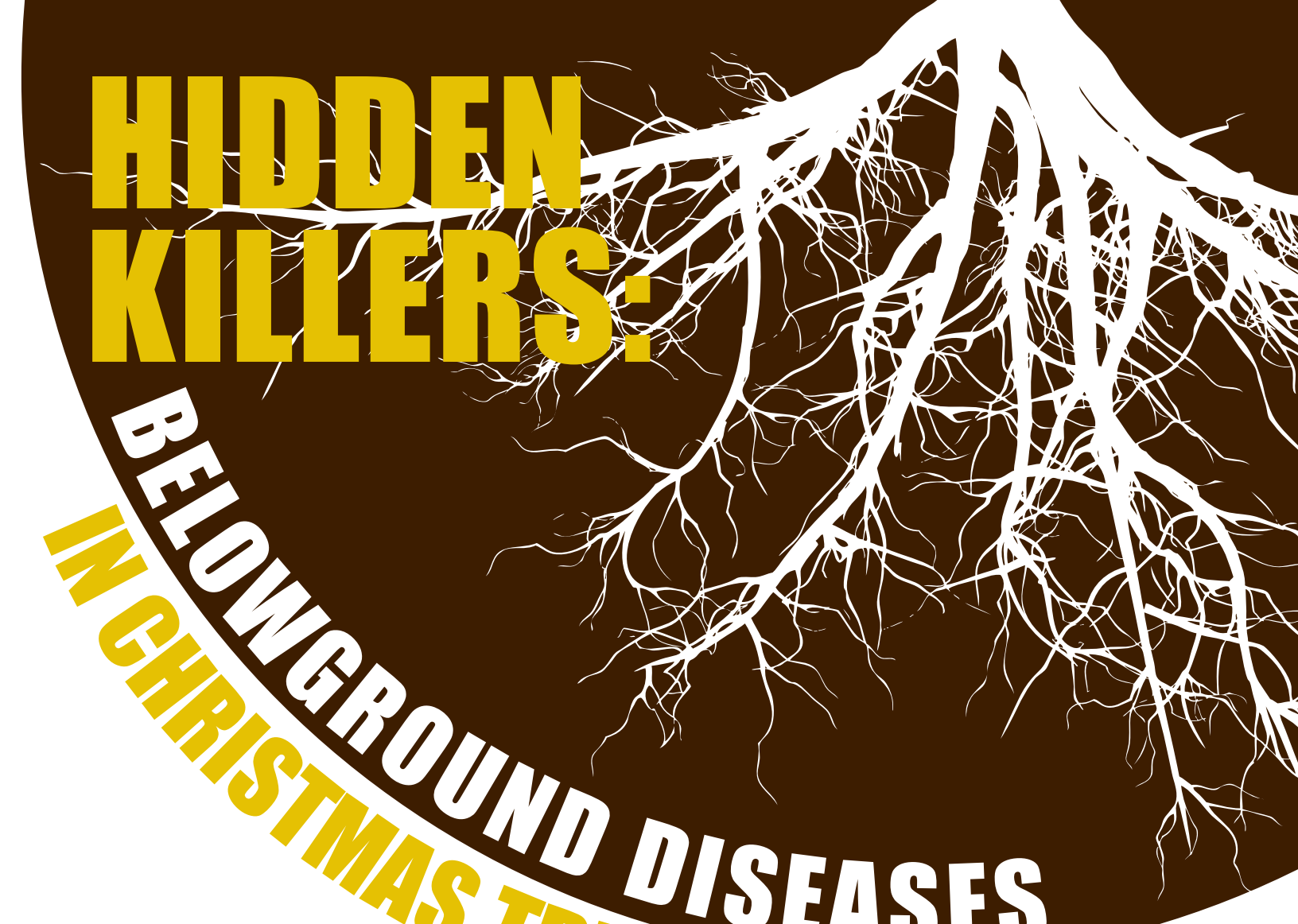
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HIDDEN KILLERS: BELOWGROUND DISEASES IN CHRISTMAS TREES

Healthy roots,
healthy trees –

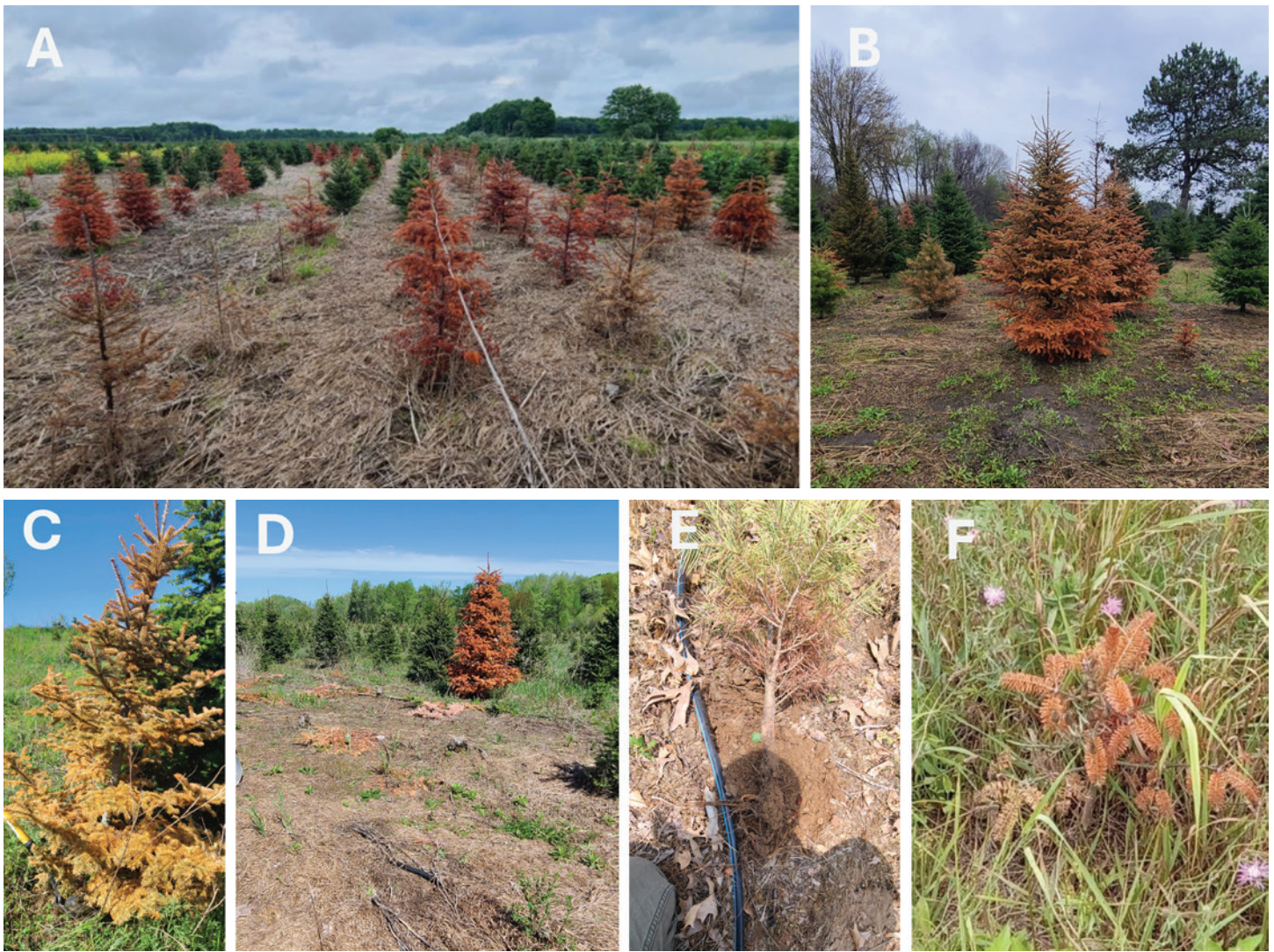
How to diagnose common root disease problems?

DR. PRATIMA DEVKOTA AND BILL LINDBERG

Introduction:

“What’s happening to this tree?” “Why are these trees suddenly dying?”

Unfortunately, these are common questions many Christmas tree growers ask themselves and ones we often hear as well. Determining the root cause of a problem is important because it may change what corrective actions can be taken. Picture 1 (on next page) shows how aboveground tree mortality can appear alike regardless of the cause.



Picture 1 – Christmas trees are affected by various biotic and abiotic stresses. A & B: *Phytophthora* Root Rot, C&D: *Armillaria* Root Rot, E: J-Rooting, F: Drought related mortality. Aboveground symptoms look alike. Picture source (A-E): Pratima Devkota, MSU, Picture F: Bill Lindberg, MSU.

However, with the use of some field identification knowledge and tips, growers can get a good sense of the underlying issue before sending samples for lab testing. The first step is to determine exactly which tree species you are working with, something most growers know well. Patterns of damage can also provide important clues. If mortality is widespread and uniform across a plantation, the cause is often environmental (non-living). If dead and declining trees are patchy or scattered irregularly, a disease or other biotic factor may be more likely to be at work.

The next step is to understand the difference between **signs** and **symptoms**.

Symptoms are visible changes in a tree's appearance, such as shifts in color or shape. These can be caused by living factors (e.g., fungal pathogens) or non-living factors (e.g., drought, frost, soil compaction). Symptoms are non-specific and if used solely often provide an inaccurate diagnosis.

Signs are direct evidence of the causal agent, such as fungal fruiting bodies, insect galleries, or bacterial ooze. Signs are unique to pests or pathogens and are the most reliable in diagnostic efforts.

Initial steps in narrowing down the cause of the problem:

1. Distribution: Note whether affected trees are clustered, randomly scattered, or concentrated in low-lying/wet areas.
2. Recent environmental stressors: Record any droughts, flooding, or extreme weather events that may have occurred in the past season.
3. Signs and symptoms: Inspect roots, trunk, and foliage for visible abnormalities or direct evidence of pests or pathogens.
4. Tree parts affected: Determine which parts of the tree show damage, when symptoms first appeared, and how quickly they are progressing.
5. Site history: Review the land's previous use. Have Christmas trees been grown here before? Did earlier plantings show similar problems?
6. Soil condition: Assess soil type, drainage and current moisture content.



Picture 2 – Concolor (A) and Fraser (B) fir trees showing aboveground mortality due to *Phytophthora* root rot. C: Canker in the lower trunk and root of Fraser fir infected with *Phytophthora*. D & E: Root ball of fir tree infected with PRR and rotting of roots from infected trees with outer layer easily separating from the core. Photo: Pratima Devkota, MSU

In this article we describe how to identify some of the common root disease issues in the Christmas tree growing regions in the United States.

Phytophthora Root Rot (PRR)

Phytophthora root rot is caused by multiple *Phytophthora* species and occurs throughout most Christmas tree-producing regions of the United States. Among the predominant species affecting Christmas tree farms are *P. cinnamomi*, *P. cambivora*, and *P. megasperma* (McKeever and Chastagner, 2016). *Phytophthora* species are often referred to as water molds because they require water to complete their life cycle. These pathogens produce swimming spores that move readily through saturated soils, as well as resting spores capable of surviving for extended periods under unfavorable conditions.

Environmental conditions:

PRR often, but not exclusively, occurs in low-lying or poorly drained soil or in sites with a history of prior PRR problems.

Above-ground symptoms:

Symptoms can vary (Picture 2) depending on the severity of infection, but often include:

- Branch flagging (dead branches).
- Needles turning from green → yellow → red.
- Sudden tree death.

Branch flagging can also result from mechanical damage, such as mowing or other equipment impacts. If flagging is caused by PRR, scraping the bark at the base of affected branches often reveals small cankers. PRR typically progresses very quickly; with healthy trees dying completely within a few weeks after an infection occurs.

Below-ground symptoms:

Excavating soil around the root system often provides more definitive evidence of infection. Key signs include:

- Root collar discoloration: Scraping away the outer bark near the root collar often reveals large red to cinnamon-brown lesions (Picture 2C).
- Feeder root decay: Rotten roots are observed when entire tree is uprooted. Outer tissue of feeder roots may slough off easily when gently pulled, another common characteristic of PRR.

Important note: Signs of the pathogen itself are not visible to the naked eye in the field.

Armillaria Root Rot (ARR)

Armillaria root rot is a common soil-borne disease affecting Christmas trees across much of the United States. It is caused by several species of fungal pathogen *Armillaria*, which persist in the soil and colonize the root systems of

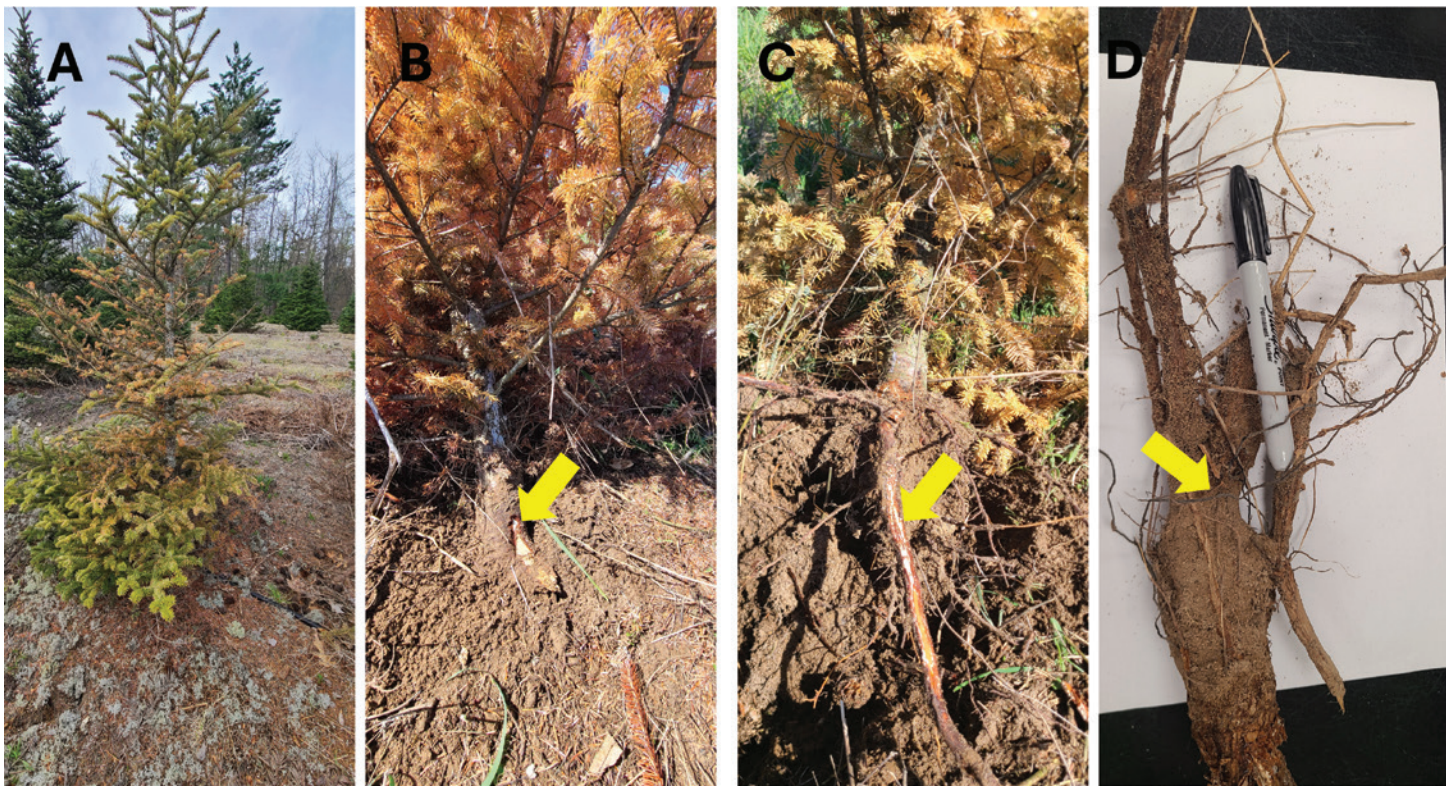
woody host trees. Once established, the fungus can survive for many years in infected roots or stumps, making eradication difficult (Devkota & Hammerschmidt, 2020).

Disease progression:

The rate of decline can vary widely. In some cases, infected trees die rapidly within weeks, while in others, above-ground symptoms develop slowly over one or more growing seasons. By the time foliar symptoms appear, the root system is typically already extensively colonized.

Above-ground symptoms:

Symptoms are similar to those of Phytophthora root rot in that trees lose the ability to transport water and nutrients from the roots, leading to needle chlorosis (yellowing) and eventual browning (Picture 3A). Branch dieback and general decline are common.



Picture 3 – A: Tree showing symptoms of ARR -about 70% of the root system was infected. B & C: Dead trees showing signs of *Armillaria* infection (white mycelial fan underneath the bark), D: Dark thread like fungal structure (rhizomorph) around the root system of tree infected with *Armillaria* root rot. Photo: Pratima Devkota, MSU

Below-Ground Signs and Symptoms:

- Mycelial fans:** White to cream-colored sheets of fungal growth found beneath the bark on infected roots and at the base of the trunk. These fans may also spread between trees through natural root grafts (Picture 3B&C).
- Rhizomorphs:** Often called the “shoestrings” of *Armillaria*, these black, cord-like fungal strands grow along or just beneath the soil surface, allowing the pathogen to travel from diseased roots to healthy ones sometimes over many years. They can be mistaken for tree roots, but closer inspection reveals key differences: rhizomorphs are more uniform in thickness than roots, have a black to dark brown exterior with a white interior when cut, and lack the fine branching typical of roots. Occasionally, they hide deeper in the soil and require extra digging to find. In early stages of infection,

rhizomorphs may not be detected if the fungus has moved directly between trees through root grafts (Picture 3D).

- Fruiting bodies (mushrooms):** In some cases, clusters of mushrooms emerge at the base of infected trees, usually in late summer or fall. These are the reproductive structures of *Armillaria* and can release spores capable of traveling long distances, potentially starting new infections. However, mushrooms are relatively rare in Christmas tree plantations, and their absence does not mean the fungus and disease is not present underground.
- Root and lower trunk decay:** Infected tissue may be partially to completely rotted, often showing white rot that leaves the wood lighter in color, fibrous, and stringy. In advanced cases, the weakened roots may cause the entire tree to come out of the ground easily.

Recognizing these below-ground features is critical for accurate

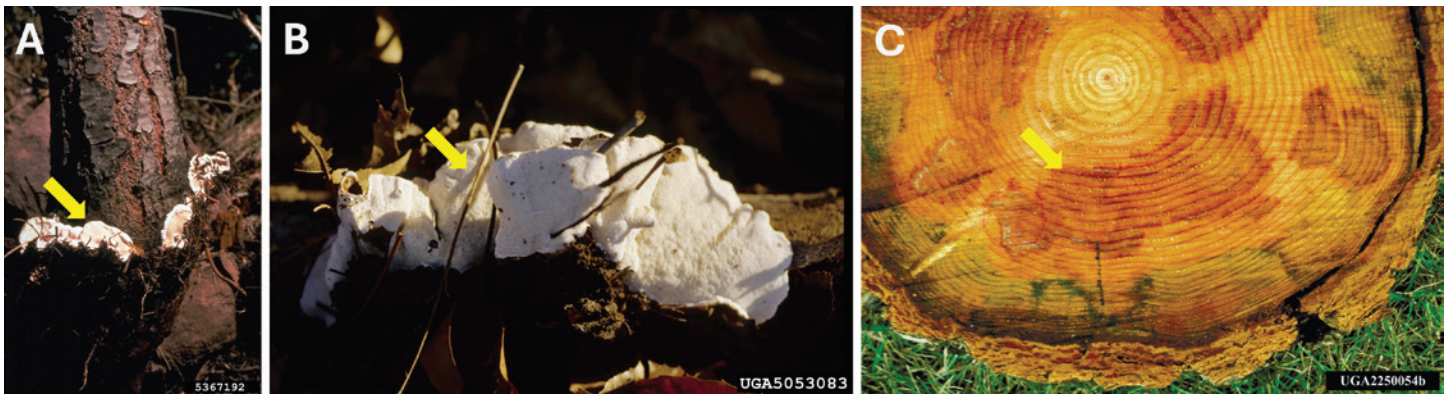
diagnosis, as above-ground symptoms alone are insufficient to differentiate ARR from other root diseases.

Heterobasidion root disease (HRD)

HRD is one of the most destructive diseases of conifers in the northern hemisphere. It is caused by pathogenic *Heterobasidion* species and has been reported to be highly problematic in Christmas tree plantations in the Pacific Northwest (Dart et al., 2006). Once established, the disease can lead to significant tree losses. HRD symptoms are often confused with those of *Phytophthora* root rot and *Armillaria* root rot. However, careful inspection can help distinguish between these different pathogens.

Symptoms of HRD

- Reduced growth rate, thinning foliage, yellowing of needles and premature mortality.**
- Root and Trunk Decay:** Infected trees often show darkly stained wood in the lower trunk and roots when



Picture 4 – A: Fir tree infected with *Heterobasidion* root disease. Picture source: Mike Schomaker, Colorado State Forest Service, Bugwood.org. **B:** Fruiting body of *Heterobasidion irregulare*, Picture source: Joseph OBrien, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org; **C:** Trunk staining due to *Heterobasidion* on Douglas fir. Picture source: USDA Forest Service - Northern and Intermountain Region, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

cut open (Figure 4C). The root and lower trunk become stringy, soft, and rotten.

- c. Tree Stability: Diseased trees are easy to push over, similar to Armillaria-infected trees. In contrast, Phytophthora-infected trees may remain firmly anchored even when roots are decayed.

Signs of HRD

- Conks (fruiting body) appear at the base of the tree or around buried roots (Figure 4A).
- The underside of conk has tiny round pores that release spores (Figure 4b).
- White and fluffy mycelium or “popcorn stage” growth inside decayed roots.

Distinguishing Feature

Armillaria produces rhizomorphs (black, shoestring-like threads) which can normally be seen wrapping around root. *Heterobasidion* and *Phytophthora* does not.

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Training Seasonal Workers and Ensuring Customer Safety on Christmas Tree Farms

Each holiday season, Christmas tree farms welcome a rush of excited customers seeking the perfect tree and, often, the perfect holiday experience. Behind the twinkling lights and fragrant evergreens, however, lies a critical need for planning and safety. With seasonal employees joining for just a few weeks each year, and with hundreds or even thousands of customers visiting, training and safety management become non-negotiable parts of a successful operation.

In an industry built on tradition and cheer, smart farms recognize that well-trained workers and a clear safety strategy are essential for preventing accidents and protecting your reputation.

Training Seasonal Workers: The First Line of Defense

Hiring seasonal help is common in agritourism, but temporary workers often lack experience in tree handling, equipment use, or even basic customer interaction. That is why creating a streamlined training program is essential.

1. Start with Orientation

Before any worker steps foot in the field, they should receive a brief but focused orientation. This should include:

- Basic farm layout and emergency procedures
- Introduction to team leaders or supervisors

- Expected customer service standards

2. Hands-On Tree Handling and Equipment Use

Workers should be trained on how to:

- Safely carry and load trees
- Use hand saws or mechanical equipment properly
- Tie trees securely to vehicles (if that is a service you offer)
- Recognize and avoid dangerous practices

For powered equipment like balers or ATVs, only trained personnel should operate them – with no exception.

3. Emphasize Personal Safety

Workers should wear proper footwear, gloves, and weather-appropriate clothing. Encourage breaks during long, cold shifts to avoid fatigue-related accidents. Make sure all employees know how to report hazards or injuries quickly.

4. Customer Interaction Training

Customer service is a big part of the farm experience. Teach staff how to greet guests, offer assistance, and answer common questions. A helpful, polite worker enhances both safety and sales.



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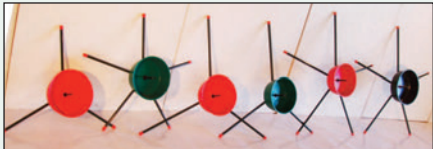
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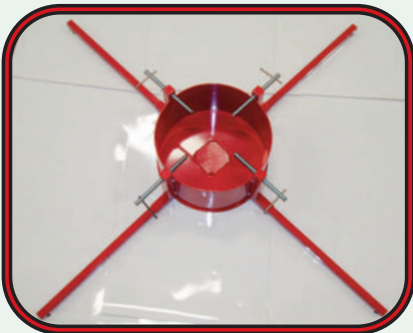


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Prioritizing Customer Safety on the Farm

Families often visit Christmas tree farms with children, pets, or elderly relatives in tow, which raises the risk of slips, trips, and mishaps. Add tools, snow, and uneven terrain into the mix, and you have a recipe for potential injuries, unless safety is proactively managed.

1. Clear Pathways and Signage

Keep walkways clear of ice, mud, stumps, or loose branches. Use clear signage for:

- Tree pricing and types
- Restrooms and parking
- Dangerous or off-limits areas

2. Designate Safe Cutting Zones

If you allow customers to cut their own trees, limit the area to designated

cutting zones. Provide clear instructions on how to cut trees safely and station workers nearby to assist.

3. Supervise High-Risk Activities

Whether it's hayrides, fire pits, or petting zoo, assign trained staff to supervise. Never leave high-risk areas unattended.

4. Parking Lot Management

Many farms overlook parking lot safety. Have attendants help direct traffic and keep loading zones organized. Ensure vehicles are not backing into pedestrian paths.

5. First Aid and Emergency Readiness

Have a first aid kit on-site and make sure workers know its location. Post emergency contacts clearly and assign staff to handle incidents if they arise.

Building a Culture of Safety

Safety training doesn't have to be formal or complicated; it just needs to be consistent. Brief daily huddles, visual safety reminders, and leading by example go a long way in creating a safe, enjoyable environment for both workers and guests.

A well-run Christmas tree farm not only grows beautiful trees but also fosters a festive, family-friendly experience. With well-trained staff and a sharp focus on safety, your farm can deliver holiday magic without the mishaps.

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How You Can Make Messages Matter This Christmas Tree Season

BY THE REAL CHRISTMAS TREE BOARD

The holiday season is a time of magic. At the heart of the season, are the real Christmas tree growers who brighten it for families across the country. Every year, your hard work and dedication help to fill homes with the scent of the season and create memories that last a lifetime.

As a real Christmas tree grower, you are in a unique position to serve as an advocate for our industry. Whether you're talking to local media, chatting with customers, or responding to questions from your community, having clear, meaningful, and memorable messages is essential for breaking through and making an impression.

Today, shoppers encounter more messages at every turn and across more channels than ever before. Here's how you can prepare to represent your farm, your trees, and the entire industry confidently and effectively.

You're Not Just Selling Trees. You're Growing Traditions.

Every tree you nurture is part of a family's tradition – whether they're a first-time buyer or they've only known real Christmas trees.

Consumers look to you for answers about how to pick out and care for a tree, where they can find a tree, and what they might expect to pay for their tree this year.

Your voice matters. This season, you can take an active role in shaping conversation. Advocacy doesn't mean memorizing a script or overloading people with facts. It means focusing on messages that matter and making them meaningful and memorable for everyone who hears them.

Defining Messages and Why They Matter

Think of your messages as the "take-away" points. They aren't everything you could say. They are only those things you want people to **remember** and **repeat**.



Good messages add clarity, not clutter. Not only do they make it easy for you to tell your story, but they make your story easy for you to share and others to remember. Messages help you stay focused regardless of your audience – whether it’s with a shopper, a retailer, or a member of the media. And, importantly, in a media environment where it’s hard to break through the noise, a set of core, unified messages can help ensure consistency across the industry.

Think of strong messages as your “life raft” when questions get tricky, when the conversation drifts off course, or even when you may get into the “rough waters” of an interview. Key messages help you stay on track.

Crafting Your Messages: Less is More

Aim for three or four key messages that are short, memorable, and to the point (15 to 20 words each is ideal). Each message should have a “proof point” or reason to believe: a fact, a story, or a real-world example that backs it up.

Let’s say you are asked to comment on what the supply of real Christmas trees looks like this year for shoppers. A response using both a primary message and a proof point could look like:

“As always, there’s a real Christmas tree for everyone who wants one” (primary message). “And shoppers should know that real Christmas trees are grown to be harvested. Our farm replants at least one new tree for every one we harvest” (proof point).

Of course, your messages will reflect what is true and accurate for your situation, but the construct of primary and proof points is the best practice for any story you share. Finally, keep your messages simple and focused. If you can fit them on a single page, you’re doing it right.

Make it Personal, Make it Memorable.

People remember stories. Avoid jargon and buzzwords. Instead, paint pictures with real-life examples. We like to say that people buy real Christmas trees because they bring joy to everyone who sees and smells them. As a grower, you could personalize your proof point by mentioning how, in turn, it brings you joy to see customers return every year to pick out “their” tree.

Internalize your messages, but don’t memorize them word-for-word. Authenticity connects. While confidence comes from command of content, and striving to stay on message, you should also be yourself.

Ultimately, focus on meaning, not just information.

The Power of Preparation

Your first words are your most powerful tool. Know what they will be – no matter what – even if you have to say, “I want to come back to that, but first let me say ...”

Use ‘establish, develop, recap’ as a flow when preparing for how you might answer a question during a media interview. You want to start with your primary messages as your “table of contents.” Tell them. Then go into detail with your proof points upon follow up. Tell them what you told them. Lastly, close with your summary of primary messages. Never give them anything you don’t want them to use or repeat.

Keeping the Conversation on Track

Not every question will be easy or friendly. If a question can’t be answered directly with a message, respond with a necessary and true actual answer plus a message.

Between the two you need a transition phase. This is sometimes called “blocking and bridging” and you can use this technique to steer the discussion back to your messages. Think of this as a way move the



conversation from off-agenda to on-agenda. Some handy transition phrases include: “Let me clarify. What we’re really talking about is ...” or “Those things are true, but the real news here is ...”

If you can’t answer, never say “no comment.” Instead, explain the reason: “That’s proprietary information,” or “I’m not the right person to speak to that, but what I can say is...” As an example, an appropriate response to being asked about recent reports on the artificial Christmas tree industry could sound like:

“You’d really have to ask those directly involved in that industry. But for real Christmas trees, what I can say is that the market outlook looks great. There’s a real Christmas tree for everyone who wants one ...”

Essential Reminders for Every Spokesperson

It’s natural to feel nervous or overwhelmed with the prospect of a media interview. But remember, you’re the expert when it comes to

real Christmas trees. Here are a few closing concepts to keep in mind as you prepare and get ready for seasonal conversations or interviews.

- **Be honest, but don’t go to confession.** Of course, never lie or mislead. If you don’t know the answer, that’s ok. But don’t speculate. You shouldn’t feel pressured to volunteer information unnecessarily and, remember, there’s no such thing as “off the record.” Always assume you’re “on the record.”
- **It’s a transaction, not a conversation.** There is value in controlling what you say. When engaging with the media, you aren’t speaking to them, you’re speaking through them to current or perspective real Christmas tree shoppers.
- **Be ready for the first, last, and most dreaded questions.** Practice your responses. You should feel empowered to say what you want to say and then stop. Don’t feel pressured to keep talking because you’re nervous or want to fill the



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silence. You can repeat your main points, but don't sound robotic. And never repeat a negative.

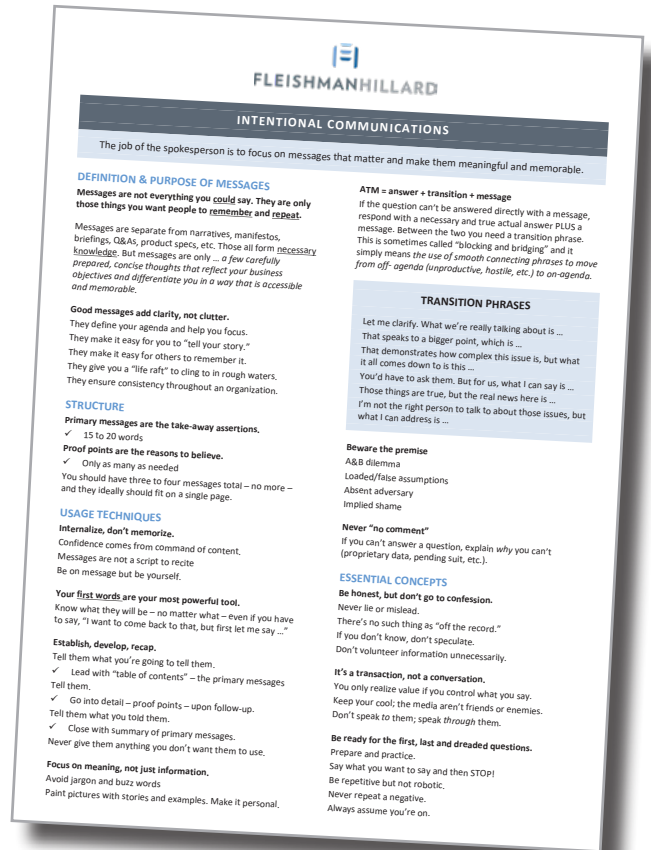
Why This Matters

Real Christmas tree growers are the face of a holiday tradition. This season, you may be asked about everything from the market outlook for real Christmas trees, to why shoppers should choose a real Christmas tree, to environmental or weather impacts. Being prepared with clear, meaningful, and memorable messages ensures your voice rises above the noise and conveys a positive message about real Christmas trees for the entire industry.

The story of real Christmas trees is a good one. Recent conversations with growers across the country points to a great season ahead for growers and families alike. Take time now to prepare your key messages, practice them, and use them consistently with customers, with the media, and in your community.

And remember, you aren't alone. The Real Christmas Tree Board is here to support you. Please visit <https://www.realchristmastreeboard.org/resources/> for additional resources and key seasonal messages in our Media Interview Guide. You can even view the recorded webinar with John Armato from September 16, to further delve into these techniques in more detail.

We hope that you feel empowered and energized to shine a light about what makes a real Christmas tree so special for every shopper. Wishing you a memorable and successful season! 🌲



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SERIES: How to Get the Most Out of Your Weed Management Program in Christmas Tree Production?

TOPIC: Fall Herbicides for Christmas Tree Production



DEBALINA SAHA
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF HORTICULTURE, MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Introduction:

Weeds can lead to heavy intense competition with Christmas trees in the field at any stage of their life (Fig. 1). They can interfere with production practices such as shearing, pruning and spraying in larger trees and can also harbor pests, pathogens, and diseases. Generally, herbicide program in Christmas tree production includes

applying preemergence herbicides (mixed with broad spectrum postemergence herbicides) during springtime before budbreak. Followed by postemergence applications (spot treatments) during growing season in summer for controlling those weeds that escapes spring preemergence herbicide effectiveness. A fall herbicide application can lead to better weed management and an improved herbicide program in Christmas tree production. This article will discuss the benefits & drawbacks and timings of fall herbicide applications in Christmas tree production.



Figure 1. A highly weed infested Christmas tree farm. Photo credits: Debalina Saha, MSU Horticulture.

Need to identify weeds properly: Identifying the dominant weeds species in the Christmas tree field is a very important step for planning a successful herbicide program. Understanding which weed species are the problematic ones is the first step in control. For identifying the weed species, scouting is recommended where growers can simply walk around the field and note down the important weeds growing in the field and their locations, or they can utilize the latest technologies such as Geographic Information System (GIS) which can significantly enhance weed identification and mapping of their locations throughout the field. For easy weed identification, “The IPM Pocket Guide for Weed Identification in Christmas Trees” by Michigan State University (MSU) Extension can be a good handy resource. MSU Pant & Pest diagnostics is also available to help identify weed species. Once the main problematic weed species have been identified, growers can target specific weeds’ life cycles/stages and adjust herbicide products for the best effectiveness.

Was the initial weed control ineffective?

It is important to understand why weeds were problematic this year can be helpful in preventing the weed problems in the future. The initial preemergence herbicides applied during the springtime may be ineffective if the products have been applied too late, after weeds have already emerged or the weed species may not be on the product label, or even the spray equipment was not properly calibrated (Lindberg and Saha, 2022). In these cases, weeds can escape the effect of preemergence herbicides and will persists during the growing seasons and later during the fall as well.

Fall herbicide application timing:

Preemergence herbicides. MSU Extension recommends using soil temperatures to determine the timing of fall preemergence herbicides. Sol microbial activity is responsible for herbicide decomposition, degradation, and longevity. However, soil temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit or below is not suitable for biological activity. So, when the soil cools in the fall, microbial activity slows and then ultimately ceases. Hence, soil temperature needs to be noted before fall preemergence

herbicide applications (Lindberg and Saha, 2022). MSU Enviroweather can be a good resource for growers to find weather stations near their locations and view soil temperature readings.

Postemergence herbicides. For postemergence herbicide applications, growers need to make sure trees have hardened off in the fall to ensure crop safety. When the trees harden, the cuticle of the needles get thickened, and the herbicides cannot get in contact. A general thumb rule is at or around Labor Day new growth should be sufficiently hardened off (Lindberg and Saha, 2022). During fall time, perennial weed species such as maple seedlings and poison ivy, translocate resources from shoots to roots and hence systemic postemergence herbicides will also move more effectively to the roots, and can improve its effectiveness.

Benefits and drawbacks of fall herbicide applications:

During springtime there can be weather related issues such as dry weather can prevent preemergence herbicides from getting activated properly, or too wet conditions can make the field impassable, or too cold weather can delay getting equipment preparation and ready to use (Lindberg and Saha, 2022). Some perennials weed species

TABLE 1: List of preemergence herbicides with their water solubility that are labeled for use in Christmas tree weed control.

Herbicide	Mechanism of action	WSSA and HRAC group	Water solubility (mg/L) at 20-25°C	Water solubility strengths
Gallery (isoxaben)	Cellulose synthesis inhibitor	21(L)	0.93	Low
Goaltender (oxyfluorfen)	PPO inhibitor	14(E)	0.1	Very low
Marengo (indaziflam)	Cellulose synthesis inhibitor	29(L)	2.8	Low
Pendulum Aqua Cap (pendimethalin)	Mitosis inhibitor	3(K1)	0.3	Very low
Pennant Magnum (s-metolachlor)	VLCFA synthesis inhibitor	15(K3)	529.3	High
Princep (simazine)	Photosystem II inhibitor	5(C1)	5.0	Relatively low
Sureguard (flumioxazin)	PPO inhibitor	14(E)	0.8	Low
Surflan (oryzalin)	Mitosis inhibitor	3(K1)	2.5	Low
Tower (dimethenamid-P)	VLCFA synthesis inhibitor	15(K3)	1450± 20	Very high
Velpar (hexazinone)	Photosystem II inhibitor	5(C1)	33000	Very high

translocates resources from shoots to roots during fall time and the systemic postemergence herbicides (such as glyphosate and triclopyr) are more effective during this time than summer. In addition, certain weed species such as marehail can germinate during fall and early spring. Hence, fall herbicide application can improve weed control in Christmas tree production (Lindberg and Saha, 2022).

However, there are few drawbacks of fall herbicide applications. During fall time, the herbicides applied will need to remain in the soil for a longer time interval than spring applied products. Growers need to choose products that have low solubility in water (Lindberg and Saha, 2022) to avoid leaching and run off and for longer persistence in the soil. Table 1 lists some important preemergence herbicides with their water solubility that are labeled for use in Christmas tree weed control.

In conclusion, growers need to rotate herbicides with different modes of action to avoid herbicide resistance development among weed species. In Michigan a population of common ragweed has already been reported to become resistant to clopyralid herbicide, and some pigweeds have become resistant to glyphosate. It is recommended to integrate non-chemical methods along with the chemical method to achieve successful weed control in Christmas tree production.

References:

Lindberg, B. and D. Saha. 2022. Fall weed control options for Christmas tree farms. Michigan State University Extension.
<https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/fall-weed-control-options-for-christmas-tree-farms>



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ICTA Attendees at the National Summer Meeting

ICTA SUMMER REPORT

It's almost time to wrap up the summer chores and prep for the fall. We have about one more good mowing through the trees, and I've still got some rows of trees that need a little shearing...mostly to nip back the leaders that have gotten long.

2025 Trees for Troops Bears For Fall Delivery



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REGIONAL NEWS ILLINOIS

The season here started out a little cool, then dry, then very hot, and now we seem to be getting nice little showers every few days. While shearing, I found several “funky” looking concolor fir, so I sent some samples and a couple of pictures to the University of Illinois Plant Clinic for identification; now I just need to wait for the results.

The summer meetings are over now. Our Illinois Field Day at Dave and Joey Daniken’s farm in Pocahontas, Illinois, on June 28th, was very interesting. We had a good showing, with some of our new ICTA members in attendance. Many members had questions for Dave, and they went home feeling pretty good

about growing trees. The Michigan/MACT meeting in Cadillac, Michigan, was huge!! Amy Start did a great job of organizing, and everything seemed to run smoothly. They never ran out of food! We had 42 members from Illinois in attendance.

Gift shop items are now arriving, and one of our employees is starting to price them. “It’s beginning to feel a lot like Christmas”. I’m sure you are all looking forward to good tree sales; so, stay safe, and don’t fret the small stuff. We’ll compare notes with many of you at the winter meeting in Indiana.

Robert Richardson, ICTA President



New members Connor and Scott Cofoid



New members Kate and Nate Chatic

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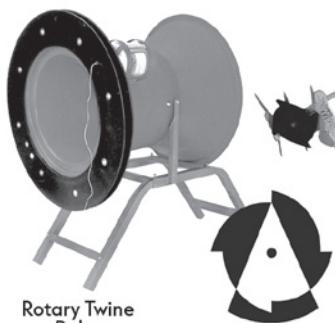
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A big thank you to Erin Wagner and Genth Tree Farm for hosting the ICTGA Social this year!

GREETINGS FROM INDIANA

Growers from the Indiana Christmas Tree Grower Association kept busy this summer with several events!

NCTA/MACT Summer Meeting

The 2025 NCTA/MACT Summer Meeting was hosted by the Michigan Christmas Tree Association at Dutchman Tree Farms in Manton, MI from July 24th to 26th. The meeting was well attended by growers from Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Ohio, as well as several other states. The meeting agenda included many informative demos and presentations pertaining to growing and marketing Christmas trees, wreaths, and more. The vendor tent was packed with companies offering a wide variety of supplies. Attendees enjoyed the wonderful lunches and a rodeo dinner offered at the meeting. A big thank you to the MACT and Dutchman Tree Farms for hosting the summer meeting!

State Tree and Wreath Contest

Within two weeks after the conclusion of the MACT meeting, ICTGA members took their trees and wreaths to the Indiana State Fair for the State Tree and Wreath Contest on July 31st. Congratulations to all participants. The following members took home top honors in the contest.

Christmas Trees

- Fir 1st Place – Dull's Tree Farm, Thorntown, IN
2nd Place – Sambol's Tree Farm, Fortville, IN
3rd Place – Jay's Tree Farm, Mooresville, IN
4th Place – Oak Hill Tree Farm, Crawfordsville, IN
- Pine 1st Place – Dull's Tree Farm, Thorntown, IN
2nd Place – Jay's Tree Farm, Mooresville, IN

3rd Place – Oak Hill Tree Farm, Crawfordsville, IN

- Spruce 1st Place – Millbrook Tree Farm, Pendleton, IN
2nd Place – Birch Island Tree Farm, Waldron, IN
3rd Place – Yakey Tree Farm, Fishers, IN

Decorated 1st Place and Best of Show – Millbrook Tree Farm, Pendleton, IN

Wreaths

- Decorated 1st Place – Millbrook Tree Farm, Pendleton, IN
2nd Place – Dull's Tree Farm, Thorntown, IN
3rd Place – Sambol's Tree Farm, Fortville, IN
4th Place – Happy Goat Christmas Tree Farm, Fort Wayne, IN

- Undecorated 1st Place – Dull's Tree Farm, Thorntown, IN
2nd Place – Millbrook Tree Farm, Pendleton, IN

The Indiana Christmas Tree Growers Association would like to thank Randy Castor for judging the trees and wreaths entered in the state contest. Thank you Randy!

Indiana State Fair

The Indiana State Fair took place August 1st through August 17th. ICTGA members set up their exhibit booth on August 1st following the tree and wreath contest. The association thanks ICTGA Board Members Milt Yakey and Andrea Lux for their hard work to maintain the ICTGA exhibit booth at the fair. This year, over 20 ICTGA members volunteered their services and informed thousands of fair attendees about the benefits and beauty of real Christmas trees. Thank you to all volunteers for your help in promoting real Christmas trees!



ICTGA Members enjoying the annual social

REGIONAL NEWS INDIANA

Trees for Troops

In late November, ICTGA members will once again be taking part in the Trees for Troops program to be sure that our military families enjoy a Merry Christmas with a REAL tree from our Indiana Christmas tree farms. ICTGA National Director Lucas Dull serves as the Trees for Troops state coordinator for two pickup locations in Indiana. Piney Acres Farm at Fortville, Indiana will serve as the FedEx pickup location for the central Indiana area and Hensler Nursery at Hamlet, Indiana will provide the second FedEx pickup location for the north central part of the state.

In addition to ICTGA members donating trees for the program, several tree farms will be collecting donations for the Trees for Troops program. The following ICTGA members donated trees and/or collected money during tree sales last year for the 2024 program. There are other members that collected money and sent it directly to the Christmas Spirit Foundation so they may not be listed here. The association thanks all its members for supporting the Trees for Troops program in various ways for so many years.

- Birch Island Farm – Rick & Andrea Lux, Waldron
- Bohman Christmas Tree Farm – Doug & Becky Bohman, Greensburg
- Dull's Tree Farm – Tom, Kerry, Lucas & Dana Dull, Thorntown
- Evans Whispering Pines – Joe & Rita Evans, Danville
- Hensler Nursery – Joe Hensler & Scott Heeren, Hamlet
- Jolly Pines Tree Farm – Dustin & Sarah James, West Terre Haute
- Lees Trees – Lee & Alicia Van Vuren, Wheatfield
- Millbrook Tree Farm – Brent & Cara Reed, Yorktown
- Oak Hill Tree Farm – Matt & Rachel Stine, Crawfordsville
- Piney Acres Farm – Rex & Janice Zenor, Fortville
- Potter's the Family Tree – Brian & Debra Potter, Akron
- Sambol's Tree Farm – Lance & Susan Sambol, Fortville
- St. Joe Christmas Tree Farm – Mike & Judy Reifenberg, Fort Wayne
- Sugar Ridge Pines – Doug & Annette Ream, Centerpoint
- Woliung's Farm – Steve & Kathy Woliung, Aurora

2026 Winter Meeting Save the Date

Mark your calendars! The ICTGA winter meeting will be held Jan 30 - 31, 2026 at the Boone County Fairgrounds, just north of Zionsville, IN. The committee is currently working on scheduling speakers and organizing roundtable discussions. If you have any topics that you would like to hear at the meeting, send an email to info@indianachristmastrees.com.

Mike and Liz Walsh, ICTGA Secretary-Treasurer 🌲

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NEWS FROM IOWA

Summer Meeting and Conference

Iowa Christmas Tree Growers Summer meeting and Conference was July 11-12, 2025 at the Country Pines Christmas Tree Farm in Marcus, Iowa. Travis Pritts and his wife and partner in crime, Tanya did an amazing job hosting everyone and setting up a memorable couple of days. Thank you!

Next year the summer meeting and conference will be at Strautman's Tree Farm in Cambridge, Iowa July 10-11, 2026.

The Loss of a Christmas Tree Legend

Last year, shortly before Christmas holiday tree season began, Iowa lost a Christmas tree legend. Vernon Rettig passed away October 29, 2024 at the age of 91.

Vernon Rettig founded Rettig Tree Farm in Bondurant, Iowa and started selling trees in the late 1970s and has been selling trees ever since. Vernon was also an active member for the Iowa and National Christmas Tree Growers Association.

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Vernon's son, Rex Rettig has come alongside his father, working on the tree farm and attending summer conferences with the Christmas Tree Growers Association. This summer, Rex's brother Mark and his wife also attended and plan to help carry on the love their dad had for Christmas trees.

Rettig Christmas Tree Farm is one of the tree farms on the outskirts of the Des Moines area. While each of us grows Christmas trees, what we sell and the experience that is provided to the customers is different and special.

There were many raving reviews of the Rettig Tree Farm from long time and first-time customers. I just used one that encompassed what the tree farm is and means to the families:

"Our favorite Christmas tree farm in the metro. It is owned by a sweet family, who love growing Christmas trees. There are acres of trees to choose from, with several different types of pines and firs. They allow you to come out late October or early November to tag your tree when the weather is still nice. Then you can come back and pick it up closer to Christmas.

When you come to pick up your tree, you take a mat and saw and head out to cut it down! What a fun family tradition! After you have brought it back for them to shake and bundle, there are candy canes on the Christmas tree inside for the kids.

Super fun place, great memories, highly recommend!"

Update From the Christmas Tree Farm Nightmare

Last quarter, there was an article about a Christmas Tree farm that had been accidentally sprayed by chemicals from a nearby field and the struggle to get any assistance to recover.

The article was written with the hope to possibly get experience or advice from other Christmas tree growers who may have dealt with the same or similar situation.

I spoke with Steve shortly after the article was written. Steve and his wife, Joann took the article to the president of the local coop and spoke with him and showed the article. The president said he was not made aware of the situation previously. Steve and Joann spoke with him on a Monday. The president heard their concerns and understood. The article documented that the damage had been estimated at \$45,000. The coop's insurance company had counteroffered \$25,000 in response with no explanation on how they decided on that amount.

By Friday of that same week, a check had been cut by the coop's insurance company for \$40,000 and the coop wrote a check for the additional \$5000 to cover all the damages.

While the article did not produce any advice from outside growers, it put into writing the struggle and concerns of one tree farm and after presented, was able to conclude the best ending possible. 🌲

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Pete Kovalic discussing shearing larger trees and specifically addressing pines.

GREETINGS FROM KENTUCKY!

Kentucky Christmas Tree Association

KCTA held its fall 2025 meeting on August 23 hosted by Roberts Family Farm in Guston KY. After being welcomed by KCTA President Kim Miller and by Kevin Roberts and family the organization heard several useful presentations:

- Clint Quarles, KY Department of Agriculture, Legalities in Agritourism
- Patricia Krausman, Small Business Administration, Starting a Small Business + Funding
- Tarrah Hardin, KY Farm Business Management, Record Keeping & Taxes

- Bethany Cox, KY Horticulture Council, Using Canva & Social Media in Marketing
- Kenney Gulley & Michael Duckworth, KCTA, Funding Opportunities for our Members

Following the business meeting the Roberts provided a tour of their farm and described their agritourism program which includes pumpkin production, playground activities, corn maze, bakery, wedding/meeting venue and gift shop. Tom Nieman provided a shearing demonstration as well. Many good learning opportunities were available for member farms. A few prospective farms were in attendance as well.



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Tom Nieman discusses shearing techniques as well as when shearing should occur.



Kevin Roberts explains their Agritourism business on the farm tour.

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Tony Stefani sharing tree culturing tips

GREETINGS FROM MARYLAND!

President's Note

The grandkids are back to school and last night it got into the 50 degrees mark. Summer is dwindling and before we know it Old Saint Nick will be coming. Are you ready? Well, we aren't but somehow, we always get there.

Just like the passing seasons, two of our fellow neighboring tree farmers have decided to retire. John and Mary Ellen Hutchison to our south and to our north Blue Heron, run by Ed and Harriett Caporin have gone out of business. Sad to see them close with no successors. The number of growers in Maryland Eastern Shore and Delaware continue to dwindle. Is it the same in your region?

I want to thank Ryan and Linda Fair for hosting our summer meeting. They are comparatively new to the tree business, but a welcome addition.

MCTA has a close relationship with the University of Maryland Extension Service and Maryland Department of Agriculture. MDA has aided MCTA with marketing grants and the department's Nursery Inspection Division has aided us in identifying pest and problems on the farm. Maryland Extension has provided pesticide certification and nutrient management updates during our winter and summer meeting which are essential for maintaining applicator licenses. I want to thank them both.

In summary, this year's growing season has been much better and we have not suffered too much new planting losses. Adequate rain and better summer weather has been more temperate than last year's disaster. We are looking forward to a

successful selling season and pre-cut Frasers seem to be more available and our lot has finally caught up with demand.

Enjoy the fall weather, and yes, we will be ready for the season.

Congratulations to all the growers who entered the Maryland State Fair Tree contest!

Grand Champion Tree: Hirt Tree Farm (Other fir)

Reserve Grand Champion Tree: Hirt Tree Farm (Fraser fir)

Class 1 – Douglas Fir

2nd - Frostees Tree Farm

3rd - Hirt Tree Farm



Grand and Reserve Champion Trees

Class 2 — Fraser Fir

1st - Hirt Tree Farm
3rd - Martins Tree Farm

Class 3 — Canaan Fir

1st - Martin's Tree Farm

Class 5 — Other Fir

1st - Hirt Tree Farm

Class 6 — Blue Spruce

1st - Hirt Tree Farm

Class 7 — Other Spruce

1st - Frostees Tree Farm

Class 8 — White Pine

1st - Frostees Tree Farm



Getting ready in the Cow Palace

Maryland Growers Discuss Christmas Tree Standards, Farm Challenges, and Tax Strategies

The Maryland Christmas Tree Association held their summer meeting at Fair Chance Farm (www.fairchance.farm) where Christmas tree growers and agricultural professionals came together for an in-depth exchange on industry standards, operational challenges, and financial planning. Our keynote speaker was Tony Stefani from Hillside Christmas Tree Farm in Michigan. Tony kicked off the day with a presentation of shearing for optimal Christmas Tree production – which covered the basics of tree terminology to shaping, density control, and market readiness. Participants received step-by-step instructions on shearing various tree types (pine, spruce, and fir), learned methods for correcting defects using top rings and

branch trainers, and heard about real-world fertilizer application issues and how to prevent future mistakes. A field demonstration enabled attendees to practice these shearing techniques firsthand.

Chuck Schuster, University of Maryland Extension Service, updated the group on the nutrient management contract, which is in its final year with EPA funding. He also provided updates to cover crop sign-ups, payment schedules, and the effect of heavy rains on nitrogen leaching, with advice to monitor crops and use tissue testing to assess nutrient levels.

The MCTA also welcomed Andrew Bosserman—drawing on his experience with the IRS and as a Christmas tree farmer—who explained how growers can save on federal income taxes by electing capital gain treatment for cut Christmas tree sales if specific criteria are met. He stressed the importance of accurate records, correct tax form filing, and seeking guidance from accountants familiar with agricultural and timber tax law. Andrew concluded by offering additional resources and encouraged growers to reach out with questions about tax strategies for their operations.

The day concluded with a rousing roundtable discussion around pints of farm-brew beer. In all, it was a spectacular day drawing on the leading voices throughout the Christmas Tree Industry. Many thanks to all who helped make this day a success!

Fair Chance Farm Spruce Tips Inspire Local Brewery Collaboration

Fair Chance Farm, known for its Christmas trees, is branching out in a creative collaboration with local breweries by harvesting Blue Spruce tips to create unique seasonal beers. This partnership is a reflection of the farm's longstanding interest in the art of brewing; in fact, the owners have been homebrewing privately for years.

The idea for this collaboration blossomed from a friendship formed with their favorite local brewery, Black Locust Hops Farm and Brewery. Inspired by a shared passion for craft beer, Fair Chance Farm hand-picks fresh, delicious spruce tips in the spring, providing a special ingredient for Black Locust. Over the years, multiple recipes have been developed using these aromatic tips, each harnessing the farm's expertise and the brewery's creativity. Black Locust also shared some of the Fair Chance Farm spruce tips with another local collaborative brewery, Sapwood Cellars.

This year marks a milestone: for the first time, Black Locust Hops Farm and Brewery were able to preserve a portion of the spruce tips to be used for a special seasonal beer to be released at Christmastime. The brewing collaboration is not a commercial venture, but rather an expression of community involvement and a testament to the farm's commitment to fostering creative spaces. Through these efforts, Fair Chance Farm continues to bring people together—whether around a Christmas tree or a pint of locally crafted beer. 🌲



Shearing demonstration

REGIONAL NEWS MASSACHUSETTS

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*Discussion of shearing techniques at Cranston's Christmas Tree Farm, Ashfield, MA.
(Photo Credit: Betsy Cranston)*

MASSACHUSETTS FALL 2025 UPDATE

June Farm Tour

In June, **Ioka Valley Farm** hosted the first farm tour of 2025. This beautiful, diversified farm is nestled in the Berkshire and Taconic Hills of Hancock Valley. Around 15–20 attendees from nearby Massachusetts and New York farms joined the event.

Josh & Martha, the next generation of Leab farmers, gave a tour of their year-round operation. They highlighted a current project: transitioning their Christmas trees from a hillside plantation to a nearby flat, lower field. The new location will simplify maintenance and long-term tree care.

Guests also toured Ioka's impressive sugaring facility. The farm produces thousands of gallons of pure maple syrup and a variety of specialty maple products each year. Thank you to the **Leab Family** for hosting!



*Attendees gather for a farm tour at Ioka Valley Farm, Hancock, MA.
(Photo Credit: Pete Sweet, Jr.)*

2025 Annual Meeting

In August, **Cranston's Christmas Tree Farm** hosted our 2025 Annual Meeting. Thanks to Meeting & Events Director **Pete Sweet, Jr.**, the event was once again a huge success – drawing nearly 90 attendees representing 34 member farms, vendors & speakers.

Vendors included Fraser Knoll, Sheerlund, OESCO, Tree Limo, Downey Tree Farm & Nursery, and Kurt Adler. Guest speakers included Marsha Gray (Real Christmas Tree Board), Danielle Sweet (Seekonk Tree Farm), and Dr. Rich Cowles (CAES).

A brief recap is included in this newsletter, but as always, the in-person sessions offered even more value. We hope to see you in person in 2026!

MDAR Updates

Although a representative from MDAR was unable to attend, the agency wanted to share the following:

- Despite a 1% budget cut, MDAR continues to collaborate with state and federal partners to support agriculture programs and grants.

- A **disaster relief program** will launch this fall to help farmers recover from the damage caused by severe weather issues in 2023–2024.
- MDAR also hosted training webinars aimed at strengthening agricultural nonprofit boards and organizations. These resources are now available on the MDAR website.

RCTB News

Marsha Gray, Executive Director of the Real Christmas Tree Board (RCTB), shared a preview of the 2025 promotional campaign and alerted us of an upcoming referendum.

The 2025 campaign focuses on media outreach, AI-enhanced online search, using influencer content to promote real tree experiences and consumer discovery through the RCTB's retail locator. **Members are encouraged to register for a free listing on the RCTB website.**

To date, the RCTB has funded over \$2 million in Christmas tree research, including projects with Dr. Rich Cowles and the CAES. They've also expanded educational outreach through Virtual Farm Trips for students and families, with two more scheduled this November.

Looking ahead, a referendum vote will be held in 2026 (required every 7 years). Growers who harvest and sell 500+ trees and report and pay into the RCTB will automatically receive ballots. This vote will determine whether the RCTB continues operating. We hope you find value in the research, outreach, and marketing RCTB provides to support real Christmas trees.

Social Media Marketing Tips

Danielle Sweet of Seekonk Tree Farm gave an insightful presentation on how to leverage the “big 3” social media platforms to grow your farm’s reach.

- TikTok: Use behind-the-scenes clips of planting, shearing, and family history/storytelling to attract new audiences.
- Instagram: Great for beautiful seasonal photos, reels (tree shaking, decorating), and showcasing farm aesthetics.
- Facebook: Ideal for promoting events (ex: opening day or photos with Santa), updating hours, and encouraging families to tag your business in their posts.

She emphasized showcasing experiences, not just products. Great post ideas include educational tips, seasonal moments, customer spotlights, seasonal countdowns and farm traditions. Be sure to include calls to action like “*Visit this weekend*”, “*Tag us*”, or “*Follow us*” to drive engagement.

Needle Retention Research

Returning speaker **Dr. Rich Cowles** provided a long-awaited update on his research into needle retention. His latest findings confirm that adding one half of a low-dose aspirin to 2 gallons of water improves needle retention in true firs. Further research is underway to determine if the same benefit applies to spruce and Douglas Fir, with results expected soon.

MCTA Annual Business Meeting

Held between a BBQ lunch and the field tour, the **67th Annual Business Meeting** took place in the Cranston barn – providing a cool break from the heat. Secretary **Sara Davagian** confirmed we met quorum (20 farms) and opened with a leadership announcement. President **Bob Schrader** had shared his intent to step down after 3 years of dedicated service. Having revived the role after a 6-year vacancy, Bob expressed interest in remaining on the board as a director. Thank you, Bob, for your commitment to leadership with the MCTA.

To fill the remaining year of Bob’s current term, the board met earlier that week to elect **Pete Sweet, Jr.** as interim President, who will also continue as the Meeting & Events Director. Pete is a second-generation tree farmer and well respected in the industry. He also serves as a CTFANY director and has held multiple roles within our organization. We thank Pete for taking this on, and we expect he’ll be seeking election to his first full term as President at next year’s meeting.

Membership Update:

Sara reported 108 current members. While we lose some each year, new growers continue to join, recognizing the value of being part of the organization.

Reminder: The deadline for dues payments and website updates was **September 15th**. If you haven’t renewed yet and wish to remain a member, please contact Sara ASAP.

Financial Overview:

Treasurer **Seth Cranston** shared the 24/25 cash flow report and 25/26 proposed budget. With a healthy balance, we’ll continue operating under a small deficit budget to responsibly spend down reserves. Members showed interest in supporting research, possibly through CAES, to spend some of the surplus which Pete & Seth will investigate.

- **24/25 Cash Flow Report:** motion to approve as presented by **Dave Butt**, seconded by **Dave Bihldorff** – passed unanimously.
- **25/26 Budget:** motion to approved as proposed by Dave Butt, seconded by Sherry Deane – passed unanimously.

Officer & Director Elections:

Pete Sweet, Jr. closed out the meeting with the annual election. Sara Davagian & Seth Cranston both sought re-election to their respective Secretary & Treasurer roles. There were two open director seats – previously held by **Pete Sweet, Jr.** & **Diane Butt** who both completed their second 3-year terms. A big thank you to both for their 6 years of service to the organization. **Bob Schrader** & **Kathy Jacobs** expressed interest in serving as directors. **Diane Butt** motioned to approve the ballot as presented, and **Matt Campbell** seconded – it passed unanimously.

Field Tour

The afternoon concluded with a comprehensive field tour of Cranston’s farm. The group began at the transplant bed, where the Cranstons discussed pros and cons of transplant bed maintenance. **Larry Downey** highlighted attributes of Korean Balsam crosses and bracted Balsam that they grow and sell as transplants.

Dr. Richard Cowles led the discussion during a walking tour and shared information on common Christmas tree health issues:

- Needle cast diseases (e.g., rhizosphaera that was prevalent on Concolor Firs)
- Spruce spider mite concerns found in Balsam and Fraser Firs
- Widespread presence of phytophthora root rot, found across multiple species

The group discussed strategies for managing phytophthora, including planting disease-free stock and switching to more tolerant tree species. The tour concluded with a shearing demonstration by the Cranstons, showing their techniques for producing more open, hangable trees.

Thank you to all our members, speakers, and hosts for another wonderful year of connection, education, and collaboration. Here’s to a great 2025 Christmas tree season – we look forward to seeing you in 2026! 🌲

REGIONAL NEWS MICHIGAN

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2025 National Summer Meeting "Cowboys & Christmas Trees" was a success!

A RESOUNDING SUCCESS:

The 2025 National Summer Meeting – Cowboys and Christmas Trees

Thank you to everyone who attended the National Summer Meeting, hosted by Dutchman Tree Farms at their Northern Pines Nursery in Lake City! We are thrilled to report that this

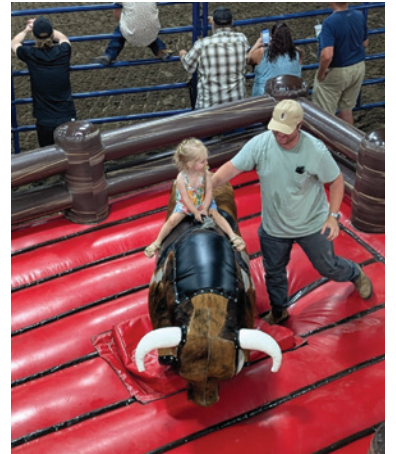
was the largest Christmas tree meeting in decades, with roughly 900 attendees! It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces, including members from Michigan, NCTA, Mid-America, Illinois, and Indiana, along with numerous other growers from across the U.S. We even had international guests from Canada, England, Scotland, and Denmark!

A MICHIGAN TREE HEADED TO THE WHITE HOUSE!

*Congratulations to Korson's Tree Farms,
National Tree Contest Grand Champion!*



REGIONAL NEWS MICHIGAN



A special thank you to our host, Dutchman Tree Farms and Northern Pines Nursery. Owners Joel Hoekwater and Chris Maciborski, their families, and their entire team rolled out the hospitality wagon to make this event incredibly welcoming and successful. They brought the fun as well, with one heck of a rodeo with some talented (and cute) kids!

We also want to thank Michigan State University and MSU Extension for putting together an excellent lineup of speakers and tours. Dr. Bert Cregg, Riley Johnson, and Bill Lindberg dedicated countless hours to this event, and their hard work is deeply appreciated. Additionally, thank you to Getty Tree Farms for being great neighbors and allowing us to include their farm as a tour stop.

Thank you to all the vendors who attended our show, and what a massive trade show it was! There's nothing better than connecting with customers in person and putting a face to a name. We also extend our sincere thanks to our event sponsors. For an event of this size, these sponsorships are crucial for providing quality meals, snacks, and, of course, a few adult beverages!

Again, thank you to everyone who attended the National 2025 Summer Meeting! And a super big thanks to Dutchman Tree Farms and Northern Pines Nursery for hosting our event!

Amy Start, Executive Director





HALL OF FAME

Michigan State University's Dr. Bert Cregg Named to Christmas Tree Growers Hall of Fame



Dr. Bert Cregg, Professor in both the Department of Horticulture and Department of Forestry at Michigan State University, was inducted into the Michigan Christmas Tree Association Growers Hall of Fame at the Michigan Christmas Tree Association's National Summer Meeting, held July 24-26, 2025. Dr. Cregg has been recognized for his lifetime of service and contributions to Michigan's Christmas tree industry.

Dr. Cregg is a Professor in the Department of Horticulture and the Department of Forestry. He has worked for the University for more than twenty-six years. Dr. Cregg is recognized as an international expert in the field of Christmas tree production. He shares his knowledge and passion for Christmas trees as a speaker for state, national, and international Christmas tree meetings.

Dr. Cregg's first job was shearing Christmas trees at sixteen, working in Washington State, where he grew up. His enthusiasm for Christmas trees, and all trees, has been with him since a young age. His education reflects his passion for learning and curiosity to make things better for trees: how to take care of them, improve them, learn from them, and share that information with others. He started at Michigan State University in 1999 studying Christmas trees and has continued with research that has strengthened the industry.

Dr. Cregg has been the lead researcher and has collaborated with the Michigan Christmas Tree Association on many USDA

Specialty Crop Block Grants. His latest grant is titled *Improving Establishment of Christmas Tree Plantations through Research and Education*. Over the years, Dr. Cregg has brought in hundreds of thousands of research dollars to better the industry. He also collaborates with educators across the country and around the world on issues related to Christmas tree production. His latest collaborative project titled "A GIFT SEED," with Dr. Justin Whitehill of North Carolina State University and other researchers, is a tree improvement effort to enhance fir tree genetics.

Dr. Cregg is a trusted advisor to the Michigan Christmas Tree Association. He plays an integral role in the Association's planning process and brings a wealth of experience and information about the industry at large. He works closely with the Michigan Christmas Tree Association's Board of Directors on educational programming, as well as editorial content for the *Great Lakes Christmas Tree Journal*. Some of the article titles Dr. Cregg has written for the journal are: "Christmas Trees for Connoisseurs," "Christmas Trees are Naturally Socially Distanced," "Help me save my Blue Spruce," "Don't be a Grinch, begin a holiday tradition at your local choose and cut Christmas Tree farm," and "Real Christmas Trees are good for Michigan's environment and economy."

Helping us celebrate his many accomplishments were his wife, Terri, Michigan State University and MSU Extension colleagues, and many industry friends. The two-day National Summer Meeting was hosted by Dutchman Tree Farms at their Northern Pines Nursery in Lake City, Michigan, with roughly nine hundred in attendance.

Dr. Cregg's wife, Terri, said they cannot go anywhere without stopping to take pictures of trees that are different, in distress, beautiful, or something he can share with others about what issue is going on with the trees. Terri added, "During the holidays, we are always excited to go to a choose-and-cut farm to get our Christmas tree with our family and share in that tradition with others. Bert is a local celebrity at Christmastime on the news, sharing all the tips on Christmas tree care, selection, and the beauty of having a real tree."

Dr. Bert Cregg was inducted into the Michigan Christmas Tree Association Growers Hall of Fame alongside long-time Christmas tree grower and owner of Dutchman Tree Farms, Joel Hoekwater. Dr. Cregg and Joel Hoekwater have been recognized for their lifetime of service to Michigan's Christmas tree industry. Both Dr. Cregg and Joel Hoekwater's commitment and service are tremendously appreciated by the Michigan Christmas Tree Association and our state's Christmas tree growers.

Joel Hoekwater Inducted into Michigan Christmas Tree Growers Hall of Fame



Joel Hoekwater, of Dutchman Tree Farms, has been inducted into the Michigan Christmas Tree Growers Hall of Fame, honoring over four decades of innovation, leadership, and steadfast dedication to the Christmas tree industry.

Joel's story with Dutchman Tree Farms began in the early 1980s, but his roots were planted even earlier, starting at just 15 years old on the farm. By the mid-80s, he was working side-by-side with founder Steve Vanderweide, managing production and overseeing operations during pivotal years of growth, including Dutchman's 1984 delivery of a tree to the White House.

In 1986, when the farm changed ownership, Joel was entrusted with continuing to manage the farm. Within two years, the new owners defaulted, and Steve regained ownership, with Joel firmly in place and continuing to lead. His presence was instrumental in the planting of the farm's first Fraser Fir crop in the early 90s, helping shift Dutchman's focus as the market evolved away from Scotch Pine.

Recognizing the challenge of a diminishing local workforce, Joel became one of the first growers in Michigan to implement the

H-2A guest worker program nearly 30 years ago. In 2018, that experience culminated in the creation of ARM Labor Solutions, a Department of Labor-approved H-2A labor contracting company that now supports tree farms with trimming crews, from Wisconsin to New York.

His leadership continued to shape the industry's future. In 2006, Joel became the owner of Dutchman Tree Farms, purchasing it from Steve. In 2011, he expanded by acquiring Northern Pines Nursery, securing the farm's seedling supply. He added a wreath company in 2012 and went on to support the construction of a 3-acre greenhouse and 60,000 square feet of cooler space in 2021, efforts that further solidified Dutchman's place as a national leader.

Joel's quiet, steady, principled leadership has earned the respect and loyalty of employees and industry peers alike. Many members of his team have worked alongside him for over 30 years. Whether adapting to market changes, pioneering labor solutions, or investing in the next generation of growers, Joel has exemplified quiet innovation and unwavering commitment to his farm, his employees, the industry, and, most importantly, his family.

Dutchman Tree Farms was honored to host the 2025 NCTA Summer Meeting in Michigan, an event that feels especially fitting in a year where Joel's lifetime of leadership is recognized.

2026 Winter Meeting

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REGIONAL NEWS MINNESOTA

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GREETINGS FROM MINNESOTA!

National Christmas Tree Contest

Back in July many of our growers traveled to Michigan where over 1,000 growers from all over the country gathered at Dutchman Tree Farms in Lake City, MI. This was the largest gathering of Christmas tree growers in the country in over 20 years. Our association was well represented in the National Tree Competition with three of our growers, Happyland Tree Farms, Krueger Christmas Tree Farm, and Wolcyn Tree Farms & Nursery all bringing a tree. None of the three made it to the final vote, but it was a great experience for everyone. Congratulations to Tom Wolcyn and Janet Aanerud and everyone else at Wolcyn Tree Farms & Nursery for finishing in third place in the decorated wreath competition!



Janet Aanerud of Wolcyn Tree Farms with her National 3rd Place Decorated Wreath



From L-R Joan and Steve Turck with their Grand Champion Canaan Fir



From L-R Ben and Becky Wolcyn with their Reserve Champion Balsam Fir

MN State Fair

Today is Labor Day, which means the last day of the Great Minnesota Get Together. It has been a fantastic year for our Christmas Tree Exhibit in so many ways. We had a modern-day record of 111 trees judged in the 11 categories of undecorated trees. 14 different farms



From L-R Fox 9 reporters Cody Matz, Dale K, and MNCTA President Ben Wolcyn



Taylor Swift Tree

brought trees in, and 12 of them won at least one ribbon! Congratulations to Steve Turck and Turck's Trees on their Grand Champion Canaan Fir as well as to Tom Wolcyn and Wolcyn Tree Farms on their Reserve Champion Balsam Fir! This means Turcks will be bringing a tree to the State Capitol, and Wolcyns will be bringing a tree to the Governor's Mansion this Christmas. Wolcyn Tree Farms also took home the Sweepstakes, winning five blue ribbons on trees in addition to a blue on both the decorated and undecorated wreaths for a grand total of 15 ribbons! With one day left in the voting, the coveted People's Choice Award looks to also be going to Wolcyn Tree Farms with their beautiful Korean Fir! Tom Wolcyn has been bringing trees to the fair every year since 1969, and he said this is the best showing he's ever had! In addition to the record number of undecorated trees, we also had a record number of decorated trees this year. The decorated trees have become an incredible spectacle that attracts lots of fair goers to our exhibit. There were 25 decorated trees with lots of creative decorations including the People's Choice Leader "Taylor Swift" tree, the "Wicked" tree, and the blue-ribbon winner in the contemporary division, the "Toilet tree." Congratulations to Cleo Zins on first place in the "traditional" category, and Rachel Larson for first

Summer Convention

Our Summer Convention this year will be held September 12-13th outside of New Ulm at Guggisberg Tree Farm, so it may have already happened by the time you are reading this. The Guggisberg Tree Farm is a family run business that has been growing trees since 1996. They currently have 15 acres of planted trees which consist of nine different types, ranging from fir to pine to spruce. Their farm is a cut-your-own farm with the idea of making memories for families for many years to come. Guest speakers will include Dr. John Ball from SDSU among others. It will be a great opportunity for networking, learning, and hands-on demonstrations.

In addition to all the great stuff happening at the Guggisberg Farm, the family also arranged for a Friday event at Schell's Brewery, which is the second oldest family-owned brewery in America! Hopefully you can all join us and Herman the German in one of Minnesota's most unique cities!

Winter Convention

The 2026 Winter Convention is set for February 20-21st at the Braham Event Center. This is a centrally located, beautiful venue that will offer us financial flexibility in terms of food and drinks. Look for more details in the next issue.

Ben Wolcyn, MNCTA President 🌲



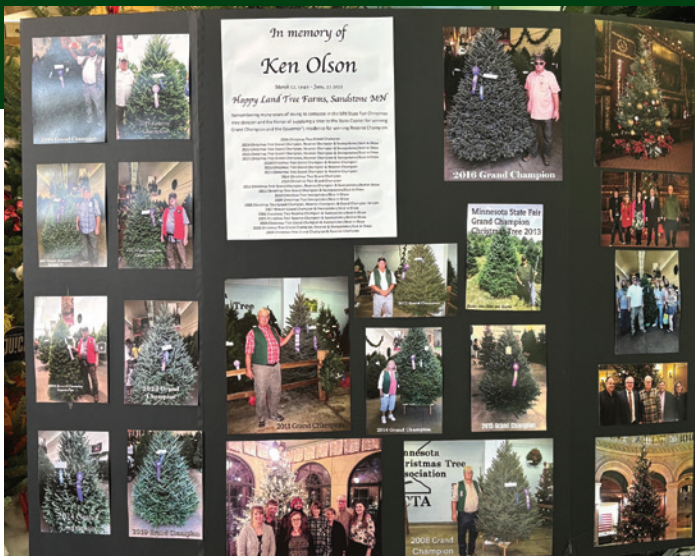
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Ken Olson Tribute Board

place in the "contemporary" category. The decorated tree division has come a long way in the last two years, and we hope to continue building on the momentum we've created. With the huge increase in numbers of trees displayed, came extra media attention for our display! We had interviews with Fox 9, Kare 11, and WCCO that all went great! They were each 3-5 minutes in length, and I personally had the privilege of doing two of them with our Vice President Paul Saunders doing the third. It gave our industry the most attention we've ever got at the State Fair. With growth comes opportunity, so I hope everyone who didn't bring a tree this year considers bringing a tree next year. With the increase in traffic flow, it has become more important than ever for us to fill the time slots volunteering in the exhibit. It is a great opportunity to represent our industry, so please consider helping next year.

The Passing of a Legend

On June 23rd our association and industry lost an absolute legend when Kenneth W. Olson of Happy Land Tree Farms passed away after a 2-year battle with brain cancer at the age of 76. Ken was born on March 12, 1949 in Denver, CO. He lived in Sandstone, MN and was married to Sandy Olson. He was a life-long Christmas tree grower and a long-time member of the MNCTA where he served on our board in various roles including President. Ken was as genuine a tree grower as you would ever meet telling it like it was with his one-of-a-kind northern MN accent. He was always willing to help the brand-new grower with a tip here or there. Our MNCTA board felt it was appropriate to honor him at the State Fair this year with a beautiful collage of pictures of his Grand and Reserve Champion trees from over the years in addition to his trees at the Governor's Mansion and Capitol. He won his first Grand Championship in 2002, and he kept on winning from there with 16 Grand Champion Trees, 12 Reserve Grand Champions, and 13 Sweepstakes Awards over the next 22 years! 2017 was the only year in that time where he didn't win Grand, Reserve, or Sweepstakes. What an incredible run by Ken and Happyland! Beyond all the awards that he won, Ken had a way of making everyone he met feel special. Personally, I enjoyed interacting with him whenever I had the chance, and our entire industry will miss him dearly!

REGIONAL NEWS MISSOURI

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Jennifer Hoffman
Amanda Harmon



A quick group shot as MCTA Members wrap up the Summer 2025 Meeting at Pin Oaks Farms.

WHAT AN EXCITING SUMMER TO BE A MISSOURI CHRISTMAS TREE ASSOCIATION GROWER!

Summer Meeting

Neither a heat warning nor intermittent rain could keep 45 members of the MCTA from enjoying a weekend at Pin Oak Farms on July 19 in New Haven, MO. As the weather continued to try to compromise the agenda, the MCTA members do what they do best, and “pivot” – adjusting to make the most of the valuable day. It all worked out in the end, with members hearing from the host, a productive association meeting, plus a farm tour and demo – not to mention the knowledge and connections gained.

The meeting kicked off with Pin Oaks Farms founder, Dwayne Brune, providing a history of his family’s life’s work and farm. After finding successes in the vegetable market, along with his family’s pumpkin patch success, and farm-to-table products,

the family explored growing Christmas trees several years ago – with some impressive specimens thus showcased on the farm tour.

During the farm tour, Scott Rood, of Pea Ridge Forest, and others shared tips around pruning and shearing knowledge – including how to identify needle cast and remove/treat it – which lead into the demo.

AirGro LLC was on-site to demonstrate their fascinating drone technology. Each drone, with precise GPS technology, can deliver timely applications of products, like fungicide, exactly where needed while eliminating soil compaction, tree damage, and wasted product. The members found the demo entertaining and insightful.



AirGro LLC drone demonstrates a precise drone application using water and dye.



Dwayne Brune, Pin Oak Farms, (host) speaks to the layout of fields, his strategies, and lessons learned.

New Ideas/New Councils

The council and members brought up issues and ideas to the group during the association's meeting, with the association agreeing to once again sponsor the nationwide campaign, Trees for Troops. The association also approved exploratory measures (and thus the formation of new councils) to discover and present ideas in the winter meeting regarding arranging and attracting vendors to attend MCTA meetings and advertising/cross-promotion around "Real Christmas Trees" for MCTA farmers.

Tree & Wreath Contests

The MCTA is once again hosting its annual Tree & Wreath Contests for 2025. This exciting contest is open to all MCTA members to submit and vote. So please do! The deadline to submit is September 15th. Voting will take place Sept 15-30. Winners will receive \$200, plus the honor of presenting the Governor and First Lady of Missouri with a fresh wreath and tree in December during the Proclamation signing. Learn more at <https://missourichristmastrees.org/tree-wreath-contest/>.



President, Troy Bollinger (Bollinger Farms), leads the MCTA meeting Jul. 19.



Michelle Brune, Pin Oak Farms, stands outside the farm's remarkable original cabin, protected and preserved throughout decades.



Scott Rood (Pea Ridge Forest) demonstrates practical pruning and shearing techniques.

The logo for Better Forest Tree Seeds features a green evergreen tree inside a circular border with the text "BETTER FOREST TREE SEEDS". The background image shows a person on a lift pruning a large evergreen tree.

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REGIONAL NEWS NEW YORK

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Springside Farms Break out session.

CTFANY SUMMER RECAP

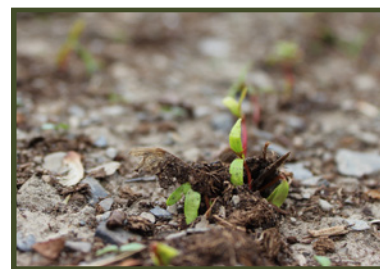
Hello fellow growers. Hopefully all are starting to wrap up the shearing season and maybe participating in local or regional fair competitions with trees and wreaths. Many have spent the summer attending various association meetings in between summer work. As we close out the summer, CTFANY had a

great summer program of meetings starting in the east of the state and migrating to the west.

Naccarato's Trees and Wreaths hosted the first CTFANY Regional Farm Visit. We had 10 members from 5 farms in



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Age	Size	100 - 499	500 - 1000
-----	------	-----------	------------

Abies balsamea ~ Balsam Fir

* Limited crop

2-1 / P+1	8 - 14"	1.75	1.25
2-2 / P+2	10 - 18"	2.50	1.95

Abies balsamea phanerolepis ~ Canaan Fir

* Limited crop

2-1 / P+1	10 - 15"	1.85	1.65
P+2	10 - 18"	2.50	2.00

(1000+ Inquire)

Abies concolor ~ Concolor Fir

* Limited crop

2-0 / 3-0	12 - 18"	1.25	0.95
3-1 / P+1	8 - 14"	2.00	1.75
2-2	12 - 18"	2.25	1.95

Abies fraseri ~ Fraser Fir

* Limited crop

3-0	9 - 12"	0.95	0.75
3-1 / P+1	8 - 14"	1.65	1.45
3-2 / P+2	10 - 18"	2.25	1.95

(1000+ Inquire)

Age	Size	100 - 499	500 - 1000
-----	------	-----------	------------

Picea abies ~ Norway Spruce

3-0	10 - 15"	0.85	0.65
2-1	10 - 16"	1.65	1.45
2-2	15 - 24"	2.25	1.75

(1000+ Inquire)

Picea glauca ~ White Spruce

3-0	9 - 15"	0.95	0.70
2-1 / 2-2	15 - 24"	1.95	1.75

Picea pungens "Glaucia" ~ Colorado Blue Spruce

3-0	9 - 15"	0.95	0.70
2-1 / P+1	8 - 14"	1.65	1.45
2-2	16 - 22"	1.85	1.65

(1000+ Inquire)

Picea omorika ~ Serbian Spruce

2-2	12 - 16"	1.65	1.45
2-2	16 - 22"	1.95	1.75

Picea glauca "Densata" ~ Black Hills Spruce

2-2	9-12"	1.65	1.25
-----	-------	------	------

Age	Size	100 - 499	500 - 1000
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Pinus resinosa ~ Red Pine

2-0 / 3-0	8 - 14"	0.95	0.75
2-2	8 - 14"	1.75	1.45
2-2	14 - 22"	1.95	1.65

Pinus strobus ~ Eastern White Pine

3-0	6 - 12"	0.95	0.75
2-1 / 3-1	10 - 16"	1.95	1.75
2-2	14 - 20"	2.25	1.95

Pseudotsuga menziesii ~ Douglas Fir

3-0	9 - 15"	0.95	0.75
2-2	12 - 16"	1.95	1.75
2-2	15 - 24"	2.25	1.95

Thuja occidentalis ~ American Arborvitae [Eastern White Cedar]

2-0 / 3-0	18 - 24"	1.25	0.95
2-1 / 3-1	10 - 16"	2.25	1.95

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attendance. There were a lot of conversations, questions and interaction between everyone. Some feedback included positive comments and appreciation of CTFANY in bringing people together and we should do more of these. They looked forward to visiting other farms and being able to talk with and learn from other growers regardless of size.

The second regional meeting, sponsored by CTFANY, was held at Country Pine Farms in Holland, NY on Saturday, August 2. About 30 Christmas tree farmers toured the fields and shared their knowledge about growing trees. Growers were able to see approximately 30,000 potted trees (aged 1 year to 3 years) that are part of fall planting at the farm.

We had great weather and a great turnout for our Annual Summer Meeting at Springside Farms in Fabius NY July 17th – 19th. Over 150 attendees participated in 2 days of presentations from a variety of expert speakers with up to 8 DEC credits available. We had around 20 vendors participating offering great products and delivering preorders. A good number of members also participated in 3 farm tours the day before the sessions.

Our Final Sponsored Tour, will be a DEC Saratoga Tree Nursery Guided Tour, Friday September 19th, 10am – 1pm at 2369 Route 50 S. Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. There is no charge for this event. Bring your own lunch. No RSVP is needed. Contact Michael Naccarato with questions. 845-332-3977

We welcome our newly elected President Michael Naccarato of Naccarato Trees and Wreaths, and new Board Members, Jerianne Scheiderich, Pat Barczys, and Don Griffing.

We look forward to and wish everybody a great sales season.

Best Regards

Peter Sweet Jr, Communications Director



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Naccarato Trees and Wreaths Farm Visit.

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Hall of Fame inductee Dave Reese (center front) is shown with his family.



Jeff and Doug Greig are pictured with the Grand Champion tree at the Ohio State Fair.



Amy Galehouse is shown with the reserve champion tree.

GREETINGS FROM THE BUCKEYE STATE

Earlier this year, Mother Nature provided many of our growers with excess moisture. However, we are now experiencing drought conditions. The month of August brought temperatures exceeding 100 degrees and no rainfall.

Despite the earlier wet weather, the OCTA Summer Meeting, hosted by Kaleidoscope Farms and the family of Dave Reese, was a great success. The event offered a full schedule of educational programming and ample opportunities to network with fellow growers. Sincere thanks to the Reese family for their time and effort in planning such a memorable meeting.

It was especially fitting to gather at the Reese family's northwestern Ohio farm as Dave Reese was inducted into the Hall of Fame. Dave has selflessly contributed to the betterment of the Ohio Christmas tree industry for many years. He has laid the foundation for a beautiful farm that is now operated by his four sons, their wives, and families. Congratulations, Dave!

At the recently held Ohio State Fair, Greig's Christmas Tree Farm exhibited the Grand Champion Christmas Tree, a Canaan Fir. Galehouse Tree Farms exhibited a Korean Fir, which was selected as the Reserve Champion. We were honored to have judges from The Ohio State University, along with our celebrity judge, Brian Baldrige, who serves as the Director of Agriculture.

During the fair, commodity representatives also had the opportunity to tour a new building that will house the OCTA display at the 2026 Ohio State Fair — an exciting development for the industry!



Honorary Judge Brian Baldrige is judging at the state contest.

Looking ahead, the OCTA Winter Meeting is scheduled for February 21, 2026, at the Quest Center in Columbus. Topics will include:

- Agritourism
- The use of credit cards
- A tax update
- Chemical recertification classes

Please stay tuned to our website for the most up-to-date information.

Have a great fall season!

Valerie Graham, Executive Director, OCTA



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AROUND ONTARIO REGION

This past summer, the Christmas Tree Farmers of Ontario (CTFO) were very busy.

On August 16, 2025, we held our annual Field and Education Day at Outback Tree Farm in Listowel, Ontario. Our hosts, Tim and Christine, welcomed more than 100 attendees to their beautiful farm. The event featured a variety of learning and discussion areas, including Christmas Tree Growing 101 for new members, sessions with Agritourism Ontario, field tours, a weeds and pest management session, a pruning lesson, a field-clearing demonstration, and even a special visit from Santa.

The Christmas Tree Lab at the University of Waterloo also released an illustrated *Climate Glossary for Christmas Tree Farming* to our members during the Field and Education Day. Dr. Kelsey Leonard and Alison Clarke were on site gathering input from growers to further develop and enhance our *New Growers Program*—another exciting project in partnership with the Lab.

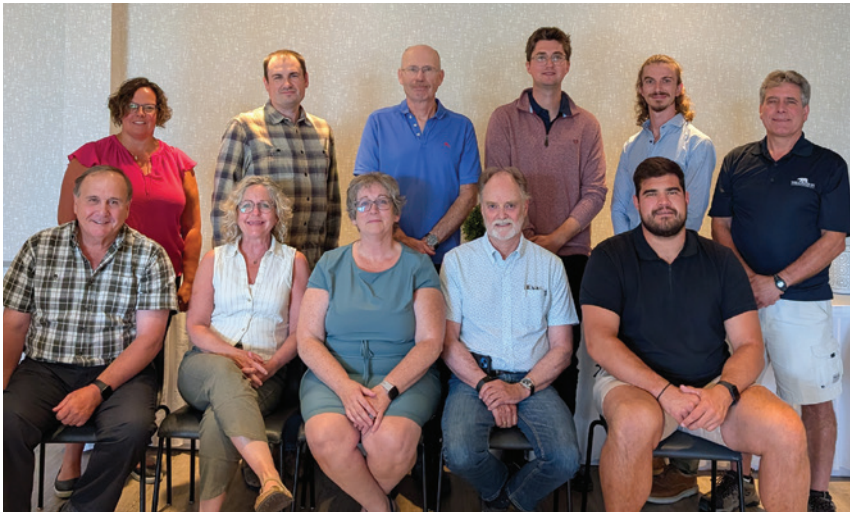
CTFO President James Somerville also took a moment to acknowledge the passing of Doug Drysdale Sr., paying tribute

to his legacy in Christmas tree farming and his instrumental role in helping to organize the CTFO many years ago.

On August 22, 2025, several CTFO members traveled to Quebec to take part in the Canadian Christmas Trees Association's Annual General Meeting and the Quebec Christmas Tree Association's (APANQ) Field Day. These events provided a valuable opportunity to learn from growers in another region of Canada. While plantations in Quebec tend to be much larger, it was inspiring to connect with smaller growers as well, and to exchange experiences about both the challenges and the rewards of Christmas tree farming.

The CTFO office had the opportunity to participate in numerous media interviews this summer, which has been a great benefit for our industry. Too often, Christmas tree farming only appears in the news during the harvest season. These interviews gave us a chance to highlight the year-round work and dedication it takes to grow healthy trees and ensure that perfect Christmas tree is ready for consumers each holiday season.

Submitted by Shirley Brennan Executive Director



A group shot attendees at the CCTA AGM



Joe Wareham from Chickadee Tree Farm and Shirley Brennan, Executive Director

REGIONAL NEWS ONTARIO



Field and Education Day at Outback Tree Farm in Listowel, Ontario



Charles Vaillancourt from Valfei Products explain the equipment and set up at his farm.

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	Age	Per 100	Per 1000
Norway Spruce			
8-12"	2-0	67.00	336.00
12-18"	2-1	170.00	1092.00
16-24"	2-1	190.00	1328.00

Colorado Blue Spruce			
8-12"	2-0	67.00	325.00
10-16"	2-1	170.00	1092.00

Fraser Fir			
7-12"	P+1	178.00	1233.00
10-18"	P+2	231.00	1785.00

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Douglas Fir, Concolor Fir, Canaan Fir,
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REGIONAL NEWS PENNSYLVANIA

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Summer Meeting at Berkey's Nursery.

NEWS UPDATE FROM PENNSYLVANIA

Message from the PCTGA President, Gerrit Strathmeyer

It almost becomes 'the norm' to say, which is never fun, but 2025 has brought a roller coaster ride of weather for Pennsylvania growers. The winter months were harsher than average with colder temperatures for an extended period of time. Spring was filled with lots of rain and sunshine, which in turn has made weed control a struggle into the summer months. And par to the course, late summer into fall, mother nature has turned off the faucet. We could use some of those spring April showers. All in all, I'd say things are 'the norm'.

We had a great summer meeting at Berkey's Nursery! They were celebrating their 75th year in business. A big thank you to the Berkey family for hosting and everyone involved in making the meeting a success. It's always great to see a family business continue through multiple generations. With over 170 growers in attendance everyone was able to connect, share ideas and strategies, and continue to support the industry.

We're all in this together and that's evident at Pennsylvania meetings. As kids get back into school and football returns (We Are... Penn State!) we wish everyone a successful fall and Christmas season ahead!



Hague Wins National Grand Champion for Decorated Wreath



Gary Hague Earned the National Reserve Champion for his Undecorated Wreath

PCTGA Has Memorable Impact & Incredible Time at the 2025 National Christmas Tree Association Meeting

This year the National Christmas Tree Association's meeting was held at Northern Pines Nursery, Lake City, MI. The very successful event attracted over 700 people including growers and exhibitors! The Pennsylvania Christmas Tree Growers Association (PCTGA) made its own impact with many of its members attending and several of those winning recognition in the national tree and wreath competitions.

On July 25th Hague's Christmas Trees entered its wreaths into the national wreath contest and when the judging and votes was done Hague's earned the National Grand Champion Decorated Wreath Award and the National Reserve Champion Undecorated Wreath Award! It was Hague's 5th time winning at national: two undecorated and three decorated wreaths.

In all, there were sixteen wreaths entered from the best wreathmakers from across the U.S. Gary Hague remarked, "It was a wonderful meeting with many Pennsylvania members attending and many Christmas tree friends we have gotten to know through the years. It wasn't just a Christmas tree meeting it was a family reunion!"

Wreaths were not the only highlight for the PCTGA. Evergreen Acres (Pam and Paul Shealer) entered their Douglas Fir in the national Christmas tree competition and took home the Reserve Champion ribbon!

The PCTGA wishes to thank the National Christmas Tree Association for its work and dedication to the Christmas tree industry and offer a special thanks as well to Northern Pines Nursey for hosting such an incredible event.

Looking Ahead to PCTGA's Winter Meeting February 5th and 6th 2026

Next year, the PCTGA is planning on taking a look back as well as a look ahead. Specifically, we will review the association's history with its members going all the way back to the 1940s. You never can tell where you are going until you know where you have been and the PCTGA has a long and proud history worth telling.

The Winter Meeting also anticipates looking ahead to understand how the Pennsylvania Agritourism Activity Protection Act of 2021 (the Act) impacts growers who have agritourism as part of their business. The Act grants limited civil liability protection to agritourism operators — like farms offering tours, hayrides, or choose-and-cut operations — so long as four conditions are met: the activity occurs on agricultural land, a prominent warning sign is posted, visitors sign a bold-font waiver (or ticket) before participation, and none of the statutory exceptions (gross negligence, intentional harm, criminal conduct, reckless failure to warn) apply. The Act excludes weddings, concerts, overnight stays, or food/beverage services.



PCTGA at the National Christmas Tree Association Meeting: From Left to Right Beth Bossio, Gary Thomas, Joe Ahearn, Mark McCurdy, and Gerrit Strathmeyer

Understanding how these rules impact Christmas tree operations is critical and the PCTGA will be sure to address this important rule and how growers can best comply.

The PCTGA provides its membership discount to anyone who is a member in good standing of any other state association. If you would like to know more about the PCTGA's Winter Meeting and perhaps take advantage of its membership discount, please reach out to our executive director, Aaron Grau at aaron@christmastrees.org. 🌲



REGIONAL NEWS WISCONSIN

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Members Appreciation Banquet from left to right: Eric Anderson, Leah and David Chapman, Lisa and Mike Stoffel, Casey and Rana Chrudimsky.

NEWS UPDATE FROM WISCONSIN'S SUMMER CONVENTION

Branching Out Toward Tomorrow: A Recap of the 2025 WCTPA Summer Convention

When nearly 200 growers, vendors, and friends of Wisconsin's Christmas tree industry gathered in Merrill this August, the energy was electric. Our 2025 Summer Convention, *Branching Out Toward Tomorrow*, was more than just a meeting—it was a celebration of our traditions, our resilience, and our shared future. With 25 exhibitor booths, 17 sponsoring businesses, and

eight farm stops on tour, attendees left inspired, informed, and proud to be part of the WCTPA family.

Learning, Sharing, and Growing Together

Our convention opened under the vaulted beams of Hillview Farms Wedding Barn, graciously hosted by Chris and Marling Schultz, alongside the Schultz family's Northwoods Evergreen & Wire Company. Their dual enterprises—Christmas tree



Educational session inside Hillview Farms Wedding Barn, site and host of the 2025 Wisconsin Summer Convention: *Branching Out Toward Tomorrow*



Hillview Farms Wedding Barn, site and host of the 2025 Wisconsin Summer Convention: *Branching Out Toward Tomorrow*



Winners of our Summer Convention Welcome Reception 16-Team Bracket Bags Tournament: Mary & Don Miller of Wheeler's Laura's Lane Nursery

production and a thriving agritourism venue—perfectly embodied the theme of *Branching Out Toward Tomorrow*.

Educational sessions covered everything from labor and workforce development to agritourism strategies to national and state-level industry updates.

In the field, demonstrations kept attendees buzzing: fertilizer research, soil studies, drone applications, and equipment innovations.

Touring Wisconsin's Christmas Tree Country

Saturday featured the hallmark of every summer convention—our farm tours. This year's eight-stop field tour was as diverse as it was dynamic:

- **Smiling John's Christmas Trees** showed how 15 acres can thrive through interplanting and customer-focused experiences.
- **Doug Latzig Christmas Trees** demonstrated the seed-to-sale cycle on over 100 acres of Fraser firs grown from seed he collects himself.
- **Fritz's Mountain** highlighted its transformation from wholesale block planting to a family-friendly choose-and-cut farm.
- **Central Wisconsin Evergreens** impressed attendees with hands-on ball-and-burlap demonstrations and cutting-edge nursery technology.
- **High Ground Tree Farm** opened its test plots on herbicide trials and shared decades of wholesale and retail market knowledge.
- **Central Wisconsin Evergreens Office & Shop** showcased GPS-guided planters, nursery blocks, and specialized planting tools.
- **Hillview Farms Wedding Barn** revealed how agritourism diversifies income and strengthens community ties.
- **Northwoods Evergreen & Wire Company** underscored the impact of wreath and garland production alongside wholesale tree operations

Each host farm was honored at our Member Appreciation Banquet for their generosity and leadership.



Tree Contest Grand Champion and Reserve Champion winner, Swan's Christmas Trees, Sue and Ron Swan (with daughter and son-in-law, Jill and Dennis Carlson)



Tree Contest winner, Roselin and John Hagedorn of Smiling John's Christmas Trees won 1st place in the Pines category



Tree Contest winner, Josh Koehler of Central Wisconsin Evergreens won 1st place in the Spruces category and 2nd place in the Balsam Fir category



Tree Contest winner, Dennis and Jill Carlson on behalf of Swan's Christmas Trees won 1st place in the Balsam Fir and Fraser Fir categories. Swan's Christmas Trees' award winning trees also claimed Grand Champion (Balsam Fir) and Reserve Champion (Fraser Fir) titles.

Competition, Celebration, and Recognition

TREE CONTEST RESULTS

This year's Wisconsin Tree Contest drew the largest number of entries we've seen in years. Swan's Christmas Trees claimed both Grand Champion (Balsam Fir) and Reserve Champion (Fraser Fir). Additional winners included:

- **Fraser Fir:** 2nd – Northwoods Evergreen; 3rd – Happ's Homegrown Christmas Trees
- **Balsam Fir:** 2nd – Central Wisconsin Evergreens
- **Pines:** 1st – Smiling John's Christmas Trees
- **Spruces:** 1st – Central Wisconsin Evergreens
- **Other Species:** 1st – Northwoods Evergreen

BRANCHING OUT AWARDS

We also recognized members making an extraordinary impact:

- **Rex Miller** of Miller's Christmas Trees, for promoting WCTPA through his "Christmas in July" booth at the Columbia County Fair.
- **David & Leah Chapman** of Silent Night Evergreens, whose balsam fir earned **Grand Champion at the 2025 NCTA Tree Contest**, securing the honor of presenting the White House Christmas Tree in 2026.
- **Chris Schultz** of Hillview Farms and Northwoods Evergreen, for his vision in expanding agritourism and for hosting this year's convention.

WELCOME RECEPTION FUN

The Thursday-night *Brats, Burgers, and Bags* kickoff was capped by a spirited bags tournament. Congratulations to **Mary & Don Miller of Wheeler's Laura's Lane Nursery** for taking home the championship!

A BANQUET TO REMEMBER

Our Member Appreciation Banquet blended fellowship and recognition in true reception style. We were honored to welcome **Sarah Hagenow, the 2025 Alice in Dairyland**, who will cut Wisconsin's first Christmas tree of the season at Newby's Evergreen Farms on November 17, 2026. Her presence

REGIONAL NEWS WISCONSIN

underscored the important connections between agriculture, tourism, and our state's holiday traditions.

Board electees were introduced, winners were celebrated, and a preview of the upcoming Winter Convention reminded us that the momentum continues into the colder months.

LOOKING FORWARD: DOUBLE THE OPPORTUNITIES, DOUBLE THE IMPACT

As we reflect on these 2.5 packed days of networking, learning, and celebrating, one theme rings clear: Wisconsin's Christmas tree growers are indeed branching out toward tomorrow. Together, we're blending tradition with innovation, scaling wisely, and ensuring that families near and far continue to experience the joy of a real Christmas tree.

Thank you to every attendee, sponsor, exhibitor, farm host, and volunteer who made this year's convention a success. The future of our industry is bright because of you. The momentum from our Summer Convention carries us toward two exceptional learning opportunities in the year ahead:

2026 Winter Convention: "Creating Real Value" January 18-20, 2026 | Wisconsin Dells, WI

Winter is the season for reflection, planning, and deep learning—and our 2026 Winter Convention promises to deliver precisely that. Join us over Martin Luther King Jr. weekend on our Christmas Tree track at the Growing Wisconsin Conference where upwards to 500 attendees from 7 different agricultural associations gather together in the Waterpark Capital of the World at the Kalahari Resort in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin.

With sessions ranging from cutting-edge research results with MSU's Bill Lindberg to practical cost analysis of pre-emergent herbicides with Helena's Shawn Hilliard, this gathering will sharpen your competitive edge for the coming season. Look for hands-on workshops including a Grand Champion Wreath Workshop, introduction to our new Member Portal, and targeted roundtables designed specifically for both new growers seeking guidance and experienced growers ready to expand their association engagement. Growers and vendors are welcome—come teach, demo, and connect.



2026 Heartland Christmas Convention: "The Making of an Old-Fashioned Christmas"

August 6-8, 2026 | Oregon, Wisconsin
Hosted by Hann's Christmas Farm

Step back into the wonder of Christmases past while learning to grow your farm for the future. Hosted at one of Wisconsin's

THE MAKING OF AN OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS



2026 HEARTLAND CHRISTMAS CONVENTION
AUGUST 6TH - 8TH

Alongside National Christmas Tree Organizations' Summer Meetings



HOSTED BY HANN'S CHRISTMAS FARM
Oregon, Wisconsin



largest choose-and-cut operations—grown by over 200% in one generation—you'll discover efficiency strategies to move more customers through your operation, real-world tactics to scale your business, and inspiration from a journey that transformed modest beginnings into retail success. Save the dates to join us, just outside of Madison, WI, for three days blending hands-on field learning, retail best practices, and family-friendly fun. We're inviting state associations to co-host, with equal recognition and shared value for members, plus national visibility as NCTA, the Real Christmas Tree Board, and the Christmas Spirit Foundation hold their summer board meetings alongside the event.

Open Invitation to the Industry

These events welcome not just WCTPA members, but Christmas tree growers and industry vendors from across the nation. Whether you're just starting out, already operating at capacity, or looking to connect with new markets and partnerships, both conventions offer valuable insights and networking opportunities that can elevate your operation to the next level.

From the smallest seedling operation to the largest wholesale nursery, there's a place at our table and wisdom to be shared. Come reignite your passion, strengthen your business, and build lasting connections in this incredible community.

Here's to branching out toward tomorrow – together.

All growers and vendors are invited to join us at one or both events in 2026. Please reach out to Executive Director Sarah Glitto at info@christmastrees-wi.org or 608-742-8663 and check our website, www.christmastrees-wi.org, for more updates in the coming months!

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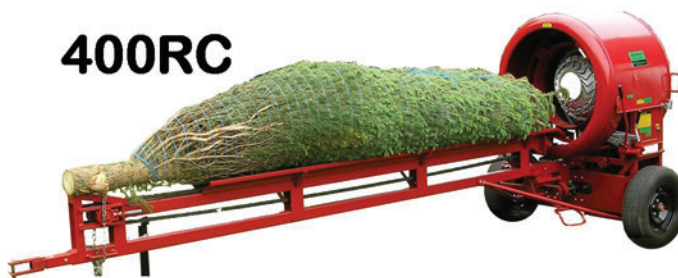
214A



400A



210RC



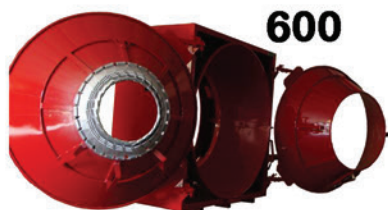
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324



317



600

Howey Tree Baler Corp.

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For more information or a free catalog, contact us



120



150A



150PTO



200T



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