

Key Topics:

Maximizing Your Herbicide Performance

Weed control is an important and potentially costly activity for a Christmas tree producer. Tracey Harpster of Penn State University will provide a review of pre and post weed control programs and offer tips to help you get the biggest bang for your weed control buck.

The Tree Starts Here

Jim Rockis will be presenting a session on what is involved in seed collecting, seed extraction and seed storage. One of the most important aspects of the Christmas tree industry is the ability to procure viable seed. Jim Rockis will give his opinion on what is transpiring with the new species; Nordmann and Turkish Fir, as well as some of the old standbys: Fraser, Canaan and Douglas Fir.

Wreath Inspirations

Nationally-renowned floral designer, Alice Waterous, will entertain and engage attendees as she demonstrates creative wreath designs and techniques. Alice is known for her ability to mesh high-style design with natural elements. Participants will be inspired by wreath designs that will appeal to a diverse customer base and will also take away tips to create those designs in an efficient way.

2013 Sales Results

2013 Season Consumer Tracking Poll Results & Season Highlights Be among the first to view the results of the 2013 season Harris Interactive consumer poll and find out what they mean for the industry. We'll also recap the major news stories of the 2013 season and how NCTA helped to shape them. But it's more than just what the survey shows about total trees purchased, for how much and from where. It's about our industry listening to consumers and what they say about our product.

Small Insects, Big Problems?

Insect pests can have major effects on tree growth, appearance and value. MSU Extension Specialists will provide an overview of common Christmas tree insects and effective management options.

4R's of Nitrogen Use

Right rate, Right time, Right place and Right form - Jill O'Donnell, MSU Extension will be discussing ways to better understand some of the strategies associated with efficient nitrogen management in Christmas tree production.

Disease Update

Dr. Dennis Fulbright, MSU will discuss and answer your questions about some of the more common disease problems Christmas tree growers have faced the last few years.

Successfully Using IPM

The goal of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is to manage pests by using several control strategies that are safe, profitable and environmentally compatible. Erin Lizotte, MSU Extension will discuss how scouting, monitoring and identifying natural predators can be part of a successful Christmas tree IPM program.

Cover crops

Christina Curell and Paul Gross, MSU Extension will discuss how to choose and use of cover crops to improve soil structure and productivity.

Coning in Fraser fir

Fraser fir trees often produce large amounts of cones in many Christmas tree plantations. While the cones look fairly harmless when they first begin to develop, growers need to remove them to maintain the marketability of their trees. This requires significant hand labor and can be quite costly, reducing grower profits. Dr. Bert Cregg and Brent Crain will update the group on their current research efforts to understand and control early coning in Fraser fir.

Exotic conifers

Dave Armitrout, of Armitrout Nursery will lead a discussion and take the group on a tour of their collection of unusual and exotic conifer species.

Equipment Demonstrations:

A variety of equipment demonstrations will be offered throughout the meeting. One of the pieces of equipment to be demonstrated will be the Jutek High Clearance Tractor from Denmark. This unique tractor was developed specifically for the Christmas tree industry and includes a variety of implements including sprayers, row fertilizer, basal pruner, harvester and more.

Farms and Tour sites:

Peterson's Riverview Nursery - Peterson's Riverview Nursery, LLC is owned and operated by Jerry Peterson and his son Josh. Jerry founded the nursery in 1993 after years of working in the nursery business with different companies. With his agricultural degree from Purdue University, Jerry has worked with and grown nursery stock for over 30 years. Josh has worked at the nursery since its start and became a co-owner in 2004 after graduating from MSU with a degree in Horticulture. Jerry and Josh have worked hard in recent years to expand the production capacity of the nursery to meet the increasing demand for quality seedlings and transplants. They personally take care of all tasks at the nursery such as seed sowing, irrigation, spraying, shearing Christmas trees, and office management.

Anne Peterson, Jerry's wife, is also very involved in the business. She plays a big role in the grading process of the seedlings and transplants which is perhaps the most important step in making certain that only the best quality plants are sent out to our customers. Another key role she plays is in the wreath making process. She oversees the entire operation to ensure that each wreath made is of florist quality. She is an award-winning wreath designer, winning the Michigan and National Wreath Contests on multiple occasions.

Armintrout Nursery – Established in 1935, Armintrout's Nursery is a wholesale grower, specializing in spruce, fir and pine. The nursery is located in the ideal growing area of Southwest Michigan's snowbelt where the proximity to Lake

Michigan moderates the climate. Most winters, the ample snow cover keeps the ground from freezing. Sheltered from the harsh extremes, the trees thrive.

Armintrout's Nursery is a leading supplier of landscape evergreens, mostly in the 5'-14' range. Their balled and burlapped trees are packaged with double, root proof burlaps, wire baskets and their unique double tying system. Located half way between Chicago and Detroit, Armintrout's ships truckloads throughout the greater Midwest and beyond. They also offer field potted evergreens for the garden center and landscape trade.

Owner, David Armintrout, carries on the tradition started by his father, Paul. Paul was a leader in Michigan's budding Christmas tree industry in the 1950's and helped to establish the Michigan Christmas Tree Association. He served as one of the association's first presidents and was a pioneer in testing new seed sources and varieties. The farm features a unique collection of exotic species.

Badger Evergreen Nursery – Started in 1980 by Villas Mohrland, Badger Evergreen Nursery is managed by sons Tim, Kevin, Chris and Matt. Badger Evergreen features a seedling nursery and large B&B landscape operation. They produce wholesale Christmas trees and operate multiple choose & cut locations as well as a number of retail Christmas tree lots in southwest Michigan. In addition, Badger Evergreen produces large quantities of wreaths and roping each season.

To assist in managing these diverse enterprises, the Mohrlands added a new building in 1999 that combines contemporary architecture and functionality of space to better serve clients and manage their business. Located in close proximity to Peterson's, we will be using space in this building for a number of our summer meeting sessions.

Janke Tree Farm – Choose & Cut Tour – Mark and Hilde Janke have made their small, choose & cut Christmas tree farm a destination for hundreds of families in the Allegan area. With just six acres of Christmas trees, the Jankes have created a special holiday destination for their customers.