



2023 MCTA SUMMER MEETING SCHEDULE

IMPORTANT: We will divide into two teams (**BLUE** and **GREEN**) in order to keep group sizes manageable for Wednesday's and Thursday's programming. Presenters will repeat all sessions, so each team will experience the same program. You will see the same presentations in both groups.

TUESDAY, JULY 25

- 1:00-6pm **Vendor Set-up**
- 5:00pm **MCTA Board Meeting**
- 7:00pm **Meet and Greet at Stix Ludington** – Join us for a drink on the patio – cash bar/ food available – 1963 N Lakeshore Drive, Ludington, MI 49431

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26

- 7:30-9am **Registration and Exhibits Opens**
- 9:00am **Welcome** – Followed by **Presentations & Field Tours**
- 9:00am-12pm **GREEN group – Indoor Presentations** by Real Christmas Tree Board, Marsha Gray; MSU Extension, Bill Lindberg; USDA Farm Services, Janet Howes and Seth Earl; MDARD, Amber Neils; Helena Chemical representatives.
- BLUE group – Field Tours**
As we tour the fields with Ben and Jim Nickelson, they will share stories and insights from decades of growing Christmas trees. In addition to our hosts, we will have MSU Extension Educators and Specialists presenting on the following topics throughout the field tour: MSU Dept. of Horticulture, Deblina Saha; MSU Dept. of Biosystems & Agricultural Engineering, Dr. Younsuk Dong; MSU Extension Christina Curell; MSU Depts. of Horticulture and Foresetry, Dr. Bert Cregg.
- 9:00am-12pm **AUXILIARY Programs** – Bow making, Centerpieces, Alice Waterous
- 12-1:30pm **Exhibits and Lunch**
- 1:30-4:30pm **GREEN group – Field Tours**
Repeat of morning 9:00am Field Tours
- BLUE group – Indoor Presentations**
Repeat of morning 9:00am Indoor Presentations
- 1:30-4:30pm **AUXILIARY Programs** – Retailing, Flocking and Retail Shops, Kevin Torlinee, Laurie Koelling
- 4:30-5:30pm **Happy Hour Reception with Vendors**

- 6:00pm **Dinner at Lincoln Hills Golf Club, 1527 N Lakeshore Drive, Ludington MI 49431** – Hall of Fame awards ceremony, live music, and fun.

THURSDAY, JULY 27

- 8:00-10am **Exhibits Opens**
- 10:00am **Nursery Tours – BLUE and GREEN groups will be directed at tour time**
Needlefast Evergreens and other conifer nurseries are literally the 'birthplace' of your Christmas tree plantations. The culture and care that goes into the production of quality seedlings and transplants has a lasting impact on trees throughout the Christmas tree production cycle. Join us as we explore the intensive steps of going from seed to seedling to transplant.
- Bryan Rennick, MSU Dept. of Plant, Soil, and Microbial Sciences – What are mycorrhizae and do my trees have them? Most growers know that conifer roots form mycorrhizal associations. But do you need to add mycorrhizae or are native populations sufficient? Bryan Rennick will report on his survey of mycorrhizae on seedlings in nurseries in Michigan.
- Ben Nickelson: Strawberry fields forever...? – Interested in branching out into other aspects of agro-tourism? Ben Nickelson will discuss their experiences with adding strawberry production to their operation.
- 10:00am **AUXILIARY Program** – *The Ultimate Wreath Workshop*, Anne Peterson, Erin Peterson and Jessica Korson
- 12:30pm **Lunch**
- 1:30-3:30pm **Beginner Grower Session** – A Christmas tree bootcamp for the starting Christmas tree grower. Presentations by Dr. Bert Cregg, Riley Johnson, and Bill Lindberg.
- 2:00pm **9-hole Golf Scramble at Lincoln Hills Golf Club** – Rate: \$42 per person for 9-hole scramble with cart. Individuals, couples, and teams are all welcome!

EDUCATION PRESENTATION & TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26

INDOOR PRESENTATIONS

Real Christmas Tree Board report Marsha Gray, RTPB Executive Director – provides an update on the latest programs and activities of the Real Tree Promotion Board

Managing mites in Christmas trees Bill Lindberg, MSU Extension – Mites are tiny arthropods, related to spiders and ticks, that can cause damage to all Christmas tree species. Growers often do not notice mites until their damage becomes apparent. Effective management of mites in plantations requires scouting and understanding their lifecycle and treatment options.

USDA Farm Service Agency programs Janet Howes, FSA County Executive Director and Seth Earl, NRCS – provide an overview of various USDA programs that can provide aid to Christmas tree producers.

Invasive species in Michigan update Amber Neils, MDARD – discusses new invasive species in Michigan and MDARD regulations for control.

Trico Pro: Deer repellent for Christmas tree growers – Helena Chemical rep discusses application, effectiveness and availability of Trico deer repellent

FIELD TOUR STOPS

Weed management in mid-rotation tree plantations and chemical mowing of weeds Dr. Debalina Saha, MSU Dept. of Horticulture – Growers often focus on weed control in new plantations, but weeds can also impact growth and quality of trees at mid-rotation. Dr. Saha will discuss strategies for continuing your weed management plan.

Moisture sensor technology for irrigation management – Dr. Younsuk Dong, MSU Dept. of Biosystems & Agricultural Engineering. When and how much to water are never-ending questions for growers that irrigate. Dr. Dong will discuss his on-going research project to use the latest-generation moisture sensors to manage irrigation.

Sprayer calibration Christina Curell, MSU Extension – Spray tank running out before it should? Or plenty left in the tank when you're done? Effective and efficient spray programs start with accurate sprayer calibration. Christina Curell will cover the nuts and bolts of calibrating your system.

Deer management options in Christmas tree plantations Dr. Bert Cregg, MSU Depts of Horticulture and Forestry – Deer damage is a universal problem for large and small growers. Dr. Cregg will discuss a range of options for dealing with deer and highlight recent research at MSU on Trico deer repellent.

AUXILIARY PROGRAM DETAILS

WEDNESDAY, JULY 26

9-10:00am: Hands on bow making – Alice Waterous
Master bow making & your customers, family & friends will think you are brilliant! Here's an opportunity to practice this skill under the supervision of Alice Waterous, veteran floral professional. Bring a sharp pair of scissors & a wire cutter.

10:30am-12:00pm: Profitable Christmas Designs: Stuffing is for Turkeys! – Alice Waterous
How do you utilize less products but realize maximum profits? Alice will teach you how to create beautiful centerpieces in less time while being mindful of the materials used.

1:30-2:30pm: Turn selling Christmas Trees into selling an experience – Kevin Torline
Learn how to be creative and make your business an extension of a family's special Christmas memories and traditions. We will discuss the importance of family's tree buying experience and how to use the power of social media to stand out amongst the others.

2:30-3:30pm: Retail Shops – Laurie Koelling

Gift shops can be a profitable addition to your farm. How do you source and stock your store? Laurie will share her years of experience on managing a successful retail shop.

3:30-4:30pm: Snow Force Christmas Tree Flocking Demonstration – Pursell Manufacturing Team

Learn about the necessary equipment and how to successfully flock a tree. The demonstration will include applying colors and sparkle along with tips for success and pricing for profitability.

THURSDAY, JULY 27

9:30am-12:30pm: The Ultimate Wreath Workshop – Ann Peterson, Erin Peterson, and Jessica Korson

From efficient bough collection to making and decorating gorgeous wreaths, learn all about how to incorporate wreaths as part of your Christmas tree farm sales. This session will show you how to make wreaths, instruct you on how to use novelty shaped forms to add variety, and how to decorate in profitable and eye-catching ways!