



The Dog Days of Summer... and 150 of My Closest Friends



Chris Nicholson

It is hard to believe that we will all be selling our trees in just a few short weeks. I am sure that everyone is eager to get the sales season kicked off and I wish you all the best of the weather and hopefully the best season ever. Take

a deep breath, open the gates to your farm and do your best to keep a smile on your face no matter what comes your way.

Our winter meeting has been scheduled and we will return to Clinton at the Holiday Inn. It has been a few years since we used this location and the hope is that some of the northern growers will join us. We have a tremendous roster of speakers for you this year, please join us.

Our tree cutting ceremony in which the New Jersey Secretary of Agriculture cuts the ceremonial first tree of the season has been scheduled for Monday, December 1st. This year Secretary Fisher will have the honor of visiting the home of our 2014 Grand Champion, The Perfect Tree Farm in Phillipsburg NJ. This event is open to all who wish to attend. It is quite a thrill to see the press at this event each year. Think about making the trip to support not only our Grand Champions, but our organization as well. You never know, you might make it on to the evening news.

Our charity support has again been placed with Trees For Troops and Farmers against Hunger. You should have received the information and sign up sheet in the mail. They are both great charities and your donations go a long way in supporting others during the holiday season.

I wish you all the very best of luck this year selling the trees you have worked so hard to grow. In the blink of an eye it will all be over. Enjoy it, you've earned the right to showcase your farm and your trees. See you at the winter meeting.

Real Christmas Trees are Kinder to the Environment than Plastic Ones

The Easton Express-Times recently ran an article about the city of Bethlehem changing from real trees to plastic trees. Tim Dunne wrote a letter to the editor concerning the article. The newspaper felt that the article was too long for a letter but published it as an "opinion piece."

I am appalled at the thought of the Christmas City going plastic, as detailed in Lynn Olanoff's Nov. 6 article. I have always admired the real trees adorning the light posts as I drive into Bethlehem each holiday season. I will look differently at that symbol of the season as I drive in this year.

As a Christmas tree grower, I dispute Lynn Collins Cunningham's statement that the plastic trees are "better for the environment." I guess she does not know that while they're growing, real Christmas trees support life by absorbing carbon dioxide and other gases and emitting fresh oxygen. Our farms that grow Christmas trees stabilize soil, protect water supplies and provide refuge for wildlife while creating scenic green open space.

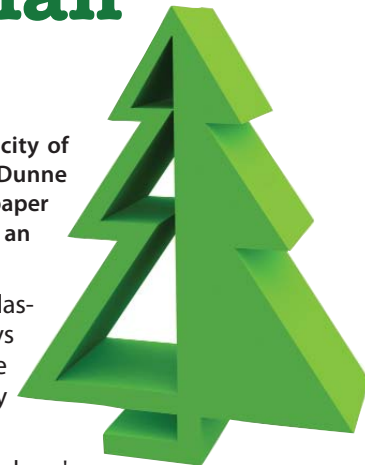
Real Christmas trees are grown on farms just like any other agricultural crop. To ensure a constant supply, Christmas tree growers plant one to three new seedlings for every tree they harvest. So when Cunningham says "we cut down a forest every year," local Christmas tree growers are planting one to three new forests each year. Pennsylvania has more than 31,000 acres in Christmas tree production. Even little New Jersey has 4,600 acres in production.

The real-versus-artificial tree debate crops up almost every year, but most environmentalists have come to a pretty clear-cut consensus: a real Christmas tree is a better choice for our environment. About 450 million trees are currently grown on farms in the U.S., according to the National Christmas Tree Association. "Buying a real tree is not depleting the forests," says Rick Dungey, a spokesman for the association. "It's like buying any food or fiber product."

On the other hand, 85 percent of fake trees are imported from China. The U.S. Christmas tree industry creates more than 100,000 U.S. jobs. And although fake trees can be used year after year, most are made out of polyvinyl chloride plastic. When produced or burned, they release dioxins that can cause liver cancer and developmental problems, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The average family uses an artificial tree for only six to nine years before throwing it away, where it will remain in a landfill for centuries after disposal.

So go ahead Christmas City, go plastic. But do not try to sell us that it is better for the environment. You will be importing fakes from China, introducing carcinogens to Bethlehem and filling up landfills in a few years. You also will cost local farmers some income, some local farm workers' jobs will be lost, and the 500-year-old tradition of real Christmas trees will be gone from the Christmas City.

Tim Dunne is the owner of the Woodsedge Tree Farm in White Township and vice president of the New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers Association.



NJ Farm Facts

Food and agriculture are New Jersey's third largest industry. In 2011, the state's 10,300 farms generated sales totaling \$1.12 billion. Retaining productive, taxpaying farmland is critically important to all New Jersey residents since agriculture is the largest single source of the scenic vistas we all enjoy throughout the year. Productive farmland covers 730,000 acres.

Farmers in the Garden State produce more than 100 different kinds of fruits and vegetables for consumers to enjoy either fresh or processed here in New Jersey and elsewhere in the Northeast, in Canada and in many countries around the world. In addition, growers also produced hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of specialty crops that added a unique flavor to the Garden State's bounty. Vineyards, for example, are a growing segment of the industry, enabling the state's vintners to develop a wide variety of award-winning New Jersey wines.

Information from jerseyfresh.nj.gov

NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURE STATISTICS

Number of Farms	9,071
Acres in Farming	715,057
Preserved Farmland	207,081 (As of 1/1/14)
Cash Receipts	\$1.14 billion

LEADING NEW JERSEY AGRICULTURE SECTORS

Nursery/Greenhouse/Sod	\$444.8 million
Fruits and Vegetables	\$462.9 million
Field Crops	\$131.6 million
Equine	\$46 million
Poultry and Eggs	\$32.8 million
Dairy	\$24.2 million

NEW JERSEY IS A NATIONAL TOP-TEN PRODUCER OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

2012 STATISTICS	RANK	PRODUCTION	PROD. VALUE	ACRES
Cranberries	3rd	550,000 barrels	\$29.9 million	3,000
Bell Peppers	3rd	120.3 mill. lbs.	\$28.9 million	3,400
Spinach	3rd	25.9 mill. lbs.	\$12.7 million	1,400
Peaches	4th	30,000 tons	\$39.6 million	5,300
Blueberries	5th	51.5 mill. lbs.	\$80.8 million	7,500
Cucumbers	5th	73.1 mill. lbs.	\$15.7 million	3,400
Squash	6th	43.4 mill. lbs.	\$17.8 million	3,100
Tomatoes	7th	56.7 mill. lbs.	\$30.8 million	2,700
Apples	8th	34 mill. lbs.	\$28.5 million	1,900
Sweet Corn	9th	68.4 mill. lbs.	\$23.1 million	7,200
Snap Beans	10th	8.4 mill. lbs.	\$3.7 million	2,700



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Contact Larry Kuhns at (814) 574-8635

**For additional information and to see the farm visit:
kuhnstreefarm.com**



Summer Meeting Revisited

The Foster Family graciously hosted the summer's meeting and trade show at their family farm, Holly Ridge Tree Farm, in Hammonton. Members were treated to a farm tour, shearing demonstrations, and talks by Rutgers' Cooperative Extension experts.



Dr. Ann Gould describing several of the common diseases of Christmas trees.



Dennis Foster discussing the details of running his successful Christmas tree farm.



Christmas tree growers listen attentively while Dennis Foster explained how he started his farm.



The Fosters explaining how they tag trees for customers during the holiday season.

NJCHRISTMASTREES.ORG

NJCTGA Newsletter Trading Post Ads

Do you have items you no longer use on your farm? Starting in the next edition of the newsletter there will be a section for member ads. You will be able to list either items for sale or items you are looking to purchase. Contact Matt Martini if you have any questions.

For Sale: Hardi Air-Blast cannon sprayer 100G 3pth manual chute \$1,500, Oliver 3 bottom 16 inch spool plow \$1,000.00 Salem Co. NJ 939-355-2222, no Sundays, or email jsmith125@gmail.com
MORE AVAILABLE!!!

ADS ARE FREE, BUT MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING AD REQUIREMENTS:

- For Sale or Wanted items directly related to Christmas tree growing & production only.
- Personal, Business, Services, Commercially/Massed Produced Product ads not accepted.
- Business, Service and Commercial Products require purchase of regular Newsletter ad.
- Description limit: 30 words, text only, no photos or drawings.
- Any drawing or photo included in ad requires purchase of \$35 quarter-page newsletter ad (see ad specifications on page 6).
- List phone number or email address for contact.
- Ads will appear one time only. Resubmit to re-run ad.
- Limit: 1 ad per farm per newsletter edition.

The NJCTGA reserves the right to reject any ads not meeting these requirements. Submit your ad for review to Matt Martini at CherryvilleFarms@Earthlink.net. Ad will be published in next edition of the Newsletter.



NJCTGA ANNUAL WINTER MEETING

Saturday, January 31, 2015 • 9am to 3:30pm

Clinton Holiday Inn, Clinton, NJ

- 8:15 – 9:00 am **Registration, Coffee and Refreshments, Visit With Exhibitors**
- 9:00 – 9:15 am **Welcome by NJCTGA Executive Secretary/Treasure Donna Cole and NJCTGA President Chris Nicholson**
- 9:15 – 9:30 am **State of Agriculture in 2015**
by NJ Agriculture Secretary Douglas H. Fisher (invited)
- 9:30 – 10:30 am **Successful Weed Control Strategies For Christmas Tree Growers**
by Dr. Larry Kuhns, Professor Emeritus, Penn State University and Owner of Kuhns Tree Farm in State College, PA
Weed control is one of the most important factors in establishing healthy trees. This presentation will cover the latest strategies and materials for Christmas tree growers to optimize weed control.
- 10:30 – 11:00 am **Break – Networking With Fellow Growers, Visit with Exhibitors**
- 11:00 am – Noon **Fertilization for Christmas Trees by Dr.Larry Kuhns**
Fertilization can be a critical step in establishing and managing your trees. Dr. Kuhns will discuss fertility issues for Christmas tree growers and examine several NJ growers actual soil tests and recommendations.
- 12:00 – 1 pm **Lunch by Holiday Inn, network with fellow growers**
- 1:00 – 2:00 pm **Douglas Fir Production in 2015 – Sarah Pickel, IPM Education Specialist, PA Department of Agriculture**
Douglas Fir have historically been the Christmas tree most planted and harvested by NJ growers. In recent years diseases and insect pests have challenged many growers. Sarah will review current Doug Fir pests, scouting strategies, control recommendations and tips for production.
- 2:00 – 2:15 pm **Break – Networking With Fellow Growers, Visit with Exhibitors**
- 2:15 – 3:00 pm **Pesticide Safety Update - Patricia D. Hastings, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Pest Management Office**
- 3:00 – 3:30 pm **NJCTGA Annual Business Meeting by NJCTGA President Chris Nicholson**
- 3:30 pm **Adjourn**

schedule subject to change

Welcome New Member!

Ben Caputo, Caputo Christmas Consortium
Morristown, Morris County

Trading Post Ads

For Sale: 8' SAJE Tree Trimmer, Shindaiwa engine, lightweight back pack, good condition. Flemington - call Matt at 973-725-3597 or email cherryvillefarms@earthlink.net

Grower's Spotlight: WOODSEGE TREE FARM

By: Tim Dunne



Tim Dunne

After three to four years of traveling New Jersey and writing stories about NJCTGA member's farms I thought I would stay home this time around and write about my farm – Woodsedge Tree Farm. Our Belvidere, Warren County farm began 10 years ago in 2004. That year our tenant farmer, who had corn and soy beans on our crop fields for the last ten years, decided to give up grain crops on our small deer infested fields. My wife Mim and I were left needing either another tenant farmer on short notice or we needed to farm our fields in order to retain our farmland assessment property tax rate. We had thought about Christmas trees, but had not thoroughly investigated all the issues involved with starting a Christmas tree operation. We jumped in with both feet and began our 10 year journey.

We knew we needed a deer fence if we were to be successful, so that was the first order of business. It was a huge investment but the 8' tall woven wire fence we had installed should last us 30 years. We researched varieties of trees to plant, spoke with Rutgers Cooperative Extension staff, took soil tests, ordered transplants and a planting bar and held our breath! Luckily our soil tests revealed we had a good pH for Christmas trees and our fertility levels were all high. We planted about 2 acres of trees that first year and planted an additional acre every year until we had about 6 acres in trees.

We joined the NJ Christmas Tree Growers Association that first year and that was probably the best move we made. We attended the annual winter meeting and met several other Warren County growers. Marty McMekin, Alan Quick and George Black all had farms near mine, they each had about 25 years experience growing and selling trees and were a wealth of information. I visited their farms and learned a great deal about growing and selling trees. These growers not only gave us many Christmas tree tips but also were very generous with some tree equipment they no longer needed. We tried to attend every NJCTGA winter meeting, summer meeting and twilight meeting to gather the valuable information presented by university professors, growers and other professionals. We also attended the Penn State Christmas Tree School in State College, PA one winter early on and found that invaluable.



Mim Dunne Ready With a Bundle of Fir Transplants in April

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Field of Colorado Blue Spruce Ready for Harvest



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Nicely Sheared Field of Canaan Firs

Today we mainly grow Douglas fir, Canaan fir, Fraser fir, Norway spruce, Colorado blue spruce and white pine. We built a small barn with help from some friends that is now our home base during weekends in December. We sell wreaths, grave blankets, ornaments, tree stands, bird houses and a few other items. Mim and I have been beekeepers for more than 35 years and honey from our bee hives has been a good sale item in our Christmas shop. Mim also makes beeswax soap, that has won ribbons at the annual NJ Honey Show in Atlantic City, and we normally sell out of that each December. Complimentary hot chocolate, cider and cookies are enjoyed by customers around the Christmas Barn wood stove when they return from the fields.



Happy Family With a Tree at Woodsedge Tree Farm

Our daughters Lisa and Andrea have assisted in all aspects of the operation – planting, mowing, shearing and selling. I could not have run the Christmas tree operation without all the help from my family. We also have good friends that help us with sales on weekends and a few local teens are hired to help as well. I retired in 2012 after 32 years with the USDA

Natural Resource Conservation Service and now spend most of my days in some aspect of the Christmas tree farming operation.

My advice to any new grower is to attend as many grower meeting as you can. Reach out to other growers, introduce yourself and ask questions. Don't be afraid to ask a dumb question – I know I have asked many! I also highly recommend the Penn State Christmas Tree School.

Tim Dunne, owner of Woodsedge Farm, Belvidere, Warren County, visits farms throughout the state and writes the Grower's Spotlight.

Tree Contest Results

The results of the 2014 Christmas Tree Contest at the NJ State Fair in Sussex County are as follows:

Spruce	1st Place	Wintergreen Farm, Bill Allison
	2nd Place	Simonson Farm, Rodger Jany
	3rd Place	Evergreen Valley CTF, Les Alpaugh
Fir	1st Place	Perfect Christmas Tree Farm, John & Cynthia Curtis
	2nd Place	Evergreen Valley CTF, Les Alpaugh
	3rd Place	Simonson Farm, Rodger Jany
Pine	1st Place	Evergreen Valley CTF, Les Alpaugh
	2nd Place	Perfect Christmas Tree Farm, John & Cynthia Curtis
	3rd Place	Simonson Farm, Rodger Jany
Table Top:	1st Place	St. Paul's Abbey, Luke O'Connell
	2nd Place	Wintergreen Farm, Bill Allison
	3rd Place	Pine Meadow Farm, Larry Toth

GRAND CHAMPION: Perfect Christmas Tree Farm, John & Cynthia Curtis

Congratulations to all!



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njchristmastrees.org

Contact Donna Cole, Executive Secretary, at (908) 735-4658 or email execsecretary@njchristmastrees.org

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NJCTGA Newsletter Ad Sizes & Rates

FULL PAGE
7.75" wide x 9.875" high \$100

Half Page
7.75" wide x 4.863" high \$60

Quarter Page
3.795" wide x 4.863" high \$35

If possible, ads should be submitted in PDF format, in 4-color process.

Contact Director Charlie Brown for additional details.



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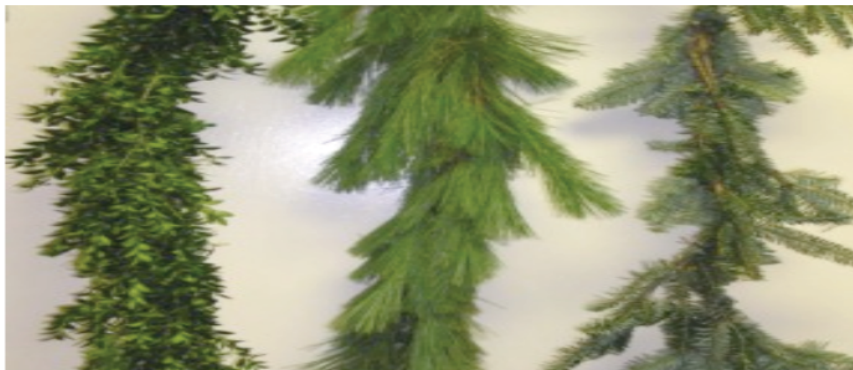
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