



## Moving Forward... Together



Chris Nicholson

If you are reading this you are just like me, a proud member of the NJCTGA. This is my first correspondence as your new President. I feel that it is important to convey who I am and what I hope my term will stand for, as I attempt to represent our membership to the best of my abilities.

I began growing trees in 2000. I joined the association in 2007. I quickly realized I had joined seven years too late. As I began attending the winter and summer meetings I started to feel what I am sure many of you have felt for a long time, the NJCTGA is a special group of people who share common goals and interests. I was, and still am amazed at how much we share our experiences and knowledge with each other. We have all felt the emotional high of a happy family harvesting a tree which we nurtured for years. We have all felt the emotional low of losing a field of transplants due to lack of rain or extreme heat. These feelings are what bind us together and will keep us together for a long time to come. I find comfort in attending one of our gatherings knowing that I am not alone in dealing with the problems that we all face as Christmas tree growers. I also find comfort in making new friends who love to grow trees. I can't think of a better type of friend to have.

Our industry and organization are facing many challenges which we can all overcome. Artificial trees from China have slowly changed consumer's habits. Big box stores which didn't exist twenty years ago have sprung up all throughout the country. These pressures have created obstacles for us. They have also created opportunities. Buying local is becoming a major trend. Agritourism barely existed twenty years ago, but is now so popular many of us have expanded our operations and opened our doors for year-round family fun. The concept

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## Diseases of Christmas Trees PART 1

By: Ann B. Gould, Ph.D.  
New Jersey Agricultural  
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Rutgers University

Disease problems in Christmas trees result in immediate crop loss, increased labor costs, increased pesticide use, and, as a result, an increase the energy and resources required to produce each tree. Disease management, therefore, involves a sensible approach that includes education, monitoring, good cultural practices (consider irrigation, improvement in soil drainage, spacing and tree orientation, lighter shearing, and weed control), and chemical use when appropriate.



To diagnose diseases in Christmas trees, ask the following questions:

- What part of the tree is affected? (Top, bottom, roots, needles, stems branches, one side of tree, all above ground parts?)
- What is the age of the foliage attacked? (New growth or older needles; one age class of needles or multiple age classes?)
- How vigorous is the growth of the tree? (Amount of new growth, color of buds, shortened needle length?)
- When are symptoms first observed? (Immediately or delayed?)
- Where is the damage distributed in the field? (Wet areas, ridges, clumped, randomly distributed?)
- Multiple problems may accumulate to kill trees.

### WINTER INJURY

Winter injury is a result of many environmental factors. The causal factors are diverse and include late spring frosts, a cool summer followed by a warm fall and a sudden drop in temperature, excessive or late season fertilization, excessive temperature fluctuations and abnormal cold temperatures during winter, drying winds, and lack of snow cover. A wide range of plants can be affected by winter injury. However, winter injury is most prevalent on broadleaved evergreens such as rhododendron and mountain laurel, needled evergreens such as hemlock, yew, pine, and juniper, and deciduous trees and shrubs such as the flowering cheery and almond, maple and dogwood. The most common winter injury symptoms on rhododendron and mountain laurel are characterized by a marginal browning and longitudinal rolling along the mid-vein. Needled evergreens exhibit a slightly different symptom with browning of the tips of needles, needle drop, and tip and twig dieback.

- Install physical barriers such as canvas, burlap, or wood slats on the exposed sides to reduce winter desiccation.
- Select the appropriate plants (e.g. pine, spruce or juniper) as windbreaks in areas of high exposure to wind (northwest side).

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# Diseases of Christmas Trees continued from page 1

- Apply sufficient moisture in the root zone before the soil freezes in the fall, and mulch the ground to retain moisture in the winter.
- Avoid late summer and early fall fertilization (this simulates and encourages plant growth late in the season which may not harden off properly for the winter).
- Select ornamental plants that exhibit medium to high tolerance to low temperatures.
- Protect conifers and broadleaf evergreens from drying by spraying antidessicants in late fall and throughout the winter months when temperatures are above 45 F.
- Prevent winter sunscald in newly planted, thin-barked trees by wrapping the trunk with burlap or other tree wrapping materials (the wrap can be kept in place up to two years).
- Prune dead twigs and branches that serve as sites for secondary pests.

## NEEDLE CASTS

**Rhabdocline needle cast.** A week or two before budbreak, orange fruiting bodies develop on the lower surface of affected needles. These fruiting structures form on the needles within red-brown spots that become evident during the winter. Once the fruiting structures are mature, they rupture and release abundant spores (ascospores) during wet weather. The ascospores, which are blown by wind and rain to nearby trees, infect expanding buds. Once new needles fully elongate and the weather turns warmer and drier, ascospores are no longer released, and the older, infected needles are cast from the tree. Symptoms on the newly infected needles do not appear until the following fall or winter, and spores are not produced again until the following spring.

Rhabdocline needle cast is optimal during cooler temperatures (50 to 59 F) and abundant moisture. As a result, lower branches, shaded branches, or branches on the northeast side of the tree are more severely affected. Successful management depends on ensuring that environmental conditions are not conducive to disease development.

- Use healthy stock and provide an optimal growing environment for your trees.
- Inspect Christmas tree plantations during late winter/early spring. Look for reddish-brown lesions on last year's needles. The pattern of infection will follow portions of the canopy or field where moisture in the canopy is most abundant.
- Remove sources of inoculum. Severely affected trees serve as a source of inoculum for new growth. Remove severely infected trees; prune branches on trees that are less severely infected (less than 30%) during dry weather.
- Manage the moisture. Choose sites with good air drainage. In existing plantations, reduce humidity and promote rapid drying of needles through spacing and row orientation, and remove weeds.

- Use resistant seed sources when available. Coastal or "green" varieties (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *menziesii*), tend to be resistant. Intermountain, Rocky Mountain, or "blue" varieties (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *glauca*), although less likely to be injured by freezing, can be susceptible to this disease. Within this group, susceptibility varies greatly by seed source, and even within a type, susceptibility can vary by individual tree. Those that are most resistant include Shuswap, Pillar Lake, Rio Grande, and Upper Clearwater. Trees that are moderately resistant include Santa Fe, Silver Creek, and Coville. Trees that are most susceptible include San Isabel, Lincoln, Apache, Cibola, Kaibob, and Coconino.

**Chemical control:** Chlorothalonil is labeled for control of Rhabdocline needle cast. Begin sprays when the first 10% of the trees in the planting first break bud (or the candles are about ½-inch long) and repeat 1, 3, and 6 weeks later until needles are fully elongated or conditions are no longer favorable for disease development. On stands where irregular budbreak occurs, apply chlorothalonil weekly until all trees have broken bud and repeat at 3- to 4-week intervals as specified above. Add a spreader sticker (if the product does not contain one) to enhance coverage. Other compounds labeled for control include chlorothalonil + thiophanate-methyl, copper (ammonium complex, Badge, basic sulfate, cuprous oxide, hydroxide, salts), Junction, mancozeb, and thiophanate-methyl. Refer to label for timing and rates. For all fungicides, thorough coverage is essential.

**Swiss needle cast.** This disease of Douglas-fir, caused by the fungus *Phaeocryptopus gäumannii*, has a life cycle similar to Rhabdocline needle cast. Differences between Rhabdocline and Swiss needle casts include symptoms (symptoms include yellowed or brown needles), signs (tiny, black fungal fruiting structures that emerge through the stomates of the needles), infection period (which can sometimes extend through August), and latent period (symptoms may appear up to 3 years after infection). In addition, Swiss needle cast may cause needles to turn brown from the tips and can be easily confused with symptoms of moisture stress. Be sure to look for the fruiting structures.

- See above as for Rhabdocline needle cast.
- **Chemical control:** Add a fourth spray (three weeks after the third application) to the chlorothalonil spray regimen used for Rhabdocline needle cast. Other compounds labeled for Swiss needle cast include azoxystrobin, copper (basic sulfate), mancozeb, or thiophanate-methyl. Refer to label for timing and rates. For all fungicides, thorough coverage is essential.

**Rhizosphaera needle cast.** As with other needle cast diseases, the fungus that causes this disease has one infection cycle per year. Needles become infected in May or June, but symptoms are not evident until the following spring. Affected needles in the interior of the tree turn purple, and the fungus produces tiny fruiting bodies that protrude from the stomates on yellow or green needles. Colorado blue spruce and Black Hills spruce are most susceptible to this disease.

*The second part of this article will be published in the next edition of the NJCTGA News. Blights, cankers and root diseases will be discussed.*



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DESIGNED AT BURLINGTON COUNTY COLLEGE



# Grower's Spotlight:

## WINTERGREEN CHRISTMAS TREE FARM

By: Tim Dunne



Tim Dunne

The picturesque Wintergreen Christmas Tree Farm in Lafayette, Sussex County has a rich farming history that dates all the way back to the late 1700's. The former dairy farm was converted to Christmas trees by the Albeck Family in the 1960's and the farm was purchased by the Allison family in 1996. Bill Allison has run the tree production operation since that time and his wife Barbara and daughter Sharon help Bill during the hectic Christmas tree selling season.

Wintergreen farm has beautiful Fraser fir, Canaan fir, Douglas fir, concolor fir, Colorado blue spruce, Norway spruce and white spruce for sale annually, as well as premium wreaths made on the farm. Tree stands are also available for the farm's customers. Sales were brisk in 2012 and some fields are now cut out and spring planting season will soon start a new rotation of trees in those blocks.

Bill has been an NJCTGA member since he bought the farm in 1996. Bill says that learning about Christmas tree production methods "has been a real educational experience" and credits the



*Younger trees with good weed control evident in this block.*

association a great deal. The farm is truly scenic and the mature trees are trimmed expertly by Bill. "How the farm looks today in 2013 is a product of me being a member of the NJ and National associations", said Bill. After attending many meetings, farm demonstrations and field days Bill has become well versed in weed control and disease control – things that change almost every year. He really stresses that the association helped him get to where he is today in Christmas tree production.

Although many of the Christmas tree production techniques he uses he has developed through trial and error, he also has relied on fellow growers providing him information at meetings. Bill urges new growers to "get out and look at many farms, talk to other growers because there are many perspectives out there". Although Bill learned by "baptism under fire", he received many tips from fellow growers and these helped him immensely. Bill cites flexibility is a must. He has changed tree varieties planted over the years, after learning about production problems with some once-popular tree species. Bill likes to "keep it simple" as much as possible, and that is a theme of his Christmas tree operation.

One recent problem Bill has encountered is damage to mature trees by black bears. Bill reports that "bears will break off almost any fragrant tree top, especially concolor and Fraser firs". After breaking out the tree tops, the bears return and rub on the trees making them un-saleable. Many other growers in Sussex and Warren Counties have reported similar damage in recent years.

The scenic beauty of Wintergreen Christmas Tree Farm in Lafayette is a product of New Jersey's wonderful landscapes and Bill Allison's dedication and hard work at the art and science of Christmas tree growing.



*Fall colors on the hillside frame the picturesque Wintergreen Christmas Tree Farm in Lafayette, Sussex County.*



*Well sheared trees ready for harvest.*

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

# Fungicides

## For Common Diseases in Conifer Nurseries

Revised March 2011 – Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry

**ALWAYS READ THE PRODUCT LABEL. THE LABEL IS THE LAW. CONSULT THE LABEL TO TARGET THE MOST APPROPRIATE LIFE STAGE OF THE DISEASE.** For all diseases, any recommendations for control are listed near the pest name. Any available PA Dept. of Agriculture Regulatory Horticulture pest circulars are listed near the pest name, in parentheses. (**Active Ingredient** = Bio-rational Product)

### BOTRYTIS BLIGHT

A gray, cottony growth starts on shaded, senescent needles and in leaf litter at the base of seedlings. It spreads from needles to shoots and then into stems. As the disease advances, infected shoots become waterlogged and brown lesions develop. Once inside the main stem of seedlings, it can canker and girdle, eventually killing that tree.

**Douglas-fir, Fir, & Spruce:** *Keep seedlings as healthy as possible. Weak and frost-damaged trees are vulnerable to infection. Avoid overcrowding so good air circulation can be maintained. Avoid overhead watering or water early in the day so the foliage has adequate drying time. Remove dead plant material as soon as possible. Apply a listed fungicide when new shoots emerge. Make additional applications as necessary, especially in years with excessive rainfall.*

#### Active Ingredients:

- Chlorothalonil
- Dicloran
- Ferbam
- Iprodione
- Iprodione + Thiophanate-methyl
- Pentachloronitrobenzene (PCNB)
- **Potassium Bicarbonate**
- Thiophanate-methyl
- Triflumizole

### CEDAR APPLE RUST (GYMNOSPORANGIUM)

**Juniper:** *Damage increases if infected, broadleaf trees are nearby, so avoid planting these trees nearby. Galls form on twigs and branches, decreasing a plant's value. Twig dieback occurs if disease is severe. Disease is only noticeable in the spring when galls are making bright yellow-orange spore horns. Carefully inspect plants during dormancy. Prune and destroy any gall tissue before spore horn growth.*

#### Active Ingredients:

- Copper Hydroxide + Mancozeb
- **Copper Salts of Fatty and Rosin Acids**
- Ferbam
- Mancozeb
- Mancozeb + Thiophanate-methyl
- Thiophanate-methyl
- Triadimefon
- Triflumizole

### NEEDLECASTS (CYCLANEUSMA, LOPHODERMIIUM, PHAEOCRYPTOPUS, PLOIODERMA, RHABDOCLINE, RHIZOSPHAERA)

Because many needlecasts are similar, obtain a laboratory diagnosis before implementing control measures. Contact your regional Plant Inspector or local extension agent for more information. Needlecast fungi need plentiful moisture for infection and development. With this in mind, be sure to adequately space trees at planting and maintain good air circulation, which is done through good weed control (lowers humidity and reduces needle wetness). Only irrigate when needles will be wet for the shortest amount of time. Only plant disease-free or disease-resistant plant stock. Do not shear trees when wet. Shear healthy trees first, so spores from infected trees cannot be carried to healthy trees, sterilizing pruning tools when done. After trees are harvested and if any stumps remain, prune any branches. Remove and properly destroy severely infected trees early in a rotation so they do not serve as a disease source.

**Scotch Pine, other Pines (*Cyclaneusma minus*):** *Scotch Pines are typically infected from mid-April to late-June, but possible through December. Maintain proper nutrient and water levels to keep trees healthy and vigorous. Make a total of five fungicide applications throughout the growing season (late March, early May, mid-June, mid-August, and mid-October).*

**Pine (*Lophodermium seditiosum*):** *This fungus produces significant browning of Scotch pine and kills Red pine seedlings. Apply a listed fungicide three times, starting in mid-July and continuing at three-week intervals. However, during a warm, early summer start spraying in mid-June.*

**Douglas-fir (*Phaeocryptopus gäumannii*):** *Apply a listed fungicide in the spring when the new shoots are ½" – 2" long. Make a second application two to three weeks later. A third application can be made if rainfall has been unusually high. It may take two years of treatment for most trees to have full, green foliage. If trees are severely infected, it may take them more than three years to return to a sellable product.*

**Pine (*Ploioderma lethale*):** *This disease affects (two- or three-needled) hard pines (especially Red). Early needle drop occurs in May or June. Black structures on the dead part of the needle open, via long slits, releasing spores in May through June. Apply a listed fungicide three times, at three week intervals, starting in late May.*

**Douglas-fir (*Rhabdocline pseudotsugae*; *Rhabdocline weirii*):** *Apply a listed fungicide as first buds break, a second spray one week later, and a third spray two weeks after the third spray. A fourth spray may be required three weeks after the third spray if cool, wet weather persists OR if Swiss Needlecast is also present.*



# Fungicides continued from page 4

**Spruce (*Rhizosphaera kalkhoffii*):** This fungus needs at least 48 hours in order to infect new needles under moist conditions, around 76°F (longer times for cooler and warmer weather, dense foliage). Apply a listed fungicide when new shoots are ½" to 1 ½" long. Make a second fungicide application three weeks later. A third application may be needed in mid-August to early September.

## Active Ingredients:

- Azoxystrobin
- Basic Copper Sulfate
- Chlorothalonil
- Chlorothalonil + Thiophanate-methyl
- Copper Hydroxide
- Copper Hydroxide + Mancozeb
- **Copper Oxochloride + Copper Hydroxide**
- **Copper Salts of Fatty and Rosin Acids**
- Ferbam
- Mancozeb
- Mancozeb + Myclobutanil
- Thiophanate-methyl
- Triadimefon

## NEEDLE RUST (COLEOSPORIUM & CHRYSOMYXA)

**Pine (*Coleosporium*):** Mow weed-alternate hosts.

**Spruce (*Chrysomyxa*):** Rogue infected plant material when the tree is dormant, and during the summer and fall. Destroy infected trees. Apply a listed fungicide when 10% of the tree is at bud break, making a second application one week later, and a third application three weeks after the first application.

## Active Ingredients:

- Chlorothalonil
- Myclobutanil

## PINE-PINE GALL RUST (ENDOCRONARTIUM)

**Pine:** Inspect all plants for galls and prune as necessary. Rogue when tree is dormant. Destroy infected trees. Apply a listed fungicide at bud break, making a second application two weeks later. Prune infected plant material in the summer and fall.

## Active Ingredients:

- Mancozeb

## RED BAND NEEDLE BLIGHT (DOTHISTROMA)

This fungus infects and kills needles. Severely infected trees may become more susceptible to other diseases or die. The spores of this fungus can be spread throughout the growing season by the wind and rain. New needles cannot be affected until they have come completely out of their sheaths. Fruiting bodies develop in the fall and spores are released the next spring and summer.

**Pine:** Only plant disease-free trees. Do not shear trees when wet or else spores will be released and spread to other trees on shearing tools. Apply a listed fungicide at bud break and continue throughout the summer.

## Active Ingredients:

- Copper Hydroxide + Mancozeb
- **Copper Octanoate**
- **Copper Salts of Fatty and Rosin Acids**
- Copper Sulphate Pentahydrate
- Pentachloronitrobenzene (PCNB)

## ROOT ROT (ARMILLARIA)

This fungus kills trees by girdling them at the root collar. A tree has an increased risk of infection if it is already stressed. The tree's needles will first yellow, then turn brown. Resin will appear on the bark at the root collar, where the stem and roots meet. Black fungal strands from infected stumps grow through the soil and infect nearby conifers.

**Fir & Pine:** Healthy, vigorous trees are more resistant than weak, diseased ones. Reduce a tree's stress by treating for other diseases, insects, and environmental stresses. Remove dead trees, as well as infected, large roots and stumps.

## Active Ingredients:

- N/A

## SEEDLING BLIGHT (DIPLODIA, PHOMOPSIS)

Promote tree vigor by protecting from environmental stresses, insect attacks, and injuries. Do not use fertilizers containing high amounts of nitrogen on pines. Do not plant healthy, two- or three-needled pines near older, infected trees. Treat the entire crown of the tree (especially the lower branches) with a listed fungicide at bud break and again two weeks later. Sprays are not effective at any other time.

## Active Ingredients:

- Azoxystrobin
- Copper Hydroxide
- Copper Hydroxide + Mancozeb
- Mancozeb
- Mancozeb + Myclobutanil
- Propiconazole
- Thiophanate-methyl
- Thiophanate-methyl + Iprodione

# Fungicides continued from page 5

## SEEDLING ROOT ROT (PHYTOPHTHORA)

Douglas-fir, Pine, & Spruce: Apply a listed fungicide (drench) to the infected tree at bud break, as well as during the summer and fall. Rogue in the fall.

*Fir: Pre-plant or fumigate using a listed fungicide during dormancy. Apply a listed fungicide (drench) at bud break, as well as during the summer and fall. Rogue in the fall.*

### Active Ingredients:

- *Bacillus subtilis* QST 713 strain
- Boscalid + Pyraclostrobin
- Chloropicrin + Iodomethane
- Dimethomorph
- Etridiazole
- Fluopicolide
- Fosetyl-Al
- Hydrogen Dioxide
- Hydrogen Peroxide + Peroxyacetic Acid + Octanoic Acid
- Iodomethane + Chloropicrin
- Mefenoxam
- Metalaxyl
- Mono- & di-potassium Salts of Phosphorous Acid
- Mono- and dibasic sodium, potassium, and ammonium phosphites
- Mono- and di-potassium Salts of Phosphorous Acid
- Potassium Dihydrogen Phosphate
- Potassium Phosphite
- Propamocarb
- Propiconazole
- Pyraclostrobin
- Thiophanate-methyl + Etridiazole

## TIP BLIGHT (DIPLODIA)

The fungus over winters in litter, cones, pine bark, or shoots, infecting new shoots in the spring. Fungal spores spread during wet weather from spring to fall. This fungus kills current-year shoots on trees and will usually kill nursery seedlings within their first year. Older trees will die if they are infected over multiple years. Girdling cankers form when this fungus infects wounds of branches and stems. Stressed trees are more likely to be infected. Wounding from hail, shearing, and insects allow the fungus to enter.

*Arborvitae & Pine: Plant disease-free plants. Avoid shearing infected trees during wet weather. Prune infected plant material when the tree is dormant or in the fall. Control insects that can weaken the tree. Apply a listed fungicide at bud break.*

### Active Ingredients:

- Azoxystrobin
- Chlorothalonil + Propiconazole
- Cooper Hydroxide + Mancozeb
- **Copper Salts of Fatty and Rosin Acids**
- Copper Sulphate Pentahydrate
- Iprodione + Thiophanate-methyl
- Mancozeb
- **Potassium Bicarbonate**
- Propiconazole
- Thiophanate-methyl
- Thiophanate-methyl + Iprodione

## TWIG BLIGHT (KABATINA, PHOMOPSIS)

*Arborvitae: Prune and destroy infected plant material when the shrub is dormant. Using a listed fungicide, begin spraying at bud break and again during the fall. Mancozeb will protect foliage on plants with Kabatina. Thiophanate-methyl should be used when new growth is present on plants with Phomopsis.*

*Douglas-fir & Juniper: Prune the tree or shrub when dormant. Apply a listed fungicide at bud break and continue throughout the summer.*

### Active Ingredients:

- Azoxystrobin
- Basic Copper Sulfate
- Copper Hydroxide
- Copper Hydroxide + Mancozeb
- **Copper Oxichloride + Copper Hydroxide**
- **Copper Salts of Fatty and Rosin Acids**
- Copper Sulphate Pentahydrate
- Iprodione + Thiophanate-methyl
- Mancozeb
- Mancozeb + Myclobutanil
- Mancozeb + Thiophanate-methyl
- Propiconazole
- Thiophanate-methyl
- Thiophanate-methyl + Iprodione

## WHITE PINE BLISTER RUST (CRONARTIUM)

This disease causes cankers and kills branches, eventually spreading to main stems where it will kill an entire tree. For a pine to become infected, it requires the alternate host (e.g. gooseberry or currant). Once the pine is infected, the disease will progress in the tree without the presence of an alternate host. The disease is the harshest in areas of abundant cool, wet weather from August to September.

*Pine: Do not plant white pines near where alternate hosts are plentiful or at the base of a slope or in a dip. Alternate hosts should be sprayed with an herbicide or removed. Rogue when the tree is dormant. Prune infected plant material during the summer and fall. Remove and destroy all trees with trunk cankers.*

### Active Ingredients:

- N/A

# What's Shaking at NJCTGA

- Save the Date! The Annual Summer Meeting is scheduled for Saturday, September 14th at Evergreen Valley Christmas Tree Farm in Washington, NJ.
- Would you be interested in hosting the Twilight Meeting in June? Contact Donna Cole for more information or if you would be interested in hosting.
- Annual dues notices were mailed in January and are due by February 15th. Contact Donna Cole if you did not receive a dues notice or if you have any questions.
- Thank you to all farms that participated in the Farmers Against Hunger "Pounds for Pennies" fundraiser. The 27 participating farms collected over \$4700 to support this program which collects fresh produce from New Jersey farms for distribution to food pantries and shelters throughout the state.
- Watch your mail for the application for the annual Choose and Cut Christmas Tree Guide. Over 13,000 copies of this guide were printed and distributed last year and it is posted on the NJCTGA website for internet access.
- Do you have equipment recommendations, tips or information that you would like to share with other Christmas tree growers in the newsletter? If you do, contact Donna Cole for more information and assistance.

## Welcome New Members!

**Frank Dominiani**  
**Holly Bough Farm**  
 Whitehouse Station, Hunterdon County

**Ted Martin**  
**Martin Family Christmas Tree Farm**  
 Mt. Freedom, Hunterdon County

**Stephen & Kelly Lombardo**  
**Lombardo's Christmas Tree Farm**  
 Salem, Salem County

**Ryck Suydam**  
**Suydam Farms, LLC**  
 Somerset, Somerset County

## News from the National Christmas Tree Association

From: William Rieth, NJ National Director

- Trees for Troops delivered 18,694 trees in 2012. To date more than 122,000 trees have been donated.
- The National Director Position will be open as of January 1, 2014. Anyone who is interested in replacing current Director William Rieth should contact Donna Cole or Chris Nicholson.
- The NCTA Pre-Season Clinic will be held August 10-11 in Arlington VA. The clinic will take place at the Renaissance Arlington Capital View of Arlington, Va., and will feature both educational and networking offerings, compressed into an affordable, information-packed weekend experience. Attendees will have lots of options – all focused on helping you grow your business. The clinic program will also include NCTA's 2013 National Tree and Wreath Contests.
- Paul Battaglia-President Elect has resigned from NCTA. Blake Rafeld, V.P. of Finance will assume his role and remain V.P. of Finance. DeLaine Bender, NCTA Executive Secretary has also resigned. The position remains open and NCTA and AMR is looking to fill the position.
- The NCTA is working hard to battle the new fire codes and legislative issues that affect the Real Tree Industry nationwide. You don't need to be a NCTA member to support the efforts that will benefit the Christmas tree farms.



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# Results of Winter Meeting Survey

By: Anne Edwards

A survey was distributed to everyone attending the winter meeting concerning the winter meeting and the summer twilight meeting. Fifty-two surveys were returned and the following are the results:

- 98% felt that January was a good time for the winter meeting. One person felt that February would be better
- 92% liked the location of the meeting. 4% felt the meeting was too far north and 4% felt the location was too far south. Comments included: "Center of membership mass is great"; "Excellent"; "Very nice, sort of central, wonderful facility"; "Loved it, seems fair to everyone"; "Good venue"; "AV support very good, microphones and computer support was great"
- 81% felt Secretary Fisher's talk was moderate or very interesting/helpful; 6% felt the talk was not interesting/helpful; 13% did not respond
- 98% felt Richard Buckley's talk on Rutgers' Plant Diagnostic lab was moderate or very interesting/helpful; 2% did not respond
- 98% felt Sarah Pickel's talk on Pest Scouting was moderate or very interesting/helpful; 2% did not respond



*The Alpaugh family proudly displayed the ribbons they won at the 2012 Christmas tree contests.*



*George Hamilton discussed safety issues on Christmas tree farms at the annual winter meeting.*

- 88% felt Tom Rathier's talk on soil environments was moderate or very interesting/helpful; 12% did not respond
- 85% felt George Hamilton's talk on farm safety was moderate or very interesting/helpful; 15% did not respond
- Comments about the speakers: "Very good speakers, good meeting!"; "Best meeting in 28 years"; "All speakers were informative, organized and geared towards our concerns and interests"; "Get Rutgers to work with Penn State, get NJ to have a system like PA to work with growers, NJ focus"; "One of the better meetings I've been to, Good time allocation, Very few people left even with business meeting at the end"; "It was an excellent meeting!"; "I thought this was the best meeting yet on every account. Thank you!"
- Topics members wanted to see discussed at future meetings ranked from most wanted to least wanted: Tree species; Soil/fertilization; Pesticides/herbicides; Cultivation of Christmas trees; Insect/disease scouting; Marketing, including wreaths; Labor laws; estate planning

- Other topics members listed as possible meeting topics: Income tax review; Facebook; NJ regulations; Technology for farming/small business including websites and social media
- Overall the members were pleased with the meeting's food. For breakfast: 67% rated breakfast as excellent, 31% rated breakfast as good, 2% rated breakfast as fair. For lunch: 89% rated lunch as excellent, 9% rated lunch as good; 2% rated lunch as fair. Comment on lunch from a member, "Probably more than needed for lunch"



*NJCTGA President Chris Nicholson presented John Wyckoff with the ribbon and plaque for the 2012 Grand Champion Christmas tree. Executive Donna Cole assisted with the presentation of ribbons and awards.*

- The members were most interested in attending a twilight meeting in north central New Jersey (Hunterdon, Somerset, Mercer, Middlesex, or Monmouth County). The second preferred location was south central New Jersey (Burlington, Ocean or Camden County). North and South New Jersey were the least preferred locations for a twilight meeting.
- For the preferred day of the week for the twilight meeting, Sunday was the least preferred day. Wednesday and Thursday were the most preferred days.
- Topics members wanted to see discussed at the twilight meeting ranked from most wanted to least wanted: Tree species; Pesticides/herbicides; Insect/disease scouting; Cultivation; Soil/fertilization; Marketing
- Other topics members wanted to see at the twilight meeting included: Deer fences; Cryptomeria scale trial and other trials; Corrective shearing; Site preparation; Estate planning; Tractor requirements



*NJ Secretary of Agriculture, Douglas Fisher, kicked off the annual winter meeting with an update of agricultural issues in New Jersey.*

*Results compiled by Anne Edwards, Edwards Christmas Tree Farm, Wrightstown, Burlington County*

## President's Message continued from page 1

of visiting a local farm is more alive than ever.

An important function of my tenure will be to assure our long term fiscal health. I assure you that any changes made will be in the best interest of us all, and agreed upon by our hard-working Board of Directors. Our Board of Directors are all volunteers who devote their time and energy towards making the NJCTGA a group you can be proud

to be a part of and will be around for a long time to come. I will make every effort to communicate to you exactly what is happening on your behalf throughout the upcoming year.

My sincerest thanks are offered to Donna Cole, our outgoing President. Donna has agreed to take over our day-to-day operations as our new Executive Secretary. She is

off and running in her daily efforts to represent us in a professional manner. This was clearly evident in her recent success in coordinating our winter meeting, the best we have had in recent memory.

I am thrilled and honored to be the President of the NJCTGA. With the help of our many volunteers we can all move forward... together.

*Chris Nicholson is our current President and the owner of Hidden Pond Tree Farm in Mendham, Morris County.*