



NJCTGA News

Winter 2017

President's Message



Chris Nicholson

The 2016 selling season is over and I personally am looking forward to a few days with my family on a much needed vacation. I hope your season was a success and even a little bit of fun.

The check off program was unrolled and our money was spent to begin a massive campaign to advertise the real tree industry. I personally was less than impressed, but the jury will be out for at least a few years. I do believe that we all have to show patience with the program, no matter how much it pains us to submit our monies. Be patient, in the long run it could pay off in a huge way.

Our membership seems to be stable even though we keep losing farms to development. You will even notice a few new members, which is a very good thing for our strength and stability. Our financial stability is very good as well, with a balance of around \$40,000 in our coffers for a rainy day. The media events we held this season were well attended and well covered by the media. The annual tree cutting by Secretary Fisher was held at Evergreen Valley Christmas Tree Farm and the Alpaugh family were fantastic hosts. Congratulations Sam and Kate on a job well done on behalf of our association. The trees for military families event was orchestrated by Donna Cole and Tim Dunne. Again this year the event brought lots of press from the south Jersey area. This event is a very good cause and we should look to expand the program in the coming years.

If you do not know who Larry Downey is, you can get to know him at our winter meeting. Larry is the owner of Downey Tree Farm in Nova Scotia. He is an expert in his field of growing fir trees on a large scale basis. He is coming down from Canada to speak to us and share his knowledge, don't miss it if you can help it.

See you all at the winter meeting.

Happy New Year.

– Chris

NCTA or CTPB? Why the Christmas Tree Industry Needs Both Organizations

By: Tim O'Connor
Executive Director

I know some confusion exists about what the National Christmas Tree Association (NCTA) and the Christmas Tree Promotion Board (CTPB) each do, why the industry needs both organizations, and the importance of funding NCTA now that growers are required to pay into the checkoff program. These questions are not unique to the Christmas tree industry. In my career I have worked for five other agricultural organizations in industries that have both a trade association and a checkoff program; the same questions exist in those industries and, in all sectors of agriculture. It is highly important for Christmas tree growers to understand the differences between NCTA and CTPB and the importance of both organizations.

NCTA fills a unique and critical role as the advocacy organization for the Christmas Tree Industry; it represents the industry in public policy/governmental affairs advancing positions that support the industry and defending against legislation and regulations that could negatively affect the industry. CTPB is expressly prohibited from conducting any public policy activities by its USDA oversight regulations. If NCTA were not acting on your behalf in public policy matters you would simply be helpless on the sidelines as key issues of importance to the industry were in play.

For example, a few of the issues NCTA advances and defends as industry priorities are:



- Maintaining IRS Designation that Christmas tree production is classified as lumber and therefore taxed at capital gains rates.
- Ensuring Christmas tree production retains its agricultural status and associated overtime wage payment exemptions.
- Positively influence fire codes to protect opportunities for real trees.
- Providing the White House Christmas tree each year.

CTPB can't work on these vital industry advocacy matters because it is a checkoff program. All checkoff programs are prohibited from funding public policy advocacy initiatives because their revenue comes from a government mandated assessment. NCTA, on the other hand, is funded by members' dues payments, sponsorships, state TIP fund investments and advertising from its publications. NCTA can undertake public policy advocacy work because it's funding

continued on page 2

**Save the Date! Winter Meeting – Saturday, January 28, 2017
at the EcoComplex in Bordentown Township, Burlington County.
See page 6 for agenda and page 7 for registration form.**

NCTA or CTPB *continued from page 1*

is derived through these voluntary contributions from the industry.

CTPB's mission is to conduct promotion, education and research programs to increase demand for real Christmas trees. The industry has seen significant erosion in demand for real Christmas trees as many consumers have found artificial trees to be "easier" to use. Reversing this demand loss will require a sustained promotion and education program, which is now possible with the resources available through the checkoff managed by CTPB.

To build long-term sustained demand it is highly important that we connect real Christmas trees with young Millennial families as they are beginning to form their own family traditions. The Millennial generation is the largest in US history, even larger than the Baby Boomer generation; they are about one-fourth of the US population and have \$2.5 trillion in purchasing power. They are the best-educated cohort of young adults in US history and are the first generation of digital natives utilizing technology and social media to make most of their purchasing decisions. CTPB's marketing campaign prioritizes Millennial families as its core target because of the long-term importance of not losing these consumers for the future.

Having worked for both trade associations and checkoff programs I know the value the industry receives from each organization delivering results that matter to advance the industry. To be successful you need NCTA representing your interests as your advocate and CTPB building demand for your products. It is not helpful to the industry if growers make the decision because they are required to pay an assessment to one organization they will no longer voluntarily pay to support the other.

CTPB is launching its first consumer ad campaign for the 2016 Christmas season. It will be exciting and we encourage the whole industry to utilize the campaign to extend its reach to consumers and ability to build demand.

NCTA is going through a transition to be more focused and more effective. There have been some disconnects between growers and NCTA in the past; but that was the past. This is a new future for NCTA, a future that seeks to be more connected with the industry.

Let's move forward together to make the Christmas tree industry stronger by supporting both NCTA and CTPB to accomplish their missions.



**Christmas Tree Pruning Services
Offered to Christmas Tree growers
of New Jersey**

Please Contact Michael Martin for information
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Published by the New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers Association

njchristmastrees.org

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

DESIGNED AT ROWAN COLLEGE AT BURLINGTON COUNTY

Grower's Spotlight:

VILLAGE TREE FARM

By: Tim Dunne



Tim Dunne

Village Tree Farm in Green Village in Harding Township is a charming little Christmas Tree Farm bordering the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge in Morris County. Fred Castenschiold has run the farm with the aid of his family since the 1970's. The farm began with a small patch of about 1 acre of trees planted the first year. Since then, subsequent plantings have been added, cut over stock has been re-planted and the farm now includes

about 5 acres of well maintained Christmas trees. Fred's sister Gail and his wife Martha help during the busy Christmas season along with his two children Kristin and Tom and their spouses Bruce and Jess. Farm dogs Boone and Happy were also on hand when I recently toured the farm.



Fred and Martha (on the far right) with the whole family at the farm in front of a nice stand of spruce.

At the center of the farm is a beautiful Amish barn which serves as the farm headquarters, equipment shed, office and gift shop. The barn was constructed by Amish craftsmen in 2004 and was also featured in a TV show soon after it



Small on-farm nursery with transplants ready for next year.

was constructed. Customers can come and tag trees in November and the farm is open for tree sales on weekends after Thanksgiving. Martha makes and hand paints clay Christmas ornaments that they sell in the small gift shop along with decorated wreaths.

Hay rides around the farm are provided to customers during the Christmas season.

Tree species Fred grows include a great diversity including Norway spruce, blue spruce, concolor fir, Douglas fir, Fraser fir, Canaan fir, Korean fir and white pine. The farm now includes a deer fence surrounding the trees since they are adjacent to the wildlife refuge and white-tailed deer rubbing and munching on trees can be a huge problem in this area of Morris County. Fred learned the hard



Amish barn at the Village Tree Farm in Green Village, NJ.

way after some of his earliest plantings were damaged by deer before he installed the fence. He advised any new grower to carefully consider the deer population in your area and think seriously about a fence before you start.

Fred closely mows all his trees with a riding Toro mower and rarely has to use herbicides on the farm to control competing vegetation. He maintains a small Christmas tree nursery area on the farm with transplants ready to fill in areas as trees are harvested. In recent years Fred has had a problem with cryptomeria scale infesting his Fraser fir trees. He has followed the recommendations from NJCTGA speakers and members and now has that problem under control.



Keenly decorated office inside the Amish Barn. Note the large painting depicting the farm's layout.

Fred joined the NJCTGA almost as soon as the farm was started. Fred says "It was a must to join the association, attend meetings, farm tours and learn what to do and what not to do from other growers". Fred feels "you have to be involved with an organization like the NJCTGA if you want to be successful". "A tremendous education" is the great benefit Fred has obtained from his years in the NJCTGA. Fred's advice to a new grower – "start small, you can always grow your business in the future. Learn what you are getting into before you plant too many trees. They get big quickly and big trees are hard to handle and hard to maintain". Things appeared very well maintained to me when I visited this delightful small farm!

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

2015 New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers Survey Results

The results of the 2015 Christmas tree survey are tabulated below and include results from over 50% of NJCTGA member farms. Of the eight-two survey forms returned, 72% of the farms were located in the northern section of the state (Mercer, Monmouth counties and north) while 28% were located in the south (Burlington, Ocean counties and south). A summary of the results included:

- 72% of the Christmas tree farms have 10 acres or less in Christmas trees
- 72% of the responding members have been growing Christmas trees for 20 years or more
- 98% of the farms sold trees in 2015
- The survey showed that 38% of the farms planted 500 plus trees with Douglas Fir being the most popular followed by Blue Spruce and Norway Spruce.
- Most farms (67%) reported tree losses at less than 25%.
- Only 22% of the farms reported that they irrigate
- An almost an equal number of farms fertilize (51%) vs not fertilizing (46%).
- All farms reported using mowing as their primary means of controlling weeds with several adding herbicides to the mix.
- Over 51% of farms used pesticides/fungicides to control insects and disease, others used a combination of methods and 17% report that they did not use chemicals.
- Only a small number of farms used full time workers and over 50% of farms utilized 1 to 5 part-time workers.
- Trees were sheared by manual knife/shears or mechanical cutters.
- For the responding farm, 60% reported selling as many trees as they want to sell while 31% sold less than they expected.
- 12% of the farms raised their prices while 76% or the farms kept prices the same as last year. The average weighted set price per tree was \$34.66 and the averaged weighted price per foot was \$8.20.
- The best-selling tree species: Douglas fir, Norway Spruce, Blue Spruce, Concolor Fir
- 71 farms reported selling a total of 47,447 cut trees grown on their farms. Fifteen farms reported selling 3678 purchased cut trees.
- 10 farms reported selling a total of 960 dug trees from their farms. One farm reported selling two purchased dug trees.
- 71 farms reported that an average of 84.8% of their farm sales came from Christmas trees

How long have you been growing Christmas Trees?

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Less than 5 years | 2% |
| 5 – 10 years | 10% |
| 11 – 15 years | 9% |
| 16 – 20 years | 7% |
| Over 20 years | 72% |

How many trees did you plant this year?

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| None | 18% |
| Less than 100 trees | 7% |
| 101 – 250 trees | 16% |
| 251-500 trees | 21% |
| 501 – 1000 trees | 17% |
| More than 1000 trees | 21% |

What is the approximate percentage loss of trees planted this year?

| | |
|-----|--------------|
| 17% | Less than 5% |
| 21% | 6 – 10% |
| 29% | 11 – 25% |
| 17% | 26 – 50% |
| 7% | Over 50% |
| 15% | No response |

What species of trees did you plant this year?

| | |
|-------|---------------|
| 19.1% | Douglas Fir |
| 18.4% | Blue Spruce |
| 17.4% | Norway Spruce |
| 1.2% | White Pine |
| 13.9% | Canaan Fir |
| 13.1% | Concolor Fir |
| 6.3% | Other Fir |
| 5% | Fraser Fir |
| 2% | Scotch Pine |
| 1.8% | White Spruce |
| 1.8% | Other Spruce |
| 0% | Other Pine |

The following is additional data for some of the survey questions:

What is the acreage in Christmas Trees on your farm?

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Less than 5 acres | 28% |
| 5 – 10 acres | 44% |
| 11 – 15 acres | 9% |
| 16 – 20 acres | 6% |
| Over 20 acres | 16% |

How long have you be selling trees grown on your farm?

| | |
|-----|-------------------|
| 7% | Less than 5 years |
| 11% | 5 – 10 years |
| 9% | 11 – 15 years |
| 10% | 16 - 20 years |
| 63% | Over 20 years |

In Memoriam

LTC (Ret) Charles T. Brown, Jr.

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Charles T. Brown, Jr., 82, of Palmer Township, passed away on June 19, 2016, at the Atria Senior Living Community in Bethlehem, PA. Charles served for 22 years in the U.S. Army, retiring in 1975 as a Lieutenant Colonel and Engineer Branch Officer. He was a Master Army Aviator with over 6000 hours of flight time in helicopters and fixed wing aircraft. Charles traveled all over the world and served overseas assignments in the Republic of Korea, France, and Vietnam. He was highly decorated during his military career, receiving multiple awards for service and heroism.

After retiring from the Army, Charles joined the New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers Association and was an active member and Director for many years. Along with his wife, he was the owner and operator of Charlie Brown's Christmas Tree Farm and the Volendam Windmill Museum, both in Holland Township, NJ.

Charles is survived by two sons, Charles T. III and his wife Katherine and Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Randall K. and his wife Kathryn, both of Holland Township, NJ; two sisters; four grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society at <https://donate.cancer.org> or to the St. Luke's Hospice at <https://5639.thankyou4caring.org>

David W. Croshaw

David W. Croshaw of Columbus passed away Wednesday, April 27, 2016, at the Samaritan Hospice Inpatient Unit in Mount Holly. He was 69.

David was the longtime owner of Croshaw Nursery in Columbus, where he worked as a tree farmer and nurseryman. He was a member and former director of the New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers Association, a member of the Burlington County Board of Agriculture, and a member of the Mansfield Township Environmental Commission.

He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Sandra; a son, Jeffrey of Columbus; and a daughter, Heather of St. Croix.

Contributions in David's memory may be made to Teton Valley Ranch Camp Education Foundation - online at <https://tvrcamp.org/donate-now> or by mail to The TVRC Education Foundation, P.O. Box 4915, Jackson, WY 83001.

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67th ANNUAL WINTER MEETING

New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers' Association

January 28, 2017 – Rutgers EcoComplex

1200 Florence-Columbus Road | Bordentown, NJ 08505

- 8:15-9:00** **Registration –**
Coffee & Danish - Visit with Exhibitors
- 9:00-9:15** **Welcome –**
Executive Secretary/Treasurer Donna Cole
and President Christian Nicholson
- 9:15-9:25** **State of Agriculture in NJ 2015-2016 –**
Douglas H. Fisher, Secretary of Agriculture, State of New Jersey
- 9:25-9:30** **Farmers Against Hunger –** Update by Kristina Guttadora
- 9:30-10:30** **Shearing of True Firs –**
Larry Downey, Downey Tree Farm, Hatley, Quebec, Canada
- 10:30-11:00** **Break –** Networking with Fellow Growers, Visit with Exhibitors
- 11:00-12:00** **Fungal Diseases of Christmas Trees in NJ –**
Dr. Ann Brooks Gould, Rutgers University
Department of Plant Biology and Pathology
- 12:00-1:00** **Lunch (Hot, locally catered) –**
Visit with growers, friends, and exhibitors
- 1:00-2:00** **Exotic Firs as Christmas Trees –**
Larry Downey, Downey Tree Farm, Hatley, Quebec, Canada
- 2:00–2:15** **Break –** Networking with Fellow Growers, Visit with Exhibitors
- 2:15-3:00** **Pesticide Regulatory and Safety Update –**
Core credits will be available
Wayne Trojanowski, WCSN Consulting (pinch hitting for
Patricia D. Hastings, Rutgers Cooperative Extension Pest Mgmt)
- 3:00-3:30** **NJCTGA Annual Business Meeting –**
President Chris Nicholson and Vice President Tim Dunne
State Contest and People's Choice Awards
- 3:30** **Adjournment**

REGISTRATION FORM ON PAGE 7

NJCTGA Officers

Chris Nicholson, President
Cnicho6345@aol.com
973-865-6362

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848-932-8993 ext 10

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 Executive Secretary
Donna Cole for additional details.

Welcome New Members!

Donald Knezick
Foggy Bottom Farm
Columbus, Burlington

Kenneth Stillwell
Stillwell Christmas Tree Farm
Lebanon, Hunterdon

Scott Lobban
MacGregor's Tree Farm
Newton, Sussex



67th ANNUAL WINTER MEETING

R E G I S T R A T I O N F O R M

Please register everyone who plans to attend – PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

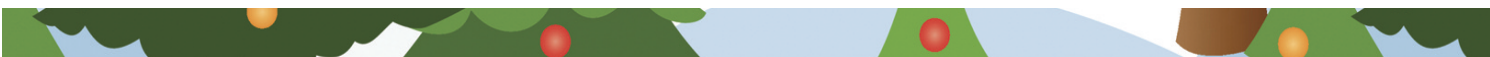
FARM NAME _____

TELEPHONE: (_____) _____

| | Number Attending | Meeting Price | Amount |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| REGISTRATION – FULL MEETING | | | |
| Coffee, Danish, Morning Break Beverage, Luncheon, Tax & Gratuities | | | |
| MEMBER (Per Person) Member rate includes spouse and family, partners and /or employees. | _____ | \$65.00 | _____ |
| NON-MEMBER (Per Person) Non-member fee entitles registrant to NJCTGA membership. | _____ | \$130.00 | _____ |
| REGISTRATION – MEETING ONLY | | | |
| Coffee, Danish and Morning Break Beverage. | | | |
| MEMBER | _____ | \$45.00 | _____ |
| NON-MEMBER | _____ | \$110.00 | _____ |
| | | TOTAL ENCLOSED | _____ |

List People attending.
For name tags, give first name preference. PLEASE PRINT.

Return Registrations to:
NJCTGA, Donna A. Cole, 478 County Road 579, Milford, NJ 08848, 908-735-4658



New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers' Association 2017 Membership Application

Please update and submit this form with your 2017 dues payment by **February 28, 2017**. Thank you!

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Farm Name _____

Farm Address _____

Farm City, State, Zip _____

County _____

Home Phone _____

Email Address _____

for access to digital information and NJCTGA News

Seasonal Phone _____

Website Address _____

Acres in Trees _____

Total Acres in Farmland _____

2017 Annual Membership Dues\$65.00

2017 Annual Acreage Dues\$_____

Based on Acreage in Trees. See Chart Below.

2017 Annual Dues Total: (enclosed)\$_____

**Please make checks payable to NJCTGA and mail to:
Donna A. Cole, Exec. Secretary/Treasurer, 478 County Road 579, Milford, New Jersey 08848
908-735-4658**

Acreage Dues Rates/Acres in Trees in New Jersey

| | |
|-------------------|----------|
| 1-4 acres | \$ 5.00 |
| 5-9 acres..... | \$ 10.00 |
| 10-19 acres | \$ 20.00 |
| 20-49 acres | \$ 50.00 |
| 50+ acres..... | \$100.00 |



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| GROWMARK FS, LLC | 55 Silver Lake Road | Bridgeton, NJ | 08302 | 856.455.7688 | 888.432.7939 |
| GROWMARK FS, LLC | 2545 Rt 206 | Eastampton, NJ | 08060 | 609.267.7054 | 800.966.4909 |
| GROWMARK FS, LLC | 425 Helms Avenue | Swedesboro, NJ | 08085 | 856.467.2867 | |

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