



President's Message



Chris Nicholson

As I reflect back on this past year I can only give thanks that I have survived and my farm thrived. We had our best year ever as far as sales are concerned, and in my discussions with other farmers that seems to be the norm for 2020. My high anxiety about what

was to come this past season was quickly extinguished after our first day of sales. I try and think of everything leading up to opening day each year and be prepared for anything. But this year I could have never imagined that so many people would want to come to our farms and cut a real tree. The media seemed to be our friends this season. No spotted lanternfly headlines and no bad press. The tree shortage was a recurring theme with each media outlet that reached out to me. I get lots of calls from the media due to my position as President of this association. Most I return, some I do not. It was a pleasant surprise this year to answer questions about how busy and popular our farms were. I guess when you can't go to dinner, a movie, shopping, a sporting event or even church on a Sunday morning our farms offered some normalcy and happiness to so many families during the holiday season.

My wife and daughter have recovered from covid. They both tested positive a week before Christmas. I was forced to vacate my home and live in isolation at my farm in the little sales shed with no running water for over two weeks. It was rough, especially Christmas Eve and Christmas day. This time in near solitude was a blessing in some strange way. The silence each night allowed me to give real

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Christmas Tree Success Requires Long-Term Commitment

Despite a strong market, Christmas tree growers say it takes years to be able to generate income.

By Paul Post

Article Reprinted from the American Agriculturist

Christmas trees can offer dairy farmers a way to supplement their farm income or stay in agriculture without the daily demands of caring for large animals.

For Springside Farm owners Ed and Paulie Drexler, the decision was an easy one. They'd been growing trees as a sideline for many years, but at 50, Ed turned to his wife one day said, "We've got 25 good years left. What would you like to do with the rest of your life?"

He simply wanted a different lifestyle and more time to focus on trees at their central New York farm near Syracuse.

"Christmas trees don't jump the fence," she says, smiling. "Nobody calls you at two in the morning and says, 'The trees are out!' If you want to go to a wedding, nobody says you have to mow the trees that day, that kind of thing. You can structure your workload around Christmas trees, so you have quite a bit more freedom of time. With the dairy everything had to be done for the cows. Animals have to be fed every day and we were always involved with

fall harvest. You had to get the corn in. It wasn't until we got rid of the cows that we had more time.

"And the equipment required for trees is much smaller. We do most our mowing with zero-turn lawn mowers."

The market for live trees is extremely strong right now and growers are more than willing to help newcomers get started.

"It's a wonderful industry of people," she says. "There's a lot of room out there for everybody. My problem isn't competition from the tree farmer next door. I taught his kids how to make wreaths and roping. It didn't bother me in the least. He's not my problem. My problem is the artificial tree."

PLAN FOR THE LONG TERM

There's no time like the present to get started because raising Christmas trees is an extremely long-term proposition.

"There's actually a shortage of real trees," she says. "People aren't growing them because people aren't patient. They're per-

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Have you paid your dues?

If you have not paid your dues for the years 2020 and 2019, you will no longer receive emails from us.

However, there is a membership form on page 11 if needed. The form is also available on our website.

In Memoriam

John W. Wyckoff



John W. Wyckoff Jr., 76, a lifelong resident of Belvidere, NJ passed away on November 21, 2020 at St. Luke's Hospice House in Bethlehem, PA. John was born on April 19, 1944 in Phillipsburg, NJ to the late John W. Sr. and Dorothy Fulmer Wyckoff. He was a graduate of Belvidere High School class of 1962. John married the love of his life Susan Patee in March of 1977.

Growers Association Grand Champion Award, and twice received national awards as National Christmas Tree Grand Champion Grower and Reserve Grand Champion Grower.

He was a lifelong member of the United Presbyterian Church of Belvidere. The only thing he loved more than farming was his family. He adored his grandchildren and always looked forward to seeing them. He will be greatly missed. John is survived by his loving children; John C. Wyckoff and his wife Leslie, Lisa McKeever and her husband Jeffrey, Thomas Hammill and his wife Kris, William Wyckoff and his wife Maureen. He is also survived by his sister Judy Wyckoff Morris and his cherished grandchildren; Noelle, Olivia, Johnny, Sadie, Nicole, Jason, Paige, Katie, Makenna, Delaney, Ryan, Brennan and Keira and 2 future great-grandsons due in December and February. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his devoted wife Susan, who passed in 2013. In keeping with the family's wishes all services at this time will be private. A service of remembrance will be celebrated at a later date on the farm.

John and his father established the Wyckoff Christmas Tree Farm in 1958. He lived the farmer's life and worked until this most recent illness. John was a member and former President of the New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers Association and member of the National Christmas Tree Association. Under John's tutelage the farm was an 11-time winner of the New Jersey Christmas Tree

Donations may be made in John's name to Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, 14 Commerce Drive Suite 301, Cranford, NJ 07016, www.teamintraining.org/nj, or to the charity of your choice. Funeral arrangements were entrusted to the Warren Hills Memorial Home. To send an online condolence please visit www.warrenhillsmemorialhome.com.

President's Message

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thanks for my health, my friendships, my family and the success I found after all my hard work these past twenty years of growing my trees. Perhaps I found the true meaning of Christmas somewhere in that little shed on Christmas Eve.

I sincerely wish our winter meeting could be held. I miss seeing so many friends and I am sure you all feel the same. Yes, the lectures are always great. But it's the togetherness at our meeting that I cherish the most. For those of you who wish to gather information this winter, Michigan

State University has put together a fabulous Christmas tree production webinar series, with a really good agenda, every Tuesday in February. Information about the webinar series was emailed to you in January and is listed in this issue. Our summer meeting is still a go as of now and will be held at Alger Tree Farm. If you recall we were supposed to be there last summer but it wasn't possible. We will keep you posted.

Your dues reminder will be mailed to you shortly. If we ever needed to stick together

er now is the time. We cannot survive this tumultuous time without your support. Stay with us. Our meetings are always a source of revenue for the NJCTGA and without them our funds are strained. Your membership dues will keep us afloat and together for the foreseeable future.

My mother always said that this too shall pass, and I sincerely look forward to seeing you all very soon.

Christian

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:

SUNSET CHRISTMAS TREE FARM

Blairstown, Warren County

By: Tim Dunne



Tim Dunne

Sunset Christmas Tree Farm in rural Warren County is a uniquely diverse farm that includes ponds, woodlands, orchards, pastures, honeybees, Hereford cattle and of course – Christmas trees. The 136 acre farm run by Tim and Wendy Ruh has 15 acres of Christmas trees. The Ruhs grow concolor fir, Douglas fir, Colorado blue spruce, Norway spruce and Fraser fir.

The Ruh family has been growing Christmas trees in Blairstown since 1980 when Tim's father, Al, began the choose and cut operation. Al was a former director, treasurer and member of the NJ Christmas Tree Growers Association (NJCTGA) in the years 1980 to 2007. After Al passed away in 2007, Tim took over the farming. For about 5 years Tim and Wendy ran the operation from their home in Arkansas before moving back home to Blairstown full time.



Field of young concolor fir

At Christmas time the farm is open seven days a week. On weekends local groups such as the local search and rescue team of Warren County, and previously the America Legion post, have their members volunteer to carry and bale trees. The volunteers work for tips that are their organizations largest fundraiser of the year.

Tim had been a commercial beekeeper in Arkansas with up to 2000 bee hives and now has a few dozen hives in Warren County.



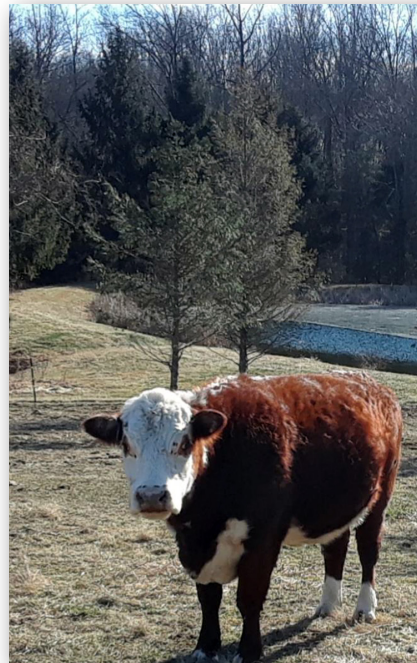
Sunset Christmas Tree Farm includes a productive bee yard

Every tree customer at Sunset Christmas Tree Farm gets a free 8 ounce honey bear with a purchase of a tree, and Wendy commented that "the honey is loved by customers and helps keep them coming back to the farm". The Ruhs bring 100 to 150 pounds of pecans from Arkansas each year to shell and then bag them into smaller quantities they sell at the farm. The pecans are another custom-

er favorite and they sell out after only a few weekends. They also have local crafts people at the farm making wreaths and grave blankets for sale. They also had two different new food truck businesses offer concessions the last two years some weekends. The farm includes an antique railroad caboose that Tim's Dad Al brought to the farm many years ago. The caboose is a favorite setting for pictures by customers and photographers.



An antique railroad caboose at the farm is a favorite spot for photos



One of the farms Herefords enjoys the winter sun above the farm pond

Tim has been a member of the NJCTGA since he took over the farm in 2007. Wendy enjoys the association meetings where they meet other farmers, learn about other operations and enjoy the camaraderie of Christmas tree farmers.

Wendy really likes the ability to email a question to NJCTGA Executive Secretary Donne Cole and have Donna send it out to 100+ members. One tip Wendy has for new tree farmers is to make a farm Facebook page. Wendy has a website too for the farm, but finds the Facebook page is much easier to update often, and is a great way for customers to find the farm. They used to do some print advertising "but everybody uses the internet and their phone now to find farms", Wendy reported.



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

Christmas Tree Success *continued from page 1*

fectly willing to hop on the newest trend like hemp, hops, all that kind of stuff.”

It takes seven to nine years before trees are ready to harvest and with another year dedicated to clearing and planting, land might be tied up for an entire decade.

“As bad as the dairy industry is with milk prices, at least there’s a steady income there,” says Pete Goderie, co-owner of the fifth-generation Goderie’s Tree Farm in Johnstown, N.Y. “When you transition to Christmas trees, unless you’ve got another income, it’s about 10 years before you see an income.”

That’s why, like most growers, Goderie’s farm has a diversity of revenue streams such as a greenhouse operation and contracting business.

Family-owned Springside Farm also has a thriving side fiber business with livestock such as sheep, goats and alpacas in addition to hosting weddings, a summer day camp, autumn corn maze and pick-your-own pumpkin patch.

“We’re an extraordinarily diverse operation, but Christmas trees are the bedrock, the backbone for what we’re doing right now, and Ed enjoys it,” owner Paulie Drexler says. “It keeps you moving, yet at a pace that doesn’t break the bones. It’s not like milking cows where your knees and shoulders give out.”

LONG ROAD TO PROFITABILITY

Chip and Sally Ellms founded Ellms Family Farm in 1983 utilizing a former fruit farm they had purchased in Charlton, N.Y. Soon after, they started buying land from a neighboring dairy farmer who was downsizing, and in 2000 they purchased the entire farm.

Today, the Ellms have about 30,000 trees under production and their son, Garth, 38, recently took over the business.

While there are plenty of rewards, Garth, too, cautioned prospective tree farmers to consider things carefully because there is no shortage of challenges such as potential damage from poor weather, insects and deer.

CONSIDER OPTIONS: Raising Christmas trees can be a rewarding business that produces lots of fond memories for customers who visit farms to cut their own tree. But there are also lots of challenges such as potential damage from weather, insects and deer. Plus the fact that a farmer will usually only generate an income years into the venture.

“You’re constantly monitoring, looking for problems such as bugs,” he says “Last year we had a big root aphid problem. Luckily, we have great resources at Cornell, so we were able to identify and treat it within a day. But you can plan on about 30-percent loss from the day the seedling goes in the ground to the day of harvest.

“If you have all the tractors, the land and everything, that first year you’re probably spending about \$3,000 to \$4,000 per acre, and maybe a couple thousand each year in fertilizer, sprays and insect pesticide control. Then there’s the cost of infrastructure — roads, buildings and everything else. It’s a lot more than you realize, and trees have to be trimmed twice, every single year.”

Chip Ellms says it took 25 years to become profitable. Fortunately, he had a successful business career to rely on while building his diverse farm venture, which also includes one of the Capital Region’s most popular fall agritourism destinations.

“You need to start thinking about trees before you start thinking about kids if you want to put your kids through college with Christmas trees,” Garth says.

Goderie’s Tree farm was a dairy until Pete Goderie’s great-grandfather sold off his cows and half the farm in 1960. “In 1970, my father decided to plant Christmas trees with the idea it was going to put me and my brother, Mike, through college,” he says. The money wound up paying for Pete Goderie’s children’s tuition, not his. In 2000, the family’s agricultural heritage came full circle when Pete and Mike Goderie bought back the land their great-grandfather sold 40 years earlier.

From its original 30 acres, the farm now has 150 acres of trees under production, primarily Fraser fir, one of the industry’s most popular varieties because of its lengthy needle retention.

“But nothing can beat the fragrance of balsam and they’re a little more forgiving, they’ll take a little bit heavier soil,” Pete says. “Fraser fir want to have dry feet; 24 to 48 hours of standing water will kill a mature tree. They want well-drained soil. That’s why site selection is so important. If you want to get into the business take a year or two to evaluate your soils. The one thing everyone thinks initially is, ‘I’ll put the trees on my poorer ground, my poorer soil.’ But trees are like every other crop. The better the ground the better the trees.”

CONSIDER OPTIONS

Mary Jeanne Packer, executive director of the Christmas Tree Farmers Association of New York, says that she’s gotten quite a few recent inquiries from people who have either bought or inherited a farm, or are looking to add a new crop.

“The best advice I can give is if you’re flexible, consider buying a Christmas tree farm that’s already established,” she says. “It would be an absolutely excellent investment because the hard work has already been done. All you have to do is keep the trees alive, shape them and make a sale.”

Paulie Drexler says there’s almost limitless information available online for getting started. “In this day and age, a lot of people don’t join trade associations and they should,” she says. “Ninety percent of the good tips you get come when you go to their meetings, just chatting around the lunch table. That kind of networking has almost gone out of style with people who think they learn everything they need on YouTube.

“I’m not saying you can’t, but sometimes you don’t know you have a problem or that there’s a solution until you talk to other people. Back before internet, that’s how you learned. It’s still a valid method of exchanging information. It’s a great way to pick up a tip.”

Back to Basics: Winter Christmas Tree Webinar Series Announced by Michigan State

Series will teach new growers how to build a solid understanding of management practices and give experienced growers a much-needed review, as well as give updates on research and emerging issues.

By Jill O'Donnell, Michigan State University Extension

Christmas tree operations run the gamut from small choose-and-cut farms to large-scale wholesale operations. Regardless of the size or type of farm, a good working knowledge of the overall production system is essential to help growers avoid problems before they start and give a leg up on trouble-shooting issues when they arise.

In the free Back to Basics: Christmas Tree Production webinar series, experts from Michigan State University Extension and around the country will examine the fundamentals of Christmas tree production from understanding soils and site selection to managing

pests and diseases during the rotation to ensuring maximum needle retention for the end customer. This program will provide newer growers with the foundation they need to gain confidence in their decision-making and provide more experienced growers a much-needed review as well as give updates on research and emerging issues.

The Back to Basics: Christmas Tree Production series will run each Tuesday, Feb. 2-23, 2021, from 12:30 to 2 p.m. Participants can receive two pesticide recertification credits (private core, commercial core or 3B) for both the Feb. 9 and 16 programs.

Topics and Speakers:

FEB. 2 NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT TO IMPROVE TREE QUALITY AND PROFITABILITY

Rick Bates, Pennsylvania State University

Fertilization and nutrient management are among the most important tools growers have to improve Christmas tree growth and quality. Bates will review the recommended soil nutrient guidelines, how to use available assessment tools and developing a sustainable nutrient management plan to meet your goals.

Bates' research with Christmas trees includes species selection, planting, vegetation and disease management, fertilization, shearing and post-harvest handling. In addition, he provides leadership in the planning and implementation of the highly recognized annual Pennsylvania Christmas tree management short course.

FEB. 9 DISEASE MANAGEMENT: DEVELOPING YOUR STRATEGY

Monique Sakalidis, Michigan State University

Effective disease management is much more than applying fungicides. Sakalidis will review the principals of disease control and how you can use them to manage some of the common diseases in your Christmas tree fields.

Sakalidis is an assistant professor in forest pathology in the Departments of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences and Forestry. Her research focuses on using genomic tools in conjunction with traditional pathology tools to mitigate and respond to forest tree diseases (detection, identification, pathogenicity and population analysis). She is currently focusing on oak wilt, white pine and spruce decline but is always on the lookout for new problematic tree diseases in forested and Christmas tree plantations.

FEB. 16 INSECT MANAGEMENT: AVOIDING THE PESTICIDE TREADMILL

Cliff Sadof, Purdue University

Minimizing or eliminating damage from insect pests requires an integrated management approach. Sadof will discuss how to design an insect management plan that is effective, environmentally friendly and flexible enough to respond to new insect/mite problems you may find in your fields.

Sadof is a professor and Extension specialist responsible for developing pest management programs for insect pests of ornamental crops. His research interests include integrated pest management of ornamental landscape and production systems, reducing invasive species introductions on imported nursery and floriculture crops and developing education and outreach programs to reduce the introduction of invasive species.

FEB. 23 KEEPING THE CUSTOMER SATISFIED: UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING NEEDLE RETENTION

Gary Chastagner, Washington State University

Needle retention is critical to customer satisfaction. The ability of trees to hang on to their needles is impacted by a range of factors before and after trees are harvested. Chastagner will review the best management practices to keep trees fresh, helping you improve quality and customers satisfaction.

Chastagner has worked with Christmas tree growers since 1979 in his role as plant pathologist and Extension specialist. He is well known for his work on managing Christmas tree diseases and factors that affect the postharvest quality of Christmas trees. His work has helped get healthier, longer-lasting Christmas trees into people's homes.

TO REGISTER, CLICK HERE

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Welcome New Members!

Michael Larney

Larney Tree Farm

Belvidere, Warren

Scott Rios

& Tara Nelson

Integrity Farms

Stockton, Hunterdon

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. Contact Exec. Secretary Donna Cole for additional details.

N J C H R I S T M A S T R E E S . O R G

News from the Christmas Tree Promotion Board (CTPB)

New CTPB Board Members Appointed

In late November, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the appointment of five producers and one importer to serve on the Christmas Tree Promotion Board with three-year terms beginning on January 1, 2021, and expiring December 31, 2023.

Newly appointed members to serve are:

- Roger W. Beyer, Molalla, Oregon
(Producer Region #1 – Western) Second Term
- Michael Cocco, Redwood City, California
(Producer Region #1 – Western)
- Jane M. Neubauer, Chardon, Ohio
(Producer Region #2 – Central)
- Renee' Beutell Campbell, Tuckasegee, North Carolina
(Producer Region #3 – Eastern)
- Chuck Berry, Covington, Georgia
(Producer Region #3 – Eastern)
- Larry Downey, Quebec, Canada (Importer)

The 12-member board has 11 producers representing production in the eastern, central and western regions of the United States, and one importer member. Each member can serve up to two consecutive three-year terms.

Reports and Assessments Due February 15

Reporting forms for the 2020 harvest and sales season were sent to Christmas tree producers in mid-December. Completed reporting forms and assessment payments are due by February 15.

If you have not received your form in the mail or have misplaced it, you can print your own copy here: <https://www.christmas-treepromotionboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/2020-SALES-IMPORTER-Report-XMAS-SI.pdf>

Please note that there is a new address for the bank lockbox. This address appears on the return envelope provided to you and at the bottom of the Sales and Importer reporting form

Did you Sell Christmas Trees Imported from Canada?

Assessments on imported Christmas trees are the responsibility of the "Importer of Record" listed on the paperwork filed with US Customs. US Customs supplies these names and tree numbers to the CTPB. If you are not the "Importer of Record" on the US Customs paperwork, you are not responsible to pay these assessments. All Importers of Record will be contacted directly by the CTPB regarding the number of trees imported into the US.

News from the National Christmas Tree Association (NCTA)

2020 has been a year unlike any other. NCTA members reported record early sales as consumers flocked to find a real Christmas tree as the centerpiece for their celebration. The media was highly interested in the increased demand for real Christmas trees. NCTA handled hundreds of calls and emails from reporters wanting to learn more about what was happening.



COVID-19 Preparation

The media contacted NCTA early in November asking if consumers would want to shop for Christmas trees this year due to COVID-19 and if Christmas tree retail locations had taken steps to adequately provide COVID-19 protections. We knew the demand for similar farm experiences and products like pumpkins, u-pick berries and orchards was extremely high as families wanted to come to farms and have a great experience. We knew garden centers had one of their biggest spring/summer seasons ever and they were anticipating 2020 would be one of their biggest Christmas seasons. We also knew many of our members were reporting a high level of calls and online communications with customers indicating a significant demand for real trees and the experience of a family outing to get a tree this year. We were telling the media these indicators lead us to believe it will be a very strong season for real Christmas trees. We were also highlighting that the industry is well prepared to do business safely and is utilizing NCTA's COVID-19 best practice recommendations. Those responses were well received and reported by the media.

Wall Street Journal Cites NCTA's Effective Lobbying Efforts

An article that appeared in the December 26th issue told the story of how the logging industry was seeking financial aid due to coronavirus and highlighted how NCTA had been successful in lobbying to include Christmas trees in the CFAP2 program.

Please click below to access the pdf of the article:

<https://files.constantcontact.com/6ef2df20601/5ab3dd59-4d86-4dc5-aedc-d68704b654f4.pdf>

NCTA Featured on Business of Agriculture Podcast

NCTA member Casey Grogan and NCTA Executive Director Tim O'Connor were featured in an episode of Damian Mason's Business of Agriculture podcast to discuss the Christmas tree industry. Several members have seen it and contacted us to say "good job". You can view it here: <https://youtu.be/zHOkEgMn1GY>

Why is My Christmas Tree Beginning to Grow?

By Bert Cregg, Michigan State University Extension, Departments of Horticulture and Forestry,
and Jill O'Donnell, Michigan State University Extension

It may seem like a miracle when your Christmas tree breaks bud and begins to grow while on display and it is, a miracle of nature. In some years, species prone to early break bud like concolor fir, Douglas fir, balsam fir and Black Hills spruce are likely candidates to possibly break buds once displayed.

Often, Michigan State University Extension educators receive calls from homeowners in December because their Christmas tree has broken bud and started to grow while in the house. To understand what is going on, we need to talk about how conifers develop and survive the winter. Each year, trees follow a cycle of dormancy in the fall. This process helps them survive through winter until spring when they will come out of dormancy, de-harden and resume growth.

The two most critical environmental factors that trigger the dormancy process are the reduction of light, or photoperiod, and low temperatures. Conifers will stop growing and set terminal buds as days become

shorter even though the day temperatures are still relatively warm, but the nights are cool in August and September. The dormancy process first begins because of decreasing photoperiod, but continues as



trees respond to low temperatures around or just below the freezing point. This dormancy or chilling period is needed before normal growth will resume in the spring.

As a general rule, most conifers need to accumulate at six to 10 weeks of exposure to temperatures below 40 degrees

Fahrenheit in order to meet their chilling requirement to overcome dormancy. The chilling requirement is an evolutionary adaptation that protects trees from starting to grow anytime they experience a brief warmup during the winter. It's the same reason bulbs don't start to grow as soon as you plant them in the fall.

Some tree species require a relatively short chilling period to overcome dormancy. If we have a cold fall and early winter, trees may accumulate enough chilling hours to satisfy their dormancy requirement before they are harvested from their field or during shipping and display at the tree lot. Once the chilling hours are met, the only thing keeping the tree

from growing is that outdoor temperatures are too cold. Once trees are placed in a warm, favorable environment, they can and sometimes do begin to grow like it's springtime. This can seem like a miracle, but it is just the miracle of nature.



Shearing Equipment



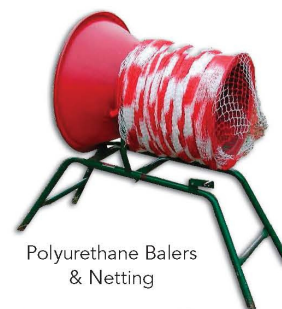
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More Fungus Among Us?

Observations from the Rutgers Plant Diagnostics Lab

By Tim Dunne

I recently had an opportunity to speak with Richard Buckley, Director of the Rutgers University Plant Diagnostic Lab in New Brunswick. Rich has been a frequent presenter at our winter meetings, summer meetings and spring twilight meetings. He has a great knowledge of the many pests and diseases that might impact our Christmas tree plantations and he and his lab provide a valuable resource to Christmas tree growers in New Jersey.

Rich explained that 2020 was quite an experience for his lab as the pandemic shut down all Rutgers facilities in March. He was able to “bring his lab home” and continue to provide his valuable services from his home. In fact a national publication did a story how Rich and his staff continued to diagnose plant problems from home. Unfortunately a Rutgers administrator learned of that article and promptly shut down the home diagnoses efforts since official Rutgers equipment must be used on campus in Rutgers facilities! Fortunately, Rich soon had his lab and staff designated as essential personnel and they were allowed to return to the Rutgers facilities and continue the lab functions.

Overall the number of plant samples sent to Rutgers in 2020 was down considerably from previous years. This was in part due to staff limitations of partners such as the NJ Department of Agriculture who set out many of the traps used to monitor pests around the state. Also many arborists and landscapers who send in plant samples had their work schedules interrupted by the pandemic effects. Since local County Ag Agents offices were closed (and are still closed) many homeowners sent plant questions to Rich’s lab daily.

Several big problems were uncovered on spruce trees in the spring and summer of 2020. Norway spruce continue to have issues from the *Rhizosphaera* needlecast, a fungal disease that

causes needles to brown and falloff. Many Christmas tree growers have reported this problem in recent years and in 2020 Rich feels it is on the increase. Additionally, Rich identified *Stigmata* needlecast on many samples of blue spruce sent into the lab last summer. This is a newer fungal disease, which may also be on the upswing and Christmas tree growers should be diligent in looking out for this in 2021. Rich thought that in recent years, a lack of prolonged cold periods during our winters may allow fungal diseases to go unchecked and that is a possible cause of the increased occurrence of these two diseases, especially *Rhizosphaera*.

Good fact sheets are available that explain and illustrate these two fungal diseases at the links below:

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/CAES/DOCUMENTS/Publications/Fact_Sheets/Plant_Pathology_and_Ecology/NeedleCast-DiseasesofSprucepdf.pdf?la=en

<https://extension.psu.edu/rhizosphaera-needle-cast>

Rich also mentioned that newer County Extension Agents in South Jersey have begun putting together a Nursery Growers Work Group that includes Rutgers faculty and staff, growers and others that may be a new resource for Christmas tree growers in the future as the group evolves.

“Watch the weather, timing is everything” in the control of Christmas tree pests Rich explained. “We have many treatment prescriptions that work well to control pests and diseases – if we get them applied in a timely fashion” he continued. Rich explained that it is critical to scout your fields for pests and if needed, get plant samples into the diagnostics lab for identification.

The lab is open and is accepting plant samples via no-contact, curbside drop-off. You can see specific sample instructions at the Rutgers website at: njaes.rutgers.edu/plant-diagnostic-lab/ You can also email Rich at richard.buckley@rutgers.edu with questions.

Pesticide License Information

The NJ Christmas Tree Growers Association regularly provides recertification credits for grower’s pesticide applicators licenses. Since we did not have in-person meetings last summer and this winter we have not been able to provide members these credits. Generally you have five years from when your license was granted to obtain credits before you are recertified.

To look at your current private pesticide applicators license and view recertification credits you have and are required to have, log on to the NJ DEP, Bureau of Pesticide Compliance web site below. You will need to provide your license number, last 4 numbers of your SS# and your birth date.

<https://www13.state.nj.us/DataMiner/Search/SearchByCategory?isExternal=y&getCategory=y&catName=Pesticide+Control+Program>

NJ DEP Bureau of Pesticide Compliance and Rutgers University, NJ Agricultural Experiment Station, Pest Management Office both maintain a comprehensive list of all on-line courses available to help you meet your recertification credit requirements, go to the web-sites below for more information.

<https://pestmanagement.rutgers.edu/pat/recertification-2/>

<https://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/pcp/bpo-recert.htm>

New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers Association

2021 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



Please update and submit this form with your 2021 dues payment by **FEBRUARY 28, 2021**. *Thank you!*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Farm Name _____

Farm Address _____

Farm City _____ State _____ Zip _____

County _____

Home Phone _____

Seasonal Phone _____

Website Address _____

Email Address _____

(for access to digital information and NJCTGA News)

Acre in Trees..... _____

Total Acres in Farmland _____

2021 Annual Membership Dues \$ 65.00

2021 Annual Acreage Dues \$ _____

Based on acreage in trees; see chart to right.

2021 Annual Dues Total (enclosed) \$ _____

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

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



New Jersey Christmas Tree Growers Association T-SHIRT ORDER FORM

Shirts are \$22 if mailed to your home and only \$20 if picked up at Cole's Country Tree Farm.

Sizes available are S, M, L, XL, and 2XL. These are high quality Gildan T-shirts and they do not shrink at all.



_____ shirts to be mailed at \$22 each.

_____ shirts to be picked up at \$20 each.

Total amount enclosed:
\$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone # _____

Mail this form with your check or money order to:

Farm Name _____

Donna A. Cole
**Exec. Secretary/
Treasurer**

Farm Address _____

478 County Road 579
Milford, NJ 08848

Farm City, State, Zip _____

908-713-9214 (fax)

Questions?
Email
execsecretary@
njchristmastrees.org
or call
(908) 735-4658

	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE	X-LARGE	XX-LARGE	
Number of Shirts TO BE MAILED \$22/ea.						TOTAL: _____ shirts to be mailed @ \$22 ea.
Number of Shirts TO BE PICKED UP \$20/ea.						TOTAL: _____ shirts to be picked up @ \$20 ea.