



Tree Line



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association

January 2010

Special point of interest:

◆ Upcoming Meetings:

The NHVTCTA has tentatively set dates and locations for its two 2010 meetings. See the Association Web site (www.nh-vtchristmastree.org) for up-to-date information.

- The summer meeting has been scheduled for June 26 at Larry Krieger's farm in Vermont.

- The fall meeting has been scheduled for September 25 at Gordon and Carolyn Page's farm in New Hampshire.

◆ Farms for Sale?:

On occasion, the NHVTCTA receives calls inquiring about possible tree farms for sale. If anyone has or knows of any, please let Jim Horst know, (802) 447-1900.

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Winter Meeting Preview

The winter meeting is just days away, to be held Jan. 26 at the Canadian Club in Barre, Vt.

One important part of a full agenda will be an open discussion on the 2009 sales season. There will also be an open discussion on worker costs and production incentives—please take a few moments before the meeting to compile some specifics from your operation to share with the group. This might include not only sales figures, but also data related to labor and other expenses incurred during production. The more information we can exchange at this type of gathering, the more we all can learn from each other.

Also on tap for the Barre meeting will be a presentation by

Internet guru Veronica Francis of Notchnet Web Services on maretting with Constant Contact, a tool for keeping in touch with customers. David Santamaria, a paramedic and tree farmer, will provide valuable safety information related to chemical use on the farm.

With weather patterns seemingly constantly changing, Ron Kelley will new problems that growers may face in the world of disease and insect pressure. Last, but not least, Larry Downey of Downey Nursery, and a past president of the Canadian Christmas Tree Association, will share his experiences with the tree market in that country.

Hope to see you in Barre.

"Trees for Troops" Recap

The NHVTCTA's annual Trees for Troops effort took on special meaning this past holiday season with some 1,500 Vermont National Guard troops leaving home shortly after Christmas for training and then a year-long deployment in Afghanistan.

Though past years have been very successful, NHVTCTA members responded to the increased need this year by dramatically increasing the number of trees contributed. This holiday season, 32 Christmas tree farms from every corner of Vermont contributed to the "Trees for Troops" program, organized by Bob White in Vermont and Nigel Manley in New Hampshire.

Many of the trees were avail-

able at choose-and-cut Christmas tree farms in Vermont. The NHVTCTA created special certificates for these trees providing the donor farm name, address and

phone number.

The certificates were then distributed by the Vermont Guard.

In addition, hundreds more trees were trans-

ported to The Rocks in New Hampshire, where they were again picked up by FedEx and delivered to military bases out-of-state as part of the Christmas Spirit Foundation's national "Trees for Troops" program.

The The League of N.H. Craftsmen and the Vermont Hand Crafters also supplied hundreds of ornaments to help adorn the trees.

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President's Message: Focusing on Membership

Happy New Year to everyone and thank you for the opportunity to serve as president of the association. I am proud to be a third generation president following in the footsteps of my father, Bill, in the early 1980s and my grandfather, Harlie, in the late 1950s.

I would like to thank Rich Rockwood, our past president, and all of the directors for a job well done in keeping this association organized and strong. Also, a special thanks to Jim Horst for all the work he does as executive secretary, just like in any business, being efficient and organized keeps the wheels rolling smoothly!

During my tenure, I want to focus on membership. I feel it is important to reach out to

new and former members in order to reverse the trend of falling numbers in the past ten years.

There is an increase in the amount of people who are planting trees for the first time and more trees are being planted by established farms, yet association membership is still on the decline or is, at best, flat.

Getting these people to see the benefits of the association and meetings is key to new memberships.

I also think it is important to stay focused on marketing, not only your own trees, but also the real tree. Every customer that turns to an artificial tree or no tree at all is one customer none of us will have! Worse yet, they may raise their families with-

out the tradition of a real tree starting a generational cycle.

I suggest joining the National Christmas Tree Association, New Hampshire or Vermont Christmas Tree Promotion Boards, donating to the real tree program or becoming informed about the benefits of the national check off program.

The real tree is how we all make our living or part of it, doesn't it make sense to invest some time and energy into sustaining or increasing the real tree market....think about it!

Lastly, if anyone has any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me anytime. Thank you.

*Jay Weir
President*



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association



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2010 Tree Line Publication Schedule

Issue	Ad/Submission Deadline
January	--
June	May 21
September	August 20



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Research Report: International Conference

By John F. Ahrens

Having missed the first eight meetings of International Christmas Tree Research and Extension Conference, I took advantage of the opportunity to attend the 9th biennial meeting on September 13 to 18, 2009. This is a group of Christmas tree researchers and extension specialists from primarily the U.S. and Europe. In the recent past they met in Michigan, Denmark and North Carolina.

This year they met in Corvallis, Ore., and Puyallup (pronounced Pew-allup), Wash. Over 40 researchers were in attendance including several from Denmark, Norway, Czechoslovakia, and Canada and, of course, the U.S. In 2011, they will meet in Austria.

First of all I must say that the professionalism of the group and the hospitality shown by our

hosts in Oregon and Washington were above reproach; the program, accommodations and food were all excellent.

The first few days in Corvallis at the University of Oregon were composed of 20-minute morning paper sessions and afternoon field tours. I gave a talk on Wednesday about our results with the three-way combination of Roundup, Goal Tender and Stinger and the corn herbicide Callista on conifers.

From a talk on Danish weed control we learned that many more restrictions on allowable herbicides are imposed on European growers than here in the U.S.

Other topics during the week included field performance of Fraser fir grafted onto root stock of other fir species, establishment of Christmas tree plantations, rating needle loss, alternatives to commercial deer repellents,

genetic variation in root rot resistance in Turkish and Trojan fir, an analysis of shearing methods in Fraser fir, genetic needle sampling for nutrients and many other topics.

The Europeans are particularly interested in Nordmann fir which grows very well there and in the Pacific Northwest. Unfortunately, in the northeastern U.S., Nordmann has proven to be slow growing in early years. The importance of seed source was stressed often. One problem that we in Connecticut have in planting exotic firs (those not native to our area) is that we usually cannot pinpoint the seed source and get the same material for the next rotation. With time and more research to identify those seed sources that produce reliably good quality trees, that will change.

continued on page 8

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Real vs. Artificial: Life Cycle Analysis

In 2009, independent Canadian research firm Ellipso released results of a study it conducted to determine the environmental impacts of both real and artificial trees over their respective life cycles.

The firm found that, "The results for this impact category are clear: the natural tree is better than the artificial tree considering an average life span of six years for the artificial tree. This conclusion holds true for resource depletion as well."

In fact, even when factoring in the annual car trips to a Christmas tree farm or lot, purchase of a real Christmas tree still produced almost two-thirds less carbon dioxide emissions than purchase of an artificial Christmas tree.

"The emitted CO₂ over the entire life cycle are approximately 3.1 kg CO₂ per year for the natural tree and 8 kg CO₂ per year for

the artificial tree," Ellipso reported.

The study did not receive a tremendous amount of exposure in the general press, but some commentators did take notice. For example, writing in the *National Review*, Rich Lowry observed that "no more agonizing over artificial versus natural," was necessary among environmentally conscious consumers. "The great Christmas-tree debate should be settled for now."

Lowry explained how Ellipso found that, "The artificial tree incurs such a carbon footprint at its inception — with its manufacturing and then its transport from China — that it takes 20 years of use for it to match a natural tree. Since most people don't find a raggedy fake tree entirely in keeping with the spirit of the season and throw out their artificial trees on average after a mere six years of use, the

natural tree is clearly superior."

It's important to note that the independently conducted Ellipso research contradicts recent studies commissioned by the plastic tree industry (funded by the deceptively named American Christmas Tree Association) purporting that "Owning an artificial Christmas tree is healthier for the environment over a 10 year period than using real trees."

In his column, Rich Lowry noted that further research on the subject is underway, but is likely to come to the same conclusion: "Pending further peer-reviewed work at the Climate Research Unit in East Anglia and a definitive pronouncement from the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the natural tree should get a tentative eco nod."

For growers, that's news worth sharing with customers.

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4 yr. seedlings*	4-0	12-20"	36.25	58.00	290.00
4 yr. transplants	2-2	6-12"	93.75	150.00	750.00
* 5 yr. transplants*	2-3	12-20"	106.25	170.00	850.00
6 yr. transplants*	3-3	16-26"	137.50	220.00	1100.00

Colorado Blue Spruce (Majestic®)					Zones 2-7
3 yr. seedlings	3-0	7-14"	50.00	80.00	400.00
4 yr. transplants	2-2	8-16"	106.25	170.00	850.00
5 yr. transplants*	2-3	12-20"	125.00	200.00	1000.00

Colorado Blue Spruce (Pal Select) NEW!					Zones 2-7
3 yr. seedlings	3-0	8-16"	40.75	65.00	325.00

Engelmann X Colorado Blue Spruce Hybrid					Zones 2-7
3 yr. seedlings	3-0	5-10"	37.50	60.00	XXXXX

Norway Spruce (Picea abies)					Zones 2-7
3 yr. seedlings	3-0	10-18"	34.50	55.00	275.00
4 yr. seedlings*	4-0	18-28"	37.50	60.00	300.00
4 yr. transplants	2-2	8-16"	100.00	160.00	800.00
5 yr. transplants*	2-3	14-24"	125.00	200.00	1000.00
* 6 yr. transplants*	3-3	24-32"	150.00	240.00	1200.00

Black Hills Spruce (Picea glauca var. densata)					Zones 2-6
4 yr. seedlings	4-0	6-12"	40.75	65.00	325.00
5 yr. transplants*	2-3	12-20"	93.75	150.00	750.00
* 7 yr. transplants*	3-4	24-36"	116.75	190.00	950.00

Serbian Spruce (Picea omorika)					Zones 4-7
5 yr. transplants*	2-3	18-26"	112.50	180.00	900.00

White Spruce (Picea glauca)					Zones 2-7
4 yr. transplants	2-2	7-14"	87.50	140.00	700.00
5 yr. transplants*	3-2	12-20"	100.00	160.00	800.00

TRUE FIR VARIETIES	Age	Size	Per 50	Per 100	Per 1000
Fraser Fir (Abies fraseri)					Zones 4-7
4 yr. seedlings	4-0	6-12"	37.50	60.00	300.00
5 yr. seedlings*	5-0	10-18"	50.00	80.00	400.00
* 6 yr. transplants*	3-3	16-24"	112.50	180.00	900.00
* 7 yr. transplants*	3-4	24-36"	125.00	200.00	1000.00

Fraser Fir (Ayers Seed Orchard)					Zones 4-7
4 yr. seedlings	4-0	6-12"	43.75	70.00	350.00
6 yr. transplants	3-3	16-24"	125.00	200.00	1000.00
* 7 yr. transplants*	3-4	24-36"	137.50	220.00	1100.00

Fraser X Balsam Fir Hybrid (Abies fraseri x balsamea)					Zones 4-7
5 yr. transplants	2-3	12-20"	106.25	170.00	850.00

Balsam Fir (Abies balsamea)					Zones 3-6
4 yr. seedlings	4-0	6-12"	37.50	60.00	300.00

Bracted Balsam Fir (Abies balsamea var. phanerolepis)					Zones 3-6
4 yr. seedlings	4-0	7-14"	40.75	65.00	325.00
5 yr. transplants*	2-3	14-22"	112.50	180.00	900.00

Canaan Fir (Abies balsamea phanerolepis)					Zones 4-7
5 yr. transplants*	3-2	10-18"	137.50	220.00	XXXXX

Canaan Fir (Pomerene Seed Orchard) NEW!					Zones 4-7
4 yr. transplants	2-2	7-14"	137.50	220.00	1100.00

Korean Fir (Abies koreana)					Zones 4-7
4 yr. transplants	2-2	10-18"	100.00	160.00	XXXXX

DOUGLAS FIR VARIETIES	Age	Size	Per 50	Per 100	Per 1000
Douglas Fir (Deep Mountain®)					Zones 4-6
4 yr. transplants	2-2	10-18"	100.00	160.00	800.00
* 6 yr. transplants*	3-3	14-24"	112.50	180.00	900.00

Douglas Fir (Shuswap Lake Region, B.C.)					Zones 4-6
2 yr. seedlings	2-0	4-8"	37.50	60.00	300.00
3 yr. seedlings	3-0	8-16"	43.75	70.00	350.00
5 yr. transplants*	2-3	16-26"	112.50	180.00	900.00

PINE VARIETIES	Age	Size	Per 50	Per 100	Per 1000
Scotch Pine (East Anglia)					Zones 2-8
4 yr. transplants*	2-2	16-28"	106.25	170.00	850.00

Scotch Pine (French Highland)					Zones 2-8
2 yr. seedlings	2-0	4-8"	25.00	40.00	200.00

Eastern White Pine (Pinus strobus Northern Seed Source)					Zones 3-8
3 yr. seedlings	3-0	5-10"	43.75	70.00	350.00
5 yr. transplants*	3-2	14-22"	106.25	170.00	850.00

OTHER VARIETIES	Age	Size	Per 50	Per 100	Per 1000
American Arborvitae (Thuja occidentalis)					Zones 3-6
3 yr. seedlings	3-0	6-12"	47.00	75.00	375.00
* 6 yr. transplants*	3-3	20-30"	137.50	220.00	1100.00

Japanese Yew (Taxus cuspidata capitata)					Zones 4-7
6 yr. transplants	3-3	12-20"	125.00	200.00	1000.00

Canadian Hemlock (Tsuga canadensis)					Zones 3-7
3 yr. seedlings	3-0	5-10"	43.75	70.00	350.00
5 yr. transplants*	2-3	14-24"	112.50	180.00	900.00
* 6 yr. transplants*	3-3	24-32"	137.50	220.00	1100.00

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Research Report: International Conference

continued from page 4

One problem, primarily in Nordmann and Noble firs, common in Denmark and the Pacific Northwest, is called current season's needle necrosis or CSNN for lack of a better term. We are fortunate not to have it in the Northeast because after much study scientists are still not sure of a cause-weather, biotic factors, or both.

A fact that I finally caught onto at the meeting was that wet or imperfectly drained soils contribute to root rots and mortality, but not all root rots are caused by soil-borne organisms such as phytophthora, of which there are several species.

Canaan fir, for example, has greater tolerance for heavy soils than fraser fir, but is not very resistant to the root rot fungus *Phytophthora cinimonni*. It just has a root system that is more tolerant of imperfect drainage than fraser fir. Turkish and Nordmann firs, however have greater resistance to root rot fungi than fraser fir.

Farms visited on the afternoon tours included Holiday Tree Farm which has been under continuous tree production for over 50 years, Sunrise Tree Farm with Pat and Betty Malone who manage a family-sized tree farm quite



WSU plant pathologist Gary Chastagner makes a presentation at the 9th International Christmas Tree Research and Extension Conference in September.

differently from many of the larger growers; Silver Mountain Tree Farm, run by Jim Heater and his family, where you see mechanization that you can only imagine and seed orchards of Nordmann and Turkish fir for the future.

One thing obvious to anyone traveling the back roads and byways of Oregon and Washington is the immensity of the Christmas tree production there. You see thousands of acres of Christmas trees and to an easterner it is mind boggling!

Not all of the trip was work on Thursday, now in Washington state, we spent a day and over 100 miles on gravel visiting the site of the Mt. St. Helens eruption that occurred in May 1980. In August of 1980, I spoke at the National Christmas Tree Convention in Seattle and afterward Win Smith, B. John Skawinski and I rented seats on a small plane and flew over Mt. St. Helens. The forest recovery in the area in 2009, thanks to commercial and private planting, the Dept. of Natural Resources and, of course, to nature, were amazing. Some of the views were spectacular and cameras were well used.

Finally, on Friday we ended up at the Washington State University Research and Extension Center in Puyallup where 18 acres are devoted to Christmas tree experiments. There we were treated to tours of

Dr. Gary Chastagner's multi-faceted research program on Christmas trees. Identification of trees with superior needle retention is a part of the work that all growers and retailers can relate to. Cooperative efforts with east coast and European researchers bode well for the future possibilities of improving the product that we grow and sell. Needle retention is extremely important in customer satisfaction with real trees. The Washington group now uses branch tests for evaluation and one entire building is reserved for this research. As we found out in the many needle retention evaluations that we conducted in the 1970s, using whole trees takes a great deal more space than using branches and, therefore, limits the amount of needle retention research that can be done.

Dr. Chastagner also is evaluating tree species for their resistance to root rot fungi in four field experiments currently underway. They produce conditions favorable to root rots by enclosing plots with berms and flooding them-an ingenious method, I thought. In these experiments where trees were subjected to several species of phytophthora, fraser fir proved quite susceptible whereas Canaan, Grand, Nordmann, and Turkish firs were more resistant. The Washington experiments were summarized in a 37-page report issued by Dr. Chastagner and his coworkers.

I came away from the meeting feeling strongly that growers in the Northeast can be thankful for all of the research on Christmas trees conducted in Washington and Oregon as well as in North Carolina, the Midwest, Pennsylvania and in Europe. There is so much to be done and so much to learn that we need to keep focused on research for the future. That research will provide great benefits for the entire Christmas tree industry.

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Member Perspective: Fertilizer Lessons

Editor's Note: Thanks to Bob White for sharing his insights--we always welcome tips and trade secrets from members.

At the National meeting in Tennessee I got to spend some quality time with Duane Berkey who gave us a very interesting presentation at our 2008 fall meeting on fertilization of trees.

Duane has a new method that very promising to him. His current blend on his farm is 21-24-11 applied once per year in the spring at about 5 ounces per tree with trials on reducing this lower by 25% and 50%.

What is new in all this is the coating that he is using, Nutrisphere on urea and Avail on MAP. It appears we may be able to use a lower amount of urea once per year and get the same or

better results with this new coating material.

A few of us learned how ineffective and costly past coating have been on urea. This new stuff is designed to give a slow season long release of nitrogen that is in the form a plant can absorb.

Duane says he is very happy with it. Green Mountain Fertilizer was not aware of this product, but is now learning, it should be available in the spring.

Cost is about \$75 per ton, it is added in the mixing process when your blend is made. This stuff is not designed to help stop the urea from being lost in the air if we get no rain, it only starts working after it gets into the ground.

Hopefully this may become a good answer for Christmas trees, and eliminate the need for multi-

ple applications annually.

Some Quebec growers bought a lot of fertilizer in Vermont this year reporting that it was 1/3 less than in Quebec.

North Carolina growers that I spoke with had never used Urea and wanted to know if it worked on trees. The common stuff used was ammonia nitrate which surprised me as I had thought this stuff was regulated, but found it is not at all.

If you need to use Sulfur to reduce pH do yourself a favor and don't buy the fertilizer grade chips as they do not work well at all. Instead you might try Cow Feed sulfur which is the exact same material but in a powder form.

It can be evenly spread and then incorporated, PH reduction happens instantly.



WEIR TREE FARMS

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SPRING 2010 PRICE LIST

Species	Variety	Age	Size	150-599	600-999	1000+
Transplants						
Fraldam TM	Fraser X Weir Blue	3-2	10"-18"	\$ 1.99	\$ 1.10	\$ 1.05
Fraldam TM	Fraser X Weir Blue	2-2	8"-10"	\$ 1.40	\$ 0.85	\$ 0.75
Fraser	Rogers Mt.	3-3	12"-20"	\$ 1.40	\$ 0.99	\$ 0.95
	Rogers Mt.	3-2	10"-18"	\$ 1.40	\$ 0.95	\$ 0.90
	Rogers Mt.	2-2	7"-10"	\$ 1.40	\$ 0.60	\$ 0.50
Blue Balsam	Weir Blue	3-2	10"-16"	\$ 1.40	\$ 0.99	\$ 0.95
	Weir Blue	2-2	7"-10"	\$ 1.40	\$ 0.60	\$ 0.50
Canaan Fir	Reliable source	P+1.5	10"-16"	\$ 1.40	\$ 1.05	\$ 0.99
Korean Fir		P+2	10"-18"	\$ 3.00	\$ 1.25	\$ 1.25
Blue Korean		P+2	10"-18"	\$ 3.00	\$ 1.75	\$ 1.75
Veitch X Balsam	Hybrid	P+2	10"-18"	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 3.00

Seed	Source	0-3 lbs	4-7 lbs.	8 + lbs.	
Fraser/Balsam Cross	Blue Balsam/Fraser	\$125	\$115	\$100	2009 CROP!
Blue Balsam	Weir Blue seed orchard	\$150	\$150	\$150	2009 CROP!

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"Trees for Troops" Recap

continued from page 1

Across the country, 44 locations participated in Trees for Troops Weekend, resulting in approximately 5,000 trees for the program.

Overall, the Trees for Troops program delivered 16,651 Real Christmas Trees to military families at more than 50 bases in the U.S. and overseas. FedEx sent 300 trees overseas for delivery to servicemembers in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait

and the Navy's Fifth Fleet in the Persian Gulf.

The event also generated a significant amount of media attention around the country. Some highlights of national media coverage include a mention by child actress Madison Pettis about the Trees for Troops program on the Bonnie Hunt Show.

Also, a national news story ran on ABC that included a visit to Bob White's Farm in Essex, Vt.

PSU Course

Penn State's 2010 Christmas Tree Management Short Course will be held at the Ramada Inn and Conference Center in State College, Pa., Wednesday February 10 and Thursday February 11.

The course is designed to help growers adopt the latest pest control, production and business management practices. Core and Category pesticide re-certification credits from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture will be available to those attending the course. This year's program represents a broad range of topics and highlights conifer pest and cultural management and farm business management.

- A sampling of this year's speakers and topics include:
- Mel Koelling (Michigan State Univ.) on successful Fraser fir and management.
 - John Ahrens (Conn. Agric. Experiment Station) on vegetation management.
 - Rich Cowles (Conn. Agric. Experiment Station) on Controlling tree scales.
 - Tracey Olson, Cathy Thomas, Sarah Pickle, Sandy Gardosik, Rayanne Lehman (PDA) on intensive pest management.
 - Rick Bates (Penn State) on Best Management Practices for Christmas tree farms, and a Nordmann fir research update.
 - Eric Lorenz & Kerry Hoffman Richards (Penn State) on worker protection standards
 - Tracey Harpster (Penn State) on pesticide safety
 - Andy Beck (Penn State) on information resources

Plus several other topics. A registration fee of \$185 includes all educational sessions, instructional materials, breaks and lunches for Feb 10 and 11. Call (814) 863-7713 or e-mail Rick Bates at rmb30@psu.edu



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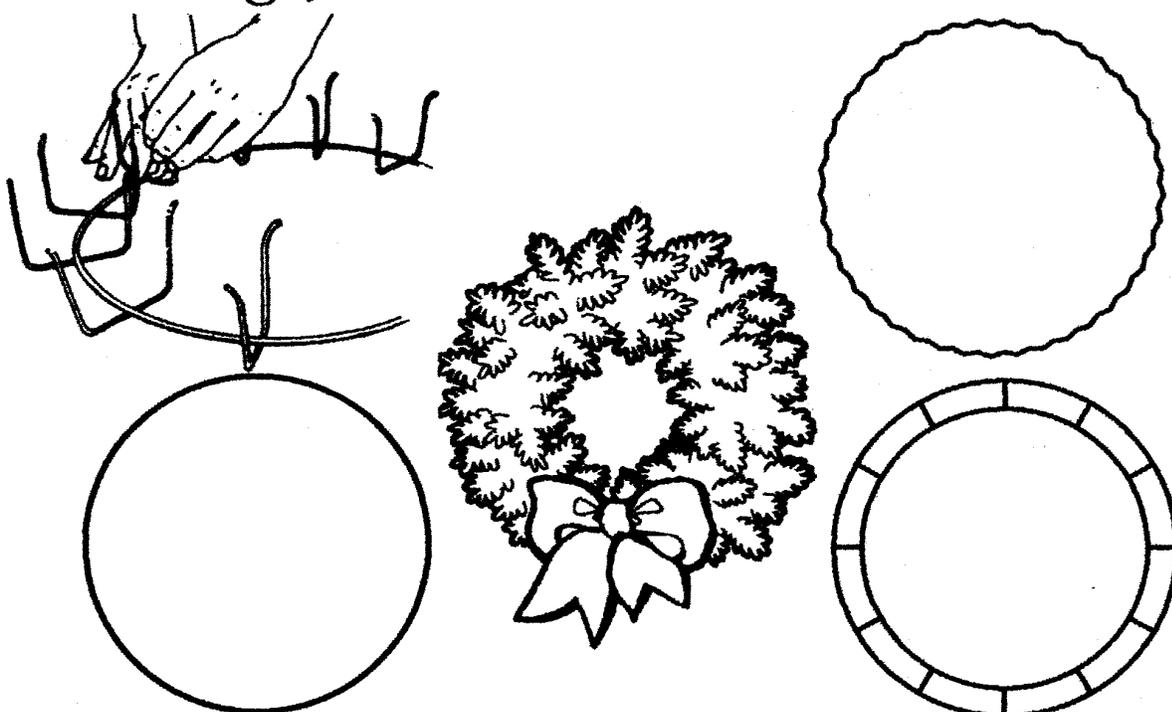
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Editor's Desk: Brief Updates

Trading Post

Just one item in this month's Trading Post (see below). Please keep in mind this is a free service for members, and a good way to buy and sell equipment, etc.

For Sale – Evergreen Tree Baler. Single lever, string tie, 90's model in good condition. Contact Stanley Holt at (802) 365-4455 or e-mail: spenholt@svcable.net

Exotic Conifer Assn.

Bob White writes in to share that the annual meeting of the Exotic Conifer Association was held in 2009 at Sue (the boss) and Jeff Taylor's picturesque hillside farm in southern New Hampshire. Bob recounts:

The Taylors have a very impressive selling barn and about the best tree tagging system that I have seen.

The farm has many different species of trees growing and being harvested. The meeting allowed the members to view and discuss

a wide variety of tree growing issues and see success and limitations in growing these trees.

Jeff has several micro-climates, and soil types on the farm which has allowed him to discover what trees work best in the different situations.

A new cross species Blue Koreana is just getting started which has great potential for the future. This is an impressive looking seedling but has growing limitations that the mother tree does not have.

Bob Girardin spoke about university research that has been conducted on controlling leaders, the methods attempted failed on Fraser but were very successful in improving the leaders on Koreana.

If you are struggling with growing issues on your farm this is a great association to be involved with as the information this group collectively has on exotic conifers is just not available anywhere else in the world.

The association plans to have a Web site available in the near future; the intent is to help spread information about the many different conifer species from around the world and help growers learn how to work with and manage these beautiful trees.

Vermont Farm Show

The Vermont Farm Show will once again feature judging of Christmas trees and wreaths. The event will be held the same day as the NHVTCTA Winter Meeting, also in Barre, making for convenient drop-off of entries.

Categoriies include:

- 6 to 8 foot true Fir

- 6 to 8 foot Pine

- 6 to 8 foot Other

- 12 inch (metal ring diameter) double faced wreath decorated/undecorated.

For more details visit www.vermontagriculture.com/FarmShow/contest.html



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