



Tree Line



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association

June 2010

Special point of interest:

◆ Upcoming Meetings:

- 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.

◆ Got Google?:

Getting your farm listed by Google in its directory of local businesses will let customers know where you are and what you offer. Some listings for farms near major roads even include panoramic photos. Another benefit: As the Vermont tree promotion board begins to formulate its list of Vermont growers, the Google list will be one key starting point. Bob White will explain more at the summer meeting.

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Summer Meeting Preview

The NHVTCTA's summer meeting will be held Saturday, June 26, at Larry and Linda Krygier's farm in Bakersfield, Vt.

The agenda includes a presentation on pesticide training by Anne Hazelrigg with UVM's Plant Diagnostic Clinic; a discussion of various tree promotion board activities in both New Hampshire and Vermont; a discussion on the specifics of using an auger for planting by Paul Lemire of Noel Tree Farm; a comparison of Westar and Roundup weed control

programs by the host; and last but not least an overview of current tree health problems and solutions but Ron Kelley.

Of course, in the middle of the day, there will also be a BBQ chicken lunch. And a look inside the Krygier's onsite farm gift shop is also sure to be a highlight for many.

You should have already received your registration information. Contact Jim Horst at 802-447-1900 to register if you have not already done so.

Update from the National Association

Nigel Manley, the NHVTCTA's representative to the National Christmas Tree Association provides this update on the NCTA winter meeting and other activities.

Tree sales overall remained stable nationwide last year (28.2 million). However many large growers did not sell out so wholesale tree prices fell in many areas. Mexico stopped 2 million trees going across the border which did not help the market in the U.S.

Less marketing money was raised by the NCTA which seems to have had a direct impact on the market share gained by farm grown trees. Consumers still think that the artificial tree is better for the environment!

I was voted in as chair for the Christmas Spirit Foundation for one more term of one year. I accepted the position even though it does increase the workload and time commitment to the industry

as I believe in the not-for-profit programs, particularly the Trees for Troops program.

The winter program itself was interesting with the main topics of social media and the check off issue. The check off has been presented to USDA and most areas of the country are backing the program. Letters of support will be asked for soon. I will let the NHVTCTA board know when

we need to get these letters in and the logistics of doing so.

The next NCTA meeting is in Winston-Salem, N.C., Aug. 11-14. Topics at the meeting will range from GPS technology on the farm to employer issues to business planning to phytophthora control. There will also be a number of farm tours in one of the largest Christmas tree producing regions of the country. For full details as well as lodging information and registration forms visit: www.christmastree.org/convention2010.cfm



President's Message: Keep on Marketing

Hello to all. I hope everyone escaped the hard frosts in mid May. I had 21 degrees on one of those nights and did have some damage, but it could have been much worse if the growth would have been out anymore. Mother Nature makes it tough for us tree growers sometimes!

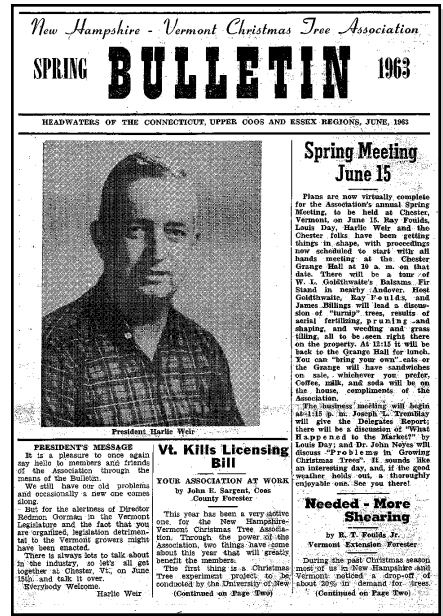
I hope you can all attend the meeting scheduled at Larry Krygier's on June 26. At every meeting I find that I learn something new or see a new way to do things and try to apply it to my operation.

Christie and I will be attending the National Christmas Tree Association meeting in North Carolina in August. We are excited to see how things are done down there and will take pictures and notes of the highlights and share them with all of you.

All signs point to another good sales year for trees. Even with the struggling economy I believe tree sales will be strong. There is somewhat of a shortage of trees in the Northeast and with trucking prices high the market will not be flooded with Michigan, Pennsylvania or Carolina trees at low prices.

I do believe that the Northeast will catch up in production within the next five years and the market will be tighter so keep marketing and keep your loyal customers happy! I think members of the association have a leg up on the rest of the growers in all aspects of growing and marketing trees so we are in better shape to weather any downturns that may arise.

*Jay Weir
President*



A copy of the Association newsletter from 1963, when Jay's grandfather Harlie was president, shows that while times have changed, many of the issues facing growers remain the same: shearing, weed control, fertilizing, the supply of trees on the market, government regulation—and preparation for the Association's June meeting.



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association



2010 Officers

President	Jay Weir	(603) 237-8617
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2010 Tree Line Publication Schedule


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



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Member Perspective: Taking stock of the spring's frost damage

It's probably not news to anyone in the NHVTCTA, but a much warmer than average April got trees growing a little early this year, only to have that new growth damaged by early- and mid-May frosts.

The Associated Press reported that temperatures on May 10/11 dropped as low as 22 degrees in Vermont and the 28 recorded in Burlington was one degree above the record low.

On a related note, the 2008 federal Farm Bill expanded eligibility to include Christmas tree and nursery tree growers. The Tree Assistance Program (TAP) provides help to orchardists and nursery tree growers who produce trees, bushes and vines for commercial purposes, to replant or rehabilitate trees, bushes and vines damaged or destroyed by natural disasters.

Learn more online at: www.fsa.usda.gov/tap

Following are some of the early observations that came in from NHVTCTA members shortly after the frosts occurred:

Not much damage from frost here at all, maybe 2% of lower buds on trees that were well budded out.

*Nigel Manley
Bethlehem, N.H.*

Our trees experienced light, spotty frost earlier this month. I'm always intrigued by the randomness of frost damage, at least on our tree farm. The lot where I expected some to occur didn't have any at all and other lots have it sprinkled throughout. The south and east sides of trees are where the frost damage occurred.

*Bill Schmidt
Dummerston, Vt.*

P.S. to my recent email re frost damage. Change the light to light to moderate. While doing basal pruning over the past few days I've become more aware of how extensive the

frost damage is. More trees have been hit by it than I realized. These include many smaller trees that will recover over time, if there's no further frost or disease damage, but more than a few of this year's saleable trees are damaged as well. We'll have to wait and see what they look like this fall before a "for sale" sign is put on them.

I would say 50% of my balsams were affected, with 25% of new growth killed. Genetics seem to play a big role in amount of damage. Trees side by side with equal amounts of new growth, and one will show damage and the other none. Fortunately most of my marketable trees are Canaan and Fraser, so do not anticipate economic effects this year.

*Russell S. Reay
Cuttingsville, Vt.*

Those of us in the southern climes didn't escape the damage. Heaviest

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Member Perspective: Frost damage

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growth on native balsam is at least 75% damaged. Sure considering all canaan! Maybe some fraser.

*Tom Lang
Worcester, Vt.*

I can only tell you about my own plantation in Colebrook, N.H. However, I am reasonably certain that all the other growers in the area who are marketing Balsam have received severe damage on any early budding Balsam as I have. Because my plantations are at 1,400 ft. and 1,900 ft., I would usually miss the frost. But this one spared no one. My early budding trees that were frosted are from wild self planting stock. The rest of my Balsam is from my own late budding seed source and it hasn't broken bud enough yet to get frosted. So it is safe for this one. My Fraser Balsam Cross was just on the edge. A few may have been out enough to get hit but not enough to be concerned about.

*Kenneth Willey
Colebrook, N.H.*

My balsams, and even a few Frasers this year, have been hampered for the second year in a row. It seems that most are blaming the frost for the damage to our budded out trees, but in fact this year the damage was caused by early season heating. If we hadn't had so many heating degree days this spring, most balsams would not have broken bud by May 11th and May 13th. If this "climate change" is truly becoming a trend—warmer seasons and wetter—we'd probably best look at finding species that grow in warmer climates and tolerate wet soils.

Personally, I'm interested to see what my some of my balsams will look like come fall after two years of having their new growth frozen off. My other thought is that maybe with a warmer climate, the deer herds will move north and quit eating my Fraser firs, so I could grow those!

*Rich Rockwood
Chelsea, Vt.*

Our farm escaped somewhat on 5/10, with damage to about 10 percent of

buds on about 30 percent of balsam (most reported to be "late breaking" but all balsam was budded out here early this year). But on 5/13 we got hit much harder with roughly 50 percent of balsams showing minor to moderate damage, fortunately there was little and in many cases no damage on trees ready to sell this year. Even with the early spring, our Canaan haven't even started to think about budding out yet—that may be trying to tell us something.

*Patrick White
Middlesex, Vt.*

Our main farm in Essex is in a bad frost pocket, it is an odd year when we do not get a late season killing frost. As of this date we have had three killing frosts this season, the first one came in April when early balsam was out because of the record early warm temperatures. The second and third was 5/11 and 5/13. Our irrigation pump sucked in a seal on 5/11 so we got more damage then we needed that night maybe 15% of the trees

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Spring 2011	Balsam Fir: Cooks Strain Vermont Seed Source	2-2	\$0.75	SOLD OUT	
Spring 2011	Canadian Fir: West Virginia Seed Source	2-2	\$0.85		
Spring 2011	Balsam- Fraser Hybrid: Vermont Seed Source	2-2	\$0.75		
Spring 2011	Fraser Fir: North Carolina Seed Source	2-2	\$0.75	SOLD OUT	

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7) Add \$5 per 100 trees for packing material and shipping cartons (For trees that are to be shipped via UPS only). Orders picked at farm have no additional packaging costs.

Vermont Residents Add 8% sales tax
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Connecticut Association's 50th Anniversary Meeting

In association with the biennial conference of the New England Christmas Tree Alliance (NECTA), the 50th Anniversary celebration of the Connecticut Christmas Tree Growers Association (CCTGA) will be celebrated at the Jones Family Farms in Shelton, Conn., on August 6-7.

NHVTCTA members are invited to attend this meeting. The program lineup is included here, and a registration form is included below. Special \$79 per night hotel rates are available at The Courtyard by Marriott Shelton and Hilton Garden Inn Shelton. For more information, contact Kathy Kogut via e-mail at wkogut@cox.net or call 203-641-1632.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

FRIDAY - AUGUST 6TH

8:00 – 9:30 AM

Check in/registration

8:30 – 12 Noon: Tours

Walking tour (1.5 hrs) – CAES

Scientists: Todd Mervosh, John Ahrens, Tom Rathier*

Riding tour (1.5 hrs) – CAES
Scientists: Mary Inman, Rich Cowles*
Discussions will include weed management, cover and aisle crops, tree and seedling culture, tree diseases, and sustainability

12:00 Noon – 1:30 PM

Lunch and trade show

1:30 PM – 2:00 PM

Welcome to Jones Family Farm

2:15 PM – 3:15 PM: Session One

A. Guest Speaker – Sharon Douglas- Disease management in Christmas trees*

B. Alternate Program –Kathy Angevine –Christmas Gift Shops makes "cents"

3:15 PM – 4:30 PM: Session Two

A. Guest Speaker – Rich Cowles- Pest control in Christmas trees*

B. Alternate program – Dick Jaynes/Andy Brand – "Wreath making", as demonstrated on the Martha Stewart Show

4:30 PM – 5:00 PM

Exhibitor demonstrations

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM: Wine tasting

6:30 PM: Dinner /entertainment

SATURDAY- AUGUST 7TH

8:00 AM – 9:30 AM

Registration – trade show opens

8:30AM – 9:30 AM: State meetings
9:30 AM – 9:45 AM: Announcements
10:00 AM – 11:00 AM

Session One

A. Guest Speaker-Larry Judson
Kuhns-State College, PA-Weed management in Christmas trees*

B. Alternate Program-Kathy

Angevine –Christmas Gift Shops make "cents"

11:00 AM – 12 Noon

Session Two

A. Guest Speaker-Mel R. Koelling,
Retired Professor from Michigan State University- Tannenbaum Farms*

B. Alternate Program-Dick Jaynes/Andy Brand – "Wreath making", as demonstrated on the Martha Stewart Show

12 Noon – 1:30 PM: Picnic Lunch

1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Farm Tours –JJF's operations and points of interest (Vineyard, Philip's Saw mill, etc.)- Jaime Jones

Conservation Tour- Terry Jones,

Tom Rathier

3:30 PM – 4:00 PM

Wrap-up/pick up Pesticide credits

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Attendee Registration Form

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Connecticut Christmas Tree Growers Association 50th Anniversary Meeting

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Additional Attendees:
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Registration Options:
Friday & Saturday trade show and seminars # attending _____ @ \$75.00 = _____
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Saturday Only – trade show and seminars # attending _____ @ \$50.00 = _____
Friday Lunch (12:00 – 1:30 PM) # attending _____ @ \$10.00 = _____
Friday Wine tasting (5:30 – 6:30 PM) # attending _____ @ \$5.00 = _____
Friday Night Dinner (6:30 PM) # attending _____ @ \$25.00 = _____
Saturday Picnic (12:00 – 1:30 PM) # attending _____ @ \$10.00 = _____

All events and seminars including the banquet will be held at the farm.
If you wish to make a donation to support CCTGA please do so here- donation amount _____
Please make checks payable to CCTGA (US Dollars) Total \$ _____
For registration questions call (203)237-9400 or email wkogut@cox.net

Member Perspective: Frost damage

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were hit. We fight frost in two ways, with irrigation, and plant / seed source selection. An irrigation system is expensive and is labor intensive but it does work. We over pressurize the system making it mist which is effective in covering a large area. We pump 800 gallons of water per minute at 85 PSI to cover about 20 acres, with the mist this often protects 35 acres. Seed source selection is a very effective way to beat most frost 8 out of 10 years. But has it challenges. We often see an annual frost pattern: The first week of May, 8 out of 10 years we get hit. The third week in May, 4 out of 10 years we get hit often very hard. The last week of May or later, 2 out of 10 years we get hit. Normal balsam buds the 1st week of May so at our farm it would be hit most years, we gave up trying to grow regular Balsam years ago. Fraser Balsam cross buds about a week earlier than Fraser, but last year got little to no damage standing beside Fraser that got hit hard. Fraser Fir and late Balsam buds about the third and into the 4th week of May and as such does not get in trouble very often. As Fraser is selective in where it can be grown and many Choose and cut customers only want Balsam this is not the only answer for us. Late Balsam especially the Blue bottle brush source is a good answer but the seed sources are not easy to find. Cannan and Korean fir bud the 4th week or later, to date these have not been touched, except for the few early bud trees in this group. Cannan fir is an easy grower but quality seed sources are not repeatable, so the trees range from the best looking deep green colored short needled source one year to a pale long needled tree another year. Korean fir is another option but I would not want a whole lot of these growing as they have other issues to contend with. For us its an annual race to plant, weed and feed them before we put the irrigation up to get ready for the second round of frost that we hope is not going to show up, but often does.

*Bob White
Essex, Vt.*

I got more frost damage than I have ever seen, which is still pretty light, especially on my Balsam. The Corkbark and some mystery Mediterranean firs got it pretty bad. Some on my Meyer too, mostly in the lower elevations, like me. My low at the house was 30, but clearly cooler lower across the road. Strange spring: the aphids were out 2 weeks before bud break. Don't know how that is affecting them. I find lots of honeydew but few aphids now. Hope you are keeping well,

*Phil Kivlin
Shoreham, Vt.*

Frost damage from 5/11, light to no damage on balsam, balsam/fraser, fraser. Canaan has not broke yet. Heavy damage on Veitch, corkbark, alpine, siberian, (Abies sibirica, Russia). Balsam/veitch, nordman and concolor showed some damage depending on location. Spruces went from none on white and blues to some on meyers and serbian. Because I am in a frost pocket, over the years we have switched to almost all late break balsam seed sources.

*David Werner
Middlebury, Vt.*

I didn't have any growth on marketable trees far enough out to frost but I did have about 10% damage on my 1-0 Balsam Fir seedlings. Fraser and Fralsam had no damage. I think it is inevitable that all growers will have at least some damage before the

last frost of this spring! We are two weeks ahead of a normal year.

*Jay Weir
Colebrook, N.H.*

No damage on Canaan, very slight on Fraser. Balsam another matter. Damage moderate to extensive, depending on location and whether or not they are late breaking. Low lying areas hardest hit, with 80-90 of trees severely damaged. In the last 4-5 years I have moved toward late flush balsam, and that seems to have helped. With the very early warm spell this year, though, even late flush balsam were damaged. I believe, overall, this is the worst damage I have seen. I seem to be caught between a rock and a hard place! I have had to move away from fraser in some cases because of phytophthora, and using balsam as a replacement raises both my anxiety level and my damage potential from late season frost. Canaan may be the answer, but I have been hesitant to move in that direction too fast because I am uncertain of market acceptance.

*Jim Horst
Bennington, Vt.*

I had minimal damage in Ripton with balsam from the first frost. All white spruce were severely damaged. Last night damaged about 20% of buds on 80% of balsam. There was extensive bud damage to 20% of balsam.

*Doug Sinclair
Ripton, Vt.*

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Trees and the Environment

With many customers focusing on the environmental impact of the products they purchase, talking to them about the value of trees as mulch or for biomass is increasingly important.

Paul Lemire at Noel's Tree Farm in Litchfield, N.H., recently began an innovative program that lets customers help the environment while also benefitting his farm. Paul explains:

We started our mulching program two seasons ago to help cut back on the high price of commercial fertilizer. In the fall we collect leaves and lawn clippings from local landscapers, along with

horse manure from a local horse farm, who gladly gives it away, along with that we add some nitrogen, and mix it all together with our loader. During tree sales we ask our customers to bring back their trees after Christmas, we usually collect trees, on the first two weekends in January, we then chip them and add them to our mix, For their effort customers get a coupon for next year, when they buy a tree and a wreath they get \$5.00 off. The pile that we started in January of 2009 gave us about 60 yards of rich compost.

Look for more mulching information in upcoming issues.

Trading Post



FOR SALE:

4X4 Tractor for sale with cab. 5245 Zetor 50-horse with MS Canon Sprayer - 200 gal tank. Contact Alan Johnson, Johnson's Christmas Tree Farms 802-695-3308 or e-mail fraser@pshift.com

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9N Ford tractor with no implements \$3900.00; Gravely model L walk behind tractor with a 9 inch auger attachment \$700.00; 1997 Kawasaki 300 ATV \$1200.00; 5 wheeled ATV with manual dump body \$800.00; Diamond steel truck bed tool box that fits a Toyota Tacoma \$250.00. Contact Greg at decelfarm@gmail.com or 802-824-5441.

FOR SALE:

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WANTED:

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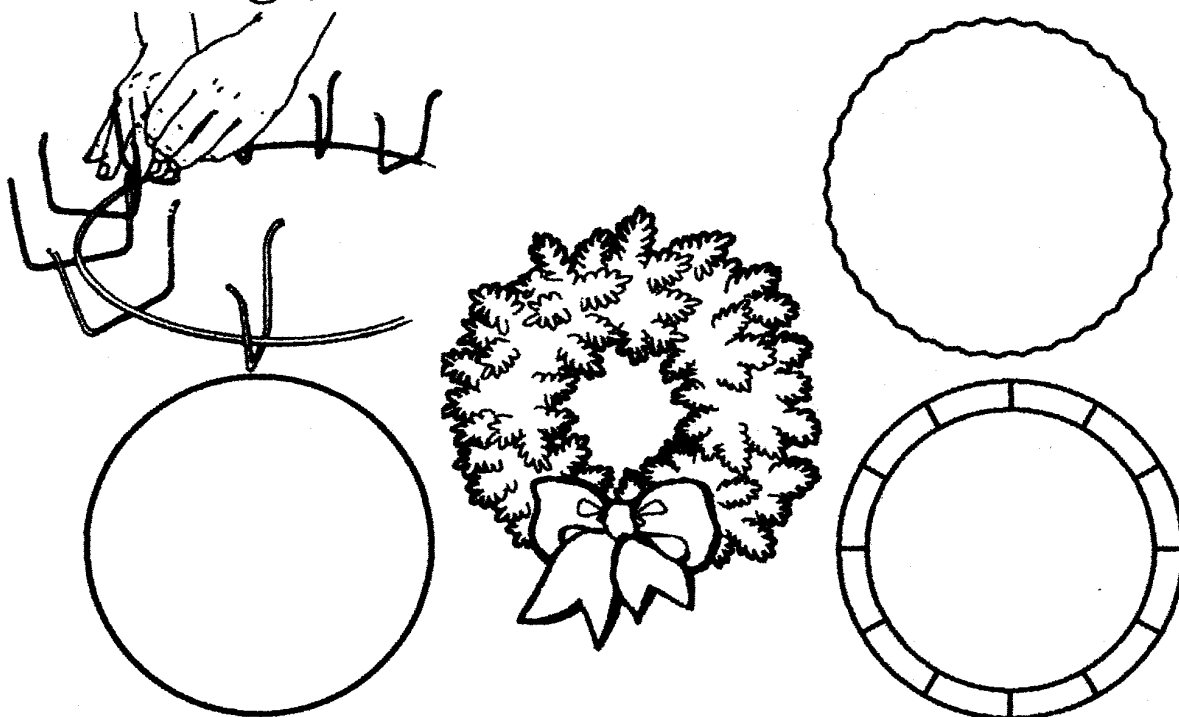
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Editor's Desk: Brief Updates

Free Riverside Delivery

The NHVTCTA directors have made arrangements with Riverside Enterprises to deliver, at no charge, your purchases of wreath rings and supplies to the September 25, meeting in Strafford, N.H. This is for NHVTCTA members only and should be a big shipping charge savings for you. Riverside Enterprises have very competitive prices and comparable gauge sizes on their rings. You should have received a catalog from Riverside. If not, contact them by e-mail at: wirestore@renare.com or call 888-773-8769. (Web site: www.wirestore.com). When you place your order be sure to mention you are a member of NHVTCTA.

Twine Recycling

I received an e-mail from Anne Macmillan with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture relating to the possibility of offering a twine (polypropylene twine only, not netting) recycling program.

"I would like to know the quantity of twine producers would have to be recycled (weight is best unit to use) and how often they would want an opportunity to recycle it, if they would bring it to a collection site (such as their Solid Waste District)," Macmillan wrote. "Between baling twine and Christmas tree twine, we may have a bit to recycle."

This information would probably apply mostly to those receiving and selling wholesale trees, but wholesale growers may want to check with their customers. If you have interest or want to offer input on twine recycling, call Anne directly at (802) 828-3479 or e-mail: anne.macmillan@state.vt.us

NH Tree Farm of Year

In a recent issue of Tree Line I noted that Monadnock View Farm had been named a Farm of Distinction in New Hampshire. Now, David and Marcia Parody have earned another honor with

Monadnock View Farm becoming the state's Outstanding Tree Farm of the Year for 2010. Congratulations to David and Marcia.

Pennsylvania Meeting

NHVTCTA members are invited to attend the Pennsylvania Christmas Tree Growers Association summer meeting, July 29-31 at Bustard's Christmas Trees in Lansdale, Pa. Topics to be covered include chemical mowing trials, exotic tree species, small field grown containerized trees, growing lighter weight large Fraser firs, sprayer calibration, and more. Speakers include Larry Downey, Rick Bates, Darryl Bowersox, Paul Shealer, Andy Beck and Eric Sundback. There will be equipment demonstrations and discussions on how a marketing plan drives your farm.

To learn more, contact Jay R. Bustard at (610) 326-2256 or e-mail: jay@jrbpromo.com



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