

Tree Line



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association

January 2005

Special points of interest:

- ◆ **Group Buying Program:**
The NHVTCTA has available group buying opportunities on several items, including Christmas tree boxes, chemicals and other supplies. Contact Jim Horst at (802) 447-1900 for info.
- ◆ **Membership Notices:**
Annual membership notices were mailed along with an agenda and sign-up for the Winter Meeting in Barre on Jan. 25. Please return both as soon as possible.
- ◆ **Sales Move Up:**
The National Christmas Tree Association reports that in its pre-season consumer tracking poll, consumers said they would purchase between 24 million and 24.5 million Real Christmas Trees in 2004. This represents about one million more purchases than in the 2003 season. NCTA will release initial consumer tracking poll data for the 2004 sales season at the CT PLUS conference, February 19-21, in Fort Myers, Florida.

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Winter Meeting: Deer and Taxes

The two certainties in life (at least for Christmas tree growers) will both be on the agenda at the NHVTCTA Winter Meeting, held in conjunction with the Vermont Farm Show in Barre, January 25. (Trees and wreaths can be dropped off the day of the Show—Tuesday—this year, see President's Message, page 2.)

Deer (and moose) damage will be the topic of a presentation by John Buck of the Vermont Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and Rob Calvert of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Dept. They'll discuss what these four-legged creatures find appetizing, and the various laws governing deer control. They'll also touch on available financial assistance for both damage compensation and prevention.

Peter Mollica will take on the weighty topic of taxes with a look at how Christmas tree growers can save (or cost) themselves money based on the taxation strategies they choose. Peter will even be available after his talk for one-on-one consultations.

Other topics on the well-rounded agenda include a recap by Ron Kelly (Vermont Dept. of Forests and Parks) of insect and disease problems in 2004, with a look to what might be in store for 2005; an examination of invasive plants in Christmas tree operations by Jeff Taylor of Vegetation Control Service; and a recap of the 2004 sales season. Last but not least, attendees will be treated to the Canadian Club's now legendary roast beef lunch.

NCTA Market Expansion Plan Review

After several years of declining use of Real Christmas Trees, the National Christmas Tree Association (NCTA) launched an aggressive, multi-media marketing and promotion campaign in time to impact the 2004 selling season. Members and non-members donated nearly \$900,000 for the RealTree Market Expansion Campaign.

"While we didn't achieve our funding goals, we were excited with the opportunity to implement many of our planned marketing programs," said Irwin Loiterstein, a St. Louis retailer and chairman of the NCTA Market Expansion Task Force.



Donors were given an enhanced Marketing Tool Kit that they could use in their local markets. The campaign also featured a "Help Santa Find the Perfect Real Christmas Tree" national contest; an Internet game called "The Attack of Mutant Artificial Trees;" an electronic greeting card; prerecorded public service announcements delivered to both English and Spanish language radio stations; cross-promotion with The Polar Express movie; publicity about the White House Christmas Tree; enhancements to the Real Trees 4 Kids! online curriculum; updates to the Real Christmas Trees Web site; proactive and

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President's Message

Happy New Year on what seems to be a cloudy April day. Not a patch of snow in sight, and the thermometer reads 45 degrees—a good day to tag my tree for the Farm Show.

I hope everyone who has found it difficult to enter a tree in the Vermont Farm Show in the past takes note of the changes this year.

Our meeting will be held on Tuesday this year, not Wednesday, and trees can be entered until 9 a.m. Tuesday, instead of Monday.

If you can have the tree there by 8 a.m., you can help set it up and have plenty of time to get to the Canadian Club for a cup of coffee before the meeting starts.

A hearty thanks to Jon Turmel, Farm Show manager, for working with the association to make this possible.

The State's Web site (www.vermontagriculture.com/FarmShow2005/index.html) con-

tains general information about the Farm Show and, in particular, the product contests.

In addition to the general product contest information found online, it's worth noting that Christmas trees will be displayed in Cinco stands, and the judging rules are the same as, or very similar to, the rules for Big E and Addison Co. Field Days.

(The Web site states entries to be in on Monday, but that is in error for Christmas trees. Trees can be delivered until 9 a.m. on Tuesday.)

Don't forget, in addition to Christmas trees, there are categories for both decorated and undecorated wreaths.

On another note, by all accounts our Trees for Troops program was very successful. Walt Rockwood (that's *Major* Rockwood) coordinated both states' donors and recipients, and we received several pieces of media coverage. (See page 7.)

The challenge of securing top quality planting stock is still with us. Growers who can anticipate their needs and place early orders with their nursery will be set, but those who procrastinate will work hard for their plants.

Finally, we note the passing of Walt Pollert of Pownal, Vt., at age 68, and convey our condolences to his family. Walt wasn't a high profile member, but he attended many meetings, and was a well-known grower in Vermont's "Hudson Valley."

Walt's obit. in the *Bennington Banner* included the following:

"Since 1967, along with his parents he operated Pollert's Christmas Tree Farm on Northwest Hill. He was a stock car racing enthusiast and had done some racing. More recently, along with his wife, he enjoyed driving and showing his street rod at events throughout the Northeast."

Russell Reay, president



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association



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(2006)
(2005)*
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2005 Tree Line Publication Schedule

Issue	Ad/Submission Deadline	Mailing Date
January	December 31	January 14
June	May 27	June 10
September	August 26	September 9

*Denotes second consecutive term

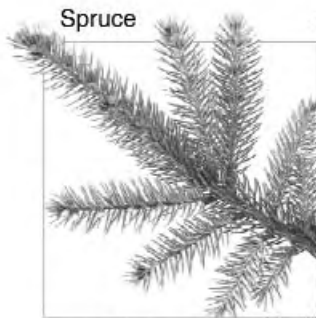
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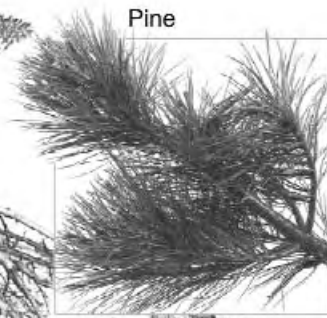
Fir

Balsam
Canaan
Concolor
Douglas
Fraser



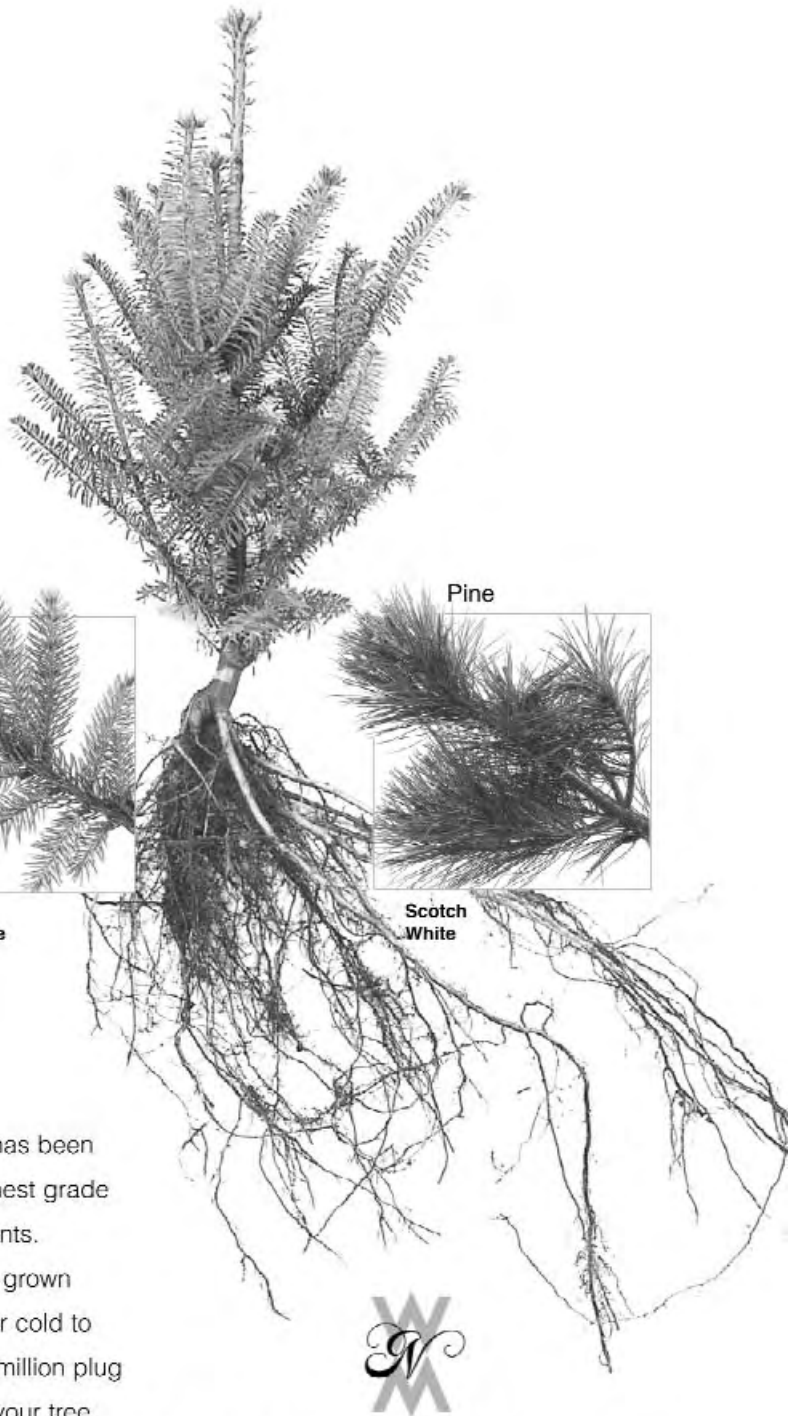
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Pine

Scotch
White



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Member Tips

Topic: Taxes

When the NH-VT Christmas Tree Association resumed publication of our Tree Line newsletter this year, the main goal was to improve communication among growers. It's always educational to learn what others in this business are doing--and what they're not doing. To that end, we are beginning a new feature called "Member Tips." Each issue, we'll contact members at random to respond to a series of questions about their operation, the equipment they use, their techniques, timelines, advice and so on. **When your number is up, please take a moment to respond!** (Everyone is off the hook this issue, as member Peter Mollica has stepped forward with some timely tips on his other area of expertise, taxes. Thanks Peter.)

B. A. N. G.

Big bucks can be saved on your taxes with only a little effort on your part. Your income from Christmas tree production is eligible for capital gains tax treatment. In the past few years capital gains tax rates have dropped dramatically. The average difference between regular income tax rates and capital gains rates is over 50 percent. In other words, you can cut your income tax in half by taking advantage of the capital gains provisions of the law.

But that's only the beginning. Because capital gains are not considered "earned income" under the Internal Revenue Code, they are not subject to the self employment tax so you save another 15.3 percent. And even this isn't the end. In Vermont, you will also reduce your state tax and pick up another 4 or 5 percent. So we are talking about potential tax savings in the range of 70 percent by reporting your income as capital gains. This is not chicken feed.

Accountants are the most wonderful people in the whole wide world. They're all brilliant. I've never talked to a Christmas tree grower who didn't love his accountant. But I've also rarely talked to a grower who understood federal income taxation well enough to really know whether his accountant knew his a__ from a hole in the ground.

What is there about accountants, that instills such blind confidence in their abilities. The answer is that we want to believe. It's like believing in Santa Claus, the tooth fairy and the weatherman. We are not, by nature bean counters or number crunchers. If we were, we'd be counting beans and crunching numbers. Our accountants are our heroes, who take our cluttered shoe boxes full of cancelled checks and soiled, wrinkled invoices, make sense of them all and let us to do our thing. The trouble with this idyllic picture is that most accountants don't know doodleysquat about the taxation of income from the production of Christmas trees, and worse, most of them don't even know that they don't know.

Folks, it's your money that's involved here, not your accountant's. It's up to you to see to it that he's doing things right. Forget the tooth fairy and check your tax returns. I'm going to show you how to do it.

New growers listen up. You can't wait until you're ready to sell trees before learning how to handle your taxes. Christmas trees grow on an eight- or nine-year cycle. You have to start organizing your tax materials in the first year you plant trees so you can take advantage of capital gains when you're ready to sell them eight or nine years later.

Specifically, you can not take tree planting costs as an expense in the year you plant. Trees are considered capital assets and the

initial cost of your trees must be "capitalized" and recovered when you sell the trees. It's just like buying a share of stock. When you make the purchase you don't consider the cost of the stock as a deductible expense. You simply keep a record of the cost and deduct it from the sale price of the stock when you sell it years later. This is the way you must treat your trees. If you've been deducting your tree planting costs as annual expenses, you'll have to amend your past tax returns to get yourself straight. You don't have to, of course. You can always pay more taxes than the law requires, but that doesn't seem too smart.

Getting started is the important thing. I'm going to be speaking on this subject at the winter meeting in Barre. At that time I'll tell you exactly how to fill out your tax returns. I'll also be furnishing you with a detailed hand-out that you can study yourself and take to your accountant, if you have one, so you can start getting organized.

In anticipation of the meeting, I suggest you look over your 2003 federal tax return. Look to see if:

1. There is a Form 4797 included in the return?
2. Your Schedule F shows a loss on your Christmas tree business?
3. Your planting costs have been excluded from your annual costs?

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Research Report: Alternative Insecticide Options

Exploring Alternative Insecticides for Control of Balsam Twig Aphid and Balsam Gall Midge

Diazinon and Lorsban have been the insecticides of choice for most Christmas tree insect pests for some time now. These two organophosphate insecticides are inexpensive and effective against hard-to-kill insects like the balsam gall midge, but we have to be concerned that some day they will no longer be available or our insects may develop resistance to them.

With that in mind, the Silviculture Committee helped support trials of several new insecticides for balsam twig aphid management done by Richard Cowles at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. A summary of his results is now available at Station Bulletin 988.

As a follow up to Cowles's trials, I worked with Steve Moffat and Fred Salo to test two new products for balsam gall midge control in 2002. One of these products, Provado 1.6F, a chloronicotinyl compound called imidacloprid, gave excellent control of balsam twig aphid in Cowle's trials. Imidacloprid is the

active ingredient in Merit. For a second material, I chose a synthetic pyrethroid called Scimitar. Unfortunately, neither of these materials performed as well as Diazinon AG500 for controlling gall midge.

In 2003, I worked with Bryan Blundell to test Provado, and one other synthetic pyrethroid called Pounce 25WP, against balsam twig aphid. Provado required the addition of a surfactant (Silwett L-77). All materials were applied with a tractor-mounted mistblower on May 18. Their effectiveness for

Results (See Box)

Number of aphids per branch before treatment averaged about 1.0 for all blocks. This is right at the threshold I use for whether treatment may be needed. Usually, damage is likely to exceed light if the number of aphids at initial bud break exceeds 1 per branch.

I consider light damage to be up to 30% of the branches showing some needle curling from aphid feeding.

However, customers of choose-and-cut operations seldom notice damage less than 50%.

Insecticide	Post-Treatment	
	No. Aphids/Branch Damaged	% Branches Damaged
Diazinon AG500	0.07	5
Pounce 25WP	0.10	7
Provado 1.6F	0.07	4
Untreated Check	1.40	27

controlling twig aphid and their effect on beneficials was compared to Diazinon AG500, and the results were discussed at the June 28 meeting at Bryan's farm. Beating surveys for aphids and beneficials were conducted before treatment (at initial budbreak) and 2.5 days after treatment. A damage survey was done on June 25.

All three materials provided good control of twig aphid. One disadvantage of synthetic pyrethroids is that they are harsh on beneficials.

There were few beneficial insects present at the time of spraying, which is an advantage of treating at initial budbreak.

However, spiders were present and their numbers decreased in the Pounce block after treatment. Spider numbers increased noticeably in the Provado block and increased slightly in the Diazinon block.

The newer insecticides tend to be costly. Provado was easy to work with and has only a Caution label, but it was the most costly at \$33.50 per acre. Pounce was \$10.40 per acre, but Asana, another pyrethroid, would be less expensive at \$7.20 per acre.

Diazinon AG500 was only \$2.40 per acre. All of these materials are currently registered for Christmas tree use.

Ron Kelley

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Editor's Desk

A number of newsworthy items have crossed my desk since the last issue of *Tree Line*. Until next time, happy planting...

The results of the judging at Big E (below) proved that New Hampshire and Vermont growers can compete with anyone when it comes to quality trees—next year, it would be great to see more entries from members.

Trees—New Hampshire

Spruce

7th overall, # 1 N.H.— Bill Nichols

Pine

1st overall, # 1 N.H.— Myles Finnegan (also 2nd overall for Reserve Grand Champion)

Fir

2nd overall, #1 N.H.— Bill Nichols
3rd overall, #2 N.H.— Mountain Star Farms
3 N.H.—Abby Tonry
4 N.H.—The Rocks

Wreaths—New Hampshire

Undecorated

5th overall, #1 N.H.— Nichols Tree Farm

Decorated

1st overall and grand champion, #1 N.H.—Nichols Tree Farm
3rd overall, #2 N.H.— Monadnock View Farm-Dave Parody

Trees—Vermont

Spruce

3rd overall, #1 Vt.— Red Rock Tree Farm

Fir

#1 Vt.—Red Rock

Wreaths—Vermont

Undecorated

3rd overall, #1 Vt.— Red Rock Tree Farm

Decorated

5th overall, #1 Vt.— Red Rock Tree Farm

Trees for Troops Recap

Spurred by the efforts of Walt Rockwood (not an unusual phenomenon, see below), the NHVTCTA undertook a project called Trees for Troops during the 2004 holiday season.

After determining there were too many logistical problems in sending trees to Vermont and New Hampshire troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, the decision was made to work with the National Guard units in each state to provide trees for the families of deployed soldiers.

Even then there were challenges. Walt reports: “We learned early in the game that National Guard vehicles could not be used for transport. Tree growers generally cooperated to deliver trees to the nearest Family Center. In some cases, it worked out that picking up and delivering trees was the best way to go. I put 1,318 miles on the truck/trailer. A typical day—pick up trees in Wells River, Vt., pick up wreaths in Sweetwater, N.H., drop off trees at the Littleton, N.H., armory, pick up trees in N. Stratford, N.H., pick up trees in Caanan, Vt., pick up wreaths in Lancaster, N.H.”

The result was a tremendous success. Some 209 New Hampshire National Guard families received trees through six of the state's Family Assistance Centers. In Vermont, 175 trees were provided, along with 106 wreaths, through five Centers.

Thanks to many generous donations (Kelco stepped forward to donate 100 wreath boxes for the project) of time, transport and trees, the total cost to the Association was just \$63.86.

News media coverage was good and blanketed most of New Hampshire and Vermont. Stories included coverage not only of the NHVTCTA, but also individual growers who donated trees and wreaths. In Vermont, newspaper

articles appeared in the *Rutland Herald*, *Barre-Montpelier Times Argus*, *Bennington Banner* among many others. Similar coverage was realized in New Hampshire, where television station WMUR 9 also broadcast a story on the Trees for Troops project. Back in Vermont, WCAX 3 broadcast the presentation of a plaque from the National Guard to the NHVTCTA in appreciation for its efforts.

At the 2004 Fall Meeting, held at Redrock Farm in Chelsea, Vt., NHVTCTA President Russell



Reay (left) presented Walt Rockwood with an honorary lifetime membership, and plaque commemorating his many years of service to the Association.

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Member Tips...Taxes

continued from page 4

4. Has your farm net income been reported on Schedule D?

If the answer to any of these questions is "No" then something's wrong. If you're doing your own taxes you'll want to change your system. If you're using an accountant, you'd best show him my paper and get him started along the right path.

I'm not going to try to teach you everything there is to know about the Internal Revenue Code, even if I knew it, which I don't. All I'm going to teach you is enough so you'll know whether your income from Christmas tree production is being treated correctly. Believe me; I'll make it so simple your pet monkey will be able to understand it.

After my formal presentation, I intend to be available for the rest of the day for private discussions with anyone who would like some additional help.

I look forward to seeing you in Barre. Don't miss the meeting, especially if you answered "No" to any of my four questions.

Peter Mollica

Education Opportunity: Penn State Short Course

Penn State's 2005 Christmas Tree Management Short Course will be held at the Penn Stater Conference Center and Hotel on the University Park Campus, February 16-17. Sponsored by the College of Agricultural Sciences and the Department of Horticulture, the course attracts Christmas tree growers from over 12 states and Canada.

The course is designed to help growers adopt the latest pest control, production and business management practices. Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture pesticide re-certification core and category credits will also be available to those attending the course.

This year's program represents a broad range of topics and highlights cultural management and marketing. Speakers and topics include:

- Rayanne Lehman, PA Dept. of Ag. - *Douglas fir needle midge update*
- Paul Heller, Penn State - *Elongate hemlock scale update*
- Patti Borger, The Borger Farm - *Value-added sales*

- Larry Kuhns, Penn State - *Soil testing, herbicide application equipment*

- Brett Crosby, Watts & Assoc. - *Managing production risks*

- Miles McCoy - *Marketing Christmas trees*

- Paul Shealer, Penn State - *Diagnosis of field problems*

- Rick Bates, Penn State - *Handling containerized conifers*

- George Perry/Bob Pollock, Penn State - *Sprayer calibration*

A registration fee of \$185 includes all educational sessions, instructional materials, breaks and lunches for Feb 16 and 17. Registration for one day is \$105.

To receive a registration form or need additional information, please call the Christmas Tree Management Short Course office at (814) 863-0918 or e-mail Rick Bates at rmb30@psu.edu.

A block of rooms have been reserved at The Penn Stater Conference Center and Hotel. Reserve a room at a by calling (800) 233-7505, and indicate you are attending the Christmas Tree Short Course.

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2004 Weed Management Review for Christmas Trees

By John F. Ahrens

The 2004 growing season was great for Christmas trees but also great for weeds. Tree growth and weed growth were exceptional, thanks largely to abundant rainfall. Wet seasons can be tough on herbicides, however, causing more leaching with some herbicides and increased rates of breakdown. As a result, mid- to late-summer found many plantations in New England overrun with tall weeds even where spring-applied residual herbicides were used.

This was the first year that many Christmas tree growers used SureGuard (flumioxazin) in comparison with or in place of more traditional treatments including combinations of Princep (simazine) or Goal (oxyfluorfen) with Surflan (oryzalin), Pendulum (pendimethalin) or Pennant (metolachlor). How did SureGuard measure up? In most cases that I heard about or observed in our experiments and in growers' fields, the answer was "very well indeed." Longer control of annual grasses and ragweeds in particular was obtained with SureGuard, provided guidelines were followed. With a few exceptions (chickweeds and small seedlings of certain weeds, for example) SureGuard works best when applied on weed-free soil or combined with Roundup at 1 pt. to 1 qt. per treated acre. Seedling horseweed in the spring is not controlled by SureGuard alone. Most perennial weeds, including some that emerge later in the spring such as yellow nutsedge, horsetail and dogbane also are not controlled. A follow-up application of glyphosate (Roundup, etc.) will be needed to kill these perennials.

A common rate of SureGuard for long season control is 12 ounces of product per treated acre. If a 50% band is applied, that rate is 6 ounces per acre of trees. Using less can shorten the control period, but

each farm is unique in soil texture and organic matter which can affect longevity.

What about applying SureGuard in the fall with Roundup? That works and it may be possible to split the dosage between fall and spring. However, it is a rule that no fall treatment can be expected to provide excellent weed control all of the following season.

Treating with SureGuard before bud break of Christmas trees is imperative to avoid conifer injury with or without Roundup.

Glyphosate Update:

We have gotten used to Roundup Original (41% glyphosate) for Christmas trees but the situation is constantly changing. Roundup Original is being phased out but is still available from some suppliers. Honcho, Glyphos, Glyphosate 4, and Credit are glyphosate products that I have verified to be equivalent to Roundup Original. There may be others. However, there are now many glyphosate products from several companies and their selectivity (efficacy and safety) on dormant conifer foliage is questionable or remains to be proven. Of course, if one applies only fully directed sprays, it does not matter one bit which formulation is used.

Experimental Results:

We tested two potassium salt formulations (Roundup Original Max and Roundup Ultra Max II) as well as Clear Out 4 Plus (another 41% glyphosate formulation) over dormant Fraser firs in April 2004 and also in September. At 0.75 lbs. active ingredient per acre (the equivalent of 1 qt. of Roundup Original per acre), none of the formulations caused significant injury, but at 1.5 lbs. per acre some firs sprayed with Roundup Ultra Max II and Clear Out 41 Plus showed more injury symptoms than those sprayed with Roundup Original or Roundup Original Max. We will reserve judgment on these products until next year when we see the results of our experiments.

Another exciting development for the future of weed management in plantations is a new herbicide product from the DuPont Company. This product, tentatively called "Westar", gave weed control lasting into September from an April 30 application in two experiments that I conducted this year. One year's testing is insufficient. As with the new Roundup formulations, more work is needed on dosage and conifer tolerance.

Reprinted from the November 2004 issue of The Real Tree Line, published by the Connecticut Christmas Tree Growers Assn.

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NCTA Market Expansion Campaign Review

continued from page 1

reactive story placement and interviews with the national news media; continuing work with fire safety officials; cooperative tree care dissemination with Underwriters Laboratories and the Home Safety Council; environmental action including work with the EARTH 911 national recycling effort; and a "Marketer of the Year" competition.

In planning for the 2005 campaign, the Task Force mailed and e-mailed an evaluation survey to all donors and to member non-donors.

The goal is to get feedback on what worked, what didn't work and to come up with new concepts that retailers and grower-retailers could use.

The Task Force will prepare a final report to donors and members after meeting in mid-January to analyze the data and hold discussions with Smith & Harroff (NCTA's marketing agency) and staff to develop plans for the 2005 Campaign.

Project Summaries

"Help Santa Find the Perfect Real Tree" National Contest:

To get immediate and long-term benefits, NCTA sponsored a "Help Santa Find the Perfect Real Tree" national contest for youths, ages six to 16. The contest - children wrote a story about their Real Tree experiences and took a photo of their Real Tree and their family - included prizes ranging from \$5,000 college scholarships to trips to the Louise Mandrell Theater in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. New Holland helped sponsor the trip prizes and mailed contest materials to all donors.

E-card:

College students, under the direction of Smith & Harroff, produced two versions of an electronic greeting card, which were pro-

vided to Market Expansion donors. Participants then e-mailed these "cards" to customers, prospects, family and friends as a "high tech" means of communicating their farm's and lot's key messages.

The Attack of the Mutant Artificial Trees Advergame:

To reach "tweeners" who influence current sales and are emerging as tomorrow's customers, NCTA produced an interactive game that was e-mailed to 800,000 "registered gamers." They were encouraged to forward it to friends with a "beat my score" challenge. The game was filled with messages encouraging the use of Real Christmas Trees. As a side benefit, a number of reporters saw the game and decided to do a Real Tree story.

Kim Komando:

The nationally syndicated radio personality and USA Today columnist - named NCTA's game as her "Cool Site of the Day." This recognition was also included in an e-mail that she sent to her 500,000 subscribers in addition to the on-air recommendation of the site to her 3.3 million listeners.

Enhanced Marketing Tool Kit:

To assist in local implementation of key messages, NCTA provided donors of \$50 or more with a Media Tool Kit, which was organized in a three-ring binder. The kit included suggested activities, news releases, ads in English and Spanish and much more in both print and electronic (CD ROM) formats.

White House Christmas Tree:

The John Tillman family of Northwest Plantations, Rochester, Washington, presented the official White House Christmas Tree to First Lady Laura Bush on November 29. Tillman earned the right to pres-

ent the White House tree by winning the 2004 NCTA Christmas Tree contest. The annual presentation generates huge positive coverage in national media when the White House selects the tree in October and when the first lady accepts it in an official White House ceremony before the White House Press Corps. USA Today featured sketches of the Tillmans and the tree in a half-page story in its Dec. 4 issue.

National News Media:

From USA Today and The Wall Street Journal to "The Today Show" and HGTV, NCTA has worked to place positive stories about Real Trees and responded to media interview requests. One dozen volunteers agreed to serve as industry spokespeople. During their busiest season, these people graciously gave their time on your behalf to promote Real Christmas Trees.

Enhanced Web-site:

We enhanced the NCTA Web-site with additional information and more listings. Some members told us they received a large number of new customer leads from the NCTA Web links.

The Polar Express:

Late in the Market Expansion Campaign planning, Warner Bros. Pictures offered NCTA the opportunity to cross promote Real Christmas Trees with The Polar Express movie. Even on short notice, several donors were able to take advantage of the promotional opportunities with their local theaters. And, as expected, The Polar Express helped NCTA gain new and expanded publicity about Real Christmas Trees. It also led to an additional partnership from New Holland that was worth more than \$10,000 to the Real Christmas Tree promotion campaign.

New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association

Winter Meeting Canadian Club, Barre, VT

Tuesday (not Wednesday), January 25, 2005

Reminder: Enter your trees and wreaths at the Farm Show by 9 a.m. the day of the meeting. Winners will be announced before the meeting is over.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 8:30 - 9:30 a.m. | Registration, coffee |
| 9:30 - 10:30 a.m. | Business meeting
Committee reports
Trees for Troops - <i>Walt Rockwood</i> |
| 10:30 - 11:15 a.m. | Christmas Tree Taxation Issues: The Dollars You Save May be Your Own!
- <i>Peter Mollica, attorney and past president of the NHVTCTA. This presentation will be followed by opportunities for brief one-on-one consultations with Peter.</i> |
| 11:15 a.m. - 12 p.m. | Deer and Moose Damage: What whets their appetites? Why my place and not yours? What are the laws? Is there any financial help available for compensation or prevention?
- <i>John Buck, Deer Team Leader, VT Dept. of Fish and Wildlife; and Rob Calvert, Wildlife Damage Specialist, NH Fish and Game Dept.</i> |
| 12 - 1 p.m. | Lunch - Canadian Club's roast beef dinner |
| 1 - 1:30 p.m. | Marketing recap of the 2004 season with audience participation. Sales up or down? New trends, outlook for 2005. |
| 1:30 - 2 p.m. | Recap of the year's insect and disease problems, and forecast for 2005
- <i>Ron Kelley, Forest Protection Specialist, VT Dept of Forests and Parks</i> |
| 2 - 3 p.m. | Invasive Plants in Christmas Tree Culture: what's bad and what's not, what can we live with and what must we control, and are we part of the problem or part of the solution ?
- <i>Jeff Taylor, general manager, Vegetation Control Service</i> |

Directions: The Canadian Club is on VT Route 14, about 2 miles north of Barre City.

***Pesticide Credits: 2 Pesticide Recertification Credits
SAF and NH Forester Licensing: 3 credits, category I***

The New Exotic Experience

By Bob Girardin

As choose-and-cut growers of Christmas trees, we all take pride in the experiences that we offer our customers so that they will continue to buy our trees. As growers in the 21st century we must diversify and add to the experience by offering our customers a variety of species to choose from.

At Willow Pond Farm (my farm in Sanbornton, N.H.) we sold 17 different species of Christmas trees during our three tagging weekends in Oct. 2004. We sell our trees by invitation and have a waiting list.

This year our farm was featured on television, in newspapers across the United States, and on New Hampshire Public Radio. The NH Public Radio segment, "Some Americans Pine for Exotic Christmas Trees," by Shannon Mullen, contained the following quote from Dave Rotinnelli, who runs Apple Tree Nursery in Tilton, N.H.: "If you

could put 10 different trees side by side, you'd pick his exotics every time. They're outstanding."

There were several other tree farms that received local and national exposure because they were offering their customers exotic conifers for Christmas trees. One of the growers, Bill Weir from Colebrook, N.H. (a wholesale grower of exotic conifers) was featured in the Sunday papers across the country, and next year CBS will visit his farm three times. Mike Laine Floodwood from Minnesota was featured on PBS television because of the exotic conifers he is growing at his nursery. Frank Genevose from Oxford, Michigan, has received local, state, and national exposure because of the wide varieties of exotic conifers that he offers his customers, and the farms of Jeff Taylor from Richmond, N.H., and Dave Werner from Middlebury, Vt., have been featured in the local and state media because of the

variety of trees they offer their customers at Christmas time.

All of the growers of exotic conifers cited in this article get high prices for their exotic conifers. Christmas trees are not the only income derived from growing exotic conifers as we all use the beautiful foliage in our wreaths, swags, and other decorations. The pot in a pot growing system also provides additional income with the ability grow this species for ornamentals and live Christmas trees.

New Hampshire and Vermont Christmas tree growers have a great opportunity to expand their operation by growing exotic conifers. We are very fortunate to live in a micro climate that will allow us to grow many of these exotic species.

For one complimentary copy of the *Exotic Conifer News*, send a stamped, self-addressed, business size envelope to: Bob Girardin, 158 Upper Bay Rd., Sanbornton, NH 03269.



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