

# Tree Line



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association

June 2012

## *Special points of interest:*

### ♦ **IMPORTANT!!!**

The NHVTCTA's fall 2012 meeting will be held Saturday, Sept. 22, at the farm of Larry and Marlene Downey in Canada. In order to cross the border you must have either a U.S. Passport or a U.S. Passport Card or a state-issued "enhanced driver's license." Be sure to allow enough time to secure this documentation well before September. The day before the meeting (Friday Sept. 21), the Downeys will be hosting a field day for the Exotic Conifer Association. Members from both groups are welcome and encouraged to attend both meetings. See page 12 for more details.

### ♦ **Group Buying**

The NHVTCTA will NOT be doing a group buy with Cinco stands this year due to the fall meeting being held in Canada and the complexity and cost of delivering the stands across the border. Cinco can still take individual orders, though each grower is responsible for shipping.

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## Summer Meeting Preview

The summer meeting of the NHVTCTA will be held Saturday, June 23 at Ridges End Tree Farm in Deerfield, N.H.

Mike and Linda Cannata, our hosts, will provide a tour of the choose-and-cut farm, as well as a look at field tests they are conducting to examine species, fertilization and root dips in relation to possible phytophthora damage.

The featured speaker at the meeting will be Dr. Richard Cowles of the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, who will discuss advanced techniques

in pest management and latest in pesticide availability.

The meeting will also include a group discussion, led by Barbara Burns of the Vermont Dept. of Forests and Parks, on the unusual tree losses experienced by a number of growers this late winter/spring, and the potential relationship to weather (the results of an e-mail survey of members on this topic are included in this issue of Tree Line, beginning on page 4).

For more information or to register for the meeting call Jim Horst at (802) 447-1900.

## Update from the NCTA

After the NCTA directors meeting in Texas it was agreed upon that the organization should take a different tack based on the Check-off program. It is still presumed that the Check-off will be passed into law once the upcoming presidential election is over with. When this happens the work of the NCTA will change. The Check-off board will take care of the marketing and research of the real tree.

The NCTA will move solely into protection and policy, which are areas that the Check-off money cannot be used for. The NCTA will be looking at fire protection, chemical use and government policies that affect the tree industry. This change will keep a necessary arm of the organization while letting the marketing and research be funded through the Check-off.

Trees for Troops, a national program of the Christmas SPIRIT Foundation, was honored at the White House on April 11 as a finalist in the Joining Forces Community Challenge.



Launched by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, the Joining Forces Community Challenge recognizes those organizations and individuals with a demonstrated, genuine and deep desire to be of service to military families.

Trees for Troops was selected from more than 300 applicants as a top 20 finalist. Nigel Manley, Christmas SPIRIT Foundation chairman and NHVTCTA representative to the NCTA was at the White House for the ceremony.

## President's Message: Weather Worries

What crazy weather we're having! Little or no snow beginning back in December and continuing in January and February. Oh yes, but let's not forget the significant snow storm we had (Trick or Treat) at Halloween. And then summer weather in March, followed by too warm weather for putting in transplants in April! But then the National Weather Bureau reported that the last five months were the warmest on record. That makes it OK?

But as early as February many growers were seeing a lot of dead Christmas trees in their various lots. They began communicating with other growers and before you know it e-mails were flying all over the places. What was causing this mortality? First thought, phytothora? But no, growers who don't have frasers

were hit too. Mortality was not selective to species or age. Was it herbicide, insecticide, too much rain last fall, little or no snow cover this winter??? Well, as you see, this is one of several agenda items for the June meeting.

But this whole situation affirmed what I have always felt about NH-VT CTA. For anyone growing Christmas trees, it is most important for them to become a member of their regional association, The networking, sharing and exchange of ideas, is invaluable.

And, this September, we have the opportunity to go 'international', when we visit Larry's Downey's Tree Farm & Nursery in Quebec. Be sure to sign up. This experience is one you won't want to miss!

*Mary Lou Schmidt  
President*

## Trading Post

**FOR SALE:** For Sale: 32 gal. Solo 419 Mist Blower with teleblast head on 3 pt hitch: \$875; Rears 50 gal. Nifty sprayer with AR30 pump: \$300; Gandy Fertilizer Applicator 09-M902: \$150; Kelco 18", 22" & 26" manual netters on stands: \$150 ea.; Kelco 22" netter on 14' table with manual winch: \$225; 18" netter with PTO driven winch: \$100; 250 gal plastic tank: \$75, Two Solo backpack sprayers: \$30; Unused Solo backpack sprayer: \$40, Four 25 gal. plastic tanks: \$15 ea.; Twenty retail stands (4 place): \$10 ea. Shearing knives: \$10 ea. Felco pruners: \$10 ea. Call Rob at 802-475-2322 or email [rudds@gmavt.net](mailto:rudds@gmavt.net)

**FARM FOR SALE:** 22-acre choose and cut farm with a barn and selling shed. There is no home on the property but there is a place to put one. We have been selling trees since 1990. There are approximately 3,000 trees in the ground. The farm is located in Barnstead Parade, N.H. Contact Rich at 603-269-4012.



## New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association



### 2012 Officers

President	Mary Lou Schmidt	(802) 257-0233
Vice President	Dan Beloin	(603) 237-8633
Recording Secretary	Russell Reay	(802) 492-3323
Executive Secretary/Treas.	Jim Horst	(802) 447-1900
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### 2012 Directors (Term Ends)

Dan Beloin	(603) 237-8633	(2012)
Mike Godzyk	(603) 237-5702	(2013)
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Bob White	(802) 899-4924	(2014)
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### 2012 Tree Line Publication Schedule

Issue	Ad/Submission Deadline
January	—
June	—
September	Sept. 7



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## Tree Losses

*Editor's Note: In late winter/early spring reports started to come in from growers, mainly in southern parts of Vermont and New Hampshire, of unexplained tree losses—trees that appeared healthy last fall were now dead or dying. We surveyed members by e-mail in hopes of learning more; what follows are excerpts of the responses. Among those impacted, the consensus seems to be that this phenomenon is weather-related. The information here is interesting because it sheds light on not only this issue, but some of the other challenges NHVTCTA members are facing.*

I first became aware of the more than normal amount of loss in our fir lots (balsam and canaan) in early Feb. This prompted me to do an inventory of the losses on Feb. 12. Losses totaled 229 trees ranging from the 2011 planting (5-year old transplants) to 4-5 foot 9-10 year old trees. Many of the trees had totally turned rust color and the others were yellowish and on the way to browning/rusting. I did another check (on April 7) and counted 364 losses, a 135 or 37% increase over my Feb. 12 count. There's no difference that I can make out between the balsam and canaan in the amount and extent of mortality. The full range of tree ages and sizes is affected here. A related phenomenon, even more strange in some ways, is that scattered branches on some trees have browned. This is puzzling where I can't identify ice damage or any other specific physical cause. Chemicals can't be the culprit when these branches are randomly located in the upper half of a tree. My best guess is that the losses are weather-related. Rains last fall may have excessively saturated the soil. Then we had the open and warmer than usual winter.

*Bill Schmidt  
Dummerston, Vt.*

I lost between 1,500 and 2,000 trees. Mostly 1-3 years in the field. Fraser, Balsam and Canaan were all affected. Losses occurred where trees had been planted "on the stump," but also in new fields where trees had never been grown before. Losses occurred where Westar had been used, but also where Westar had not been used. In one case, the field was wettish and Canaan fir had grown there successfully for 3-4 years. In other cases losses were where there had been no previous signs of wet soils. Barbara Burns said it was not Armillaria, and lab tests of tissue showed very low likelihood of the dreaded Phytophthora. Other growers in the area with similar soils have similar problems. One grower in the area with well drained soils had no unusual losses. Losses were not apparent last fall, but began to appear late winter continuing into spring. The only consistent factor I have where losses occurred were super-saturated soils for a 2+ week period before and after Irene and heavy soils. Losses seem to be primarily in the south where moisture and Irene were the worst. Best guess is a combination of weather (moisture) and heavy soils.

*Jim Horst  
Bennington, Vt.*

This year's "winter death" appears to be about normal as far as my farm is concerned. We've been experiencing this for about as long as the soil has been too wet (7-8 years). Generally the trees that die have been planted less than three years and appear fine in the fall.

*Rich and Stephanie Rockwood  
Chelsea, Vt.*

I'm seeing tree losses where it has not been a problem. It started late last summer/early fall, continued through the winter and is still happening this spring. The trees seem

to die very quickly and there is no apparent pattern, it affected younger and older trees. Hoping it is related to the very wet early summer last year and then long dry period that followed.

*Doug Sinclair  
Ripton, Vt.*

Aside from typical Armillaria root rot in various trees throughout the plantation no real mortality to report. I haven't noticed any differences in this particular dry warm year.

*Geoff Chandler  
Waterville, Vt.*

Losses over the winter are less than normal and explained. We do have approximately 25 trees in the 4 to 7 year range severely off color in a wet area where we have been losing trees for years. We expect to lose these trees but certainly aren't surprised by their appearance.

*Balsam Acres  
Worcester, Vt.*

At the end of winter I started to notice reddish color branches here and there on some fields. Did not notice anything in the fall or early winter. I did see it develop over a period of 2 months or so. First noticed it early March or late Feb. In April we basal pruned the dead branches and noticed thereafter slightly more tree discoloration. On wet sites we saw more mortality than dryer sites. Fraser were more affected, younger trees more affected. Mature Fraser and Balsam trees only affected in the wet sites. Lack of snow over the winter and high amount of rainfall over 2011 I think played the biggest role. My neighbor 1 mile away on a protected hill had no issues that I could see.

*Mike Ahern  
Plymouth, N.H.*

*Continued on Page 6*

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## Tree Losses (continued)

*Continued from Page 4*

I am seeing unexplained tree losses this winter/spring. No sign of it last fall; I started to notice off-color in late Feb. The process was not sudden, but inexorably progressive. Only identifiable spatial pattern is in areas which are somewhat poorly drained. Equal mortality in BF, CF, FF. Very worst was in Serbian spruce. No damage at all in Norway spruce, white spruce, white pine. Losses appear to be uniformly distributed through all sizes. Root rot death is still fairly discernible from mystery death. My herbicide regime has not changed—if anything I am being more conservative. I am quite certain the mortality is weather related.

*Russell Reay  
Cuttingsville, Vt.*

We've had many unexplained tree losses this winter/spring. The problem started showing up in March, right after the hot weather. The trees died suddenly and there didn't seem to be a pattern; it impacted younger and older trees. In addition to the Christmas trees we had seen this on lots of landscape evergreens after the hot week in March. The ground was still frozen under the trees and we had 85 degree temps, the tree let off all moisture and wasn't able to bring any up from the roots.

*Jay Wilson  
Newfane, Vt.*

Fortunately I only lost about 10-15 "mature" trees, but also lost a few hundred 3-0 seedlings planted last spring. They were randomly scattered about. The "mature" trees ranged from 2 to 5 ft and appeared perfectly normal last year. My assumption is it was the result of the 2011 weather. I started noticing late last fall/early winter that a few were browning out. The trees were not dead yet

as a fingernail scratch of the bark revealed green and if you crushed a bud you got sap. It was clear that the buds never swelled and clearly were not going to break this spring. Some even have needles that are still partly green. Seems to be a slow death. When I pulled them this spring I did not get the root mass that I would have normally expected for a tree of that size as well. No real pattern—some trees situated in a level field but in a shallow depression that held water last spring are fine but a tree a few yards away is browned out. Only my Firs died. I also grow Norway Spruce and not one of them was effected. I just attributed it to the all the rain and then the drought as too much stress on the tree.  
*Campbells Tree Farm  
North Hero, Vt.*

I lost 300 or 400 1- to 2-year trees in late winter and early spring. I actually had Carolyn Smith from NH Cooperative Extension out here to help me set up some test plots for root rot and I queried her on this topic. I showed her where most of the losses took place and we looked at the remaining trees. She also took a few fresh pulls and was going to test for root rot. (Results not back yet.) Last year, I began using an auger allowing my plantings to have greater depth and more tolerance to drought. That worked well and I did not have to hand water during the 6 week drought last year. The drought did stress the trees though. Then came the winter of no snow cover. She believes that the trees were weak due to the stress of lack of water and were winter killed by the lack of snow. Mortality occurred in all areas and seemed to be concentrated in the Balsams and Fraser Firs and some very small Blue Spruce that I planted last year. While a few older trees were affected, it was

concentrated in the 1 to 2 year planted trees. This strengthens the supposition that tree health may be an issue.

*Mike Cannata  
Deerfield, N.H.*

We have seen tree loss. It started with babies, planted last spring. I'd say 25%! We first noticed lots of red in the fields in late winter/early spring. Then within a week or so...big trees that were fine before. Anywhere from 4-9 feet tall. No rhyme or reason. In the early spring there were just 5 or so red trees that size. Now there are about 10 that need to be taken out. And the rate is alarming. You see a little red one day, and within a week the entire tree is gone. Everything was green for Fall and Winter. I think we had 5 red trees between last Spring and this past Winter. Now, I think we have 75 trees to remove.

*Fox Farm Christmas Trees  
Sanbornton, New Hampshire*

Yes, I did see unexplained tree losses this winter/spring. It started last fall with rapid decline. It appears to be spreading through an area of balsam firs. I pull and destroy as trees (2-3 feet) turn brown. My diagnosis is possible root pathogen that is spreading rapidly in the soil. I lost a dozen trees so far and have put transplants where trees were pulled to see if they get hit.

*Walt Rockwood  
Chelsea, Vt.*

Unexplained tree losses began last spring, with many more this spring. For most death was quite sudden, occurred mainly in poorer drained areas and affected Fraser, and balsam-Fraser crosses. Trees from 2 inches to 8 feet were impacted. No previous root rot, but 2 wet summers and an open winter. Soil conditions and species made a difference. On my main farm, clay

soil, mostly Canaans, there were some losses but mostly small year-old trees. The adjacent farm, with silty loam and fraser, there were many more losses—more than 2 percent of the trees from 3' to 8'.  
*Werner Tree Farm  
 Middlebury, Vt.*

We have seen no unexplained tree losses.  
*Michael & Lisa Godzyk  
 Colebrook, N.H.*

We noticed an area of small (2 years in the ground) trees all turned brown since winter. They were mixed in with older and younger trees that seem fine. Didn't really notice it till around March, however was not in that area since last fall. Seemed to be sudden—some that looked like they would make it one week were totally brown the next. I used RoundUp the 4th week of September I thought it was from that but the adjacent trees were not affected.  
*Russ & Diana Fiorey  
 Surry, N.H.*

We didn't have any problems with dead trees. Our soil is very sandy.  
*Max Paine  
 Morrisville, Vt.*

I have seen some loss but not more than normal. I have heard a lot of people say they have seen more

than normal loss. I think the normal Fraser fir loss these days is much more than it was 10-15 years ago. I say 25% is normal for marginal (slightly wet, low pockets, clay based) ground or 2nd, 3rd rotation dry ground. Also, expect trees to continue to die through out the whole rotation. I think it is weather extremes contributing to tree stress, and therefore making them more susceptible to disease (root rots) and pests (ants, grubs, root aphids). There is a large majority of growers moving away from Fraser to Balsam or Canaan for this reason. A lot of Canaan fir "loss" is actually not loss. I have found that most are semi-red and some are 75-95% red one year after planting (following spring). I had one field that my workers told me they thought was a complete loss when it was actually over 97% survival rate after not replacing a single tree. Do not replace any Canaan fir "dead" trees until you pull off a bud and find it dry and brown. If it is green and soft inside the bud, leave the tree even if it is 95% red. These trees will live and even thrive the following year. I believe Balsam has a better overall survival rate than Fraser partly because it is native to the northeast and it is more forgiving to extremes in weather and cultural mistakes from growers.  
*Jay Weir  
 Colebrook, N.H.*

Both of my farms are similar in that they are both in the Seacoast area, sandy soil. This winter/spring about 700 out of 3,500 transplants died. It started last fall. I did not notice any specific pattern as to area, I have one small wetter area where trees also died. Only young trees were impacted. I attributed it to 1. Last year one variety planted was 3-2, I noticed and commented to providing nursery at planting time that the root systems were damaged and not adequate to support the tree size, 40% of these died, nursery replaced them this spring. 2. We had an extremely dry 2012 spring, my soil is sandy. I typically see some amount of transplants that are stressed over the winter, yet they always seem to miraculously survive and grow the following spring. I attributed the high mortality rate this year to the soil being so dry in April, the trees just did not have what was need to come out of dormancy, it was the final blow for them.  
*John Archambault  
 Newmarket N.H. / N. Berwick Me.*

We've had lots of loss, but not completely unexplained. No real signs of it in fall, but we had so much rain going into the winter and our ground is heavy wet soil to begin with, so we knew it wasn't a good thing. Although not much snow cover this winter, they didn't look dead until this spring—it was mainly on our young trees planted last year—out of about 500 trees we had at least 100 die.  
*Sally & Bruce Collopy  
 Fairfield, Vt.*

There was a little mortality in the fall but I attributed it to not properly planting the tree or "normal loss." This spring I have noticed a lot. Mostly trees planted in 2011 but some in trees planted 2009 and 2010. The whole farm is windy but

*Continued on Page 8*

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## Tree Losses (continued)

*Continued from Page 4*

no wet areas. Some losses in Fraser but mostly Balsam. Mostly younger trees were affected, particularly one group of Balsam Fir planted in the spring of 2011. Mortality probably 30 to 60%. Blue Spruce and Korean Fir in the same beds have so far had very little loss. I am wondering if the combination of frozen ground and very warm temperatures in March could have been at least part of the cause.

*Lew Stowell  
Brookfield, Vt.*

I noticed signs of tree losses last fall—newly planted spring seedlings were dying, but mature trees seemed to be okay. This spring there has been a quick decline in trees that were planted 2-3 years ago; several older trees are showing

signs of stress. Some died over the winter but most died this spring. The land is particularly wet. There was never a good “ground freeze” last year. Balsam fir is the primary species affected. Mostly trees that have been in the field 1-3 years. I don’t recall ever seeing so many trees (of various ages) die over the winter/spring as this year.

*DeCell’s Christmas Tree Farm  
Weston, Vt.*

We started noticing unexplained tree losses in the spring on 1-5 year old trees. The trees impacted are close to a wet area. It was very wet during a long period (7 weeks) in the spring last year and it got very dry in August and September.

*Larry and Marlene Downey  
Cookshire-Eaton, Quebec*

I have noticed random red branches on trees of all sizes that otherwise look perfectly healthy this spring, but have not experienced the unexplained tree losses that others are reporting. Unlike many places, we had snow cover (though often less than 1 foot) all winter long. Not sure if that helped.

*Patrick White  
Middlesex, Vt.*

I noticed unexplained tree losses in late Winter. It was a declining process, but not a slow one. More in potentially wet areas or areas that would stay wet longer after rain. The losses are all Balsam and some of my few Fraser. No Concolor, Corkbark, Korean, Siberian fir or Meyer Spruce losses noted so far. It was mostly last year’s plantings, but also several up to about 4 years

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old. Also lost about 90% of a 300-tree transplant bed. Because of the wetter than usual last 5+ years, I've assumed that the phytophthora is getting around and have been glad that this was going to be my last planting year.

*Phil Kivlin  
Shoreham, Vt.*

I have seen unexplained losses of Balsam fir beginning in the early spring. Seemed fairly sudden, didn't notice anything last fall/winter. Of course spring is when I was out in the plantation and it might have shown up earlier. No pattern. Some protected areas, some wide open. Most dry. Mostly younger trees 3 ft and less were affected. Most on seedlings planted in the last several years. Looks like a winterkill type injury. Roots of the young seem OK but I would have preferred to see more fibrous rooting. Damage not

widespread but enough to be concerned. Don't know what is worse—something like this or the @\$&\* moose coming in and hammering away at nice ready to sell 8-9 foot trees.

*Marshall Patmos  
Westmoreland, N.H.*

Planted 150 balsam and canaans transplants in 2011. At Christmas time all looked great. In late January or early Feb. some had started to yellow. Eventually 25 turned light tan then to a tan/orange. They looked desicated No apparent reason why some died and the rest look great. There was no needle drop. In fact they still have all their needles. The whole tree suffered.

*Jim White  
Shaftsbury, Vt.*

I haven't seen abnormal tree losses. Few frasers that are on heavier

soils. I normally lose a few of these every year. On my commute to the office I pass a field of trees on good well-drained river bottom soils along the Passumpsic River. This grower must have lost 75% of last years planting but not one of his older trees. Snow cover was poor there. This field is new to trees so root rot can't be the issue.. I figured it was simply winter dessication.

*Matt Langlais,  
Caledonia/Essex County Forester  
St. Johnsbury, Vt.*

Yes, I have seen unexplained tree losses this spring. The trees started to die, branch by branch. Concolor was the worst (30-plus in one field), on an up-slope area that is flat and dry. It only happened with trees 3-6 feet tall, babies survived, perhaps because they are lower to the ground protected by larger trees from wind.

*Abby Tonry  
Hampton Falls, N.H.*



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Transplant Type	Season	Tree Age	Price per Transplant
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Balsam Fir: Cooks Strain Vermont Seed Source	Spring 2013	2-2	\$0.80
Canaan Fir: West Virginia Seed Source	Spring 2013	2-2	\$0.90
Balsam-Fraser Hybrids: Vermont Seed Source	Spring 2013	2-2	\$0.80
Fraser Fir: North Carolina Seed Source	Spring 2013	2-2	\$0.80
Mystery Tree: Late-Breaking Fraser Fir	Spring 2013	2-2	\$0.95

Questions?? Contact Bill Asack evenings 6-8 p.m. 1-802-754-6934

## Pest Management Considerations in Block Planting vs. Interplanting

By Ron Kelley

In reading the article on interplanting vs. block planting by Heiligmann, Koelling and Cacklen in the January 2012 *Tree Line*, I couldn't help but notice how the authors glossed over the potential pest problems associated with interplanting. I know a number of growers in our area who are on their third or later generation of interplanting and would disagree with the authors' statement that "In regards to insect and disease concerns, growers with successful pest management strategies in block plantings should be equally successful with interplantings." This may be true for Michigan but I don't think it's true for the Northeast. Dwayne Burkey, in his presentation at the January meeting in Essex, mentioned that in Pennsylvania, "interplanting creates a nightmare, even on an 8-10 acre farm." It may not necessarily create a nightmare for every grower in our area but that potential is there and the pest risks associated with interplanting need to be considered.

Let's explore logistical pest management concerns first. There are a number of insects and diseases that can cause enough damage to make a mature tree unsalable or lower its value but whose damage would be less of a concern on a young tree, where the damage could be pruned out or the tree could outgrow the effect over time. Take balsam twig aphid, for example. This insect curls the needles of fir but trees can tolerate some damage and often don't need to be sprayed unless they are near maturity. Interplanting, unless one is spot-treating, requires spraying the entire plantation treating all size trees and therefore using more pesticide.

With balsam shootboring sawfly, an insect that mines young fir buds and kills them, there is a risk of incurring a greater than usual

amount of damage if the grower is switching from balsam fir to Fraser by interplanting the Frasers. The later breaking Fraser fir extends the egg-laying opportunities for the long-lived sawfly adults, so blocks with a mix of the two species have had the heaviest damage in the past. This is especially true if the trees were near the edge of a forest containing native balsams that provided a source of insects looking for "perfect buds" for egg-laying. An alternate strategy of planting blocks of balsam near the edges and Frasers further away would reduce this risk. Block plantings also allows one to better match trees to their best sites, such as planting Fraser on a well-drained slope and balsam where it is more poorly drained.

The greatest pest risk with interplanting is from root disease, namely Armillaria and Phytophthora. Armillaria root rot, also called shoestring root rot, builds up in the stump and roots of cut trees and then invades the roots of nearby trees by the production of the shoestrings, called rhizomorphs, that grow through the soil. The fungus also produces white mycelial mats under the bark of infected stumps. It can live for many years, even decades, in the old roots, so risk increases over time, often becoming critical beginning with the third generation of trees. The fungus persists longest in hardwood stumps so if the planting site has old hardwood stumps present, this maximizes the risk. Young newly planted trees, without an established root system, are especially vulnerable to attack. The closer these are to an old stump, the greater the risk. Fraser fir, not being native to our area, is much higher risk than balsam, while the Fraser-balsam crosses are intermediate in susceptibility. The grower contemplating interplanting should take into account how long the area is expected to be in produc-

tion, whether there are currently any old stumps present, as well as what tree species or varieties are to be planted.

Phytophthora root rot is a soil-borne disease that can become a huge problem in poorly drained areas. Again, Fraser fir is at greatest risk, followed by balsam fir. Canaan fir is reported to be more tolerant. Infected trees have many roots with few or no root hairs. The spores that infect the roots swim through the soil in water so nearby recently planted trees are especially vulnerable to attack. The fungus can build up in the plantation during wet years and then produce a spore stage that will survive during dry years, so again the risk of tree mortality increases over time and with successive generations of trees. Growers with some wet sites should consider block plantings with the species most tolerant of wet soils, planted on those sites.

There is no viable pesticide option and no easy way to deal with either of these root diseases. With Armillaria, one would have to remove stumps and entire root systems to totally eliminate the risk. With Phytophthora, expensive drainage systems and possibly raised beds may be the only good option. It is much better to avoid or reduce the likelihood of a problem in the first place.

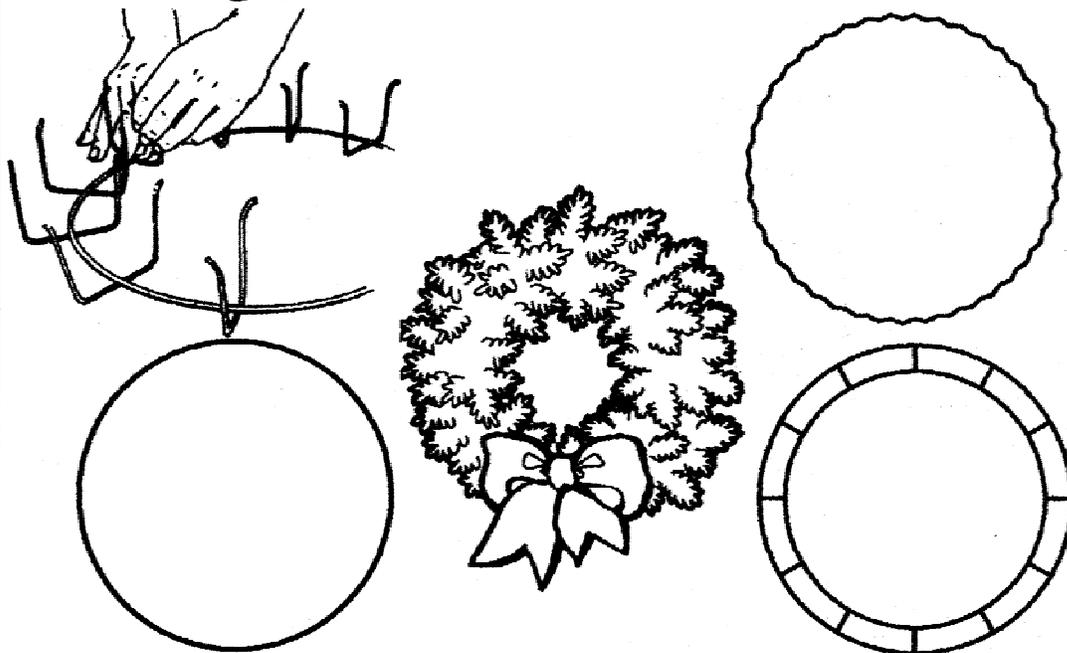
I know there are many successful growers out there who interplant and have not had a big problem to date. But those who are just beginning to plant certain areas and are trying to decide between interplanting and block planting need to be aware of these pest management implications, as well as the economic and other considerations mentioned in the January 2012 article.

*For questions concerning this article or for consulting services, I can be reached at 802-888-7466 or [ronald.kelley76@gmail.com](mailto:ronald.kelley76@gmail.com).*

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## Editor's Desk

*Following is a look at some of the news that's crossed my desk since our last issue...*

### Martha Rudd

Longtime NHVTCTA member and well-known tree grower Martha Rudd passed away recently.

Martha ran Rudd's Tree Farms in Pownal, Vt., for 20 years after her husband, Bob, passed in 1991. Martha was a member of the NHVTCTA for more than 30 years.

The Rudds hosted a well-received summer meeting in the late-1980s. Rudd's Tree Farm, eventually specializing in Fraser Firs, won over 35 awards at the Vermont Farm Show and Eastern States Exposition over the years.

Martha presented Christmas trees to the Snelling, Kunin (3 times) and Dean administrations and was Grand Champion at the Big E twice.

### Maine's 50th Meeting

NHVTCTA members have been

cordially invited to the 50th Anniversary meeting of the Maine Christmas Tree Association. This will be a two-day event beginning at Piper Mountain Christmas Trees in Newburgh, Me., on Saturday September 8. The following day, the meeting will take place at Finestkind Tree Farms in Dover-Foxcroft, Me.

There will be nine speakers and pesticide credit is already approved in all the New England states (the group is also working on approval for Canadian growers). The Saturday night dinner will feature well established growers speaking at an informal grower's forum after the meal.

For more details and registration information, contact the Maine Christmas Tree Association at (207) 793-4658.

### Exotic Conifer Field Day

On Friday, Sept. 21 (the day before the NHVTCTA meeting), Downey Tree Farm (in Hatley,

Quebec) will be hosting a field day of the Exotic Conifer Association. After a business meeting, history of the farm and catered lunch, there will be afternoon technical sessions in the field conducted by Larry Downey and Bob Girardin, as well as a question and answer session.

That evening, there will be more time for sharing at a group dinner at a nearby restaurant. NHVTCTA members are welcome to attend this meeting and then spend the night in order to attend our association gathering, at the same location, the next day.

To register for the Exotic Conifer Association gathering, send a check (\$45 for non-members of this group plus \$27 for dinner) to Bob White, 8 Wild Berry Lane, Underhill VT 05489 or call Downey Tree Farm at (819) 566-0319 for more information.

Registration forms for the NHVTCTA meeting will be sent out to members as usual in advance of the meeting.



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