

Tree Line



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association

June 2013

Special points of interest:

♦ **Web marketing**

The NHVTCTA will soon be sending out its annual sign-up for listings on the Association Web site. Be sure to take advantage of this opportunity to market wholesale, choose-and-cut, retail, mail order and wreath/greens products.

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Summer Meeting: Hidden Meadows

The NHVTCTA Summer Meeting will be held Saturday, June 22, 2013, in Bath, N.H. The hosts will be Jane and Dana Blais at their Hidden Meadows Tree Farm.

Registration will kick off at 8:30 a.m. with coffee and donuts (courtesy of Larry and Marlene Downey), followed by a business meeting. One topic to be discussed will be possible locations for the Association's winter meeting.

At 10 a.m. will be a panel discussion (with participation and questions from others welcomed) on "Off-Farm Retail Sales." A few members who operate tree lots will share their insights as to how this differs from selling on the farm. When selling at a tree lot, what makes a good location? What equipment is needed? What are

the best ways to market, set prices and handle all the other logistics?

At 10:30, we will welcome Bill Urbanowicz, agronomist with Spectrum Analytic in Ohio. He will discuss soil and foliar testing, analysis, recommendations and fertilizer response.

The afternoon will feature a history and walking tour of the farm by Dana Blais, who will talk about the different species he grows, work done to improve drainage, cultural practices and more. A UNH biologist will also discuss Christmas tree farms as bird habitat.

There's plenty of opportunity to learn. If you haven't already registered, it's not too late. Call Jim Horst at (802) 447-1900 to sign up.

Checkoff Program Update

NCTA often receives questions regarding the status of the Christmas Tree Research and Promotion Order, or checkoff program.

As you may remember, the checkoff program was requested by the industry in 2009 and went through two industry-wide comment periods.

During those periods, more than 70% of the growers and nearly 90% of the state/regional associations posting comments indicated that they were in favor of the program.

The final rule was published in the Federal Register

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President's Message:

Hello all. Hope all of your trees, and you too, of course, had a good winter. At this time last year we were all trying to figure out why there was so much tree loss over the winter, regardless of the tree age or where they were planted. Conclusion: weather related of the previous four seasons.

It's time to think about Officers and Directors for 2014. If you are interested, or would like to recommend a member. Talk to Dan Beloin, nominating chair. It's a great board and well worth your participation.

If you have some tree

topic you would like to hear discussed or an idea for one of our outdoor meetings, by all means, talk with our program chair, Patrick White. He is always ready for suggestions.

We, here at Elysian Hills, have observed an interesting new trend in customer tree preference selection. As many of you know, we have our Christmas tree tagging in October foliage season. We offer wagon rides that pass by the various tree lots. Stops are made: at the Pet Cemetery for stories; at our new stone trees; and for shearing demonstrations and tree care. We always leave a number of unsheared

trees along the edges for the demonstrations.

In recent years, more and more of these trees are being tagged by customers. This year we will leave unsheared trees scattered throughout the designated tag lots and see what happens! We know from experience that customers prefer a more open tree to accommodate their ornaments. We even thin branches throughout a tree to achieve this. *Is this a new trend on customer preference—a more wild look?*

*Cheers,
Mary Lou Schmidt
President*



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association



2013 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
Past President	Jay Weir	(603) 237-8617

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2013 Tree Line Publication Schedule

Issue	Ad/Submission Deadline
January	—
June	—
September	Sept. 6



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Canaan Fir: Past, Present and Future

Editor's Note: Bob White has been looking into the past, current and future state of canaan fir transplants and shares his findings here. Thanks to Bob for his contributions.

In the late 90s we started hearing about a new balsam: Canaan fir. The NHVTCTA conducted a group buy starting in 2004 with the Canaan Fir Seed Co., which sold transplants that came from The Ohio State University seed orchard. After a couple years we moved to Reliable Seed Company.

It's important to understand most all Canaan trees that we have grown in our region came from these two seed suppliers, regardless of the nursery involved.

A recent survey of about a dozen member farms indicates quality of these trees has been exceptional in some cases, good in most and marginal to poor in others. Like other strains of Balsam, individual trees can range from exceptional to poor for Christmas tree production.

Regardless of the different qualities of the seed sources all Canaan that we have seen

share several traits. They all bud with or after Fraser. They all are very light weight trees. They all have somewhat better tolerance to wet soils.

Seed Sources

Canaan Fir Company (CFC) *POM* original Canaan Valley, orchard started in 1971. The wild mother trees are dead and that orchard is mostly retired as the better quality WSL source recently came into full production.

WSL came from 4 small areas of trees outside the Valley and started 1985 much better genes. Those parent trees are gone, and the orchard is just coming into full production, culled from 1,200 down to 200 trees. All transplants now sold by CFC are from the WSL or newer sources.

Jack Schmidt from CFC indicates that the WSL seed source trees are on federal land, which has been closed due to budget cuts. He hopes to get one more harvest, while they still have access. They hope to have enough seed to carry them over until the grafted orchards that Dr. Brown has established come

into full production in the future.

OGO (Grafted). The best trees have been grafted into several orchards, but it is years away before we see large amounts of these trees. Needle retention tests have been done on all trees. A few were shipped to growers in our area this year.

Reliable Seed Company

Reliable's seed comes from the remaining wild stand in Canaan Valley. Few mature trees are left, due to balsam woolly adelgid. Jim Rockis has a new seed orchard coming but is a few years away.

Berkey's Nursery

Transplants are available from their new producing seed orchard. Pictures we have seen of field trees look like Canaan Valley quality trees.

Other nurseries are growing seed trees, time will tell how the trees will turn out.

A survey of about a dozen growers came up with these results: On most but not all farms the original trees from CFC were exceptional looking, fast growing trees requiring little shearing. Transplants from different years had very different results. We now understand some farms received the WSL source while other got the *POM* source.

Trees from Reliable had mixed results: Some farms are very happy with tree quality while others are not working out as well. It's possible soil conditions have a big influence.

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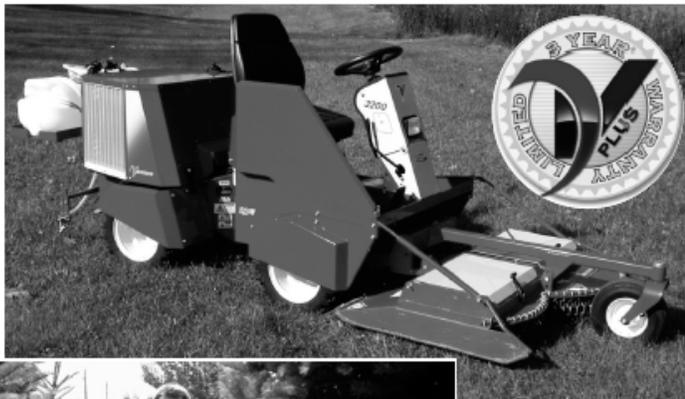
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Research: Tolerance to Flooding

Editor's Note: Growers who have been hit hard by flooding in the last few years (a problem that seems to be becoming more frequent and severe) may be interested in a recent research project undertaken by Benjamin Hoover at Pennsylvania State University. The full (126 pages) results can be found in the February 2013 issue of HortTechnology (horttech.ashspublications.org). An abstract of the research appears below:

Fraser fir (*Abies fraseri*) is an important cut Christmas tree crop in Pennsylvania and is susceptible to root disease in poorly drained soils. This research involved testing for differences between Fraser fir, Canaan fir, and Nordmann fir in response to *Phytophthora* and poor soil drainage. Fir response was measured in foliar health ratings, weekly mortality, and tissue dry weights. Susceptibility to *Phytophthora* root rot incited by *Phytophthora cactorum* and *P. drechsleri* was tested in

flooded and non-flooded settings with inoculation tests within a greenhouse with seedlings growing in soilless substrate and outdoors with transplants growing in soil. Fraser fir was highly susceptible to both *Phytophthora* species, Canaan fir was not susceptible in non-flooded settings but susceptible when flooded, and Nordmann fir was not susceptible in either non-flooded or flooded settings. A fungicide efficacy study was conducted with Fraser fir seedlings in two outdoor experiments. Dimethomorph, fosetyl-aluminum (Al), hydrogen dioxide, mefenoxam, and propamocarb hydrochloride were the chemicals tested. Based upon foliar health ratings and mortality data, dimethomorph was most effective in preventing disease incited by *P. cactorum* and *P. drechsleri*. Mefenoxam and fosetyl-Al were somewhat effective in preventing disease incited by *P. drechsleri*, but less effective in preventing disease incited by *P. cactorum*. Response to flooding

stress was evaluated with a greenhouse experiment with seedlings growing in soilless substrate exposed to weekly flooding events, an outdoor experiment with transplants growing in soil exposed to continuous flooding, and a greenhouse experiment with transplants growing in soil within rhizotrons exposed to continuous flooding. Fraser fir was intolerant of flooding. Canaan fir had some tolerance of flooding. Nordmann fir was very tolerant of flooding. In the rhizotron study some Nordmann fir developed hypertrophied lenticels and surficial roots after exposure to flooding. In this research a gradient of susceptibility to root disease occurred across the true fir species tested. Fraser fir was the most susceptible to root disease, Canaan fir had an intermediate degree of susceptibility, and Nordmann fir had the least susceptibility to root disease. This suggests that true fir crops may be viable in locations unfit for Fraser fir production.



WREATH SHIPPING BOXES SUCH A DEAL !!!!!

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E-mail: russreay@vermontel.net

I recently purchased a large quantity of wreath shipping boxes, and wish to give NHVTCTA members the first opportunity to save money on a fairly expensive item. Referring to your latest Kelco catalog at the top of page 48, these are item # BXW22G6, the white box with red bow, size 18" x 18" x 6".

Trade price for these boxes are \$3.85 each, plus shipping, in boxes of 25, and \$2.65 each, plus shipping for pallets of 350, minus your quantity discount.

My price is \$2.00 each in multiples of 25, and \$1.75 each for the pallet quantity of 350, and I will bring them to NHVTCTA meetings (including directors' meetings in White River Jct.) at no cost. I strongly prefer not to ship them, so they are available at my farm if you need an excuse for a drive.

NOTE: these boxes are flat, and strapped in bundles of 25. They are not folded in half like the boxes of 25 we normally order, and there are no pallets. A quantity of 350 is 14 bundles of 25.

If you are interested, please give me a call or shoot me an email. Thanks, Russell Reay

Checkoff Program (continued)

Continued from page 1

in November 2011 but was put on hold just a few days after it was established due to negative media attention.

Christmas Tree Promotion Now (CTPN), a volunteer-led organization focused on the checkoff program for Real Christmas Trees, has remained in constant communication with USDA, White House representatives and elected officials regarding the potential lifting of the stay.

Recently, an amendment sponsored by Representative

Kurt Schrader (D-OR) mandating the USDA to lift the stay on the checkoff was approved by the House Agriculture Committee, and is now included in the House version of the 2013 Farm Bill. The ultimate fate of the amendment will be decided when the House and Senate meet to conference their versions of the Farm Bill later this summer, but this represents the most significant progress regarding the checkoff since the original stay was enacted.

While this is good news, in a repeat of 2011 the Heritage Foundation covered the checkoff

in another blog posting.

However, unlike 2011 the Heritage Foundation blog was picked up by only one other media outlet, and the National Christmas Tree Association received only a few emails from the general public.

Given the lack of coverage the independent organization overseeing the checkoff, Christmas Tree Promotions Now (CTPN), hopes that the amendment will remain in the 2013 Farm Bill throughout the remainder of the legislative result, and ultimately result in the checkoff becoming a reality.



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Fraser Fir: N.C. (Rogers Mtn.) Seed Source	Spring 2014	2-2	\$0.85
Fraser Fir: N.C. (Ayers) Seed Source	Spring 2014	2-2	\$0.85
Mystery Tree: Late-Breaking Fraser Fir	Spring 2014	2-2	\$1.00

Balsam Fir: Cooks Strain Vermont Seed Source—SOLD OUT

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

Canaan Fir (continued)

Continued from page 4

The Canaan Valley trees have a weak branch structure, are generally a medium green, often with longer needles. They are available at a reasonable price which is a major consideration for many.

The WSL source generally has a shorter bottle brush needle with stiffer branches, faster growing and a deep green to bluish color. They are however very expensive, supply is limited and most likely will get more expensive this year. I believe this is the first year CFC is selling seed to other nurseries from the WSL source.

A few years ago at a direc-

tors meeting Rich Rockwood suggested that someone should save some of the exceptional trees for a seed orchard.

Last year I decided he was right and got moving, since I had little knowledge on how to do any of this stuff I talked Larry Downey into working together on this project. Larry has a wealth of knowledge and is fun to hang around with. We found one group of trees at Bill Nichols farm, and another group at my farm.

Needle retention testing and many other tests were done, in the end we selected about a dozen trees that we will be moving to an orchard site which if all goes well will be

equal to the best quality trees from Ohio State.

Dr. Jim Brown who did the Ohio State work to develop the orchards believes we will have the same quality as the next generation WSL select orchard that is being developed in Ohio.

If all goes well before I die someday these trees might produce some cones.

If anyone has any thoughts on these trees good or bad please share the knowledge.

If you want to order canaan fir from any nursery this year I would do it as soon as the suppliers are taking orders. I expect some nurseries will be out stock soon as demand is high in many parts of the country.

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New York Christmas Tree Association Meeting

The Christmas Tree Farmers Association of New York (CTFANY) will be celebrating its 60th anniversary with a big summer meeting Thursday - Saturday, July 18 - 20, 2013. The event is co-hosted by Bell's Christmas Trees, 647 Mettaca-honts Rd., Accord, N.Y., and Maplehorst Farm Nursery, 151 Rapp Rd., Monticello, N.Y.

Members of neighboring state associations are invited to attend the NYS Meeting. The special CTFANY member pricing will be extended to folks who present a valid out-of-state association membership card.

Participants will be divided between the two farms when they pre-register with ½ of the group attending workshops on the Bell's farm and the other ½ at the Rapp's farm one day; and then switching to the other farm on the second day.

Vendors will be set-up on both farms. So regardless of which farm you start at, you will see all of the presenters and vendors over the course of the two days.

The meeting begins on Thursday evening with a Mix and Mingle Pig Roast and entertainment from 5-7 p.m. at the Bell's Farm. There will also be a banquet with entertainment on Friday evening at Rapp's Farm. These two events are planned to give you a chance to catch-up with folks that you don't see during the day at the farm visits.

It's shaping up to be an excellent program – with numerous well-regarded speakers covering a wide variety of topics.



The two-day schedule of workshops offers valuable information for experienced growers as well as those just starting out with Christmas trees.

Co-host Gordon Bell will show his irrigation system and deer fencing; and discuss the farm's potted trees operation. John Rapp, the other meeting co-host, will lead a walk-through of his tree farm and discuss his work with herbicides include sprayer calibration.

Experts from Cornell plan to integrate both farms' fields into their presentations. Sessions will allow attendees to see first hand various insects and some of the diseases that attack Christmas trees; and learn about ways to treat infestations with Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques.

Various shearing and pruning techniques will be demonstrated. Different markets and grades of trees determine the best technique. Other workshops will cover everything from site and seed selection to cultural practices.

There is a robust Wreath, Greens & Marketing track running both days of the program on both of the farms.

Experts in the field will cover both beginning and more

advanced wreath-making and bow-making techniques and trends. Among other presenters, Cathy Jo Brown and Dave and Marcia Hicks will share their talents. Both farms will also be discussing their Christmas shops – including Point-of-Sale systems, and product selection and pricing.

Some of the specific sessions being offered will cover:

- Tree grading
- Exotic firs
- Deer fencing
- Potted trees
- Wreath decorating
- Bow making
- Chemical mowing
- Insect ID and treatment
- Farm security and safety
- Airblast sprayer calibration
- Farm insurance
- Liquid fertilizers

Full registration includes the Thursday evening Mix and Mingle, admission to all sessions on both farms and the trade show areas, workshop materials, and morning refreshments. Lunch is available both days with advance ticket purchase or bring your own. Friday evening banquet tickets should be purchased in advance as well.

The host hotel for the Meeting is the Days Inn, Liberty (845-292-7600). CTFANY has a special room rate there for meeting participants – just mention Christmas Tree Farmers when you call to reserve.

For information on registered for the event, contact: Mary Jeanne or Pam in the CTFANY Office at (607) 535 9790.

“The Big E” 2013

This year the Eastern States Exposition, known as “The Big E” (www.thebige.com) will run from Sept. 13 through the 29 in West Springfield, Mass. It is the largest fair in the Northeast, drawing more than 1.3 million people last year.

As most of you know the NHVTCTA has maintained a booth in the New Hampshire Building for several years to promote and expand the Real Tree Industry. This space is made available for free through the efforts of the New Hampshire Christmas Tree Promotion Board and the New Hampshire Dept. of Agriculture.

The interests of all NHVTCTA members are equally promoted regardless of which state they are from as well as the Christmas Tree industry as a whole.



The mid- to late-September timing of the Big E makes it very hard to get enough volunteers to man the booth because it's also a very busy time on most tree farms including mine. Therefore at our last meeting of the Board of Directors in June we decided to try a new format.

Manning the booth will no longer be a volunteer position but a paid position.

Duties will include:

- Manning the booth from 10 am. To 9pm. with restroom and lunch breaks as needed.
- Making Balsam Fir sachets for sale at \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00
- Bagging containerized seedlings for sale at \$2.00 each or 6 for \$10.00
- Maintaining a neat and attractive display and engaging people in discussion about the real tree industry.

Salary: \$200.00 flat rate per day plus 50% of all sales

after exceeding \$300.00 on any single day.

Requirements for Applicants:

- Applicants need not be a member of the NHVTCTA but should have a good general knowledge of growing Christmas trees and the Christmas tree industry. Must be at least 18 years old.

- Must provide your own transportation to and from the Big E.

- Must be responsible for your own food and drinks. A dormitory style bed will be available upstairs in the New Hampshire Building.

Note: NHVTCTA will provide all necessary materials for booth setup and display including parking passes, tickets, and a bed in the upstairs dormitory.

To apply for this position please contact Daniel Beloin at 603-237-8633 or e-mail belointreefarm@gmail.com

New Event for NCTA

NCTA's new event for the Real Christmas Tree industry—the NCTA Pre-Season Clinic—will

be held Aug.10-11, 2013, at the Renaissance Arlington Capital View of Arlington, Va., and will

feature the best of NCTA's educational and networking offerings, compressed into a valuable, information-packed week-end experience. From the Networking Center to Learning Labs to Experiential Learning to Educational Workshops, attendees will have lots of options – all focused on helping you grow your business and get ready for the coming season. The Clinic is the only national event for the Real Tree industry in 2013 and will also include the 2013 National Tree and Wreath Contests. For more details, visit www.realchristmastrees.org

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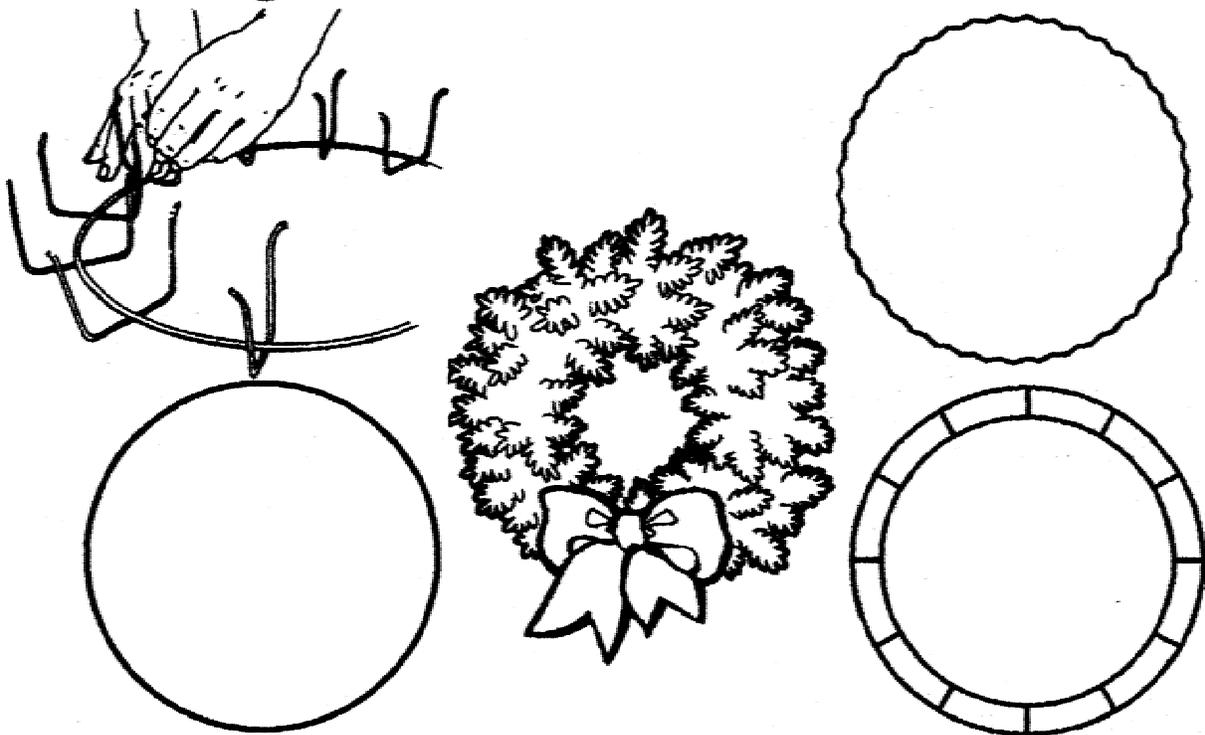
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Editor's Desk

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

Lafayette Noda

Longtime NHVTCTA member Lafayette Noda died Feb. 9, 2013, in Hanover, N.H., at age 96. Lafayette was born in Yamato Colony, a Japanese American community in San Joaquin Valley of California, one of 9 children of an immigrant family. He went on to earn degrees from UC Berkeley, UCLA and finally a PhD in biochemistry from Stanford and worked as chair of biochemistry department at Dartmouth until 1981. He married Mayme Kishi in 1947.

On weekends he worked on the land around his home in Meriden, N.H., where the fam-

ily moved in 1959. As he approached retirement, he and Mayme planted Christmas trees and blueberries for a pick-your-own farm operation.

"Dad enjoyed the association meetings and he made going a high priority," wrote his daughter Kesaya when passing along the sad news.

Future Tree Farmers?

A report by the Agricultural Marketing Resource Center (USDA) caught my eye. It states: "As of January 1, 2010, there were 2,671 Christmas tree operations raising 157.7 million trees. National Ag Statistics Service figures suggest that the number of operations will continue to decline, falling below 2,000 within 10 years." Just something to consider.

Trading Post

FOR SALE: Auger Transporter—Works great, especially on big root transplants—post holes, too. Used 2 seasons. Doesn't like ledgy terrain. Two augers—6" & 8". \$1350. Can deliver to June meeting. Elysian Hills Tree Farm elysianh@sover.net

WANTED: Small mist blower, currently have a back pack mist blower, now I need something a little larger, to drag behind my ATV. If you have something that you are not using anymore, give me a call, at 603-759-2264, ask for Paul.



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