

Tree Line



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association

September 2012

Special points of interest:

♦ **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.

♦ **Farms for Sale?:**

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

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Fall Meeting: North of the Border

The NHVTCTA's 2012 fall meeting will be held in Quebec on Saturday, Sept. 22, at the farm of Larry and Marlene Downey.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR PASSPORT OR ENHANCED DRIVER'S LICENSE IN ORDER TO CROSS THE BORDER.

Established for over 20 years, Downey Nursery is unique because of its research and development for new and exotic species through cross-breeding and hybridization. Test plots for the progression of various species are planted on the tree farms to better analyze the final product. Presently, at Downey Nursery, over eleven species are grown using five different improved stock seed orchards.

Downey Nursery also produces a variety of Christmas trees for the wholesale market and has started a choose & cut operation, five years in the making. Corporate wreaths is another sector of this enter-

prise, which has catered corporations for over eight years.

There will be a field tour of the farm conducted by Larry Downey and Louis Robert, an agronomist with the Quebec Department of Agriculture, that will look at topics including Fraser fir cone reduction, nursery production, soils evaluation and a shearing demonstration. Also at the meeting, Dr. Conrad Cloutier with the University of Lavelle will talk about IPM strategies in managing Christmas tree pests.

Marlene Downey has organized sessions covering wreaths and centerpieces and will talk about the farm's choose and cut operation.

If you have not already registered, contact Jim Horst at (802) 447-1900.

On Friday, the day before the NHVTCTA, the Exotic Conifer Association will also meet at Downey's. To register for that meeting, call Downey Tree Farm at Downey Tree Farm at (819) 566-0319.

NCTA: Protection and Advocacy

Didn't make it to the NCTA's 2012 annual gathering in Sacramento? Here's what you missed...

The message of the NCTA

Convention & Trade Show was loud and clear: NCTA is focused on protection of the Real Christmas Tree industry – and

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President's Message: Come A-Board

The 4th Quarter of the year is always an interesting time! This is when tree growers reap the fruits of their labor from the previous 6 (?) months of hard work. (pleasure?)

Hopefully this is our reward time in—sales.

But it is also election time. Not the least of which is NH-VT CTA members opportunity to select their Officers and Directors for the coming year. I had planned on writing this message even before Jim's cover letter he sent with the September packet.

At the January and June meetings we remind members that elections will be coming up in September and we would welcome any members who

would like to serve and participate in helping to keep the association running smoothly.

The nominating committee gets really serious about their work over the summer making phone calls and e-mailing members who might have any interest in running. I can only conclude that everyone is really happy with the present board and don't want to rock the boat—as it gets increasingly difficult to find new nominees.

The term of office for directors is 3 years and can be extended for a second term. Following that a director must step down for a year before coming back on the board.

The President's and Vice-President's term is for 2 years

and alternates between NH and VT.

There are 15 Officers and Directors split evenly between NH and VT. They meet 3 times a year at least three weeks prior to the members meeting, and our meetings generally run about four hours. Directors may volunteer, or be asked to serve or chair, one of our sub-committees in which they have a particular interest.

Personally, I have thoroughly enjoyed serving on the Board. The Directors are a great group to work with and learn from. Try it! You'll like it!

Happy Sales,
Mary Lou Schmidt
President



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
Past President	Jay Weir	(603) 237-8617

2012 Directors (Term Ends)

Dan Beloin	(603) 237-8633	(2012)
Mike Godzyk	(603) 237-5702	(2013)
Ben Hoyt	(603) 838-6403	(2013)
Tom Lang	(802) 223-7028	(2012)
Paul Lemire	(603) 882-8012	(2012)
Nigel Manley	(603) 444-6228	(2014)
Mary Lou Schmidt	(802) 257-0233	(2013)
Carl Szych	(802) 334-6858	(2014)
Jeff Taylor	(603) 239-4005	(2014)
Bill Tester	(802) 525-3814	(2012)
Bob White	(802) 899-4924	(2014)
Patrick White	(802) 223-4258	(2013)

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2013 Tree Line Publication Schedule

Issue	Ad/Submission Deadline
January	Jan. 4
June	June 7
September	Sept. 6



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Growing Degree Days and Temperature

Editor's Note: Especially in light of what seems to be more extreme weather patterns, managing Christmas trees (or any other crop) by calendar date alone may prove to be ineffective. Following is an excerpt from the Integrated Pest Management for Christmas Tree Production manual, produced in 2010 by the Pennsylvania Integrated Pest Management Program, describing how "growing degree days" and soil temperatures can prove more helpful than just looking at the calendar when it comes to scouting for pests. The entire 208-page manual can be found online at: <http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/FreePubs/pdfs/agrs117.pdf>

One method of monitoring specific pest populations is growing degree day (GDD) tracking. For insects, mites, and plants, development is influenced by daily heat accumulations from ambient air. (Disease progression is based on other factors such as host plant development, humidity, leaf wetting, etc.; therefore, the GDD method does not apply.) Tracking heat accumulation by monitoring daily air temperatures has proved useful in predicting the appearance of certain pest life stages.

The growing degree day method uses the daily average temperature (using low and high temperatures for 24 hours) to determine the heat unit exposure of the pest or plant. The GDDs accumulate daily until the required amount of heat for an event (hatch, emergence, pupation, etc.) is reached. This

GDD FORMULA

$$\frac{\text{Low Temperature} + \text{High Temperature}}{2} - 50^{\circ}\text{F} = \text{Daily GDD}$$

(Average temperature for a 24-hour period) (base temp.)

DAILY WEATHER LOG

Date	Time	Air Temperature			Daily GDD	GDD Running Total
		Low	High	Ave.		
3/24	5:30 pm	45°F	73°F	59°F	9	9
3/25	5:30 pm	35°F	55°F	45°F	0	9
3/26	5:30 pm	46°F	60°F	53°F	3	12

March 24
 $\frac{45 + 73}{2} = \frac{118}{2} = 59 - 50 = 9$ GDD Count positive number.

March 25
 $\frac{35 + 55}{2} = \frac{90}{2} = 45 - 50 = -5$ GDD Do not add negative numbers.

March 26
 $\frac{46 + 60}{2} = \frac{106}{2} = 53 - 50 = 3$ GDD Add positive number to total.

is not a specific number, but a range. For instance, spruce spider mite overwintering eggs begin to hatch around 50–121 GDDs. A scout can effectively monitor for a pest by knowing the range of GDDs for the target stage of each pest.

Known GDD ranges for many Christmas tree pests can be found in the Growing Degree

Days Chart (See sidebar on page 6). As a general rule, GDD recording should begin on March 1. Although each organism has a unique base temperature, most GDD calculations use a base temperature of 50°F (see explanation and examples above). The base temperature is the minimum temperature

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Growing Degree Days and Temperature (continued)

Continued from Page 4

required by an organism for development to proceed. Temperature should be tracked using a minimum (low)/maximum (high) thermometer capable of storing readings for several days. After calculating each day's GDD value, add it to the accumulated total. Never include negative numbers.

Remember that temperatures may differ in different blocks. A tree block on a south-facing slope will experience higher temperatures than a block on a north-facing slope, which can result in several day differences in pest development. Using minimum/maximum thermometers is the least expensive method of gathering data to calculate GDDs. Several other types of equipment will gather GDD in the field. These are commonly called biophenometers, data loggers, or weather monitors. The prices vary, but they are generally more expensive than a simple minimum/maximum thermometer.

Weather services, both paid and free, can also provide required data. Skybit is a subscriber-based service located in Pennsylvania (see www.skybit.com). The National Weather Service (NOAA) provides daily low and high temperatures from weather stations. NOAA data will not be specific to your area and should not replace on-farm temperature collection.

Soil Temperature

Research conducted in Pennsylvania on white pine weevil (*Pissodes strobi*) has shown that

The chart below provides a list of growing degree day ranges (see page 4 for explanation) that correspond with a particular pest life stage or life cycle event that is critical in the control of that pest. This information combined with scouting observations will help growers achieve the best control of pest problems on their farms.

Growing Degree Day Ranges for Christmas Tree Pests

Pest Name	Degree Day Range	Life Stage Comments
Bagworm	650–750*	Larvae emerge from bags
Balsam twig aphid	30–100	Overwintering eggs hatch
Conifer rust mites (eriphyid)	7–22	Overwintering eggs hatch
Cooley spruce gall adelgid	22–81	Spring control of overwintering stage
	2,800–3,000	Fall control of overwintering stage
Cryptomeria scale	600–800*	First-generation crawlers emerge
	1,750–2,130*	Second-generation crawlers emerge
Douglas-fir needle midge	200–400*	Adults emerge from soil
Eastern pine weevil	7–100	Overwintering adults become active
Eastern spruce gall adelgid	22–170	Spring control of overwintering stage
	2,800–3,000	Fall control of overwintering stage
Elongate hemlock scale	360–700	Crawlers first become active
European pine sawfly	78–220	Overwintering eggs hatch; larvae present
Gypsy moth	90–448	Overwintering eggs hatch; larvae present
Introduced pine sawfly	400–600	Overwintering eggs hatch; larvae present
Pales weevil	7–121	Overwintering adults become active; treatment to prevent egg laying
Pine bark adelgid	22–58	Spring control of overwintering stage
Pine needle scale	298–448	First-generation crawlers emerge
	1,290–1,917	Second-generation crawlers emerge
Pine root collar weevil	300–350	Overwintering adults become active
Pine shoot beetle	450–550	New adults emerge
Redheaded pine sawfly	400–600	Overwintering eggs hatch; larvae present
Spruce spider mite	50–121*	Overwintering eggs hatch
Striped pine scale (<i>Toumeyella</i> sp.)	400–500	Eggs hatch and first crawlers emerge
White pine weevil	7–58	Overwintering adults become active
Zimmerman pine moth	121–246	Larvae emerge from overwintering sites

*Based on observations in Pennsylvania. Monitoring of GDDs begins March 1.

collection of soil temperatures is equally or more effective than GDD in determining the weevil's spring emergence time. Temperatures were taken with a probe thermometer from soil beneath a tree in the target block. The probe was inserted

to a depth of 2 inches on the sunny side of the tree. Once the soil temperature reached 50°F, weevils could be found in traps and on tree leaders. This method may also be effective on other insects that overwinter in soil.

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Phosphites and Their Potential

By Bob White

Many of us experience trouble getting transplants started, especially if we are on the 2nd or 3rd rotations regardless of our farm practices.

Just looking at the farms we have visited for recent meetings: A couple had serious root aphids; one had a major flood; we all had drought; root rots and wet soils can be found somewhere on most farms; the list goes on.

I've found that root aphids have been pretty easy to control following the guidance of Dr. Richard Cowles (who spoke at our summer 2012 meeting). Floods and drought create some challenges: new plants often die

from these events, which like Larry Kuhns (who spoke at our winter 2012 meeting) told us: Death isn't the worst thing that can happen. The worst is if the plant survives but never thrives, and this is often the case with wet soil root issues.

Based on Dr. Cowles' initial research results I started looking at phosphates. At this point I am not aware of any evidence that this material works magic in Christmas tree production. It's possible it may drive cone issues, etc., that will only be seen over time. That said, a root dip on transplants in 2012 with a phosphite and either Imidacloprid or Bifenthren appears to show some promise. Canaan

fir plants were very healthy, and put on the same deep green color in this years new foliage as they did coming from the nursery. Dr. Cowles advised that we should be looking at phosphites but should go slowly as we do not understand them at all yet.

I visited a large vegetable operation that applies foliar phosphite weekly and claims it is pure magic: their harvest increases drastically after each weekly foliar application. Their cost is 10 dollars per acre weekly for the product they used (Rampart). They spray 250 acres every week once the seed is planted.

As we understand it the chemical translocates inside a

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plant changing the defense properties of a plant, making it able to withstand root rots and other issues.

The vegetable guys believe it does far more than that when applied weekly. The same phosphite is sold as a fungicide or a fertilizer, with different labels and costs, some are sold with nitrogen added, etc.

Currently we have small trials going looking at improving fall color comparing the following fall treatments:

- A. Foliar Phosphite
- B. Foliar slow release Nitrogen
- C. Ground applied Nitrogen
- D. Ground applied N P K
- E. Ground applied K Mag
- F. Ground applied P K (This combo worked magic in Sept. 2011 for needle yellowing.)

For 2013 I plan to root dip all my transplants, and then foliar spray 1 block with Phosphite to compare with other foliar applications. I am told If we foliar this material, do not tank mix it with Iron.

NCTA

Continued from Page 1

on helping the industry thrive in today's rapidly evolving business, economic and political environment.

The presentations and discussion at the NCTA Convention focused on progress and successes on industry protection issues, as well as current challenges and future threats. Sessions on legislative and regulatory issues and fire codes gave attendees an understanding of some critical issues that NCTA is working to address. The outstanding educational program continued with breakout sessions on tree keepability, wildlife control, pest management and other topics, as well as practical business issues like insurance, farm safety, accounting and succession planning.

During the general session, NCTA leaders provided updates on the association's work, and legislative consultant Craig Regelbrugge shed light on what NCTA is doing to combat legislative and regulatory challenges.

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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

NCTA

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The keynote speaker, Jack McCall, brought it all together, helping attendees apply life lessons to the "Challenge of Change," with a humorous presentation on change management.

The new NCTA website was unveiled, including features that will provide NCTA members with easy access to resources that will help protect their businesses, whether it is dealing with misinformation in the media or preparing for a Form I-9 compliance audit.

A blue spruce grown by Russell and Beau Estes, owners of Peak Farms in Jefferson, N.C., was named 2012 Grand Champion of the National Christmas Tree Contest, earning the Estes family the right to present the official White House Christmas Tree this Christmas season.

NCTA also brought together state association leaders attending the convention to discuss ways NCTA could be more helpful at the state level. Great ideas – from sharing program suggestions to methods for asso-

ciation leaders to communicate – were the result.

With all these great opportunities, it's unfortunate that, due to sluggish membership renewals and disappointing convention registration and exhibitor/sponsor support, NCTA is faced with funding shortfalls that threaten the national association's ability to provide a strong, united voice for the industry.

During the convention, NCTA's leadership announced the creation of a Protection and Advocacy Fund to support current and ongoing programs, operations, outreach and education to advocate for and protect the farm-grown Christmas Tree industry.

If you would like to be part of the fight, please consider joining NCTA or making a contribution (call 636/449-5070 or download a pledge form at www.christmastree.org).

Now more than ever, the farm-grown Christmas Tree industry needs a strong national voice and advocate.

Trading Post

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WANTED: Used tree shaker. Call Paul Lemire at 603 759-2264.

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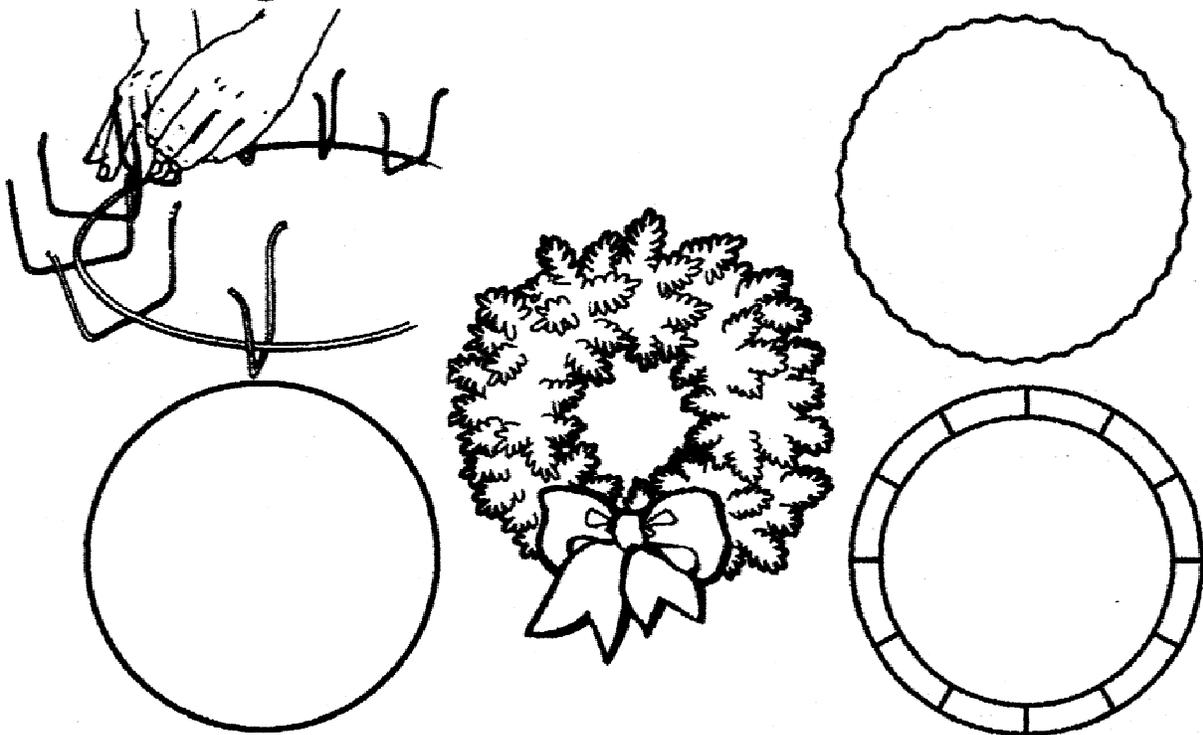
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Editor's Desk

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

Trees for Troops

NHVTCTA will once again be taking part in the national Trees for Troops program. We will be transporting donated trees to The Rocks in Bethlehem, N.H., where they will be



picked up by a FedEx truck and delivered

to various military bases.

To pledge trees to this important program please contact Nigel Manley in New Hampshire (info@therocks.org) or Bob White in Vermont (whitechristmasvt@googlemail.com).

Labor Troubles

A recent article in the *Bangor Daily News* (Aug. 13) caught my attention because it involves a longtime friend and supporter of the Christmas tree industry in the Northeast and an issue facing many farms these days: finding good workers.

The article describes the crusade of a Maine state senator to investigate Kelco Industries for employing legally documented workers from Jamaica.

“Kelco Industries owner Doug Kell Sr. freely admits to hiring four Jamaican workers at his farm in St. Francis and said he was forced to do so after local employees proved consistently unreliable,” the article explains, quoting Kell as stating: “Last year, I had 20 workers up there and they did not begin to put in the hours that 10 workers are

doing now, What we have are young people that really do not want to work.”

In the article, Kell praises the work of many of his longtime employees but said that for years now he's had problems finding enough motivated workers from the local community.

The article reports that the state senator began investigating “after receiving calls from several constituents reporting they had been laid off from Kelco and replaced by foreign workers.”

Kell said he welcomes a meeting with the Department of Labor, stating: “I have all the paperwork for them to look at. This is the first time I'd ever really sat down and compared employee performance year to year and I'll show them that.”



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