

Tree Line



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association

September 2008

Special points of interest:

◆ **Canaan fir Group Buying:**
The NHVTCTA will be offering a group buying opportunity for Canaan Fir through Reliable Source, Morgantown, W.Va., with delivery in Spring 2009. Prices will be \$1.00 for P+1.5 and \$1.20 for P+1+1. Orders must be placed in units of 200. Prices include delivery to Bethlehem, N.H. A 25% deposit is required by September 30. Those interested should contact Jim Horst at (802) 447-1900 for more information as soon as possible.

Fall Meeting in New Hampshire

The NHVTCTA Fall Meeting will be held on Saturday, September 27, at Dave Olson's farm in Madbury, N.H.

The featured speaker will be Kelly Ivors, assistant professor and extension specialist in the Department of Plant Pathology at North Carolina State University. Ivors will focus on phytophthora root rot, examining the history of the disease and covering such topics as biological control methods, fungicide and chemical control, and the latest research.

Dave Olson will discuss how to improve planting success with tublings, the advantages of specific pruning, dynamics of forest edge and the advantages of mulch.

Also on the agenda is Gail

McWilliam Jellie, director of the New Hampshire division of Agriculture Development, who will talk about grant money working for Christmas trees; and Marsha Braden, who will discuss selling trees by invitation.

Lunch will include BBQ chicken with roasted sweet corn, cole slaw, chips and dessert.

Pesticide recertification credits have been applied for and will be available along with SAF, CFE and NH forester licensing credits.

Members should already have received their meeting registration forms in the mail. Registration is available at the meeting.

For more information contact Jim Horst at (802) 447-1900.

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Trees for Troops – 2008

The NHVTCTA will once again be taking part in the national Trees for Troops program. As in 2007, volunteers will collect trees in both states and deliver them to The Rocks in Bethlehem,

N.H., for pickup by FedEx.

Bob White and Russell Reay will coordinate the effort in Vermont, while Nigel Manley will do the same in New Hampshire.

In 2007 most of the trees went to Ft. Drum in New York and were dispersed to service members and families of those deployed. Some also went to the families of Vermont National Guard members.

"There are many positive things that can be said about this

program. For me it is about letting our service members know that someone back home (wherever home is for them) is thinking about them," says Bob White.

He also notes there is a great deal of media interest in the program. "In 2007 at our choose and cut farm, I decided to do just one media story with a small community paper

to see how much interest there. I was very surprised to get an overwhelming response from so many people. Many just wanted to say thank you for thinking of the service members, but also many wanted to contribute to the effort."

There will be further details and a sign-up list at the fall meeting, or members can contact Bob White (e-mail: whitechristmasvt@googlemail.com) to learn more.



President's Message: Facing the Challenge

With the U.S. presidential election cycle upon us, we hear continuously about the need for change. I look at our Association's official ballot for election of directors for terms beginning in January 2009 and see the same names I've seen since I've been a member of the Association and note that all choices are present board members.

For the last five years as I've sat at director's meetings for our Association I've looked at virtually the same faces the whole time.

As most of you know, there are a few (maybe somewhat disgruntled?) Christmas tree farmers in northern Vermont who have formed the Vermont Christmas Tree Association.

So I ask myself and you, is it time for a change? Have those of us who have volunteered to be directors and officers (about 15 of us) of the New Hampshire-

Vermont Christmas Tree Association gotten too narrow, stagnant or old in our thinking because we've not had a lot of new or younger blood to stimulate our aging brains?

There are some 200 of you members out there. If you want to see some change, step up and have your name put on an election ballot or just ask to be involved in one of our committees.

We on the board of directors love to see some new blood and ideas. In the time I've been a member we've changed our by-laws to require that directors have at least three years off between terms of office and then seen them changed back to allow consecutive terms because we couldn't find people to take the positions.

If you don't want to become a director or committee member,

but want to see some change in a particular program or area, please let me or one of the directors know what you'd like to see. I'll even encourage and take anonymous suggestions—just send them to me. If we don't know what you all want done, we can't do much to change.

That said, a hearty thank you goes out to all our present directors and committee members for the job they are doing. Even if we are stuck in our thinking and programs, we have stepped up to do the job of running your board and Association.

If I continue to see the same faces at board meetings a year or two from now, I'll know the answer.

*Rich Rockwood,
President*



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association



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2009 Tree Line Publication Schedule

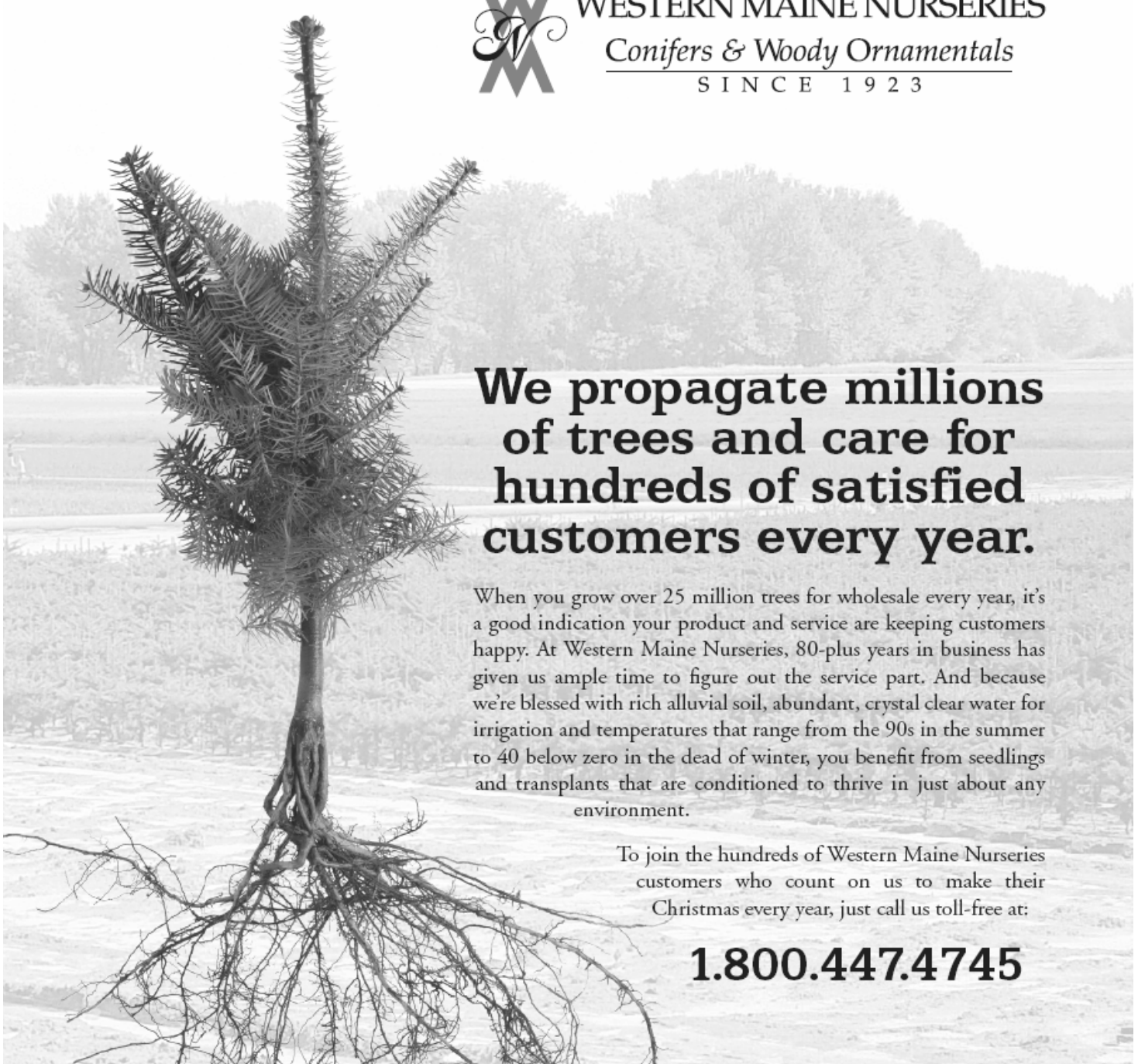
Issue	Ad/Submission Deadline
January	January 2
June	May 15
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Research Report: Update from the Valley Laboratory

By J. F. Ahrens, Plant Scientist Emeritus

The Valley Laboratory facility in Windsor, Conn., began research on Christmas trees at the Valley Laboratory and on cooperators' farms in the early 1960s. Since the early 1970s, researchers at the Valley Laboratory and from New Haven have hosted an annual twilight meeting for Christmas tree growers at the Valley Laboratory where to discuss Christmas tree research projects.

Current staff members at the Valley Laboratory conducting Christmas tree research and related problems include Tom Rathier, a soil scientist, who diagnoses soil and pest problems and is studying responses of Christmas trees to soil nutrients. Others include Dr. Richard Cowles, an entomologist, who researches insects and mites; Dr. Todd Mervosh, a weed scientist,

who researches the control of problem weeds and invasive plants; and Dr. DeWine Li, who will be investigating molds in Christmas trees. As a Plant Scientist Emeritus, I also am involved in research on weed control in Christmas trees and nurseries. The latest staff member, Dr. Hugh Smith, an entomologist, will be studying methods of integrated pest management in ornamental plants.

Currently, Dr. Richard Cowles continues to investigate the most effective, least expensive and/or least environmentally disruptive tools for management of armored scales (hemlock elongate scale and cryptomeria scale) in true firs. These two insects are plaguing many Connecticut growers. His studies are on a grower's farm and results will be available in the fall. In response to the allegation last Christmas that Christmas trees harbor

molds that allergy sufferers may be exposed to, Dr. DeWine Li has an experiment planned for this fall that we hope will enlighten us on the subject.

Our weed control studies continue with two major objectives: 1) to find herbicides that control the myriad of weeds in Christmas trees and 2) to provide data to support their registration at the federal and state levels. The goals are to provide better weed control with less herbicide and at lower cost to growers. Through the years most herbicides available for Christmas trees were products registered and proven effective in major crops such as corn or soybeans.

Tolerance of Christmas tree species to these herbicides, therefore, is paramount, so evaluations of potential injury to Christmas trees is very important. The newly registered

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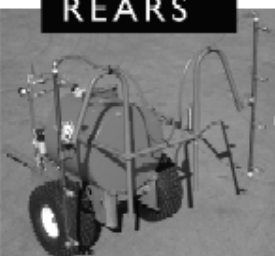


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Research Report: Valley Lab update

continued from page 4

Westar became available because of our research and that of others in the Northeast. Species tolerance varies with any herbicide and we continue to evaluate Westar in young Colorado spruce which may be more sensitive than true firs. Therefore, we have one experiment where Westar has been reapplied at varying dosages in young Colorado spruce for a second season and another where we are evaluating low-rate fall applications of Westar followed by Westar in the spring. We will not know the full results until this fall, but it appears likely that Colorado spruce will require the

lower dosages of Westar to prevent tree growth suppression.

In another experiment we are evaluating the pre- and post-emergence effects of a corn and turf herbicide containing mesotrione as the active ingredient in ten newly-planted conifer species. The species include Fraser fir, white, Norway and Colorado spruce, white pine, Douglas-fir, and four nursery conifers - taxus, arborvitae, juniper and Canadian hemlock. Currently, mesotrione at 4 or 8 ounces/A of product (Callisto) has injured only Douglas-fir in June and has controlled emerged seedling ragweed, large crabgrass, carpetweed and oxalis. We see mesotrione as a

possible June treatment to clean up weeds that escape spring pre-emergence herbicides. Further evaluation is necessary and a few years may elapse before registration. Nice features of mesotrione, however, are that it is a low-rate; low-mammalian toxicity product, synthesized to duplicate the natural product found in bottle brush trees and is on the EPAs "fast track" for registration.

Also on test at the Valley Laboratory is a combination of Goal Tender at 8 ounces/A plus Roundup Original at 4 ounces/A plus Stinger at 4 ounces/A and double these rates, applied in June as a postemergence cleanup treatment. Goal Tender is a 4lb/gallon formulation of Goal 2XL. Three weeks after application we saw good weed control and no injury to any of the ten conifers listed above. These treatments will be repeated four weeks later on the same plots. This herbicide combination already has seen use in certain Christmas tree second-year seedbeds, transplant beds and in the field, but not yet in nurseries, so further testing is warranted. Stay tuned!

To learn more about the lab's work, call (860) 683-4985.




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2009 North East Christmas Convention and Trade Show

The Christmas Tree Farmers Association of New York (CTFANY), in cooperation with numerous Northeast state province associations, is sponsoring the North East Christmas Convention and Trade Show, January 23-24th, 2009, in Saratoga Springs, N.Y.

The event will be held in the Saratoga Hilton Hotel and vendors/exhibitors will be in the attached Saratoga City Center. (Hotel registration: Saratoga Hilton Hotel, <http://thesaratoga-hotel.com>; 1-888-866-3591. NEC-CTS attendees have a discounted room price of \$115.00/night before December 23, 2008. When you call for reservations state that you are attending the Christmas

Tree Farmers convention and give them this code: ACHC. If you prefer an off site hotel, motel, inn, or B&B, please go to www.discover-saratoga.com).

Just a few of the presenters/topics at the show include: William Urbanowicz "Christmas tree soil testing and needle analysis" (from Spectrum Analysis); Dale Kramer "How to set up your business as sole proprietor, partnership, LLC or Corporation" and "How to transfer or end your business;" Paul Shealer (Penn State) "One Day Seminar for New Tree Growers;" Larry Downey (from Downey Nursery in Quebec) "New trends in tree species" and "Shearing to meet grower's needs and evolving

customer's needs;" Veronica Francis from Notchnet "Web Marketing," and "Personal Web Design;" Kimberly Merenz (USDA) "Chemical Credit seminars;" Karen Cohen/Irene Will "Gift Shops;" and Dugald Kell, Jr. "Using an electric wreath and garland maker."

Organizers are also search for anyone who owns a Christmas tree gift shop who might be interested in being part of a "Gift Shop" forum, panel or round table discussion.

A registration form for the event is included below. For questions, contact Robert Brown at (315) 384-3717 or Robert Norris at (315) 754-8132 or on the Web www.christmastreesny.org.

2009 NORTH EAST CHRISTMAS CONVENTION AND TRADE SHOW

Sponsored by Christmas Tree Farmers Association of New York (CTFANY) in cooperation with Northeast State/Province Associations

REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____
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Registration Options:

****Friday and Saturday combined registration fee includes the Saturday Awards Luncheon Buffet (\$36/person includes 20% service charge and 7%sales tax) and Seminars**

There will be a cash breakfast Friday and Saturday morning and a cash lunch Friday available

Friday night dinner in the hotel is extra (\$42/person includes 20% service charge and 7%sales tax and Entertainment)

NEW TREE GROWERS = a tree farmer who has operated their tree farm less than 5 yrs, has not sold any trees as yet, and/or who is interested in becoming a Christmas tree farmer)			
	Before January 1 st , 2009	After January 1 st , 2009	Total due
New Tree Grower:			
One Day Seminar (Fri – Jan 23 rd)	\$ 75/person or \$125/couple	\$ 90/person or \$150/couple	x # attending = \$ _____
Friday and Saturday**	\$135/person or \$225/couple	\$162/person or \$270/couple	x # attending = \$ _____
Friday night dinner	\$ 42/person	\$ 42/person	x # attending = \$ _____
All other participants:			
Friday and Saturday**	\$135/person or \$225/couple	\$162/person or \$270/couple	X # attending = \$ _____
Friday only	\$ 80/person or \$135/couple	\$ 96/person or \$162/couple	X # attending = \$ _____
Friday dinner	\$ 42/person	\$ 42/person	X # attending = \$ _____
Saturday only w/o luncheon	\$ 80/person or \$135/couple	\$ 96/person or \$162/couple	X # attending = \$ _____
Saturday w/luncheon	\$ 116/person or \$ 207/couple	\$139/person or \$248/couple	X # attending = \$ _____

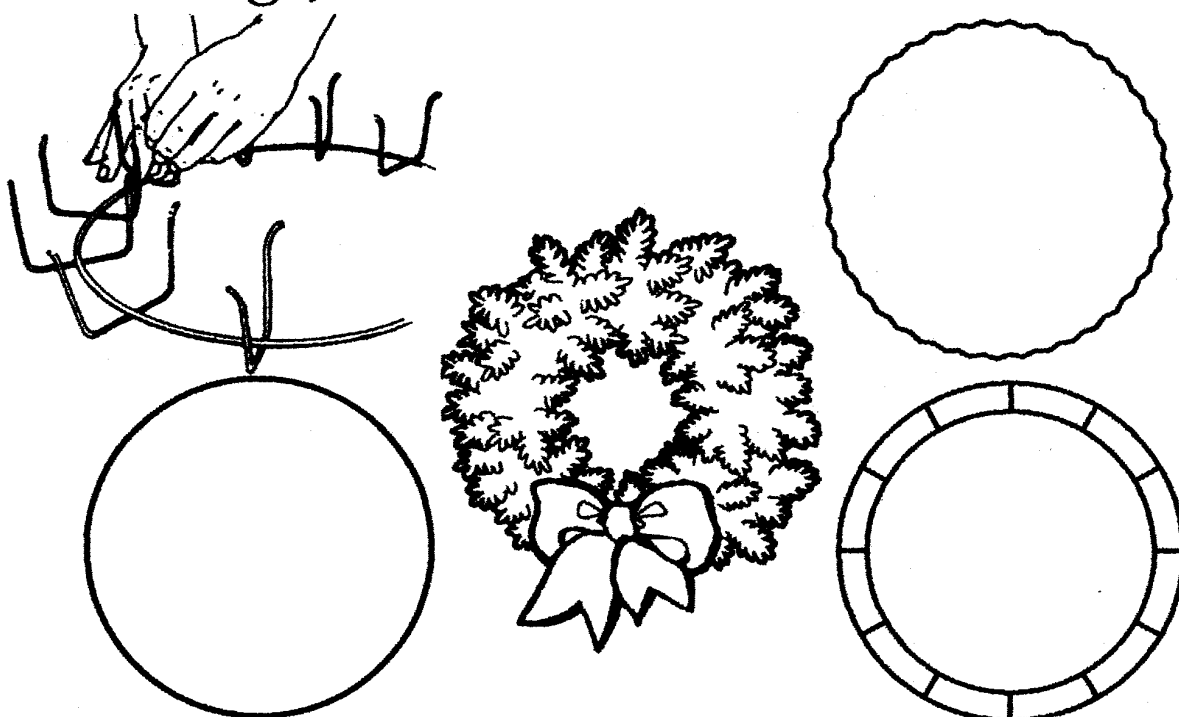
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May Tree Enterprises: One farm's innovative practices in West Virginia

Editor's Note: I recently came across the Web site for May Tree Enterprises, a Christmas tree farm and nursery operation near Petersburg, West Virginia. The farm has 120 acres and about 110,000 trees in production, with a nursery operation that sells many species of transplants, as well as 75,000 greenhouse-grown plugs each year. The Web site included some great information about some of the farm's innovative practices, and owner Larry May said he was happy to share...so here is his story:

I have been growing Christmas trees since 1967. In that period of time, I have been fortunate to be associated with many other growers – who were always willing to share their experiences and expertise. Growing trees is constant learning process: sometimes by trial and error, sometimes by observation and sometimes from experiences of others. Each farm is unique in the ecosystem and will experience various challenges. Hopefully, some of our experiences will be helpful for you – but I am sure that all conditions do not apply to your farm.

Ridges prove rewarding

Since we are now in a situation of replanting old fields, we begin by using a Merricrusher to grind up the old stumps. Pine stumps will normally rot in two to three years, but Fir stumps are very resistant to decay – therefore must be removed. This process allows us to replant fields sooner, thus we need less acreage. Also, a cultivated soil is established which can be enriched by fertilizer and lime. This is then incorporated into the soil, instead of surface applications. On one farm where we are planting a meadow, we begin by plowing the site, then making additions to the soil before “ridge” building.

Soil samples are taken from the various fields to be planted –



“Ridges” are formed prior to planting, which helps improve drainage and reduce root rot.

these are sent to soils labs for testing and adjustments are made to the fields before any new planting is made by the addition of fertilizer and lime. Douglas fir pH is adjusted to around 5.9 to 6.5. Fraser & Canaan firs do better at a lower pH, thus rarely do we raise the pH for these – 5.6 to 6.0 is OK. Our fertilizer applications are mainly to get a high amount of phosphorous into the soils before planting. This assists in many aspects of plant growth. Our soils have adequate potash, but some is added anyway.

On our silt soils, the main problem we have is that the soils have a hardpan or inadequate drainage. This causes the water table to rise into the root zone during periods of heavy rain or extended wet times. This causes the root systems to become susceptible to Phytophthora root rots.

To overcome this problem, we are building “ridges” to plant our trees on. The first step is the loosening of the soil and laying out the rows with the “greenmachine.” Then we follow up with this modified disk above right to crown the

May Tree Enterprises (continued)

ridges and dig out the furrow.

The ridges are then seeded to establish vegetation in a 4-foot center band. We have used orchard grass in the past, but now that we are doing chemical mowing, we are using white clover seed. White clover is resistant to glyphosate and will eventually form solid stands.

Chemical mowing

In 2004 we began experimenting with the use of glyphosate at low rates and low volumes to do what is termed "chemical mowing." This was using about 8 to 12 oz. per acre of glyphosate (original roundup) with no surfactants. No damage was observed on the new young foliage at anytime using these low rates. The applications were on fir, spruce and Scotch pine only.... We do not grow white pine – these would be damaged by glyphosate.

The principle in chemical mowing is that these low rates of glyphosate will stunt/stop the growth of the plant. It takes about 6 to 8 weeks for growth to recover and in need of a second application. The timing of the second application is critical – desirable groundcover can be eliminated if applied to early or at to high a rate per acre. We also found that using a lower rate per acre can kill summer annuals.

A special note as to our method of applying glyphosate: We do a directed spray pattern. None of our applications are over the tops of the trees. We do hit some foliage toward the bottom whorl, but this is limited and so far has not caused any damage.

I suggest that if you try this method, you first learn how to calibrate your sprayers accurately – and then use only on a trial area first. A constant ground speed is important.

Our equipment is set up with a tank & nozzles in front of a Steiner spraying a directed 18-inch band on each side. Behind

this rig is a 25-gallon trailer sprayer, using a single flood nozzle (TK), which does a band 4 or 5 feet wide, depending on our row spacing. Generally the calibration works out to where we are applying about 10 gallons of water per treated acre.

Deer danger

One of the major obstacles to growing evergreens is the browsing by whitetail deer. Many of the repellants do work, but the cost and application volume that is needed to protect larger trees makes their use prohibitive.

One repellant, which we use and have in the past to protect young trees, is "Tree Guard." This repellant will last all winter and if applied before damage is incurred, will prevent browsing damage on most of the crop. We have also experimented for 25 years with various deer fences. We began by constructing 5 wire electrified high tensile fences, but found that they were ineffective. Later these were modified to 10-wire slant fence with 8,000 volts on alternating wires. This worked much better, but with our high



Newly installed 8-foot deer fence.

population and over browsed woodland the deer were starving unless they had access to our fields. They managed to tolerate the voltage or find weak places in the fences and made them useless.

We now are constructing 8-foot vertical fences as a permanent obstacle. This has worked well. Big game fencing is expensive and difficult to handle without specialized equipment.

We use standard 4-foot woven wire on the bottoms, with 8 strands of 12.5-gauge high tensile wire above that. 14-gauge aluminum batten wires are then weaved around the 8 wires to give them stabilization.

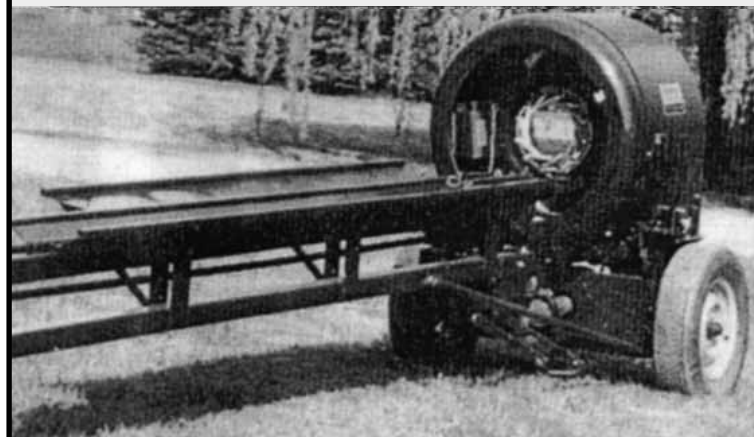
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The NHVCTA Scholarship Program

Submitted by Bill Schmidt

At the Association's meeting on June 28, \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to Kraig Pilon of Kingston, N.H., and Lucas Burgess of Bath, N.H.

Kraig is a forestry student at the University of New Hampshire and is seasonally employed at the Indian Hill Tree Farm in So. Hampton, N.H., by member Martha Blackadar. Lucas will be entering the Business Program at New England College this fall and works at the High Meadow Tree Farm in Bath, N.H., with his grandfather, member Dana Blais.

After the presentation of these awards, the fund is depleted and the Scholarship Program has reached its end. The decision to end the program was actually made in 2003 when the directors so voted. Fund limitations and recognition that \$250 (the scholarship amount theretofore awarded) was felt to be an exceedingly modest sum for a scholarship now, the cost of higher education being what it is, and that a more reasonable amount would require a substantial fundraising effort to

make the fund self supporting or additional and continuing funds would be needed in the Association's budget for it. It was also recognized that the number of fully qualified applicants had decreased over the past several years.

Coupled with the decision to end the program in its present form, the directors voted to expend the funds remaining in the scholarship fund by offering a \$1,000 scholarship annually (depending upon the amount remaining in the fund) to a qualified New Hampshire or Vermont applicant whose major area of study is in agribusiness or natural resources subject matter in some way related to the promotion of a healthy, quality Christmas tree and products industry. This essentially was the program's original purpose.

The Scholarship Award, begun in 1968, aimed to help students who have an interest in Christmas tree production, management and sales to further their education at an accredited technical school, college, or university. The awards were always

for students who were members or related to members of the Association or employees of members and whose major was in natural resources or a related field. The intention until recent years was to make awards annually to a student in each state, pending satisfactory applications and sufficient scholarship funds.

Funds for the awards have come through member contributions, first in memory of Bob Phipps and Louis Day and later by members desirous of supporting the Scholarship Program in particular. The awards have been administered by the Association's Youth Committee.

With the Memorial and Scholarship Awards gone, there is the question of whether the Association should begin a new program of some kind that specifically recognizes the role and place of young people in the Christmas tree industry and encourages them to continue in it in their adult years.

Anyone with thoughts on the subject should communicate them to Jim Horst or one of the directors.

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- Late April
 Early May

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

Season	Seedlings	Tree Age	Price per Seedling	Qty	Total
Fall 2008/Spring 2009	Balsam Fir: Mountain Strain Vermont Seed Source	2-2	\$0.65		
Fall 2008/Spring 2009	Balsam Fir: Cooks Strain Vermont Seed Source	2-2	\$0.65		
Fall 2008/Spring 2009	Canaan Fir: West Virginia Seed Source	2-2	\$0.75		
Fall 2008/Spring 2009	Balsam-Fraser Hybrids: Vermont Seed Source	2-2	\$0.65		
Fall 2008/Spring 2009	Fraser Fir: North Carolina Seed Source	2-2	\$0.65		

Total Seedling Cost

Terms:

Payment: 25% Deposit, remaining balance due 3 weeks before ship date. Note: Deposits are nonrefundable.

Minimum order of 100 seedlings or transplants.

All Buyers purchasing seedlings and transplants for production of products for sale on a farm, nursery or green house are exempt from Vermont sales tax. (Requires completion of state of Vermont Agriculture Sales Tax exemption Certificate form S-3A)

Vermont Residents Add 6% sales tax	
Add 25% of total seedling cost for Shipping Via UPS ground.	
Total Cost (Sum of the 3 lines above)	
Payment (amount to be charged or enclosed with form)	
Balance Due (Amount owed before ship date if any).	

Payment Information:

- Check enclosed
 Pay with Credit Card
 VISA
 MASTERCARD

Amount to charge _____
 Account Number: _____
 Expiration Date _____
 Name of Card Holder _____
 Purchasers Signature _____

Billing Information (incomplete or incorrect information will delay shipment of orders)

Bill to Name: _____
 Street Address _____
 City _____
 State _____
 Zip _____

Editor's Desk

A number of newsworthy items have crossed my desk since the last issue of *Tree Line*:

Tunbridge Fair Report

Rich Rockwood sends word that five central Vermont and New Hampshire members of the NHVTCTA helped to create a highly successful tree display at the 2008 Tunbridge World's Fair, held in Tunbridge, Vt.,

September 11 to 14. Judge Jon "Bugs" Turmel of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture had a difficult time selecting the Best in Show from trees submitted by Gilbert Tree Farm of Williamstown, Howe Knoll Farm of Tunbridge, Nichol's Tree Farm of Orford, N.H., Walter Rockwood of Chelsea and Redrock Farm of Chelsea, Vt.

He finally selected a Meyer spruce submitted by Redrock Farm over five great balsams, a

nice white spruce and a fantastic Fraser. A single-sided decorated wreath from Nichol's Tree Farm was selected as the Best in Show from among seven entered.

Thanks to Tom and Judy Lang of Balsam Acres, Worcester, Vt., and Dr. Daniel Sax (a new member!) of Randolph, Vt., for helping out with a very successful display and information booth.

Lewis Hill

Tom Lang forwarded the sad news of the passing of Lewis Hill of Greensboro on August 12. He was 84 years old.

"He grew Christmas trees for many years, and when he got too old to work the trees any more Claude Fontaine cut for him," writes Tom. "Some of us knew Lewis as the 'Father of Christmas Tree Growers' as he wrote the book *Christmas*

Trees—Growing and Selling Trees, Wreaths and Greens, first printed in 1989. A memorial service attended by over 800 persons was conducted on August 17 in Greensboro. Lewis was a wonderful, kind, gentle person."

Haverill Fair Happenings

Walt Rockwood (who completed his fourth year of judging) reports that 13 trees were entered at the Haverill Fair competition—the largest number ever and the best overall quality to date. Four trees were awarded blue ribbons and six earned red ribbons.

The highest score given was for a tree entered by Dana Blaise, who entered two blue ribbon-winning trees. Mary Gilbert also scored blue but not the overall winner.

The Haverill Fair pays a premium awarded to all entries.



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