



Tree Line



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association

September 2019

Special points of interest:

◆ Upcoming Meetings

The Winter Meeting of the NHVTCTA will be held on Tuesday, January 28, 2020, in conjunction with the Vermont Farm Show at the Champlain Valley Exposition in Essex Junction, Vt.

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Fall Meeting at Mt. Anthony Tree Farms

The 2019 Fall Meeting of the New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association will be held on Saturday, September 21, 2019, at Mt. Anthony Tree Farms in North Pownal, Vermont. Our hosts will be the Horst family.

Jim Horst explains that, *“The heavier clay loam soils on our main arm in Bennington have increasingly proved problematic due to phytophthora in fraser fir. When a nice 16-acre parcel in nearby North Pownal (previously planted to trees by the Rudd family) became available in 2013, Julie and I purchased it. This property has sandy loam soil, and trees—mostly fraser—are doing exceptionally well there. We were actually able to harvest 200 trees last year after only six years in the field, and expect to harvest 1500 or so this*

year. Meeting attendees will be able to view and critique seven successive plantings and management in one easy-to-navigate location. We will talk about soil testing and fertilization, weed control, and about shearing. And we will discuss our marketing plan for the trees produced here.”

In addition to these topics, Dr. Rich Cowles with the CT Agricultural Experiment Station will be on hand with an update on his research into using sulfur to improve the growth of firs in phytophthora-infested fields; Howard Boyden with OESCO will provide guidance on sprayers, and we'll learn about drone photography for marketing.

Registration for the meeting (without a guaranteed meal) is available onsite if you have not already sent in your registration form.

Trees for Troops

New Hampshire and Vermont growers have been generous in past years in donating trees to the Trees for Troops program, and we're hoping to build on that success by increasing the number of trees donated from our two states.

If you've never donated before, the process is easy. And whether you donate 5 trees or 25, it all goes to a good cause.

This year, in an effort to make things even easier, **the**

Trees for Troops program will pay for trees to be delivered to our main collection center (The Rocks in Bethlehem, New Hampshire).

If you (or a trucker in your area) would be willing to pick up trees from several different farms and truck them up to The Rocks, funds are available to pay for that service. For more information, contact Nigel Manley by email at: info@therocks.org

President's Message

Hi all,

Greetings from the land of the deer fly, thousands of which have been keeping me company all shearing season. Hornets hurt more, but at least I only run into those occasionally.

Just a quick update on a matter there wasn't room for elsewhere in this issue: For those who haven't heard, renewal of the Christmas Tree Promotion Board (check-off program) was approved in a second vote early this summer. After supporters of the checkoff program prevailed narrowly, by less than 1 percent, in 2018, the USDA required a second vote. This time, according to a report in *Capital Press*, "About 55% of farmers and importers voted in favor of the checkoff, which generates about \$1.8 million a year in mandatory fees of 15 cents per tree."

And in a couple of other unrelated matters:

- I received a note from John Archambault, who, as mentioned in the last issue, had hoped to demonstrate a banding fertilizer he is developing at our Fall meeting. As happens with new product development (and pretty much any project of any kind!), progress does not always go according to

plan. So, with John's apologies, that demonstration won't take place this fall.

- I'm happy to report that a New Englander will be the next president of the National Christmas Tree Association. Dugald Kell Jr., with Sunrise County Evergreens and Kelco, will begin his two-year term as president of the national association in 2020. Congratulations to Dugald.

- I'm including a photo above of a life-like display that Jeff Dearborn created when he hosted our meeting this summer to show the technique he used to improve drainage on his farm. This is just one example of the valuable knowledge you get when you attend a meeting. With that in mind, I hope to see you all at the fall meeting.

Patrick White, President



New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association



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President	Patrick White	pwhitevt@aol.com
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Copies of the Association bylaws and policies are available to members at any time by contacting the Executive Secretary.

2020 Tree Line Publication Schedule

Issue	Ad/Submission Deadline
January	Jan. 6
June	June 5
September	Sept. 4

Promoting Agricultural Products in New Hampshire

Gail McWilliam Jellie, director of the Division of Agricultural Development within the New Hampshire Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food, joined us at our Summer meeting to discuss some of the ways that Division assists farmers—including Christmas tree growers—in the state. We asked Gail if she could share some of that with those who weren't able to attend the meeting. We hope to include information from Vermont in a future issue.

By Gail McWilliam Jellie
The Division of Agricultural Development with the NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food (NHDAMF) has marketing responsibility for the entire New Hampshire agricultural industry.

The mission of the Division of Agricultural Development is “to create market development opportunities for New Hampshire agricultural producers that result in increased sales of New Hampshire farm and food products. We work to inform the public of the value of the New Hampshire agricultural industry, including understanding the diversity of businesses and products and to encourage the purchase of local agricultural products.”

The Division has had a longstanding partnership with the NH Division of Travel & Tourism Development for joint promotion activities. We have been able to do this with grant money, and have used primarily federal Specialty Crop Block Grant funding

to create an effective program to market the specialty crops sector of New Hampshire agriculture, which includes the Christmas Tree industry. Working with the state tourism office has allowed us access to the contracted marketing firm who is hired to guide the tourism marketing activities for the entire state. Not only are we part of the statewide advertising program themes, but they have helped us to develop a very exciting advertising campaign specific to agriculture.

Agri-tourism, or the experiential aspects of agriculture in NH has been growing over the years. The 2017 ag census showed 136 farms reporting agri-tourism activities valued at \$4

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Fraser Fir: N.C. (Ayers) Seed Source	Spring 2020	2-2	\$1.15
Canaan Fir: West Virginia Seed Source	Spring 2020	2-2	\$1.25
Canaan Fir: West Virginia Seed Source	Spring 2020	2-1	\$1.05
Mystery Tree: Late-Breaking Fraser Fir	Spring 2020	2-2	\$1.30
Veitchii-Mtn. Balsam Hybrids: Limit 100/Customer	Spring 2020	2-2	\$1.30
Korean-Mtn. Balsam Hybrids: Limit 100/Customer	Spring 2020	2-2	\$1.30 (limited supply)
Roan Mtn. Fraser-Mtn. Balsam Hybrids: Limit 200	Spring 2020	2-2	\$1.15
New River Fraser-Mtn. Balsam Hybrids: Limit 200	Spring 2020	2-2	\$1.15

The Great Glyphosate Debate

Roundup (glyphosate) has been in the news a lot lately, and much coverage seems more sensationalistic than scientific. Thanks to Russell Reay for spotting this piece recently in Country Folks Grower (CFGrower.com); it has been reprinted with permission here. While not focused specifically on Christmas tree farms, it offers valuable (science-based) information. Look for more on this topic at future NHVTCTA meetings.

By Sally Colby

Glyphosate is a hot button issue for both consumers and producers, so AmericanHort brought together several experts in the field to discuss the topic. AmericanHort represents the entire horticulture industry and has been following the glyphosate debate in the interest of dispersing the science behind the glyphosate issue.

Dr. Scott Senseman, Department of Plant Science, University of Tennessee, has done extensive studies on pesticide residue. He explained that herbicide activity from glyphosate was first observed in 1971, and it was non-selective and highly effective for crop burn down – especially in no-till systems. Farmers have noticed increased herbicide resistance, especially with aggressive weeds such as palmer amaranth. Senseman said that as of autumn 2018, agronomists listed 42 weed species resistant to glyphosate. Senseman said a report by IARC (International Agency for Research on Cancer) lists glyphosate as a “probable human carcinogen,” but added that the same list includes processed meat, all alcoholic beverages, sunlight, engine exhaust and outdoor pollution.

Since the IARC report, there

have been multiple evaluations and reports on glyphosate. “The European Chemical Agency looked at data and reported that glyphosate was safe,” said Senseman. “The European Food Safety Authority also reported glyphosate as safe. The EPA has designated it as safe, and the joint WHO and UN evaluation also came back and said there is an unlikely cancer risk.”

Dr. Jeff Derr, professor of weed science at Virginia Tech, explained how glyphosate works. “It inhibits amino acid synthesis of aromatic amino acids tryptophan, tyrosine and phenylalanine in plants,” he said “Animals and people do not make these amino acids – we have to get them in our diet.

The result is a chemical that controls plants with low acute toxicity to animals and people.” Derr added that some formulations (such as Roundup PROMAX) include a caution on the label due to low acute toxicity.

Derr said glyphosate moves from foliage to the underground portions of roots, rhizomes and tubers to control perennial weeds. It has essentially no soil

activity, and a field can be planted a week after application.

For those interested in glyphosate alternatives, Derr said there are no easy replacements. However, he suggested several non-selective post emergence options for growers who want to replace glyphosate.

The product Derr most often recommends is glufosinate, initially introduced by Bayer under the name Finale. “Cheetah Pro is a new farm product, and there are other products that contain glufosinate,” said Derr. “We have to use products labeled for nursery and landscape use – others are labeled for crop use.”

Derr explained that glufosinate is contact material with some systemic action. It works more slowly than pure contact herbicides, but faster than glyphosate. “Within two or three days, we see the effects of glufosinate application,” he said. “For weed control effectiveness, it’s between a contact herbicide and glyphosate – it’s more effective on perennial weeds than a

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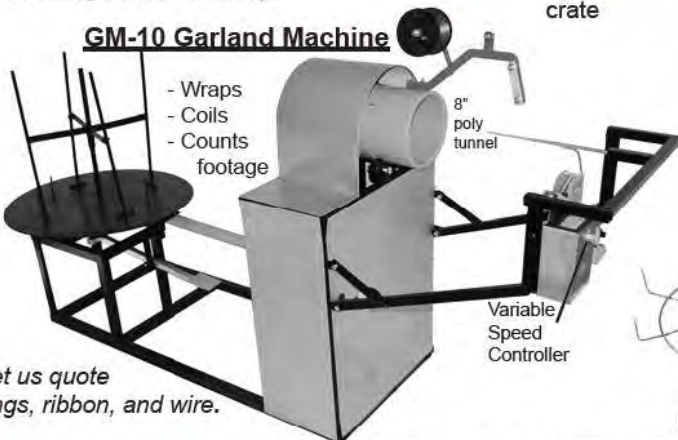
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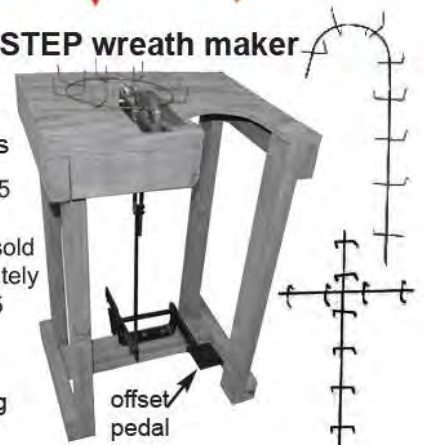
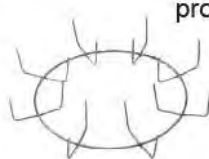
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The Great Glyphosate Debate (continued)

Continued from page 4

contact material but overall less effective on perennials than glyphosate, especially on perennial grasses.”

Some weeds, including cut-leaf evening-primrose, doveweed, dayflower and white clover, are more effectively controlled with glufosinate than glyphosate.

Derr cautioned growers to use directed sprays because glufosinate can cause bark splitting and cankering on the bark of young trees.

Derr discussed contact non-selective herbicides (herbicides that injure or damage all plants). “The problem with contact herbicides is they have no direct effect on the underground portions (rhizomes, bulbs, tubers) of perennial weeds,” said Derr. “If we’re trying to control a perennial weed, we’re going to burn off the tops, and it will regrow from what’s underground and we’ll have to repeat applications. For controlling annual weeds, coverage is important. We have to cover all the foliage to get effective control.” Derr added that if weeds are tall, it’s difficult to get thorough coverage of lower leaves because the upper leaves intercept the spray. Multiple applications may be required, especially on taller annual weeds.

Derr’s top contact herbicide recommendation is diquat (Reward). “On a warm sunny day, if you treat in the morning, by afternoon or evening you will see results,” he said. “We need thorough coverage of weed foliage so we need a nonionic surfactant to spread the droplet across the leaf surface.”

Herbicidal soaps are another option for non-selective weed

control. Pelargonic acid is the active ingredient in Scythe, and a related fatty acid product is AXXE, which is OMRI-listed. Scythe is sometimes used as an adjuvant to speed up the action of glyphosate, and is labeled for greenhouse use.

Dr. Joe Neal, professor of weed science and Extension specialist at North Carolina State University, discussed some glyphosate work-arounds, noting that mulches are the number one defense against weeds in landscape plantings. “A well-maintained landscape bed will include top-dressing mulch when it becomes too thin to prevent weed emergence,” he said. “But sometimes mulches aren’t enough.” Neal said numerous products are labeled for pre-emergence weed control in landscape and nursery settings. “The real challenge is to select the most appropriate ones,” he said. “First and foremost, we select for plant safety – safety to the ornamental plants we’re growing or maintaining in the landscape bed. Secondly, for the most effective products that will control the weeds that are important in these areas.”

In general, annual grasses are easy to control with most pre-emergence herbicides labeled for landscape plantings, but control of broadleaf weeds is more variable. For landscape uses, granular formulations are preferred because they’re better for plant safety. Granular formulations are often chosen because they seem easier to apply, but Neal said it takes a lot of extra effort to achieve uniform application.

Neal said grassy and perennial weeds are generally not as

well controlled by contact products. “But there are alternatives,” he said. “For example, Bermuda grass encroaching in a bed can be selectively controlled with a selective grass herbicide.” Annual bluegrass is not well controlled by most post emergent grass herbicides, but Neal says clethodim (Envoy) is effective as a post-emergence annual bluegrass control treatment. Several products are effective for managing nutsedge, and labeled products can be used as directed applications around woody ornamental plantings.

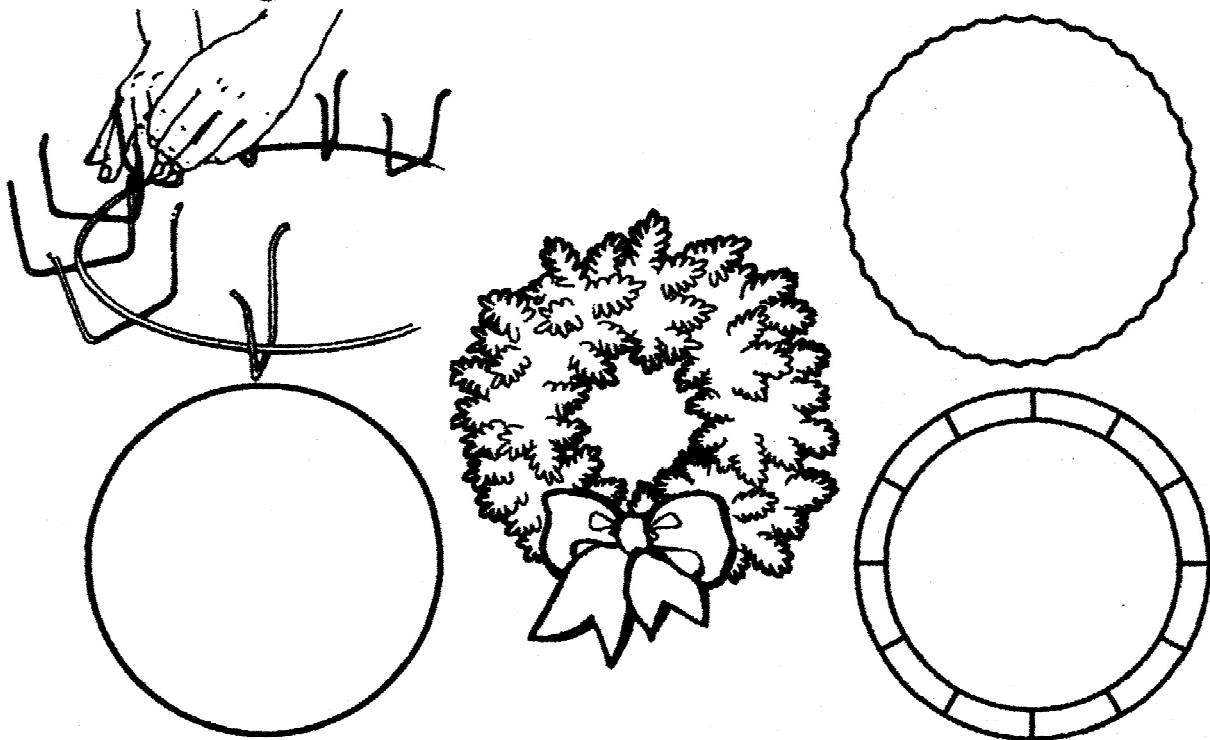
Several herbicides are effective for controlling perennial broadleaf weeds in landscape plantings. “I use the term ‘selective’ in the context that they control certain broadleaf weeds and not others,” said Neal. “They cannot be applied over ornamental plants. These are synthetic auxin herbicides, designed to control broadleaf plants, and the only safety factor for using Lontrel (clopyralid) or triclopyr in a landscape planting is the operator. The applicator must avoid applications on ornamental plants.” Neal said these products control legume and aster weeds (vetch, clover, thistle) but because they are highly active in these plant families, operators must take extra care to avoid applications around desirable legumes (redbuds) or desirable asters such as anything in the daisy family.

“There are alternatives to glyphosate, but it requires more planning,” said Neal. “Most of these herbicides are more expensive, and remember these products are not necessarily ‘safer’ than glyphosate.”

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Promoting Agricultural Products in New Hampshire (continued)

Continued from page 3

million. Through our tourism partnership we can promote agricultural experiences and products to help draw people to visit New Hampshire while benefiting sales and income for NH farms. Advertising to the public about farm related activities has been a key focus of our tourism partnership, primarily via the internet and TV. Photo or video ads on local or regional websites like WMUR TV's website as well as Comcast's Xfinity website have been valuable outlets. We have also advertised on podcasts on NHPR. All of these have brought significant viewer impressions and click through to our websites for more information.

The core of our advertising campaign has been social media. Facebook, Instagram and some Youtube ads have been very successful for us, using a combination of still images and video. There is usually a message associated with the images that encourages action on the part of the viewer, such as this example of one of our top ads: "Always look on the bright side of New Hampshire! Farm stands and garden centers are stocked with pretty perennials, colorful annual and fresh cut flowers for your home. You can even pick your own!" The ad campaign varies seasonally and includes several weeks of Christmas tree promotion.

We print a variety of publi-

cations to promote New Hampshire agriculture that are distributed through highway rest areas and other locations and events. All of our brochures are also available online and many of our directories are found exclusively online. Most of our publications are available for farms to participate and are free to provide a listing.

Two years ago we created an agritourism website hosted on NH Tourism's www.visitnh.gov website. The site is linked to the NHDAMF website www.agriculture.nh.gov via the "Visit the Farm" button found in multiple places. This is a searchable site. The site was created by dumping the informa-

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tion from our existing directories into the new site. Any NH farm that was listed in one of the directories, should be on this site. Those that aren't listed, can add themselves in by going on to the site and creating a free account.

Visitnh.gov is an award-winning site and being affiliated with the site is very beneficial as far as visibility.

We have a series of 30-second TV spots that depict the different sectors and seasonal agriculture. These spots have been shown on WMUR TV and regionally on Comcast. We have also used the videos as website ads and on social media. We usually see a spike in visits to our website when ads are running, which we use as a measure of success in reaching our audience. All these ads can be viewed

anytime, by going to the department's You Tube page: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJpnTRYi3gX8T_bl573Vcfg

The department has supported the NH Christmas tree industry directly over the years. We helped to establish the NH Christmas Tree Promotion Board and its promotional activities and have provided some grant funding for things like establishing a NH Christmas tree website, and creating exhibit materials. We provide space at the Big E NH Building for industry promotion and fund raising. We do this kind of activity with other commodity groups, as well.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram. For more information contact me at (603)271-3788 or email gail.mcwilliam.jellie@agr.nh.gov

Trading Post

FOR SALE: Retail tree business and 14,000 trees from 1' to 20'. The majority are ready to sell now & NEXT 2-3 years. All in Lyndonville, Vt., on leased land, so there is no real estate involved. The majority of trees are Fraser-Balsam cross. Including all equipment to run retail lot and to take care of trees, and harvest. Serious buyers only. If interested call or email Allen Young, 802-535-5069, yallen77@yahoo.com

FOR SALE: Christmas tree baler, fiberglass/ hexagonal, size 22/23", with steel stand, needs a coat of paint—\$150. Fourteen (14) 48" double rail clamp rings. Each ring consists of three sections to be bolted together. \$5.00 per ring. Prefer to sell in boxes of 5 (4). Ball cart used for moving B&B nursery stock—\$150. Can deliver all to the NHVTCTA fall meeting on September 21. Russell Reay, russreay@vermontel.net, or call 802-492-3323.

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Champlain Valley Fair Report

Once again this year, Peter Lyon did tremendous work organizing (and even picking up trees for) the Christmas tree competition and display at the Champlain Valley Fair. He sends along this report (and accompanying photo):

Two primary observations, the first is that the trees were all very beautiful with an excellent variety of sizes, shapes, and species from many of our growers that all the visitors seem to enjoy (many positive comments!). And second, we were very fortunate to again have Tom and Judy Lang as our judges! They are amazingly professional and do a fantastic job; their diligent judging work this year took over four hours. And now the results:

Best of Show and Best of Class -

Fraser fir by Alan Johnson (NOTE: this is the fifth year in a row that Alan has won the Best of Show!)

People's Choice - Korean Fir by Chad & Claude Fontaine

Best of Class - Balsam by Peter Purington

Best of Class - Balsam/Fraser by Bob White

Best of Class - Balsam Table Top by Alan Johnson

Blue Ribbon - Canaan Fir by Bob White

Blue Ribbon - Blue Balsam by Peter Purington

Blue Ribbon - Cook Balsam by Alan Johnson

Judges Choice - Peter Purington, Balsam (Note: this is in addition to his winning a Best of Class for the Balsam)

Red Ribbon - Scott Pike, Balsam

Red Ribbon - Ryan Ochs, Balsam

Red Ribbon - Eric & Judy Aither, Fraser

Red Ribbon - Alan Johnson, Balsam

Yellow Ribbon - Bill Tester, Fralsam Fir

Red Ribbon - Doug Hamlin, Balsam Fraser

Red Ribbon - Bill Asack, Balsam Fraser

Red Ribbon - Bob White, Balsam

Red Ribbon - Chad & Claude Fontaine, Fraser Fir

Red Ribbon - Jim Langlois, Fraser

Red Ribbon - Bob White, Fraser



As a final observation, the trees all looked great right up to my taking them down. We had quite a few comments related to how fresh they looked!



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