

# Limbs & Needles

SPRING/SUMMER 2017

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***INSIDE:***

***NCCTA Grower Survey Results***

***Balsam Woolly Adelgid Control***

***Christmas Tree Promotion Board Shares Highlights***

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*The mission of the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association is to promote "real" Christmas trees through marketing and education. We will contribute to the success of the Christmas Tree Industry by providing ethical, professional, and visionary leadership.*

# Limbs & Needles

## Keeping Christmas Real Since 1959

Volume 44 / No. 1

ISSN 1520-7145

Senior Editor ..... Jennifer Greene  
Technical Advisor / Text Editor..... Jim Hamilton  
Design ..... Aaron Bursleson

**Front Cover Photo:** "Fraser Fir Country in the Spring: Fertilizing"

The editors will not be responsible for the content of articles not written by them. Limbs & Needles will try to return articles and pictures if requested but will not accept responsibility if these items are misplaced.

Subscriptions are \$35 per year for members of southeastern Christmas tree associations and \$45 per year for all others.

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# President's Message

Dale Cornett



Thanks for the opportunity to be of service to the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association. I am well aware that I stand upon the shoulders of giants in the Christmas tree industry, some of whom are no longer with us. Their effort, dedication and unrelenting commitment to this organization has made the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association one of the leaders in the industry. Also, those efforts made North Carolina Fraser fir a household name among our wholesale customers and many consumers. Due to the continued efforts of our membership, our educators, our Fraser fir promotional committee and committee chairs, our board of directors and our executive directors, many of the challenges we have faced throughout the years have been overcome and new ones continue to arise. These include, but are not limited to issues with insects, weeds, fertility, changing regulations and misinformation. Today we grow a better tree as the direct result of all of these combined efforts.

At this time, we are facing some different challenges: Apparent seedling and transplant shortages, tree supply shortages, fluctuating prices, regulations in Florida concerning potential scale issues, and others. I would like to personally say "thank you!" to those who chaired and participated in the round table discussions at our winter meeting in Blowing Rock pertaining to these problems. The ideas and experiences shared will help our growers overcome these new challenges facing our industry. At the winter meeting we also had extremely informative speakers, good attendance, good sponsorship and excellent support from our allied business. Thanks to all those who participated.

The plans for the summer meeting are coming together at this time. Any concerns and input will be appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact Amber Scott, Travis Birdsell, The Ashe County Association, Jennifer or myself. We will do our best to address your needs and concerns. 🌲

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**See the Latest News: [NCCTA.blogspot.com](http://NCCTA.blogspot.com)**

*See highlights from the 2016 Winter Meeting on page 38.*

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# Executive Director's Report

Jennifer Greene

Since 2009, NCCTA has received \$421,000 in Specialty Crop Block Grant funds in addition to a newly approved grant for \$61,000 that began January 1, 2017. The grant that was just completed was titled "Optimizing Fraser Fir Christmas Tree Promotions". This project used targeted promotional activities to focus buyer and consumer attention on the *NC Fraser Fir: The Perfect Christmas Tree* campaign, and helped to further develop a media strategy to drive brand awareness. A few highlights of accomplishments achieved during this grant cycle include:

- Over 92,000 visitors to NCChristmasTrees.com in 2016 alone – An 11.5% increase from 2015. During the months of July, August & September, when wholesale promotions were most active, the site received a 35.6% increase in visitors over the same time frame in 2015. During the peak months of October, November & December, activity increased 13.1% from 2015.
- The Buy-Sell Guide was downloaded a total of 2,305 times on the website - almost 3 times the number of downloads in 2015, which was 777!!
- The Choose & Cut Memories guide was downloaded from the website 1,089 times in 2016, nearly double the number (588) downloaded in 2015!
- Target advertising was purchased through web, e-newsletter, magazine, newspaper and radio ads. Ads were run in high circulation national and regional publications such as *Our State Magazine* and *Boy Scouts of America*, to name a few.
- Social media ad campaigns were run on Facebook that promoted wholesale, choose & cut and NC Fraser fir Christmas trees. As a result of these ad

campaigns, 377,249 people were exposed to the information about NC Fraser fir and over 25,000 of those people reacted to the information by liking, commenting or sharing. A total of 12,482 new users started following the NCCTA Facebook page, bringing the total number of followers to over 25,000.

- NCCTA attended new trade shows (ie: The NGA Show) in 2016 and 2017 in an effort to bring NC Fraser fir to new markets.
- A two-year project with the UNC Chapel Hill Kenan-Flagler School of Business STAR team developed a three-year promotional plan that covers exact target market identification, slogan and messaging enhancements, media choices, performance monitoring and a long term plan.

The current grant will focus on "Targeting Millennials with Fraser Fir Promotions". The NCCTA seeks to establish creative partnerships to expand its social media campaign, targeting parents of young families in order to influence more of them to buy a North Carolina Fraser fir Christmas tree. The NCCTA also plans to further develop the NCCTA website to include material for specific target audiences.

Our organization fills an important need in the Christmas tree industry. With your continued support and involvement with these and future projects, the NCCTA can continue to fulfill its mission of serving the Christmas tree industry and its members through the promotion of NC Fraser fir. If you have any questions, ideas or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact myself or anyone serving on the board of directors.

I hope that everyone has a wonderful summer! 🌲



## Become a Member!

Discover the advantages and benefits on page 11.

# National News

## Wilson Barr



The National Christmas Tree Association (NCTA) selected a new management team in 2016. Tim O'Connor and Associates began with NCTA and the Christmas Spirit Foundation on July 1, 2016.

NCTA fills a unique and critical role as the advocacy organization for the Christmas Tree Industry; it represents the industry in public policy and governmental affairs, advancing positions that support the industry and defending against legislation and regulations that could negatively affect the industry.

The Association continues to represent the industry in Washington. In addition to monitoring the election results and their impact on the industry, our lobbyist Craig Regelbrugge represented the industry on a number of issues including:

- **H2 Improvement Project—helping to guide legislators and federal workers in improving and streamlining guest worker programs**
- **Estate and other tax issues**
- **Modifications in the timeline for new overtime law**
- **Rules that impact pesticide and herbicide use by the industry; a recent example is the potential loss or change in uses for Pyrethroids**

NCTA partnered with the Christmas Tree Promotion Board to represent the industry at the National Fire Prevention Association Convention in Las Vegas in June 2016. Ellis Schmidt and Jim Heater served as our ambassadors. Ellis Schmidt also attended the ASTM meeting in Chicago where fire retardant standards are reviewed.

The annual presentation of the White House Christmas Tree took place the day after Thanksgiving. Dave and Mary Vander Velden of Whispering Pines Tree Farm in Oconto, WI represented the industry at this event as the Grand Champion winner of the National Christmas Tree Contest.

NCTA continued its role as the “voice of the industry” during the holiday season; answering media and consumer questions and providing press materials. Because the NCTA budget was reduced significantly this year, there were no funds for this effort. The Christ-

mas Tree Promotion Board agreed to fund this work in 2016. Hugh Whaley was engaged to serve in this role and a complete report on media reach is forthcoming.

2016 was another strong year for Trees for Troops. The Christmas Spirit Foundation continues to work closely with Fed Ex which provides all the shipping. More than 17,000 Christmas trees were delivered to military families at 63 bases. Thank you to all the Christmas tree farms that donated trees to this important effort.

NCTA Hosting National Christmas Tree Contest in Wisconsin

Qualified growers from across the country are encouraged to travel to Green Bay, Wisconsin in August to compete in the National Christmas Tree and Wreath Contest. The contest will take place on August 18 at the Radisson Hotel in Green Bay. Registration and instruction kits will soon be sent to state association offices with detailed information on the contest.

The contest will be just one event in a convergence of Christmas tree industry happenings that week. The National Christmas Tree Association Board of Directors will be meeting at the same location on August 16. The following day, the Christmas Tree Promotion Board as well as the Christmas Spirit Foundation Trustees will also meet. All of these meetings are being held around the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association's Summer Meeting.

The Wisconsin growers welcome all interested producers to attend their event that includes an optional day of programming at Whispering Pines Tree Farm on Thursday, August 17. Friday kicks off the official event with scheduled presenters including Craig Regelbrugge with AmericanHort, Tim O'Connor with the Christmas Tree Promotion Board and National Christmas Tree Association, as well as a preview of the Promotion Board's 2017 campaign. Saturday is a tour of North Countree Christmas and wraps with a Wisconsin-style “Beer and Brats Tailgate Party.”

*Continued on page 8*

National Tree and Wreath Contest winners will be announced at the Friday evening banquet and the Grand Champion winner will have the honor of being considered to present a Christmas tree to the White House.

## Have You Renewed your NCTA Membership?

The NCTA office has been receiving membership renewals at a brisk pace during the first part of 2017. If you have not renewed your membership, you are encouraged to do so at your earliest convenience to insure that you don't miss issues of the American Christmas Tree Journal or your opportunity to participate in the National Christmas Tree Contest.

## Not currently a member of NCTA?

We encourage you to take a look at the work that the association does on behalf of the industry and join your fellow growers in furthering the industry. 🌲

**For your reference, here is our new contact information:**



**National Christmas Tree Association**  
P.O. Box 3609  
Littleton, CO 80161  
800-975-5920  
Marsha Gray – Ext 702  
Tim O'Connor – Ext 701  
[www.realchristmastrees.org](http://www.realchristmastrees.org)



## Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association Summer Convention

August 17, 18, 19, 2017

All three national-level Christmas tree organizations will be meeting in **Green Bay, Wisconsin, August 16-19**, bringing together industry leaders from across the country. The National Christmas Tree Association Board of Directors will be meeting on August 16. The following day, the Christmas Tree Promotion Board as well as the Christmas Spirit Foundation Trustees will also meet. All of these meetings are being held around the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association's Summer Meeting.

The Wisconsin growers welcome all interested producers to attend their event that includes an optional day of programming at Whispering Pines Tree Farm on Thursday, August 17. Friday kicks off the official event with scheduled presenters including Craig Regelbrugge with AmericanHort, Tim O'Connor with the Christmas Tree Promotion Board and National Christmas Tree Association, as well as a preview of the Promotion Board's 2017 campaign. Saturday is a tour of North Countree Christmas and wraps with a Wisconsin-style "Beer and Brats Tailgate Party."

National Tree and Wreath Contest winners will be announced at the Friday evening banquet and the Grand Champion winner will have the honor of being considered to present a Christmas tree to the White House.

### BOOK YOUR ROOM:

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Please call them at 920-494-7300 and ask for a room in the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers room block to get our special rate of \$99 single/\$109 double.

*Note: Booking online will not get you the rate nor will it give us the room pick-up that our contract requires.*

For more information on the Wisconsin meeting, please visit the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers website: [www.christmastrees-wi.org](http://www.christmastrees-wi.org). 🌲

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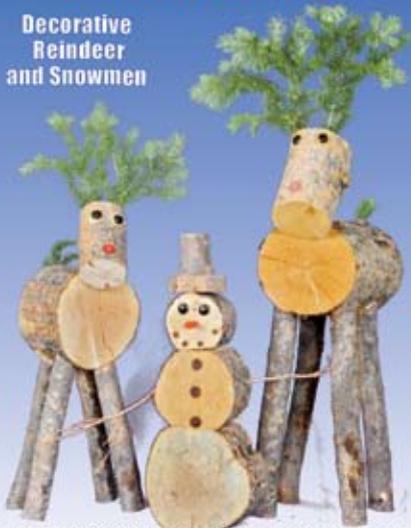
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# Legislative Update

Pat Gaskin

At this time, all of President Trump's cabinet is not in place. Two very important appointments to the Agriculture industry that have not been made are the Secretary of Labor (USDOL) and the Secretary of Agriculture (USDA).

The Secretary of Labor nominee is Alex Acosta, Dean of the Florida International University School of Law, and the Secretary of Agriculture nominee is Sonny Purdue. As of this writing these two positions have not been confirmed.

Scott Pruitt has been confirmed as the Secretary of the EPA and expected to address Waters of The United States (WOTUS). This regulation as it is written had created hardships for farmers.

## Other Concerns of Agriculture

### Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP):

President Trump has withdrawn the United States from the Trans Pacific Partnership. This was an initiative of former President Obama. Some sectors of Agriculture were hurt by this action.

The "Build the Wall Initiative" is still waiting for congressional funding.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Secretary of Homeland Security, Gen. Kelly were recently in Mexico trying to ease concerns about Immigration and Border Wall issues.

### NAFTA:

While in Mexico, Secretaries Tillerson and Kelly also addressed President Trump's campaign promise to renegotiate NAFTA. The rhetoric coming out of the White House has calmed down a bit thus permitting a better dialogue between the two countries.

*\* Note: Why NAFTA is important*

- 1 billion dollars in trade cross the Canadian and Mexican border every day.
- About \$500 Million of that comes from America on each of those borders.

- U.S. sales to Mexico are larger than all US exports to China, India Russia and Brazil, combined, as well as all combined sales to Great Britain France Belgium and the Netherlands (reported by the North American Center for Trans Border Studies and the U.S. Department of Commerce).

### Immigration: Deportation Order

President Trump's deportation order will be administered by General Kelly, Secretary of Homeland Security and has expanded President's Obama Order to include a larger pool of people. It not only includes felony crimes of gang members, it includes anyone with any convictions or anyone that has been charged with a crime deemed eligible for deportation.

*\* Example:*

- It changes the use of a false SS# from a Misdemeanor to grounds for removal.
- It also includes the automatic removal of unlawful persons in the United States that have been in the United States for 24 months or less.
- Excluded from deportation are the 750,000 immigrants protected from deportation Under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), unless they have a prior conviction that warrants deportation.

### Meanwhile:

For our farmers who use the H-2A and H-2B guest worker programs, Agriculture Coalitions are working very hard with U.S. Congressional members to change things in these programs that will make them easier to use.

Senate Bill 792 Save our Small and Seasonal Businesses Act was introduced by senators Thom Tillis (R-NC), Angus King (I-ME) Susan Collins (R-ME) and others. This bill is designed to help seasonal employers better navigate the H-2B temporary non-agricultural visa program and increase certainty for small business by allowing seasonal employers to better prepare for fluctuations in demand. [Workforce Coalition]

*Continued on page 12*

# Why Should I Become a Member of the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association?



**To promote** the traditions and memories of celebrating Christmas with a Real Tree.



**To protect** and grow your business. NCCTA works to stop legislation and regulations that are negative to you and others growing, wholesaling and retailing Real Christmas Trees and to support beneficial legislation and regulations.



**To be part** of a community of Christmas Tree professionals and share the knowledge and experiences of thousands who share your concerns, questions and needs.



## Special Benefits for NCCTA Members

- **PayAnywhere:** Credit card processing that helps support NCCTA with every swipe.
- **First Pioneer Insurance Agency:** Offers a special worker's compensation insurance program.
- **LifeStore Insurance:** Insurance discounts offered to members for property and liability coverage, workers compensation and health plan options.
- **Auto Owners:** NCCTA Members which will save 10% on all Commercial Lines of insurance (ie: Commercial Auto, General Liability, Inland Marine Equipment Coverage and Farm Property).
- **First Benefits:** NCCTA members are eligible for workers' compensation coverage with no other membership requirements. (LifeStore Insurance and First Pioneer Insurance represent First Benefits Insurance at their respective agencies in the High Country).

## Membership Benefits

- ✓ Listing with link to your own website on [www.NCchristmastrees.com](http://www.NCchristmastrees.com) where over 92,000 visitors search for Christmas trees annually.
- ✓ Annual listing in the Buy-Sell Guide that promotes REAL trees to thousands of buyers
- ✓ Annual listing in the Choose and Cut Directory that promotes REAL trees to thousands of consumers
- ✓ You will receive an annual subscription (two issues) of Limbs & Needles Magazine; keeping you up-to-date on association news, technical information, Christmas tree research information, and industry updates and marketing & management tips.
- ✓ Updated tree inventory listing available on website after September 1
- ✓ Retail lot listing on website with Google location services
- ✓ Access to NCCTA's Online Member Center, with resources such as classifieds, wholesale buyer mailing list, choose & cut promotional mailing list, and digital archived copies of Limbs & Needles
- ✓ Attention to relevant legislative issues on State and National Level
- ✓ NCCTA funded research projects through NCSU & NCDA&CS are beneficial for success and growth.
- ✓ Local, regional, state, and national advertising
- ✓ Expanded promotional opportunities and organizational planning through Specialty Crop Block Grants obtained by the NCCTA
- ✓ Access to free retailer promotional materials provided through grant funding
- ✓ Representation at Industry Trade Shows and Consumer Shows where the Buy-Sell and Choose & Cut Memories publications are distributed.
- ✓ Use of the NCCTA logo and the NCCTA trademark design "North Carolina Fraser Fir, The Perfect Christmas Tree"
- ✓ Representation with educational and governmental organizations
- ✓ Access to experts in the field – speakers, other members, sponsors
- ✓ Provides great opportunities to meet and network with industry peers
- ✓ Reduced registration rates for annual Winter and Summer meetings where industry leaders share information and insights, and growers interact and share their individual experience.
- ✓ NCTA T.I.P. benefits
- ✓ You will be a part of North Carolina's voice for the Christmas tree industry. Whether that means presenting a Christmas tree to the Governor, meeting with legislators regarding concerns for our industry, or participating in promotional opportunities in the media, NCCTA members have visibility and a voice.



One immediate problem being discussed for both guest worker programs is how to expedite and prevent delays in processing the visas of returning workers. As more farmers begin using the H-2A and H-2B programs, the Consulates are having difficulty processing the added number of applicants in a timely manner.

## **Health Care:**

Farmers are concerned about changes in the Affordable Health Care Act and how that may affect them and their seasonal workforce. U.S. house members worked on a Repeal and Replace Act but due to lack of consensus among House members, the bill was pulled and never was

sent to the floor. The second attempt at trying to get the Republicans on board has not been successful so far. They plan begin work on the bill again after the Easter Recess.

## **The Agriculture Worker Protection Standard (WPS):**

Most of the WPS requirements became effective on January 2, 2017. Three requirements go into effect on January 2, 2018. Implementation of these regulatory requirements is expected to take 14 to 16 months.

If you have questions please call your County Extension agent. 🌲

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# NCCTA GROWER SURVEY RESULTS

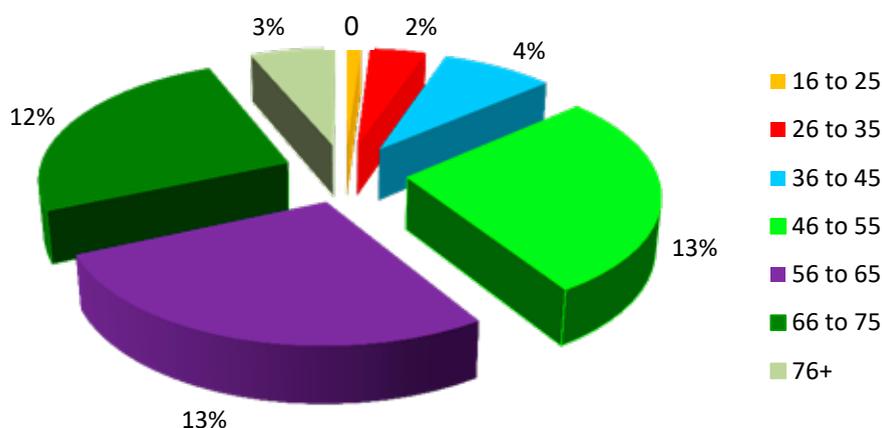


## AN ANALYSIS OF 2016 DATA

**Jeff Owen**

Area Christmas Tree Extension Specialist,  
NC State University

Followers of the G.R.R. Martin books or HBO TV series *Game of Thrones* are familiar with the greeting: “Winter is Coming.” Said in summer, it carries a sense of impending doom, but also the need for preparation. Well, the Christmas tree industry has its own cycle of seasons including its own “Winter.” We have endured it—the worst oversupply of Fraser fir Christmas trees ever experienced. The 2003 NCCTA planting surveys forecasted the 1.8 million extra trees years before they hit the market. Many growers prepared, but all suffered. Some farms did not survive. Our preparation, including individual and collective marketing and NCCTA strategic planning probably made a difference but couldn’t avert the reality of an oversupply. At present, we are in a very different “Spring” characterized by shortages of trees and transplants. Whether you want to consider it or not, our industry already faces the challenge of preparing for the next cycle of oversupply. Results of the 2017 NCCTA grower survey have important implications for our industry’s future as it touches on grower ambitions, seedling and tree supply, regional markets, and NCCTA promotional efforts.

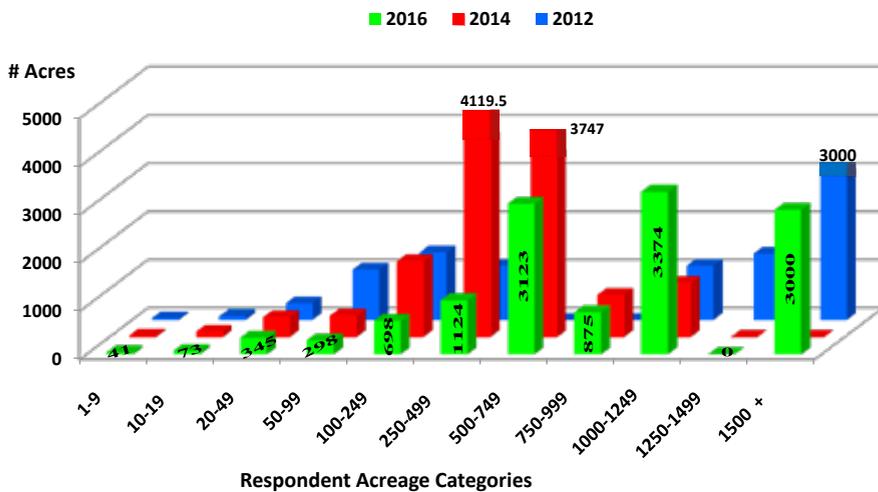


**Figure 1. Number of survey respondents by age**

2017 survey results represent the responses of 49 North Carolina growers. Seventy four percent of them sold trees wholesale, 28% of them retail, 44% choose & cut, and 9% in mail order markets. As in 2015, approximately 40% of respondents targeted more than one market with several selling in all four categories. When asked further about customer base, half or more respondents sold to garden centers, retail lots, fundraiser groups, and/or sold choose & cut trees. Forty-four percent operated their own retail lots, almost a third (31%) sold to box stores, but only thirteen percent sold to grocery stores. Nine percent sold mail order trees.

The age of growers who responded to this survey shifted from those

that filled it out in 2015 and raises important concerns. The age of respondents in the 2015 survey had been notable for a younger average age of respondents at 46 to 55 years of age. The majority of growers who responded to the 2017 survey were evenly distributed in age across the 46 to 55, 56 to 65, and 66 to 75 age brackets (Figure 1). Looking around our board rooms or general meetings, this older distribution seems to reflect a reasonable representation of who we are. The great concern for the NCCTA and our industry, however, is the low representation of young growers in either the 26 to 35 or 36 to 45 age brackets. Those numbers dropped by half from two previous surveys where age was asked.



**Figure 2. Reported Christmas tree acreage by farm size for 2012, 2014, and 2016**

While younger growers might be less likely to fill out NCCTA surveys and are thus less visible, they represent our future. As a group, we can identify the need to encourage the next generation to participate, to lead, and to carry forward the Christmas tree industry. However, inspiration and mentoring mostly occur one-on-one within families and within businesses.

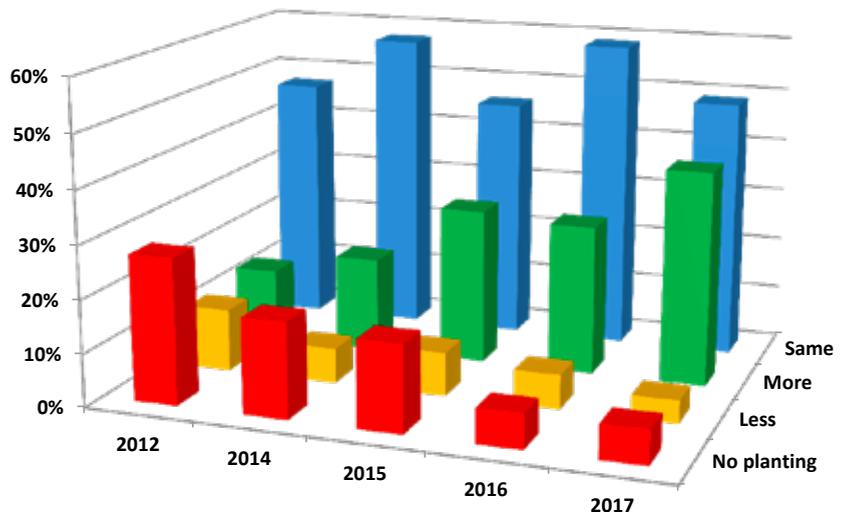
While fewer growers responded to the 2017 survey than previous years, they actually reported growing more total acres of trees. Total Christmas tree acreage reported for 2016 was 12,949 acres. This represents an increase of 500 acres from that reported for 2014 and an increase of 3,429 acres from that reported for 2012 (based on the midpoint of acreage classes). As can be seen in figure 2, the change in acreage can be explained by an increase in large acreage farms even as the number of smaller farms represented by the survey declined. The change from 2014 to 2016 can be attributed primarily to a drop in the number of 250-499 acre farms and an increase in the number of farms over 1000 acres. Without extrapolating the

amount of change from our survey to entire industry, survey results appear to reflect the trend that many have observed toward fewer small farms and an increase in farm size. It also demonstrates the influence that even one or two major growers can have on industry numbers.

Growers also reported on the number of trees they harvested in 2016. Using the midpoint of multiple-choice response categories, an estimated 1.9 million trees were harvested by respondents. If the high end of the same response categories was used, the estimate could climb to 2.7 million trees. Even this high estimate

would be smaller than the alternative estimate of 3.2 million trees calculated from acreage reported in this 2017 survey (assuming an average of 2000 trees per acre and divided across an eight year rotation). Total number of trees harvested in 2016 (class midpoint) also fell short of the 2.2 million trees reported for the 2014 year in the 2015 NCCTA survey. No estimate is necessarily right or wrong, and the truth is often somewhere in the middle, but a reduction in the number of trees harvested despite a reported increase in acreage is troubling. As growers emerged from the glut, many fields were underutilized, cutover, or left open. These discrepancies could reflect industry-wide stocking deficiencies that are only now being corrected.

Survey questions that identified grower decisions regarding tree planting are simpler to discuss because there are no alternative values. Trends increase, decrease, remain the same, or stop. Figure 3 shows the planting trends among respondents across a five-year period including the expectations for 2017. Across the entire period, the percentage of growers who maintained the same level of



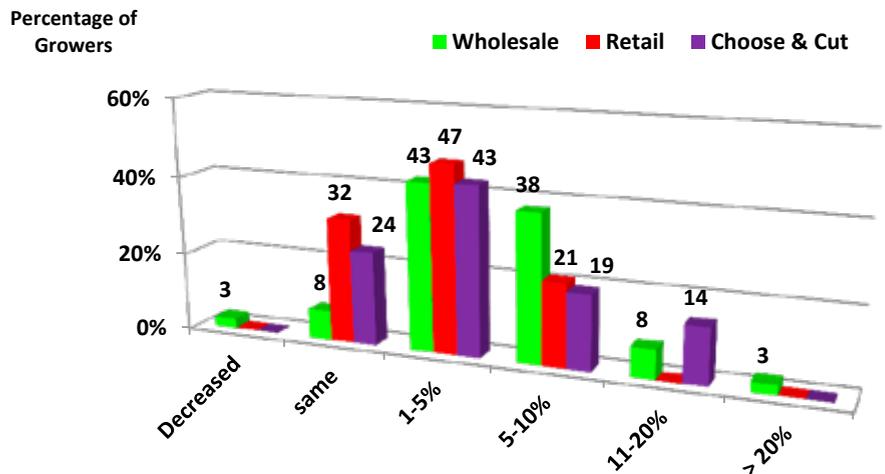
**Figure 3. Christmas tree planting trends for 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2017**

planting represented the dominant if not majority share (45-49%). The percentage of growers who are planting fewer trees or have stopped planting altogether has shrunk to 6.5% in 2016. Although the percent of growers who increased planting levels was about the same in 2016 as 2015 (28% and 29% respectively), the trend has increased over this five year period with 40% expecting to increase planting in 2017.

The number of growers who increased production in recent years could have been even greater if some were not held back by the current shortage of planting stock. From the survey, 18% of respondents indicated that a limited supply of seedlings altered their plans to plant trees; 43% of growers were impacted by shortages of transplants; and 50% did not have to reduce planting because of supply.

Limited availability of planting stock has some potential to counter grower optimism and unbridled expansion, but only appears to hold back a portion of growers. With more seedling and transplant nurseries requiring contracts up front and/or larger minimum orders, difficulty in acquiring seedlings and transplants falls disproportionately to medium and small-scale growers. Limited plant availability may not hold back those poised to make the largest increases in production.

In the current seller's market, prices have been rising and respondent attitudes reflect that optimism (Figure 4). Ninety percent of responding wholesalers increased their prices in 2016 and 95% expected to increase their prices this year. In 2016, 43% of wholesalers increased prices 1-5% and 38% increased prices



**Figure 4.** 2016 pricing trends among wholesale, retail, and choose & cut respondents

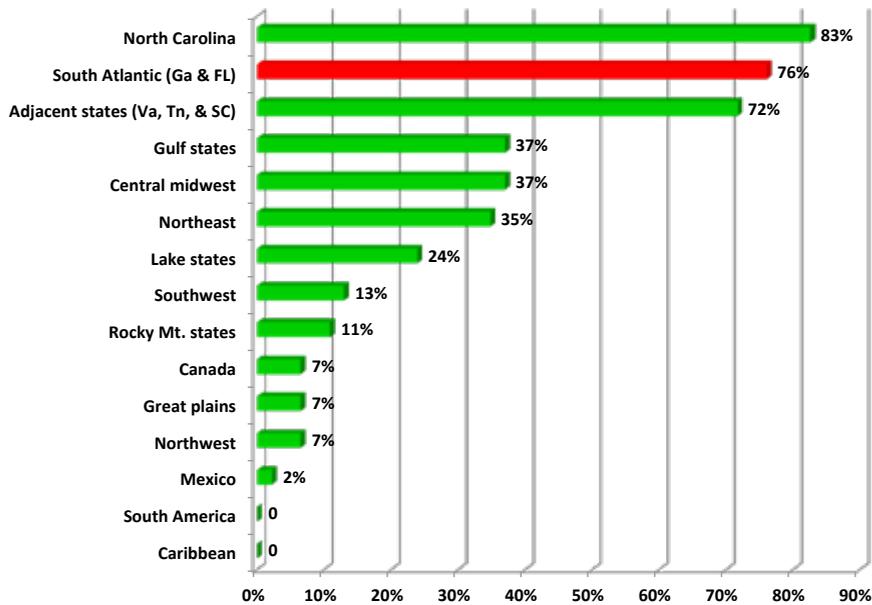
5-10%. For 2017, nearly half plan to increase prices an additional 5-10% and another 36% plan to increase prices by an additional 1-5%. So, more wholesalers will raise prices to a greater degree this season than they reported for 2016. These trends are understandable since wholesale prices took the greatest beating during the glut and have the farthest to rise for growers to achieve the same level of profitability experienced in the past.

Retailers, both on the lot and farm, share in the optimism regarding tree prices. In 2016, 69% of retailers and 76% of choose & cut growers raised their prices. Fifteen percent of choose & cutters raised their prices between 11-20%. More retailers expect to raise prices in 2017 but by 1-5% rather than larger amounts. More choose & cut growers expect to hold prices to the same level in 2017 than they did in 2016, but their prices never fell to the degree that wholesalers experienced.

Growers identified the regions in which they sold and delivered trees in 2016. North Carolina remains the predominant region at 83%, followed by the South Atlantic (76%) and ad-

acent states (72%). Another cluster of destinations including Gulf States, Central Midwest, and the Northeast represented 30-40% of respondents. When compared to the 2014 sales destinations in the 2015 grower survey, both the "above 70% group" and the 30-40% cluster included the same geographic regions. While ranking in each group changed by small percentages, overall this represents a consistency between the two surveys. In 2016, no respondents reported shipping into South America or the Caribbean, but this could reflect a difference of respondents from the 2015 survey.

Usually of only casual interest, the destination of shipments has been amplified in importance by Elongate Hemlock scale (EHS) restrictions enforced by the Florida Department of Agriculture. If growers seek alternative markets for trees originally destined for Florida, excess supply could have an impact on other regions. Hopefully, plans will be in place by the 2017 harvest to minimize potential market disruption. However, as can be seen in figure 5, only North Carolina exceeds the South Atlantic region (Florida and



**Figure 5. Respondent customer base by geographic regions**

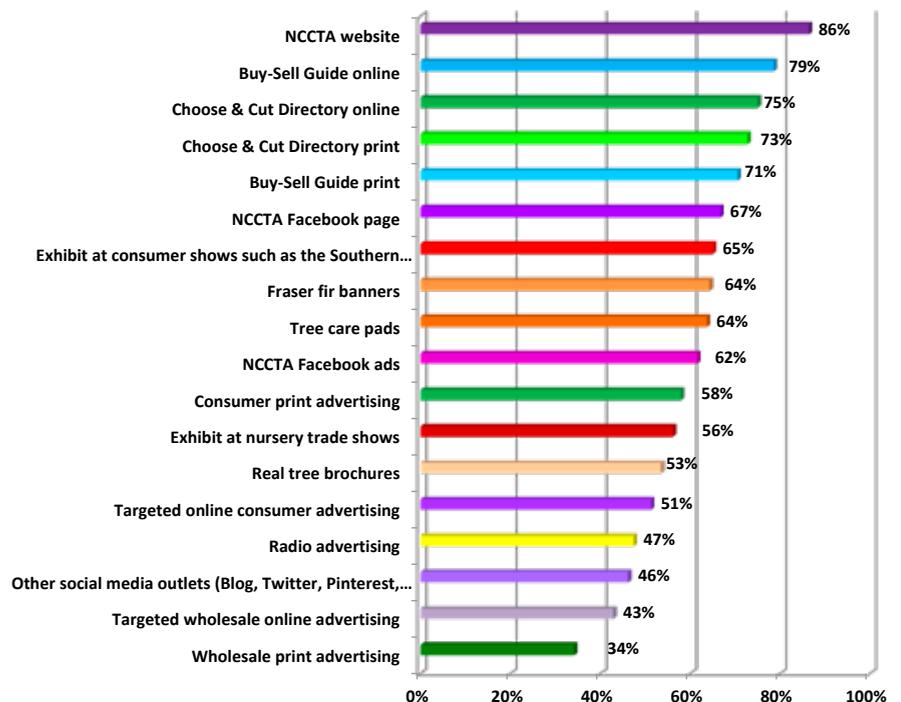
Georgia) in the number of respondents with trees going into a region. My estimates of Fraser fir Christmas trees sold into Florida, developed for other purposes, likely exceed 1.25 million trees. Low rankings of other regions may present opportunities for alternative markets if a grower's trees are unlikely to meet Florida's tightened restrictions.

The 2017 grower survey also measured perceptions of NCCTA promotional activities as a way to prioritize future efforts and justify grant expenditures. Figure 6 shows the percentage of respondents who agreed an activity was effective. The NCCTA website received the widest approval at 86%. The buy-sell and choose & cut directories both achieved second tier popularity among respondents (71-75%). Both online versions were slightly more popular than print versions. Two thirds of respondents believed the NCCTA Facebook page to be an effective promotional tool, but only half considered other social media outlets such as Twitter or Instagram to be as effective. A number of

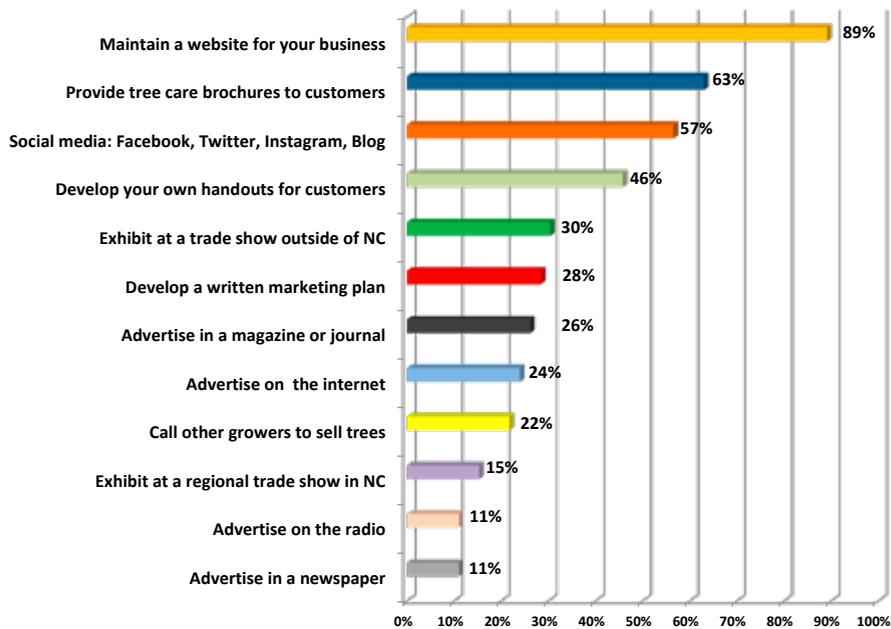
point-of-sale promotional items and consumer-directed activities all received moderate support (50 to 65% of respondents). Lowest approval fell to wholesale advertising. Within the response of "somewhat effective," real tree brochures received a "lukewarm" vote. The activity with the highest ranking of "not effective"

was radio advertising. The popularity of different activities shouldn't be used to eliminate investment in any promotional strategy outright, but it does provide another means of prioritizing limited promotional dollars.

Respondents also identified their level of use of NCCTA promotional tools including the buy-sell and choose & cut directories and point-of-sale materials. A majority of growers listed in the buy-sell directory (83%). This response rate is higher than the percentage of respondents who self-identified as a wholesale business (74%). Of those who listed in the buy-sell directory, 46% also purchased ads. Forty-one percent of respondents listed their farm in the choose & cut directory of which approximately half purchased ads. Ninety-five percent of respondents who identified as choose & cut businesses used the guide. Almost all of those who used point-of-sale items (65%) also distributed them to their customers (61%). Clearly, these pro-



**Figure 6. Perception of Promotional Effectiveness**



**Figure 7. Grower use of marketing activities**

motional services are widely used and important to NCCTA membership.

Except for maintaining a business website, the use of NCCTA promotional tools was generally more widespread among respondents than other marketing activities employed in their own businesses (figure 7): 80% percent of respondents maintain a website for their business; 63% use tree care brochures; 46% use other handouts for customers; and 57% utilize social media. Other activities are less widely used, including any form of advertising (11-26%)

or exhibiting at trade or consumer shows (15-30%). Unfortunately, developing a written marketing plan was used by less than a third of respondents (28%).

When asked how NCCTA promotional activities have impacted their business over the last three years, 44% were “significantly impacted” and 42% were “somewhat impacted”. Only 13% of respondents felt there had been little or no impact. Given these statistics, the NCCTA should be proud of making a difference for 87% of respondents. Promoting NC Fraser fir Christmas

trees will continue to be a primary mission of the NCCTA.

The results of this survey have several critically important implications. We can be happy that tree prices are trending up for 95% of wholesalers. However, in the very near term, 76% of respondents sell Fraser firs to Florida customers who are impacted by EHS restrictions. Christmas tree growers are resourceful, and we can hope they will overcome this issue as they have so many other hurdles. At present, our industry is in a better position to accommodate potential shifts in sales from one region to others than would have been possible just a few years ago during the oversupply.

As we look farther to the future, different factors compete. Are there enough young growers and future leaders learning the ropes from the older generation to sustain our industry and the NCCTA? Will the current shortage of seedlings and transplants hold back optimistic growers with visions of expansion? Some already see the seeds of the next oversupply in pounds of seed sold, in new Fraser fir plug greenhouses, bareroot seedbeds, or cleared acreage. It is hard to say what the future holds.

Winter does come, but you prepare for it. 🌲

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# Christmas Tree Research Endowment Fund

*“Sustaining a future for the Christmas Tree Industry”*

**\$195,000 pledged to date**

*Thank You*

**North Carolina Christmas Tree Association**

**The Deal Family**

**New River Tree Company**

**Cline Church Nursery**

**Yates Christmas Tree Farms**

**Dale & Ruth Shepherd**

**Mt. Rogers Christmas Tree Growers Association**

**The Barr Family**

**Sanford and Deborah Fishel III**

**Fred and Dot Wagoner**

**The Hudler Family**

**Tucker Tree Farms**

**T.R. “Dick” & Linda Workman**

If you would like to join this effort by making a contribution to the association's fund and/or fund a named endowment, email [cnr\\_development@ncsu.edu](mailto:cnr_development@ncsu.edu) or call **919.513.7734**.

**NC State Natural Resources Foundation, Inc.**

# Christmas Tree Research Fund and the NC State Natural Resources Foundation, Inc.

# We Depend On You.

In 2005, The North Carolina Christmas Tree Association established the endowment to support, ensure and enhance the successful future of the Christmas Tree Industry in North Carolina and surrounding counties in Virginia and Tennessee.

- Control of income spending is the **NCCTA RESEARCH COMMITTEE**
- NC State Natural Resources Foundation, Inc. does the Investing and Fundraising
- All gifts to the fund are **TAX DEDUCTIBLE**

## Continuous source of **RESEARCH FUNDING** for today and future generations

- \$195,000 pledged/gifted to date
- \$212,000 currently invested
- If fully endowed today — over \$10,000 available for **RESEARCH**

## How you can **PARTICIPATE:**

- Give to the Dale Shepherd NCCTA Research Endowment
- Make a gift in honor/memory of family, friends, industry partners, etc.
- Name Your Own Endowment: **CREATE A LEGACY FOR YOUR FAMILY**

## **GIFTS** in the form of:

- Cash, check or credit card
- Securities — Stocks & Bonds, IRA Rollover
- Pledge 2–7 year period
- Real Estate — house, farm, timberland, etc.
- Bequest from Will, Living Trusts, Life Insurance Gifts

NC State College of Natural Resources and the NC State Natural Resources Foundation, Inc.  
**Contact is Jennifer Viets: 919.513.7734, [jennifer\\_viets@ncsu.edu](mailto:jennifer_viets@ncsu.edu)**

# Balsam Woolly Adelgid Control Looking for a More Targeted Approach

**Holly Wantuch,  
Scott Salom and Thomas Kuhar**

The balsam woolly adelgid (BWA) is a small, soft-bodied insect that feeds on fir trees. Adelgids, relatives of aphids, are tiny and difficult to see without magnification. However, BWA secretes a fluffy, white “wool” that is easily visible on the trunks and branches of fir trees (Fig. 1). BWA is native to Europe, where it feeds primarily on silver fir. It was introduced to the United States early in the twentieth century. Although its native host is not significantly damaged by BWA feeding, North American fir species are vulnerable and many suffer high mortality because of it. This is the case with Fraser fir, which will most likely succumb if infested by BWA and not treated.

Because of this, BWA has long been a problem for Christmas tree growers in North Carolina where much of the country’s Fraser fir is grown. Despite extensive efforts to identify effective biological control agents, none of the predators introduced into the U.S. were found to reduce BWA populations sufficiently to maintain them below damaging levels. Thus, growers are left largely relying upon insecticides for BWA control. Current labeled insecticides include the pyrethroids bifenthrin (Sniper,

Talstar) and esfenvalerate (Asana, Astro), as well as the neonicotinoid dinotefuran (Safari). Though effective at killing BWA, these products are broad-spectrum insecticides, meaning that they kill somewhat indiscriminately and have been found to be detrimental to beneficial insect populations.

Today, there are insecticides designed specifically to kill soft-bodied sucking insects like adelgids, aphids, and scale insects. The specificity of these chemicals confers lower risk to non-target and beneficial insects. Preserving predator and parasitoid populations allows additional natural control of pest insects. Whereas, removing predators from a system with the use of a broad-spectrum insecticide may result in flares of pest species that otherwise would not reach damaging levels. Many such insecticides are marketed primarily for vegetable and fruit crop systems, but they may also be successful for management of pests on Christmas trees.

To investigate the efficacy of several of these targeted insecticides on Christmas trees, we conducted a study measuring their control of BWA. We applied the following insecticides to Fraser fir trees infested with BWA:

- Sufoxaflor (Closer) – sulfoxamine – systemic insecticide that kills on contact and through ingestion; labeled for use against aphids, leafhoppers, whiteflies, and others on crops; not currently labeled for use on Christmas trees
- Flonicamid (Beleaf) – pyridincarboximide – systemic insecticide that inhibits insect feeding and kills via starvation; labeled for use against aphids, whiteflies, and other similar insects on crops; not currently labeled for use in Christmas trees
- Flupyradifurone (Sivanto) – not classified – systemic insecticide that kills on contact and through ingestion; labeled for use in NC Christmas trees to control aphids (Section 24(c) Special Local Need Registration)
- Spirotetramat (Movento) – tetramic acid derivative – systemic insecticide that kills by inhibiting



**Figure 1.** Balsam woolly adelgid on the trunk of a Fraser fir tree

lipogenesis, preventing insect maturation and decreasing reproductive capacity of adults; labeled for use in Christmas trees to control aphids, adelgids, and scale insects

The selected insecticides were compared to the industry standard bifenthrin (Sniper) as well as an untreated control. Each treatment was applied to 2 groups of 6 mature trees with active BWA infestations. Each group of 6 trees was located in a cluster that was separated from neighboring treated clusters by at least 3 rows of trees to prevent chemical drift. Pesticides were applied as foliar sprays using a high pressure sprayer with complete tree coverage including the trunk and all limbs (Fig. 2). For this, Dr. Jill Sidebottom and Brad Edwards with NC Cooperative Extension provided the equipment and expertise needed. Fifteen gallons of each chemical were mixed at the highest labeled rate listed for application to Christmas trees; in the case of chemicals not labeled for Christmas trees, the highest label rate listed for aphids on crops was used. Approximately 1 gallon of the mixed chemical was applied to each tree. For accurate comparison, Movento was ap-

plied without the addition of an adjuvant, although it is suggested on its label. Treatments were applied May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016. The study site, initially scouted by Jill Sidebottom and Brad Edwards, was an abandoned Christmas tree farm to which no pest management had been applied for more than 5 years.

Adelgid populations were measured by taking 2.5 cm diameter bark circles. Three bark circles were taken from each tree on every sample date. Trees were sampled immediately prior to insecticide application, 2 weeks after spraying, and thereafter on a monthly basis. The study was concluded in October, 2016 as BWA reproduction begins its seasonal decline. Adelgids on bark circles were counted using a dissecting microscope and were classified as adults, nymphs, and egg clusters. Counts were used to attain adelgid/cm<sup>2</sup> measurements for each tree. Measurements were averaged within treatment groups, so that each treatment had 2 replicates for statistical analysis (because there were 2 clusters of 6 trees each per treatment). Treatment means were analyzed and compared to determine significant differences in numbers of adult, nymph, and egg clusters (Fig. 3) between treatment groups at each sample date.



**Figure 3.** *BWA egg clusters with adults*

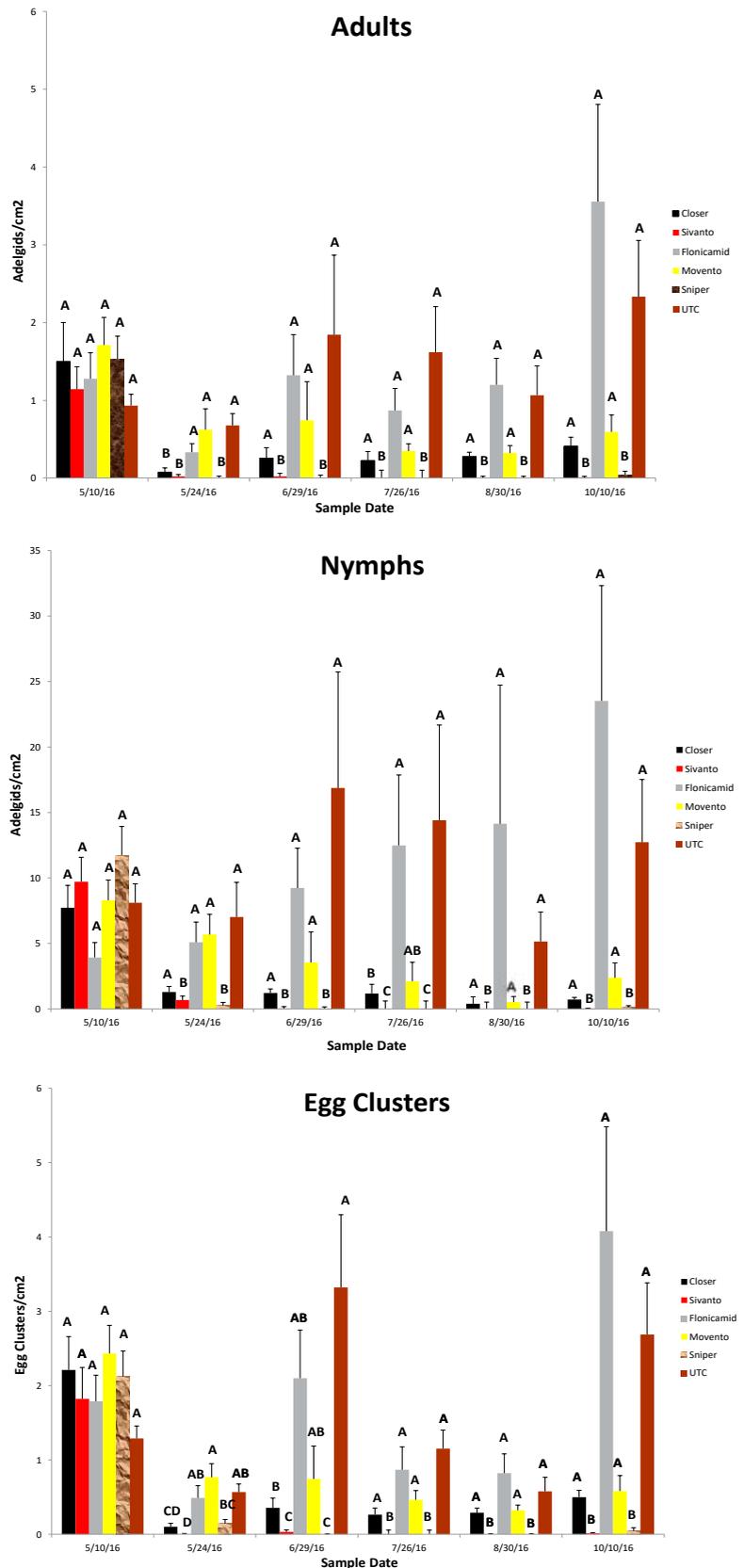
**Figure 2.** *Brad Edwards applies insecticide to Fraser fir trees using a high pressure sprayer*

Beginning at the first post-spray sample, Sivanto maintained adult, nymph, and egg populations at levels significantly below those of the untreated control. Densities of BWA in the groups treated with Sivanto were at least similar to if not significantly lower than those treated with Sniper, the industry standard. Closer treatments knocked down BWA populations initially, with adult and egg cluster densities significantly lower than the untreated control 2 weeks following application. Though treatment means in groups treated with Closer remained numerically lower than the untreated groups for the duration of the study, they were otherwise statistically similar. Adelgid densities on trees treated with Movento were not significantly reduced compared to those that were not treated, although they were often numerically lower. Beleaf did not appear to decrease BWA populations at all – in fact in several instances treatment means were numerically greater than those of the untreated control (though still statistically similar). (Fig. 4)

These results indicate that Sivanto may be a viable alternative to standard broad-spectrum insecticide treatment for control of BWA. Because of its low risk to non-target insects, including pollinators, use of Sivanto could be preferable to broad-spectrum products. Maintaining a healthy population of beneficial insects would not only help in the control of BWA, but also other insect pests that occur on Christmas trees. It would be interesting in the future to investigate the efficacy of Sivanto against other pests, such as the elongate hemlock scale and balsam twig aphid. Future work may also measure the impact of Movento in the presence of an adjuvant. These new, more pest-specific insecticides may prove very valuable to the Christmas tree industry as tools in an integrated pest management strategy. 🌲

*Holly Wantuch is a graduate student at Va Tech. She conducted a study last year looking at newer insecticides for the control of BWA. Holly presented the results of her study at the 2017 NCCTA Winter Meeting in Blowing Rock.*

**Figure 4.** Mean adelgids/cm<sup>2</sup> of each life stage — adults, nymphs, and egg clusters — at each sampling date. Treatment means on a given date that do not share a letter differ significantly.



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# Respirator Fit-Testing & Training



“ Cooperative Extension and the North Carolina Agromedicine Institute have been busy providing opportunities to ensure that our farms and workers are in compliance ”

As most of you are aware, the EPA's new respirator requirements in Revised Rule 170.507(b)(10) is now in effect for 2017:

When a respirator is required by the pesticide labeling, employers must provide handlers with the following before the handler performs any activity requiring the respirator:

- Medical evaluation
- Fit test
- Respirator training

Additionally, employers must maintain records for 2 years documenting completion of these.

With the new fit-test requirements, Cooperative Extension and the North Carolina Agromedicine Institute have been busy providing opportunities to ensure that our farms and workers are in compliance with the new rule. During the first few months of 2017, your county Extension personnel attended fit-testing training and carried out fit-testing & certification throughout our Christmas tree counties. We really appreciate the hard work that Robin Tutor and her gang of nurses and personnel from the Agromedicine Institute have put into ensuring that our employers are trained on the new requirements, and her nurses for carrying out multiple fit-testing sessions and medical screenings for growers and their workers.

Around 50 individuals (including agents, producers, and crew-leaders) received fit-testing training and certification to provide fit-tests to employees & farmers, and over 200 producers and their workers were trained fit tested and/or medically cleared in March and April in Ashe, Avery, Watauga, and Jackson counties with other trainings and fit-testing dates scheduled. 🌲





# Semi-Annual Meeting, Tradeshow & Farm Tour

August 25 & 26  
2017  
Shatley Farms  
Jefferson, NC  
Ashe County



## REGISTER NOW

Don't miss out on this year's summer meeting and the opportunity to come together and network with fellow growers, allied businesses and industry friends.

**Early registration deadline is Friday, August 11, 2017. Be sure to pre-register by the deadline for discounted registration prices!**

ASHE COUNTY CHRISTMAS TREE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS ARE ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND AT MEMBER REGISTRATION RATES

**SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE**

### Friday, August 25:

Business Meeting, Speakers, Demonstrations, Tree & Wreath Contest, Tradeshow  
Location: Shatley Farms  
3509 US Highway 221 N  
Jefferson, NC

### Friday Evening:

Pig pickin & live music by The Dollar Brothers at Dick Workman's home on the river in Lansing.

### Saturday, August 26:

Ashe County Farm Tour includes:  
Barr Evergreens

NCDA&CS Upper Mountain Research Station  
Sexton Farms / Frosty's Choose & Cut

**Make your reservations early to receive the discounted NCCTA lodging rates:**

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**For reservations call: (336) 846-4000**

Room rates available until July 24, 2017

### Other Discounted Lodging Options:

#### 4 Seasons Vacation Rentals

*Offering a 15% discount to all NCCTA members and attendees \*You must ask for discount at time of booking; they cannot go back and give discount after booking. For reservations call: (336) 246-2700.*

#### Suggested rentals closest to meeting venue include:

Hannah's Heavenly Hideaway - Approx. 20 minutes  
Greyson's River Ridge Retreat - Less than 10 minutes  
Whispering River Cottage - 15-20 minutes  
Sunset Over the Blue Ridge - Approx. 10 minutes  
Riverbend Retreat - 12 minutes



**Upper Mountain Research Station**

**Goal: 340    Final Destination: Fort Campbell    Donated: 473**

**Avery Coop**

**Goal: 265    Final Destination: Fort Bragg    Donated: 310**

**U.S. Grand Total:  
17,141 trees were donated and sent to US military bases in 2016**



Barr Evergreens of North Carolina	Clawson's & Panoramic View Christmas Tree Farms	Homer & Bonnie Sides Tree Farm	Sexton Christmas Tree Farms Inc
Bruner Sides Nursery	Cornett Carolina Trees	Hutch's Mtn Trees	Smokey Holler Tree Farm, LLC
Bryson Trees	Cornett Deal Christmas Tree Farm	JW Evergreens	Snow Creek Christmas Trees
Buck's Tree Farm	Cullowhee Valley Christmas Trees Inc.	Kathy Shore Nursery	Shepherd Farms
C. Grove Farms	Douglas R. Clark Nursery	Licklog Farms	Stone Mountain Farms
Carolina Fraser Fir Co., LLC	Happy Holiday Christmas Trees	Little Switzerland Christmas Tree Farm	Sturgill Tree Farms
Cartner Christmas Tree Farm	Hawk Mountain Tree Farm	Peak Farms	Windy Gap Tree Farm, Inc.
Christmas Tree Hill Nursery		Pressley Tree Farm LLC	Wishon Evergreens
			Wolf Creek Tree Farm & Nursery, Inc

# Spreading Christmas Cheer to Military Families

Thanks to all the growers and volunteers who contributed to the 12th annual Trees for Troops program this past December! With your help, North Carolina donated 783 trees to service families stationed on bases in North Carolina and Kentucky. We couldn't have done it without the help of our two loading stations and their staff, which included the Avery County Cooperative Extension and the NCDA&CS Upper Mountain Research Station. Also, a big thank you goes out to the Ashe County JROTC, Avery JROTC and Alleghany High School Ag students who tagged and loaded trees, as well as all the North Carolina Primary School students who decorated tags with heartfelt messages and drawings for our troops.

Trees For Troops is a joint effort between the National Christmas Tree Association's Christmas SPIRIT Foundation and FedEx. The North Carolina Christmas Tree Association is the North Carolina State Coordinator for Trees for Troops. 🌲

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# Christmas Tree Promotion Board Shares Campaign Highlights



*The popular "Tree Rigs" made appearances at the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and Santa Con.*



*Actor, Neil Patrick Harris surprised guests at the campaign's Big Event in New York City.*



Following on the heels of its first, fully-funded promotional campaign, the Christmas Tree Promotion Board shared a campaign summary video with hundreds of Christmas tree producers across the country.

"The video is a highlights reel of sorts; sharing the fun, heartwarming and creative activations from the 2016 promotional campaign," notes CTPB Executive Director, Tim O'Connor. "The video provides growers the opportunity to see what they likely missed during the busy harvest and selling season."

The video was presented at more than 20 state, regional and provincial meetings between January and March, reaching growers in more than 22 states and Canadian provinces. Each time the video was shared, CTPB staff members participated in a question and answer session to provide more details and to insure growers had accurate information about the campaign.

These sessions were also an opportunity to hear grower feedback on the campaign and what they would like to see as the campaign moves forward.

The CTPB is hoping to host an on-line webinar featuring the video and a question and answer session for growers who may not have seen the video at a local meeting. Details on the session will be announced to growers via email. 🌲

*Instagram influencer Tyler Oakley told shared the "It's Christmas. Keep it Real" campaign with his fans and followers.*

# 2016 Review and What's New for 2017

## IT'S CHRISTMAS. KEEP IT REAL.

The primary focus of the recent two-day meeting of the Promotion Board was to review the 2016 campaign and to determine how to move forward in 2017.

Concept Farm, CTPB's ad agency, presented detailed results on consumer reach for each of the activations that were a part of the 2016 campaign. Board members learned how each activation was executed, it's related costs and the measurable reach for each event.

A part of the campaign budget was pre and post-campaign consumer research. The research was enlightening and provided tremendous guidance on potential customers, their motivations and tendencies, as well as their propensity to purchase real or artificial Christmas trees. Most importantly, the research provided insight into messaging that would appeal to our target audience and where to reach our target customers.

Based on the results of the 2016 campaign, the Promotion Board chose to adopt a campaign plan for 2017 that includes the following:

The CTPB management team will create and manage the 2017 campaign strategy and secure contracts with both the ad agency and public relations firm.

Engage Concept Farm once again as the ad agency for the campaign and keep the "It's Christmas. Keep it Real!" tagline.

Select a new public relations firm, to join the CTPB campaign team to maximize the reach of our consumer messages.

Increase grower involvement in the campaign by providing easier and earlier access to campaign assets.

Increase grower outreach; training growers how to use the campaign by providing social media training in person and on-line, and expand grower-direct communications efforts.

Engage CTPB management team member, Marsha Gray, for additional hours and focus efforts on grower engagement and communications. To create that available time, Gray is resigning her position as the Executive Director of the Michigan Christmas Tree Association.

The first step in the 2017 campaign is a series of strategy sessions with the Promotion Board management team, Promotion Committee chair, ad agency and public relations agency teams that will take place over the next 45 days.

The Promotion Board will be sharing campaign updates as we move through the summer and approach Christmas 2017. 🌲



*The Christmas Tree Promotion Board Directors*



*Betty Malone presents the gavel to recently elected CTPB Chairman, Jim Rockis.*

## Rockis Elected Chair of Christmas Tree Promotion Board

At the Christmas Tree Promotion Board’s recent meeting, Jim Rockis was elected to serve as the Chairman of the board for the next year. Rockis, a seedling producer and Christmas tree grower from West Virginia, was originally named to the board in January of 2015 and was recently re-appointed by former Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack. Rockis succeeds Betty Malone of Oregon in this position where she served for two years.

“I have so much respect for Betty,” commented Jim Rockis. “The time that she devoted to this program and her commitment to creating a strong foundation is incredible.”

Rockis has chaired the Research Committee for the CTPB and has been very visible at state and regional meetings over the last two years, representing the Promotion Board.

Joining Rockis as officers of the Promotion Board are Rex Korson of Korson’s Tree Farms in Sidney, Michigan as Vice Chairman; Paul Battaglia of Battaglia Ranch Christmas Tree Farm in San Martin, California as Treasurer and Beth Walterscheidt of Evergreen Farms in Elgin, Texas as Secretary. 🌲

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# Could you be driving up your workers' compensation costs without even knowing?

## Richard Suddarth

VP of Marketing and Administration  
First Benefits Insurance Mutual, Inc.

It is possible if you don't have a structured reporting procedure in place. Evidence shows that claims not reported in a timely manner can increase costs in excess of 50 percent.

New reporting guidelines established in 2015 put definitive time frames on when employee injuries need to be reported to OSHA (Occupational Safety & Health Administration). This new set of guidelines expanded the list of severe injuries that employers must report to OSHA. Establishments located in states under federal OSHA jurisdiction must comply with these requirements. (See sidebar for requirements)

When it comes to timeliness of reporting workers' compensation claims, North Carolina has expectations from the employer as well.

*The North Carolina Industrial Commission's expectation of claims reporting is spelled out in **Rule 104 – Employer's Report of Injury**. Rule 104 states "An employer shall immediately report to its carrier or administrator any injury or occupational disease, or allegation by an employee of an injury or occupational disease, sustained in the course of employment for which the attention of a physician is needed or actually sought. Within five days of knowledge of the injury or allegation, the employer or carrier/administrator or its successor in interest shall file with the Industrial Commission and provide a copy to the employee of a Form 19, Employer's Report of Employee's Injury to the Industrial Commission, if injury causes the employee to be absent from work for more than one day or the employee's medical compensation is greater than an amount which is established periodically by the Industrial Commission in its Minutes."*

While immediately reporting to your carrier may not always be feasible based on the circumstances, claims that are reported within the first two weeks of occurrence typically have the lowest average claims cost.

Those that extend beyond that period are shown to be much higher.

Early reporting of claims can benefit the employer and the insurance carrier in many ways. First, prompt reporting often leads to better investigation and information-gathering from the injured employee and witnesses while the incident is still fresh and recall is at its best. A fresh set of facts pertaining to the claim may reveal warning signs related to fraud, or potential subrogation opportunities with an at-fault party.

Additionally, prompt contact helps to facilitate communication with the injured worker of how the claims process works and may decrease the likelihood of the worker hiring an attorney.

The likelihood for an injured employee to retain legal counsel increases as the delay in reporting increases. Attorney involvement can be as much as 2.5 times more likely as the days and weeks after an accident accrue.

Some additional benefits of early reporting impact the cost of the claim itself. A promptly reported claim will allow for case management and the ability to manage and reduce medical costs. This management and medical cost containment can also reduce the amount of time lost from work which minimizes the indemnity, or lost wage, portion of a claim. When the factors are controlled, a reduction in the cost of litigation expenses is also realized.

If you haven't given much thought to the way that claims are reported to your insurance carrier, you may be contributing to your increased costs of your workers' compensation insurance.

Having a written procedure on how claims are to be handled and reported should be included in your employee handbook. Your employees will know that their injuries will be addressed in a timely fashion, and it will make them more comfortable in their work environment. Consider the following as an example to include in your employee policies:

- When an employee is injured, secure medical treatment first
- Arrange transportation to your Designated Medical Provider or in an emergency, dial 911.
- After appropriate medical treatment has been secured, file Claim Form 19.
- Work-related injury/illness not requiring emergency services (i.e. back pain, sprained ankle, etc.) give Claim Form 18 to the employee to complete and submit directly to the NCIC and file Form 19 to your insurance carrier.
- The employer should file a Form 19 even if the employee prefers not to see a physician.
- Provide the employee with a copy of the Form 18 (copy in their file).

Remember, a claim reported late can increase costs over 50%! 🌲

*Disclaimer: This article is meant to demonstrate basic principles and ideas regarding insurance coverage. These are not recommendations as to coverages your business may need or require. Please consult your insurance agent for a needs analysis based on your specific business operation.*

First Benefits Insurance Mutual, Inc. is a member service offered by your Chamber. For more information, contact Richard Suddarth at [rsuddarth@firstbenefits.org](mailto:rsuddarth@firstbenefits.org) or Peg Pirrotta at [ppirrotta@firstbenefits.org](mailto:ppirrotta@firstbenefits.org).

# OSHA Reporting Requirements

**Employers are required to report the following to OSHA:**

- All work-related fatalities
- All work-related inpatient hospitalizations of one or more employees
- All work-related amputations
- All work-related losses of an eye

Employers must report work-related fatalities within eight hours of finding out about them.

Employers only have to report fatalities that occurred within 30 days of a work-related incident.

For any inpatient hospitalization, amputation, or eye loss employers must report the incident within 24 hours of learning about it.

Employers only have to report an inpatient hospitalization, amputation or loss of an eye that occurs within 24 hours of a work-related incident.

For more information regarding OSHA reporting requirements visit: <http://www.firstbenefits.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/OSHA-New-Injury-Reporting.pdf>

Source: [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)

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# Two Watauga Tree Farms Receive Certified Safe Farm Recognition

Congratulations are in order for Hawk Mountain Tree Farm & Critcher Brother's Produce and Christmas trees from Watauga County. Each of these farms successfully completed the steps to become Certified Safe Farms.

Certified Safe Farm is a comprehensive agricultural health and safety program for farmers, family members, and employees that saves lives, prevents injury, improves health, and saves costs! In North Carolina, the program involves:

- a comprehensive on-farm safety review conducted by Extension professionals,
- occupational health and wellness screenings conducted by Agri-Safe health providers,
- in-person education with farmers and others during safety and health visits, and
- an economic incentive program to assist farmers in making safety and health improvements (cost-share program).

Certified Safe Farm was researched and developed by the University of Iowa and through 10 years of research on 700 farms has been proven effective. Certified Safe Farm is implemented in North Carolina as a collaboration of NC State University, NC Cooperative Extension, the NC Agromedicine Institute, and AgriSafe-NC. With funding from the NC Tobacco Trust Fund Commission (NCTTFC).

Carroll Garland of Hawk Mountain Tree Farm and James Bell of Critcher Brothers participated in the audit process in 2015 and recently received their recognition during a respirator fit-testing session at the Watauga County Agricultural Conference Center. 🌲

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# Winter Meeting Highlights

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### Friends of NCCTA \$100

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### Additional recognition for special contributions:

Charlie Clark, NCDA&CS

Holly Wantuch, Virginia Tech University

Jill Sidebottom, NCSU Cooperative Ext.

Jeff Owen, NCSU Cooperative Ext.

Travis Birdsell, NCSU Cooperative Ext.

Christy Bredenkamp, NCSU Cooperative Ext.

John Frampton, NCSU

Lilian Matallana, NCSU

Robert Thomas, NCSU

Jerry Moody, NCSU Cooperative Ext.

Dwayne Tate, NCDA&CS

Christmas Tree Promotion Board

## NCCTA Winter Meeting Exhibitors:

*Thank you to each of our exhibitors and allied business partners for their support of the real Christmas tree industry and the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association.*

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# NCCTA 2016 Winter Meeting Highlights



## Thank You To Our Generous Sponsors!



*Maria Pilos presenting Dale Comnett, winner of the JPS FitBit Raffle*

On behalf of the NCCTA Board of Directors, staff and members,  
**a very big THANK YOU**  
to everyone who contributed and helped make the meeting a great success.



## Outstanding Educator Award: Jerry Moody

This past February, I had the pleasure of presenting Jerry Moody with the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association's Outstanding Educator Award.

Being an Extension Agent is a job like few others. Teaching adults about science and farming may sound like a breeze, especially if you compare it to say, teaching teenagers in middle school. I have, however, watched a couple of generations unfold before me and they are both very tough jobs.

After Waightstill Avery served as the County Extension Director through the early years of Christmas tree

production in Avery County until the early 1990's, along came a young man named Jerry Moody. Jerry had very big shoes to fill. He entered the job with a broad horticultural background and a vast knowledge of Integrated Pest Management. As a technician, I watched him enter the position and begin to develop his own program, introducing the Christmas tree industry to a new, modern and scientific approach. As many changes hit the "tree growers" Jerry took on each one with professionalism, teaching the growers how to deal with these changes and adapt.

# NCCTA Awards



From the beginning, it was obvious that Jerry was a hard worker with a passion for his job. Every time Christmas tree growers faced struggles or came under scrutiny, he went to bat for them. He was always the “first player out of the dugout”. His love and dedication to his growers remains unlimited.

In the early 2000's, the EPA put a lot of pressure on farmers, restricting many useful tools they were dependent on. One important product that Jerry fought to save was DiSystem. He met with the EPA in tree fields and demonstrated compliant ways that he had developed to use the product in an effort to change their minds. When the battle eventually became unwinnable, he taught growers how to manage pests without it. His knowledge of the chemistry of these tools and modern pest management, helped growers survive major changes.

Jerry has always been a great advocate for the industry, and his influence has gone well beyond Avery Coun-

ty. He has been vital partner in many research projects across the region in Fraser fir production. Christmas Tree Specialists Jill Sidebottom and Jeff Owen have had Jerry as a constant partner in their work. He has delivered new approaches to Fraser fir production to the tree growers of Avery County like no other. He has served the NC Christmas Tree Association in multiple ways and continues to project a positive image of the NC Christmas Tree Industry on a daily basis.

Jerry not only serves as a mentor to growers, but also to his staff. He is the glue that holds everyone together. He is an industry leader in every sense and is most deserving of the Educator of the year Award. 🌲

*Written by Doug Hundley*

*Doug Hundley presented the Outstanding Educator Award to Jerry Moody.*



*Jerry takes the utmost pride in his work with his clients, and Extension as a whole. There is absolutely no harder worker than Jerry. He is a very strong leader in our organization, county and community. He has a gigantic heart for Avery County and we are extremely blessed to have him as our leader. Most importantly, Jerry is not just our boss, he is our family. Jerry and I have been employed with Extension for 22 years, so I consider him a part of my family. I couldn't ask for a better friend and I cant think of anyone more deserving of this award.*

— Tami Hagie



# NCCTA Awards

## Environmental Stewardship Award: Rusty Barr



Rusty Barr of Barr Evergreens in Crumpler, NC is a second generation Christmas tree farmer. The Barr family has been in the industry since its infant days in the early 1960s. Rusty Barr is a leader in the industry and has helped shape its growth with an emphasis on protecting the environment. Rusty is a dedicated member and volunteer with the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association (NCCTA). He attributes much of his knowledge and care about environmental stewardship to information gained through the presentations at annual NCCTA meetings.

Like many North Carolina tree farmers, Rusty recognizes that the land is the sole source of his income. To remain profitable, currently and in future rotations of trees, he must remain a good steward of the land. This has become even more important recently as his son, Avery, has returned to work in the family business.

Rusty has fully implemented an Integrated Pest Management strategy on his farm. He uses chemical mowing as a basis for his ground cover management strategy to prevent erosion and build up populations of beneficial predatory insects. Scouting is performed on a regular basis to determine chemical use and timing of application. Rusty has been one of the farmers brave enough not to

spring treat for balsam twig aphids due to scouting results. By doing so, this reduces environmental impact.

Cooperative Extension Service (CES) has called on Rusty several times as a cooperator, most recently with an alternative herbicide weed study. This study will help to determine potential selective controls for horseweed (mare's tail) and lamb's quarter. The CES has worked closely with Barr Evergreens through the set-up and production of greenhouse seedlings at their nursery location. Nutrient management has been a focus, ensuring that seedlings receive optimal amounts of fertilizer while minimizing nutrient leaching. This is especially important in helping protect nearby Naked Creek, which is a trout designated impaired stream.

Rusty will undoubtedly continue his service to the environment and the NCCTA. His recognition as an Environmental Steward is well deserved. 🌲

*Written by Travis Birdsell*

*Travis Birdsell presented the Environmental Stewardship Award to Rusty Barr.*



## NEWS FROM JACTO

Jacto Inc. held its National Distributor Meeting and Jacto University training session March 2-3 at its headquarters in Tualatin, Oregon. In attendance were 60+ distribution partners from the Short-Line-AG and Outdoor-Power-Equipment fields.

The session included news of product updates and additions along with detailed, hands-on training and education regarding Jacto's range of tractor-powered sprayers for specialty crops and the company's line of portable sprayers for commercial use. Jacto's USA staff and key managers from the company's Brazilian headquarters conducted the meeting.

Jacto is the world's leader in spraying technology, working in more than 100 countries around the world. Jacto has a modest, but growing, market share in the USA and Canada. One core feature of the meeting was the new range of battery-powered sprayers offered by Jacto. This range offers industry-best features, battery life and user comfort.

The Jacto event included more than education and information. The company also recognized selected distributors with longevity awards. Plus, Bob Dreher, territory manager for Tru Power, Inc. was singled out for his achievement of selling nearly 2,000 Jacto backpack sprayers to dealers in his market during 2016. This feat earned Bob and his wife Trudy a trip to Brazil, which



they are taking in April 2017. The event's culmination was a large Brazilian-style barbecue in the Jacto warehouse and some fun "corn-hole" bean-bag tossing to highlight American culture.

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# Fraser Fir featured in the State Capitol...



*Grand Champion Fraser Fir winner, Lynn Smith of Merlyn Farms, provided Fraser fir trees for the State Capitol. In addition, wreaths were provided by Rusty and Beau Estes of Peak Farms, grand champion wreath winners.*



*Lynn and his family pictured with Governor Pat McCrory. Left to right: Meredith Friga, Paul Friga, Leona Smith, Pat McCrory, Lynn Smith, Nicholas Friga, Cindy Guinn*



*The Estes family pictured with Governor Pat McCrory. Left to right: Amanda Estes, Riley Estes, Athena Estes, Colin Estes, Alice Forest, Pat McCrory, Katirie Estes, Ann Estes*

*and in the Hawkins-Hartness House...*



*As First place Other Species category winners and undecorated wreath winners, Rusty & Beau Estes of Peak Farms, provided a beautiful Fraser fir tree and wreaths for the Hawkins-Harkins House, Office of Lieutenant Governor, Dan Forest.*

*Pictured above is the Estes family presenting the tree and wreaths to Mrs. Forest at the Hawkins-Hartness House.  
Left to right: Ann Estes, Amanda Estes, Colin Estes, Alice Forest, Athena Estes, Riley Estes, Katirie Estes*

*and in the Vice President's residence*

Charles Sturgill of Sturgill Tree Farms in West Jefferson, North Carolina represented the industry in the 2016 season by providing an 11 foot Fraser fir for the Vice President's residence. Unfortunately the Sturgill's were unable to visit the Vice President's residence for a tour during the holiday season but his contribution and representation is appreciated.



## John Bryan Wagoner

John Bryan Wagoner, 93, passed away Monday, February 6, 2017 at his residence surrounded by his family.

He was born in Guilford County on June 7, 1923 to the late Jew Irving Wagoner and Eunice Homewood Wagoner and was married to the late Helen Barnett Wagoner who died in 2012.

John grew up on a farm to a father who served in World War I and a mother who was proud to be one of the few women to go to college during her era. He took over Wagwood Farms, combined from his father's last name Wagoner and mother's maiden name, Homewood.

He followed his dad to NC State College along with his twin brother, enrolled in ROTC which paid for his college education. During his sophomore year at NC State, the US was dragged into WWII. He, his brother, and all of his male classmates were immediately drafted.

John trained recruits and later officers during World War II at Fort Benning, Georgia. At the time, Fort Benning was home to the advanced infantry training school and officer candidate school. He was promoted to captain and trained the soldiers that would be on the front lines.

After the war end, he volunteered to go to Europe as the officer in charge of a Graves Registration Unit. As such, their responsibility was to locate the graves of American airmen who had been shot down and died in the crash. The Germans usually buried the airmen next to their crashed plane. The unit's job was to locate the crashed planes and dig up the bodies so that they could be reburied in an American military cemetery.

During the war, he played football for the Army football team. He returned after the war to complete his college education at NC State. He returned to the NC State football team and was proud to be the starting guard on 1946 NC State Gator Bowl Football Team. He graduated with honors; he was the President of Class 1947, president of Golden Chain, member of the Blue Key, Alpha and Alpha Zeta, Upsilon Sigma Alpha and Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternities.

John was a seven year veteran of the Canadian Football Program, played for the Ottawa Roughriders and British Columbia Lions (from 1948-1954). He won the Grey Cup with Ottawa in 1951. He was on the All Canadian Team in 1948 and 1949. While playing for the Roughriders, he met his soul mate, Helen Barnett and married in 1954. He returned to Gibsonville to resume farming on Wagwood Farms. He later converted Wagwood Farms to Wagoner Christmas Trees. He founded Wagoner Christmas trees in Sparta, NC. He was one of the founders of the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association, and served as Secretary-Treasurer for 30 years. He was a dedicated and faithful member to the association. In 2013, John was honored for his service, efforts, & contributions given to the North Carolina Christmas Tree Industry, and was presented the NCCTA Lifetime Membership Award.

He provided Christmas trees to wholesale customers from New Orleans to New York. He was proud to sell Christmas trees and trimmings to customers in Greensboro and Burlington for more than 40 years. His sons, Bryan and Bruce, have taken on his role of supplying Christmas trees in the Greensboro area.

John was a lifelong member of Friedens Lutheran Church; he was a devoted and loving husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend who will be missed dearly.

# WHY

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**To be part** of a community of Christmas Tree professionals and share the knowledge and experiences of thousands who share your concerns, questions and needs.

# Calendar of Events

Tuesday, June 6, 2017

**Board of Directors/Fraser Fir Promotional Committee Meeting**  
BREMCO, Boone

Thursday, August 24, 2017

**Board of Directors/Fraser Fir Promotional Committee Meeting**  
BREMCO, West Jefferson

August 25 & 26, 2017

**Summer Meeting, Tradeshow & Farm Tour, Ashe County**  
Shatley Farms, Jefferson

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