

800-562-8789

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www.NCchristmastrees.com

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North Carolina Christmas Tree Association



Make Scenes Real Places

The Best of Mother Nature & Nurture

Have you ever wondered where all the Fraser Fir Christmas trees come from that are sold during the Christmas Holidays? These trees are grown on plantations and shipped around the country to retail lots and stores. Most North Carolina Fraser Fir Christmas trees are over 12 years old and have been cared for during more than 150 visits to the fields in which they grew.

North Carolina Fraser Fir Christmas trees begin their life in a nursery. Seeds collected from the cones of mature trees are sown in specially prepared beds. When the seedlings germinate in the beds, they can be easily watered and fertilized. The seedlings are also covered with shade cloth to protect them from strong sunlight. Fraser Fir seedlings grow to only about 2 inches in the first year. After three years, the six inch tall seedlings are ready to be transplanted to line-out beds for further growth.



Line-out beds provide the seedlings with two more years of protected growing conditions without competition from weeds. Planted on equal spacing, the seedlings have an equal opportunity for fertilizer, water, and sunlight - the building blocks of plant growth. Fraser Fir seedlings will stay in the line-out bed until they are large enough to be transplanted into the field or between 12 and 18 inches tall.

North Carolina Fraser Fir Christmas tree growers plant their small seedlings in the field with enough room to grow into full-sized Christmas trees. During the six to eight years the trees remain in the field, the grower will visit the tree many times to fertilize the soil, control weeds, stop damage from insect pests, and shape the tree.

When the young trees reach a height of three feet they are sheared or pruned for the first time. During this first shaping, the grower trims the top of the tree with hand clippers. By slowing upward growth, the tree will put more energy to branching out sideways and to filling in. As the tree gets taller and wider the following year, the grower will trim both the top and side branches to shape the tree and give it a thicker appearance. Growers use a long, very sharp knife to trim the sides of Fraser Fir Christmas trees to the perfect angle or taper.

Shearing the tree is only one of a number of practices that growers must complete to grow a high quality Christmas tree. Growers use Integrated Pest Management, a system of pest

control that uses both cultural practices and wise use of pesticides to reduce pest problems. Growers also follow sound soil conservation practices to protect the soil from erosion and to preserve the nutrients needed to grow the trees. Growing high quality trees and protecting the environment go hand in hand. Many Christmas tree growers plan to pass their farms on to their grandchildren and care deeply about protecting their land.

After six to eight years, the Fraser Fir Christmas trees have grown to maturity. Growers identify these trees that are ready to harvest by placing a ribbon on them. The ribbons are color coded with each height being assigned a different color. Often a whole field is not ready for sale in one year. It often takes two to four years before a field is cleared and ready for new trees to be planted.



At harvest, the tagged trees are cut with a chain saw and carried to the edge of the field to a machine called a baler where they are bundled tight and wrapped with string. After being baled, the trees are taken to the loading yard where they are placed on trucks and shipped to retail lots and stores all across the country. The baled trees pack tight so more trees can fit on a truck. They also dry out less and stay fresh longer.

North Carolina Fraser Fir growers work hard to produce the best tree for your family. It can take anywhere from twelve to fifteen years for a tree to be ready to harvest; Christmas tree growers agree that this long, hard job is worth it when their trees become the decorative centerpiece of your home during the holiday season.