

# Shearings

AUGUST 2013



*Peter Sweet of Seekonk Tree Farm with his  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place Reserve Grand Champion at the Big E*

M.C.T.A Annual Meeting 2013

Saturday August 24

**Massachusetts Christmas Tree Association**  
**[www.christmas-trees.org](http://www.christmas-trees.org)**

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Calendar

August	10-11	NCTA Pre-Season Clinic Arlington, VA
August	14	6:00 pm CT Twilight Meeting Dumas Family Farm Durham, CT
August	25 8:00 -3:00	MCTA ANNUAL MEETING Seekonk Tree Farm Great Barrington, MA
September	7 & 8	Maine Summer Meeting Farmington, ME
September	14	Forest Tree & Shrub Disease Workshop- 5 pesticide credits Umass, Amherst
August	14 6:00 pm	CT- Twilight Meeting Dumas Family Farm Durham, CT
September	21	CT-TGA Annual Meeting Allen Hill Tree Farm Brooklyn, CT
September	13- 29	The "Big E" W. Springfield, MA
October	4 -14	Topsfield Fair

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# ORGANIZATION & INDUSTRY NEWS

Nothing says “summer” than a stretch of steamy 90<sup>0</sup>+ days in amongst the rows of your tallest trees. One prays for a whisper of a breeze or a ten minute shower for reprieve. The cool, wet June seems like a distance memory. Mother Nature apparently likes to keep us in a constant state of “awareness”, less we get complacent in our farm chores. Challenging us, to say the least and coercing us to be active participants in the ever changing conditions she produces on a whim. Another year of inevitable disruptions from the weather Gods!

The three Twilight meetings held in June offered members an opportunity to participate from east to west. A special “Thank you” goes out to Howard Boyden of Boyden Brothers Maple Farm in Conway; Jim & Ellen Colburn in Merrimac and Dave & Vicki Morin of Uxbridge for hosting the twilight meetings this year. Luck was with us and we dogged the rainy days. Howard Boyden (who is associated with Oesco/Orchard Equipment) gave an excellent presentation on spray equipment calibration, maintenance and trouble shooting. From nozzle sizes to CF values. At Jim Colburn’s we learned how to meet the challenges of old cropland, a large deer population, and diverse land conditions (from very wet to very dry), not from a highway. Jim’s done a great job to meet those challenges for a young farm, as his mentor, Dave Butt, would say. Our last tour at Dave Morin’s gave us an inspiring look at restarting a tree farm after many years of not planting trees. Rock, ledge-type land with difficult soil conditions still allows a good tree to grow, without pesticides. To keep busy, Dave diversified his farm into a year around business focusing on weddings and other type of functions. A tour of the “Chapel in the Pines”; a bench-circled campfire pit; and farm animals to pet, all surrounded by Christmas trees. Even the most seasoned Christmas tree growers among us learned something new from attending these meetings. Good food and enlightening conversation were enjoyed by all who attended.

The “Big E” will soon be upon us and it has always been a great way enhance our exposure to the masses. No matter how small of an impression it makes on an 80<sup>0</sup> day, hundreds if not thousands of people flow pass our booth. They *will* remember us when the first flake of snow falls or on Thanksgiving day when the spirit and the warmth of Christmas season arrives. It’s not just about trees, it’s about everything we do. Do you make your own wreaths, kissing balls or swags; or g centerpieces or bows? Or the right way to butt prune a tree or proper way to put it in the stand? Why not have some fun and bring your talent(s) to the Big E for a shift. The fair go’ers will

love to see “how it is done” on the farm. We are lucky to have a membership that has a great deal of giving people, both talented and diverse.

Being a volunteer never goes unnoticed.



## 10 ft. Christmas Tree Wanted

For The “Big E” Exhibit

Stipend of **\$100.00**

Contact: **John Coward**

(413) 569-6724



## Organization & Industry News continued

Welcome Nick Brazee and Rick Harper to UMass Extension Service, Diagnostic Lab in Amherst. Nick's background includes a Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts and most recently as a research plant pathologist from the USDA Forest Service in Madison, Wisconsin. Nick has extensive training and experience in diagnostics and plant pathology to the green industry. Nick replaces Dan Gillman who has retired.

## NATIONAL NEWS

NCTA Pre-Season Clinic -- Aug.10-11, 2013.

The clinic is upon us and is taking place at the Renaissance Arlington Capital View of Arlington, Va., The Clinic is *the* only national event for the Real Tree industry in 2013 and will also include the 2013 National Tree and Wreath Contests. Non-members may attend weekend as well, at an increase price. Go to NCTA website for info.

**House Passes the Farm Bill on July 11** by stripping out the Food Stamp portion. What does that mean for us? It means the Check-Off program amendment is in the passed version. Now the House and Senate versions have to be hammered out. We might have an assessment for 2013 harvest, but it depends on the final farm bill and when it passes. It does not look like our proposed amendment will be stripped out, but stranger things have happened.

NCTA to Offer \$99 Trial Membership for First-Time, Returning Members. The \$99. General Membership is available to first-time NCTA members and members who discontinued their membership during 2009-2011. To learn more of this special rate, go to the NCTA website @ [realchristmastrees.org](http://realchristmastrees.org) Or call 636-449-5070: You can email Dustin McKissen, Executive Director of the NCTA at: [mckissen@realchristmastrees.org](mailto:mckissen@realchristmastrees.org).

The goal of the NCTA over the last year, has been learn and listen to the voices of many - and make changes to build a stronger association; to forge better relationships with state/regional associations, redesign educational events and advocate on issues that they know are important to members and growers.

## Cultural and Pest Management Update for Christmas Tree Plantations May 2013

### Conifer Collapse Disorder

Reprinted from Real Tree Line May 2013

By Tom Rathier, Emeritus Soil Scientist

Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station  
Valley Laboratory, P.O. Box 248, Windsor, CT 06095

It's still happening. Seemingly healthy trees crashing (going from looking healthy and shiny to dull and brown in a very short time span – some growers report as little as a week or two) and no obvious cause(s). Dr. Yonghao Li and I have dug up numerous trees over the past two years and carefully examined and cultured the root systems hoping to find evidence of root or vascular diseases with little to show for our efforts.

After carefully reviewing soil environment health issues it is tempting to say that root/soil relationships are at the center of this problem., especially in light of the unusual climatic occurrences we've encountered in the past few years. These weather oddities, namely two hurricanes and a bizarre October blizzard all involved large quantities of water at crucial times for root development when soils may have been so water logged that proper root function slowed down or even stopped for an extended period of time. Careful examination of the roots we excavated didn't reveal much evidence of stress or injury but this may still be a factor.

Our dilemma continues again this year. I've already heard from growers who have seen losses since Christmas. We will be out again this year digging up trees and collecting samples for the lab.



Email: [thomas.rathier@ct.gov](mailto:thomas.rathier@ct.gov)



# M.C.T.A ANNUAL MEETING 2013

Saturday

**August 24, 2013**



## SEEKONK TREE FARM

32 Seekonk Cross Road  
Great Barrington, MA 01952

Hosts: *Peter & Carol Sweet & Family*

**Guest Speaker:** *Dr. Elizabeth Lamb of New York State Integrated Pest Management Program, Cornell University*  
(3 PESTICIDE CREDITS will be offered)

The Sweet's farm is located in a beautiful scenic area and was originally part of a large dairy farm. Peter Sr. started the farm on a part time basis in 1978, planting a few hundred Scots Pine and Douglas Fir. He retired from teaching in 2000, after 28 years of teaching technology. The farm consists of two (2) seven acre parcels, in close proximity to each other. The entire farm is in its second rotation or in some cases, third rotation of trees. Currently, the majority of trees grown are Firs with the most popular being Fraser fir. Seekonk Tree Farm is primarily a choose and cut, however many tree species are grown just for the balled and burlap nursery business. During the season, they offer potted trees and fresh, pre-cut trees at their house and their farm stand.

The Sweet Family works their farm full time and is extensively involved in the tree business. Peter Sweet Sr. performs the cultural aspects of growing a variety of evergreens both for Christmas trees and landscape plantings. Carol Sweet does the office work, assists with some of the cultural practices. She makes and manages the fresh green accessory products and decorations in their shop. Peter Sweet Jr. owns and operates "Sweetscapes Landscape Contracting and Nursery". Peter Jr. owns a third parcel of trees for Christmas and nursery material. Peter Jr. is also a master gardener and cultivates a prize winning giant vegetable patch. Son Christopher, owns and operates "Sweet Tree Service", a full service tree maintenance business. The large variety of tools and equipment used on the farm and in ancillary businesses will be on display.

8:00-9:00 :	Registration :	Coffee & Pastries. Socialize, visit vendors.
9:00-9:20	Welcome:	Peter Sweet: Introductions of guests, meeting agenda, farm history
9:20-10:00 :	Annual Meeting:	Rob Leab: MCTA Business Review (with handouts)
10:00 10:30	MDAR & Farm Bureau	Representatives from Dept. of Agricultural Resources, Farm Bureau and Vendor introductions
10:30 -12:00	<i>Dr. Elizabeth Lamb Peter Sweet</i>	Discussion of important insect, disease and weed issues in 2012. Control strategies for 2013, record keeping and resources to keep ahead of pests.
12:00 – 1:00 :	Lunch	<u>BRING YOUR OWN CHAIR (S)</u>
1:00-3:00	<u>Session "A"</u>	<u>Session "B"</u>
	<i>Farm tour and IPM Practices with Dr. Elizabeth Lamb &amp; Peter Sweet Sr.</i> Weed control, fertilization, and mowing practices. Discussion of soil type, water movement with site specific planting. Pest management with focus on elongate hemlock scale	<i>Wreath &amp; Fresh Green Product Decorating with G. Ellsworth</i> Group participation. Have some fun creating some new designs together. Bring a pair of shears & scissors
3:00:	Peter Sweet Jr. :	A short tour of the cultural practices of a prize winning giant vegetable patch. Q & A included.

Twilight Meetings 201`3



Arrowhead Acres, Uxbridge



From the editor: My apologies to the twilight host farms with no photos. SD card was lost.

MCTA Annual Meeting Registration

Saturday, August 24' 2013

Seekonk Tree Farm - Great Barrington, MA

Deadline: for meal count August 19, 2013

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Cost : Members & Other Association Members \$20 per person

No. of persons \_\_\_\_\_ X \$20.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ total

Non-Members: \_\_\_\_\_ X \$30.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ total

**Make checks payable to MCTA**

Send To: **MCTA Jim Colburn**  
**104 West Main Street, Merrimac, MA 01860**

**Deadline: August 15, 2013**

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# Spruce Spider Mite Management in Christmas Trees

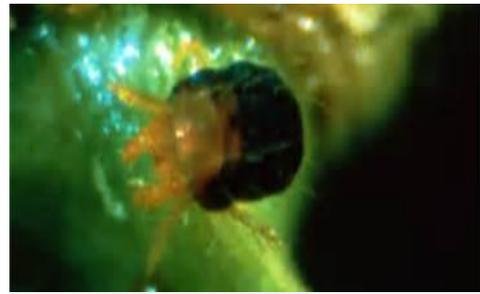
*Reprinted from Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association Quarterly Journal, October 2012. Original article posted Sept. 7, 2012 by Erin Lizotte, MSU, Dave Smitley MSU Extension, Dept. of Entomology, and Jill O'Donnell, MSU Extension.*

*As temperatures begin to cool, Christmas tree growers should be on the lookout for resurgence in spruce spider mite populations*

Spruce spider mite (*Oligonychus umunguis*) is an important pest of conifers in Michigan. This tiny insect can infest all species of commercially produced Christmas trees, regularly causing significant economic losses in spruce and Fraser fir plantings. SSM can be more of a common pest in conventionally managed plantations that have lower predatory mite populations due to insecticide use. Predatory mites benefit the grower because they feed on SSSM and help keep populations can flare leading to tree damage.

## Biology

The SSM overwinters as an egg on budscales, in needles axils, or under webbing. In the spring eggs hatch and larvae emerge, molt into nymphs and feed on tree sap before molting into adults, mating, and starting the cycle again. The entire lifecycle of SSM can occur in as little as 15 days giving this pest the potential for rapid population growth under the right conditions. SSM are tolerant of cooler weather in the spring and fall with activity in temperatures as low as 43° F. Based on research done by Boyne and Ham (1993), the development of SSM is primarily temperature driven and the time required to complete a lifecycle will continue to accelerate until the ideal maximum temperature of 78° is reached. In mid-summer when daytime temperatures typically begin to reach the mid-80's, population's crash as egg viability decreases. The few eggs that do survive these temperatures provide the seed populations



*Fig. A. Adult spruce spider mite with egg. USDA FS-NE Area Archive*

that rebounds as temperatures cool in late summer. Moisture and natural enemy populations also greatly affect SSM populations within the season. Wet or humid conditions greatly reduce SSM egg hatch, conversely predatory mites prefer high humidity further reducing populations in wet years. Accordingly, dry conditions contribute to increased populations of SSM due to higher egg viability and reduced levels of predatory mites.

## Identification

Confirming the identification of the mite at all life stages (egg, larva, and nymph, adult) is the first critical step to effective management. The SSM egg is a tiny bright red sphere with a single hair in the center, eggs that have already hatched will appear clear. (Figure A). Spruce spider mites are very small and soft-bodied during the motile stages. The larval stage has six legs; the nymphal stage has eight legs. Adult SSM are one solid color, elliptical in shape and have hairs along the top of the abdomen. Coloration varies and is not a good indicator of identity for the motile life stages. Beneficial predatory mites can be distinguished from pest mites by observing their movement. When disturbed, adult predatory mites generally move more quickly than pest mites and can be observed moving speedily around on scouting boards. Fine webbing on branches is associated with SSM activity.

*Continued on page 8*

## Scouting

To scout for SSM, growers should sample multiple trees in each plantation and be sure to select trees from different elevations as well as from the interior and exterior rows of plantings. Larger tree samples will increase grower accuracy in their assessment of the population and potential risk. Scouting should be done on a season long basis and not only after symptoms appear as this is often too late for effective treatment. The simplest way to scout for adult and juvenile mites is to shake or tap a branch over a scouting board or piece of paper.

To scout for eggs you must look at the branch and needles as eggs are attached and may not readily drop when you tap the branch. SSM and their eggs must be viewed using a 15X hand lens for magnification. Symptoms of damage include chlorosis, needle drop, and tree mortality. When viewing damage through a hand lens, symptoms appear as small, yellow circular patches that surround the feeding sites (fig. B). Damage is permanent, but becomes less visible over time as the host produces new growth. The symptoms and extent of damage from SSM damage is host dependant and SSM is more likely to cause tree mortality in nursery stock while established trees may partially defoliate but survive. Rust mites damage appears similar, but needles appear more bronzed than chlorotic and when viewed up close, do not show the distinct circular pattern associated with SSM feeding.

## Management

SSM damage can be prevented through a combination of careful monitoring, resistance management and the utilization of pesticides that are less harmful to beneficial predatory mites. Temperature driven models have been developed in some regions of the United States to more accurately gauge the need and

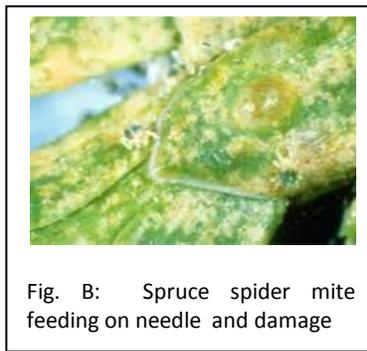


Fig. B: Spruce spider mite feeding on needle and damage

timing for SSM treatment, but there are many variables (tree species, age, environmental conditions, treatment cost) that complicate the question of whether treatment is warranted and somewhat marginalize the practicality of modeling. The simplest way to determine the need for management is to evaluate if scouting indicates that the population is growing or at a damaging level. It is important to remember that SSM populations can fluctuate rapidly so simply observing damage on trees is not an accurate indicator of the need for treatment as damage may have been caused by populations that since died off, making a spray applications pointless.

Table 1 contains current treatment options, their chemical class, the life stage they target, relative efficacy, duration of control and relative toxicity to beneficial predatory mites. Pyrethroids, organophosphates and the avermectins all have good knockdown activity and residual control against the motile life stages of SSM, but their lethal effects on predatory mites makes them a poor choice for treatments during the season as natural enemy and predatory mite populations are depleted, sometimes leading to SSM population flares.

Neonicotinoids containing imidacloprid as the active ingredient are also a poor choice for SSM control and in some cases may actually contribute to spider mite outbreaks. Research points to increase longevity and reproductive viability in female mites exposed to sub-lethal doses.

The carbazates, quinolones, pyridazinones and the insect growth regulator etoxazole all show good efficacy against SSM and are less toxic to predatory mites than the pyrethroids, organophosphates, and avermectins, lessening the risk for mite flaring.

These insecticides provide 3-4 weeks residual control and are active against all life stages of SSM, (with exception of etoxazole which has limited activity against adults). *Continued to page 10*

<b>Table 1 2012 Control Options for Spruce Spider Mite</b>					
<b>Chemical Class</b>	<b>Compound (active ingredient)</b>	<b>Life Stage Target*</b>	<b>Efficacy</b>	<b>Residual Control</b>	<b>Toxicity to Predator y Mites</b>
Pyrethroids	Asana XL, Adjourn, S-fenvalostar (esfenvalerate), OnyxPro, Sniper, Quali-Pro Bifenthrin Golf & Nursery 7.9F (bifenthrin), Tame (fenpropathrin), Baythroid XL (cyfluthrin)	Motiles	Good	4-6 weeks	H
Organophosphates	Chlorpyrifos 4E AG, Govern 4E, Hatchet, Lorsban Advanced, Lorsban 4E, Lorsban 50 WSP, Lorsban 75WG, Nufos 4E, Quali-Pro Chlorpyrifos 4E, Warhawk, Whirlwind, Yuma 4E Insecticide, Vulcan (chlorpyrifos)	Motiles	Fair	4-6 weeks	H
Avermectins***	Avid 0.15 EC, Ardent 0.15 EC, Lucid Ornamental, Nufarm Abamectin, Merlin, Minx, Quali-Pro Abamectin 0.15 EC, Timectin 0.15 EC T&O (abamectin)	Motiles	Good	3-4 weeks	M
Neonicotinoids	Admire Pro, Couraze 1.6F, Couraze 2F, Couraze 4F, Mallet 75WSP, Nuprid 1.6F, Pasada 1.6F, Prey, Provado 1.6F, Sherpa, Widow, Wrangler (imidacloprid)		Poor		M
Tetronic acids	Envidor 2SC Miticide (spirodiclofan)	Eggs, Motiles	Good	3-4 weeks	S
Thiazoles ***	Savey 50 DF, Onager, Hexygon DF (hexythiazox)	Eggs, Larvae	Good	3-4 weeks	S
Carbazates	Acramite 4 SC, Floramite SC, Sirocco (bifenazate)	Eggs, Motiles	Good	4 weeks	M
Sulfite esters	Omite (propargite)	Motiles	Good	3-4 weeks	S
Organotins***	Vendex (fenbutanin)	Motiles	Good	4-6 weeks	S
Horticultural Oils ****	Damoil (mineral oil), Purespray 10E, Purespray Green (petroleum oil)	Eggs, Motiles	Good	2-6 weeks	S
Quinolines	Shuttle (acequinocyl)	Eggs, Motiles	Good	3-4 weeks	M
Quinazolines	Magister, Magus (fenazaquin)	Eggs, Motiles	Good	3-4 weeks	M
Pyridazinone	Sanmite (pyridaben)	Eggs, Motiles	Good	3-4 weeks	M
Insect growth inhibitors	Apollo SC (clofentazine)*****	Eggs,Larvae,Nymphs	Good	3-4 weeks	S
Insect growth Regulators	TetraSan (etoxazole)	Eggs, Larvae, Nymphs	Good	4 weeks	M

\*Motile forms include mite larvae , nymph and adult stages

\*\*S: relatively safe to mite predators, M:-moderately toxic, H: highly toxic

\*\*\*Avermectin, organotins, and thiazole miticides are slower acting so growers should not be surprised if mites appear alive following application, it may take 7-10 days to see complete mortality.

\*\*\*\*Horticultural oils can cause phytotoxicity, particularly when used in summer. A 1% concentration of a highly refined horticultural oil is usually a safe rate to spray any time of year, but 2% pr higher may cause damage.

\*\*\*\*\*The Apollo label should be read and followed carefully to ensure proper use and slow development of insect resistance.

*Spider mites continued from page 8*

Horticultural oils are particularly useful when positioned early in the season as a dormant application targeting overwintering eggs and newly emerging larvae but coverage is key and not always easily achieved on dense canopied varieties. There is a risk of phytotoxicity and chlorosis with horticultural oils so growers should proceed with caution with new products or when using on previously untreated species.

The tetrionic acids, thiazoles, sulfite esters, organotin, and horticultural oils have the important added benefit of being relatively safe to predatory mites and have a low potential to cause mite flaring.

Growers may find that more than one treatment is necessary to control SSM, particularly under high population pressure or when utilizing an insecticide that isn't active against all life stages.

Growers are encouraged to note the presence or absence of the different life stages while scouting to help them select the best material and maximize efficacy this is particularly important in the spring when targeting eggs is an important strategy. To delay the development of miticide resistance growers are encouraged to follow label suggestions limiting the number of applications of a given product in a season and also to select miticides from more than one class of insecticides.

For example, growers may apply a dormant oil application in the spring, followed by a tetrionic acid application as populations begin to rebound, the next application should be from a class other than tetrionic acid. The rotation between different classes of insecticides helps prevent the selection of insects that are resistant to a given insecticide and mitigates the risk of resistance development.

Changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and the information provide in this article does not supersede label directions. To protect you, others and the environment, always read and follow the label recommendations.



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**“BIG E” VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED**

Please help support the New England Christmas tree industry by becoming part of the special people needed to man the outdoor and indoor booths during The Big E. We need display trees for show, pruning, and boughs for wreath making and any demonstration talents you can provide.

**September 13 – September 29**

**NECTA Outdoor Booth Contact**

John Coward                      E-Mail Address: jcow65@msn.com  
13 Congamond Road  
Southwick, MA 01077                      (413) 569-6724

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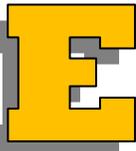
	1 <sup>st</sup> Choice		2 <sup>nd</sup> Choice
September	_____	September	_____
	_____	9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.	_____
	_____	3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.	_____
	_____	Help Set up – Thursday, September 12	
	_____	Help Take-down – Monday, September 30	

Number of working adults \_\_\_\_\_ I can demonstrate how to: \_\_\_\_\_

**Emails are appreciated over phone calls.**

\*If you cannot meet your scheduled obligation, please contact another tree grower to replace you.

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Eligibility: Open to All New England Growers & Wreath Makers-Decorators

**Entry Deadline: Thursday, September 12 AM**

Judging is on September 12<sup>th</sup>

**General Tree Contest Rules:**      **Tree Classes:** Pine, Spruce & Fir

1. Farms may enter a maximum of three (3) trees. One (1) tree per tree class.  
No flocked, colored or sprayed trees allowed. Tree handle must be trimmed and 6"-9" long.
  2. Trees must have TWO (2) waterproof shipping tags attached to butt, with name & address
  3. Tree (s) entered for prize money must be from 6' to 9' from tip to butt
  4. Tip lengths must be appropriate for tree taper
- ≈ **Deliver all entries to: Mallary Complex Rotunda between 8 am – 12 noon** ≈

**General Wreath Contest Rules:**      **Wreath Classes:** Plain and Decorated

1. Two (2) entries permitted. One for each class
2. Wreaths to be made with natural conifer greens, holly and/or Laurel or assorted greens
3. Constructed on a 10" or 12" ring.
4. Attached ID tag with name and address to wreath (s)

Other Size Trees and Wreaths Welcomed for Display Only

### Show Prizes

Christmas Trees:      Grand Champion Prize : Includes a additional \$50 premium

1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
\$ 85.	\$ 70.	\$ 60.	\$ 50.	\$ 45.	\$ 45.	\$ 45.

Decorated Wreaths

1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
\$ 55.	\$ 45.	\$ 40.	\$ 30.	\$ 25.	\$ 25.	\$ 25.

Plain Wreaths

1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
\$ 55.	\$ 45.	\$ 40.	\$ 30.

For more information on how to enter or detailed "Tree and Wreath Contest Rules" go to:  
[www.thebige.com](http://www.thebige.com) or contact John Coward, the show superintendent at (413) 569-6724

# Shearing Terminology of Christmas Trees

Scientific terminology of conifer trees can be daunting to any Christmas tree farmer. Familiar terms and not so familiar terms can lead to misunderstandings. Knowing and understanding what we are working with, will help our technique when correcting defects and characteristics early in the growth of a tree. Enhancing the salability of a tree, and help farmers recognize culls early, and reduce time and labor in the shearing process.

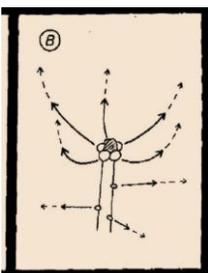
**Shearing:** Term includes cutting the leader, selecting a new terminal bud, setting the taper of the tree, trimming side branches and removing problematic growth in order to make it salable to the open market.

**Tiping:** Removal of the distal ends, (terminal and sub-terminal buds) of a branch. Where as “Shearing” removes a greater portion of the branch.

**Taper:** The angle of the side of a Christmas tree. Usually given as a percentage (width/height x 100 = %)

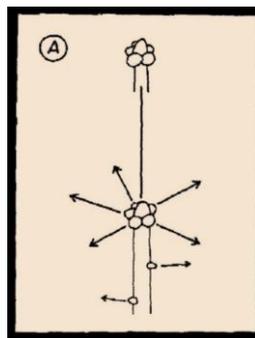
**Orthotropic:** A normal leader has a bud that “turns upward”, and subtended by four to seven nodal branches as in Fig. 1A.

**Cross Hatched Buds:** Sometimes terminal buds



abort at the beginning of the first growing season in the field, leaving the trees without a central leader as noted in (Fig. 1B Cross Hatch Bud)

**Whorls:** A ring of buds on a terminal or the layer of branches that result when the buds grow. Whorls often occur at the end of the terminal from the natural crown of buds.



(Fig. 1 A; Orthotropic Bud)

**Internodes:** Sections on the stem between bud nodes. Internodes are the “blood vessels: of the tree carrying water, hormones and food from budnode to budnode.

**Whisker Buds:** A relatively large bud (on the current season’s leader which develops a cluster of small linear needles (2 to 3 mm long) surrounding its base.

**Sessile Bud/Bubble Buds:** Typically smaller than a whisker bud, and is subtended by a single linear leaf of normal size. Or Buds on the current season’s leader that remain flush against the main stem and have one or no surrounding needles.

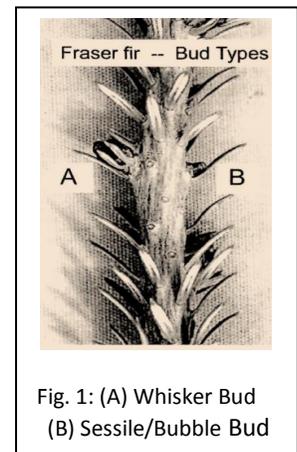


Fig. 1: (A) Whisker Bud (B) Sessile/Bubble Bud

**Bubble Buds:** Sessile buds

**Auxiliary Bud:** Buds which form in the axils between the main stem and a side branch

**Prolapsed Buds:** Buds on the current season’s leader that undergo a second flush to form a short branch of one to three inches.

**Horn:** A leader or vertical branch growing vigorously from a branch rather than the main stem; often able to compete hormonally with the leader of the tree. Should be cut out in the first year of growth. Only leave in place if they fill a large hole where no normal branches occur.

**Crossovers:** Strong diagonal branches that grow perpendicularly to normal branch growth. Should be cut out to the branch of origination unless a portion is needed to fill a hole. Even then, consider how the crossover branch will behave during harvest, baling and display.

*Shearing terminology continued*

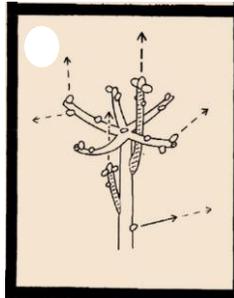
**Cat's Eyes:** The cluster of branch stubs that remain at the branch junction.

**Internodes Branch:** A space between two-nodes/buds. It is the area which extends to give the stem more length and therefore more height.

**Shoulders:** Branches that grow excessively long on the sides of the tree due to hormone growth. Trim to taper of tree. If growth is older and extends beyond taper, clippers should be used to fork prune or remove branches to minimize the formation of horns, crossovers, or cat faces.

**Adaxial Side:** The upper branches on a tree

**Abaxial Side:** The lower Branches on a tree

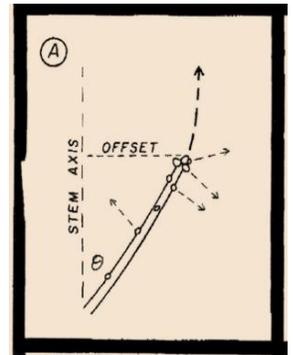


**Offset:** Is the horizontal distance of the terminal bud from the center axis of the crown. ( Fig. A-2)

**Trunk Sweep:** The stem is bowed but offset from the center axis of the crown

**Terminal Bud Selection:**

A number of different theories have been applied to selecting the right bud to make next year year's leader. Research has supported some and disapprove others. Bud size can be important after August, but may not be significant in the summer. Bud type may not be important. Some theories apply only to trees with certain leader problem and relate to the position of a bud rater that the type of bud. The truth is – no single rule can apply all the time. The following points blend research with practicality:



*Continued on page 15*

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**Shearing terminology continued**

**Decussate Arrangement of Needles:** the arrangement of needles occurring in alternating pairs at right angles (they intersect in the form of an X )

1. To get a strong leader, select a single bud with a slight height advantage (1 or 2 fingers) over any neighboring buds.
2. Leave ¼" to ½" of stem above the selected bud using a angled cut. Do not cut lower through the center of the shoot than the top of the selected bud. The cut should be highest directly above the selected bud and angle down toward the opposite side of the leader. As the wound heals and dries, the bud will be pulled to a more vertical orientation.
3. In the summer, isolating the selected bud with a height advantage is more important than either the bud size or type of bud.
4. In the fall, select large or prolapsed buds over any small buds that may be present at

5. the right height. Late in the season, small buds cannot hormonally dominate larger buds nearby on the terminal. Large buds will produce a stronger leader the following season.
6. Where leaders are crooked, pick a bud that faces the centerline of the tree. Next year, any crook to the leader will counterbalance this year's off-center growth.

**Half Length Rule:** Tree laterals are maintained at one half the length of the terminal leader. An 18" leader would be matched with 9" lateral branches. A 12" leader with be matched with 6" lateral branches. Most growers adjust the rule to their own tree style and field conditions (laterals are half length plus an inch, or laterals are half length minus an inch).

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Shearing terminology continued

**“Big Shoulders”:** Heavy lateral branching just below the terminal. When lateral branches are left too long in relation to a cut leader, the vigor can shift from the terminal to the branches in the following year. Long lateral branches contain more buds that produce more plant growth regulators. Collectively the branches out-compete the terminal shoot. Long laterals can also lead to a misshapen tree with long branches outside to taper of the tree.

**Net loss Branching:** Short lateral branches can create dominance problems for a cut leader. Short branches have few buds. Those buds at the base of lateral branches that remain after a tight shearing often are positioned to grow vertically. Cut short, an increased number of horns can be expected. Where only one or two buds were left the previous year, both shoots often become horns that have to be removed, leaving the tree with “net loss branching”.

The best solution to correct the net loss, is to leave the lateral branches longer ( and possibly the leader as well). With lateral branches of at least 5” – 6”, growth is divided to 4 to 8 buds, yielding more natural branching. With plant growth regulators divided among many buds, the vertical shoot that could become merely develops into a 3” shoot with small buds that adds density to the tree without competing to dominance.

**Resources:** Department of Horticultural Science, North Carolina University, Raleigh. Hort Science 30(2): 260-264. 1995. L. Eric Hinseley and Layne Snelling.

Correcting Loss of Terminal Buds in Fraser Fir Christmas Trees. Shaping Fraser Fir Christmas Trees Jeffery Owen, Area Forestry Extension Specialist, Christmas Trees, July 2009.

Shearing Date Affect Growth and Quality of Fraser Firs Christmas Trees. HortScience 39(5) 1020-1024. 2004. Eric Hensley and Scott Derby.

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# M.C.T.A. MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

July 10, 2013

Chicopee, MA: Attendance: Rob Leab opened the meeting at 6:30 P.M. In attendance were Dan and Kathy Pierce, Tom Cranston, Seth Cranston, Greg Davagian, Scot Dwinell, Larry Flaccus, Susan Lopes, Dave and Vicki Morin, Dave Radabaugh, Joyce Leitl, Gloria Ellsworth, Rick LeBlanc, Peter Sweet and Jim Colburn.

*President Rob Leab: The minutes of the April 2013 meeting were approved as corrected.*

**TREASURER’S REPORT:** Rob Leab reviewed YTD spending and the draft budget for 2014 as prepared by Treasurer, Joe Meichelbeck. We continue on track towards a small deficit for the year due to the decrease in membership income offset primarily by reduced spending and in particular by reduced spending for dues and subscriptions. The cash balance for the year is projected to remain in the range of \$39K. The 2014 budget is based on 121 members. After a motion and a second, the Treasurer’s report and 2014 Budget were accepted.

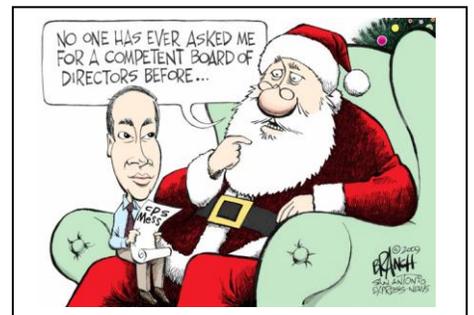
**SECRETARY REPORT:** Jim Colburn, distributed a letter received from Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc. soliciting page sponsorship of their 2013 Massachusetts Agriculture calendar. After discussion, Tom Cranston made a motion to sponsor a page in the amount of \$300. The motion was seconded by Dan Pierce, voted on and approved. The month of December is the desired first choice for sponsorship.

**MDAR Report:** Department of Agricultural Resources representative Rick LeBlanc reported that the coming fiscal year budget in the department has been level funded thus did not anticipate significant new programs. However, existing programs are running well and a 12% increase in website traffic has been measured. Last season, he said there were nearly 58,000 hits from the MDAR commuter train poster program. He showed us signage from the fruit growers for the commuter rail promotion program and spoke about promoting Ag/tourism specifically to include wine/cranberries. For the first time, Ag in the Classroom will have a summer meeting. Gloria Ellsworth will send Rick information about our annual meeting for inclusion in his newsletter/calendar. Specialty crop grants have been approved for another year.

**Nominating Committee** – The ballot for the annual meeting was discussed.

Treasurer -	Joe Meichelbeck -	1 Year Term
Secretary -	Jim Colburn -	1 Year Term
Director -	Greg Davagian -	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term Expires 2016
Director -	Joyce Leitl -	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term Expires 2016
Director -	Gloria Ellsworth -	1 <sup>st</sup> Term Expires 2015
Director -	Open Seat	1 <sup>st</sup> Term Expires 2016

Inquiries will be made to fill the open Director position.



**Annual Meeting** – Peter Sweet reported that the catering company has been selected. He anticipated that expenses for the guest speaker, Dr. Elizabeth Lamb would not be significant. Three contact hours of pesticide credits have been approved. Rick suggested that the Commissioner be invited. It was decided to hold a raffle, either 50/50 or perhaps vendors could donated items.

**“Shearings”/Website** - Gloria Ellsworth reported that a hardcopy newsletter should continue for the foreseeable future as well as the online version. Gloria presented several ideas around making our website more user friendly and more in tune with our younger customers that rely heavily on cell phone technology such as zip code reference and and mapping.

**MASSACHUSETTS CHRISTMAS TREE ASSOCIATION  
ANNUAL BUDGET REPORT**

	2012	2013	2014	
	Actual	Estimate	Budget	Change
<b>Receipts</b>				
Membership	\$ 6,920.	\$ 6,660	\$ 7,260	\$ 600
Meetings	980	1,940	1,300	(640)
Advertising/Marketing	947	1,300	1,300	-
Interest	121	135	140	5
Apparel/Misc.	378	350	250	(100)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 9,346</b>	<b>\$ 10,385</b>	<b>\$ 10,250</b>	<b>\$ 135</b>
<b>Disbursements</b>				
Marketing	\$ 2,400	\$ 1,950	\$ 1,950	\$ -
Secretary	150	200	200	-
Meetings	1,800	2,600	2,600	-
Dues/Subscr.	3,477	1,800	2,350	550
Printing/Postage	1,233	1,400	1,400	-
Travel			-	-
Stipends	1,650	1,650	1,650	-
Misc	100	100		(100)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 10,810</b>	<b>\$ 9,700</b>	<b>\$ 10,150</b>	<b>\$ 450</b>
<b>Surplus/Deficit</b>	<b>\$ (1,464)</b>	<b>\$ 685</b>	<b>\$ 100</b>	<b>\$ (585)</b>
<b>Cash Balances</b>				
Start	\$ 40,088	\$ 38,624	\$ 39,309	\$ 685
End	\$ 38,624	\$ 39,309	\$ 39,409	\$ 100

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### *MCTA Director meeting highlights continued*

It was decided a committee would be a better avenue to look into any website changes/updates. Rick LeBlanc, Dave Morin and Gloria volunteered. It was decided that Cynthia Cranston should be invited to join the group. Dan Pierce made a motion to spend up to \$500 with email updates to the Board as to any action plans developed. Rick suggested that this effort may lend itself to a possible grant.

**New Business** - Tom Cranston presented Twilight meeting expenses in the amount of \$205. The Board noted that the practice was to present such items to the Treasurer for reimbursement. Tom indicated he would do so.

In response to a note received from Nicholas Brazee, Ph. D. of the UMass Extension to update our contact information as presented in "Shearings" the Board suggested that both Nick and Rick Harper be invited to our annual meeting as our guests. Jim Colburn will extend an invitation.

Dave Radebaugh agreed to provide some potted trees for the Big E. We will advertise in "Shearings" and pay \$100 for a 10 foot tree for the fair.

*Thank you to Susan Lopes and The Paul Bunyan Farm and Nursery.*

*Respectfully submitted, Jim Colburn, Secretary*

### **Weeds of the Northeast**

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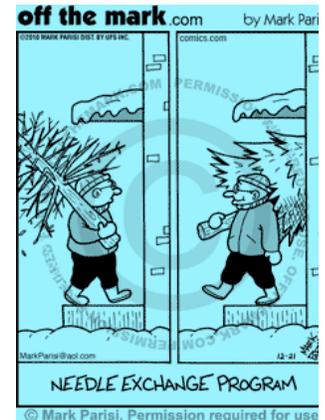
By: Richard Uva, Joseph Neal and Joseph DiTomaso  
Available at: Cornell University Book store

### **Asian Longhorned beetle eradicated in N.J. and**

**Canada:** The US APHIS has recently declared the ALB absent and declaring eradication of the ALB in New Jersey. ( Middlesex and Union Counties) ALB was recently found in Clermont County Ohio, and remains active in areas of New York and Massachusetts.

### **Brown Spruce Longhorned Beetle in Nova Scotia:**

Tetropim Fuscum, is native to Europe and Asia, is now feasting primarily on trees compromised by disease or already dead trees. BSLB feeds mainly on spruce, but attacks fir, pine and larch species. The pest has been associated with new wood stain fungus. No positive ID in the US as yet.



## **CHRISTMAS TREE RESOURCES**

### **Massachusetts Dept of Agriculture:**

[www.mass.gov/agr](http://www.mass.gov/agr)

### **Umass Extension Service**

[www.extension.umass.edu/agriculture](http://www.extension.umass.edu/agriculture)

### **Soil Testing Lab:**

Soil and Plant Tissue Testing Lab

West Experiment Station

682 North Pleasant St.

UMass, Amherst, MA 01003

(413)545-2311 fax: (413)545-1931

[soiltest@psis.umass.edu](mailto:soiltest@psis.umass.edu)

### **UMass Plant Diagnostic Lab**

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[umassgreeninfo.org/](http://umassgreeninfo.org/)

### **Landscape & Nursery Insects:**

Bob Childs, (413) 545-1053,

[rchilds@psis.umass.edu](mailto:rchilds@psis.umass.edu)

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(413) 545-2826 Fax: (413) 545-4385

[nbrazee@umass.edu](mailto:nbrazee@umass.edu)

#### **Landscape & Nursery Weeds:**

Rick Harper

[rharper@umass.edu](mailto:rharper@umass.edu)

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Northborough, MA 01532  
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Submission Deadlines

- Jan. 15 (February Issue)
- April 15 (May Issue)
- July 15 (August Issue)
- Oct. 15 (November Issue)



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Size	Dimensions	One (1) Issue	Two (2) Issues	1 Yr.- (4) Issues
Full Page	7.5" w x 10" h	\$ 86.00	\$ 162.00	\$ 304.00
2/3 Page	7.5" w x 6 3/4 " h	68.00	128.00	246.00
1/2 Page - Horizontal	7.5" w x 5" h	48.00	90.00	172.00
Vertical	3.5" w x 10" h	48.00	90.00	172.00
1 /4 Page	3 5/8" w x 5" h	32.00	56.00	104.00
Lg. Business Card	4 1/4" w x 3 1/2 "h	26.00	48.00	92.00
Business Card	3 1/2 " w x 2" h	20.00	38.00	74.00
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*For more information and details or questions please contact: Gloria Ellsworth (508) 393-6479  
Email to: [shearings2u@verizon.net](mailto:shearings2u@verizon.net)*

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