

February, 2024

THE CCTA NEWSLETTER



Christmas Tree Culturing Discussion at Crest Ranch, Sept 2023, led by Louise Moran, Alejandro Padilla and Paul Illingworth

Presidents Message

By Mark Scheberies

January is normally a time of personal reflection on our farm with questions such as: How did last year go? What were the challenges? Did we overcome them? What could we do better? What do the final numbers look like? What is our plan for this year? What new governmental regulations will we need to contend with? How can we improve our tree quality? And many more questions. Sometimes the answers are easy. Other times the answers prove elusive. As you go through your own list of questions, I'd like you to consider that you are not alone. Collectively, CCTA members have hundreds of years of experience in the specialized niche of operating tree farms in California. It is likely that the issue you may be struggling with has already been solved by someone else, and that answers can often be gleaned from roundtable discussions between members at our meetings. My wish for 2024 is that as an organization CCTA continues to foster an environment wherein our knowledge base continues to expand and be accessible to all members.

Directors

Mark Scheberies, President
Alhambra Christmas Tree Farm
2647 Reliez Valley Rd
Martinez, CA 94553

Holly Benzer, Vice President
Little Bear Tree Farm
960 Meadow Rd
Alta, CA 95701

Keith Garlock, Secretary
Garlock Christmas Trees
2275 Bloomfield Rd
Sebastapol, CA 95472

Ted Seifert, Treasurer
Silveyville Christmas Tree Farm
6248 Silveyville Rd
Dixon, CA 95620

Paul Battaglia, At Large
Battaglia Ranch Christmas Tree Farm
13580 Murphy Ave
San Martin, CA 95046

Jeri Seifert, At Large
Silveyville Christmas Tree Farm
6248 Silveyville Rd
Dixon, CA 95620

Paul Illingworth, At Large
Castro Valley Christmas Tree Farm
7001 Miller Rd
Castro Valley, CA 94546

Fall Kick Off Recap

By Paul Illingworth

In September over 40 members of the California Christmas Association gathered at Crest Ranch in the Santa Cruz Mountains to celebrate the 2023 Season Kickoff. And Oh what a great meeting it was! CCTA president Mark Scheberies opened the meeting by welcoming the participants and introducing new members and the Board of Directors. Keith Garlock gave an update on the National Christmas Tree Association and gave some valuable insight on the state of the insurance industry in California. Paul Battaglia presented information about the Promotion Board followed by an outlook on the 2023 wholesale tree market. A short video was shown promoting a five-part series of videos by Paul Illingworth on growing quality Monterey pine Christmas Trees. (These videos can be viewed on the CCTA website.)

A spirited discussion of Christmas tree issues was held during a wonderful lunch hosted by Jeri and Ted Seifert. After lunch, Louise Moran welcomed us to Crest Ranch by giving a history of the farm. Crest Ranch was the first Choose & Cut farm in California. Louise talked about all the different species growing on the 40+ acre farm (some we've never even heard of), We were amazed at the progress she has made in rehabilitating the farm following the devastating Santa Cruz wildfire of 2020 that destroyed over 80% of her trees. A tree farm tour followed with a walk around the farm looking at all the different species of trees and seeing demonstrations of shearing Monterey pine, white fir, Douglas-fir and discussing how to use stump culture to quickly replace cut trees.

At the end of the day, results of the silent auction were announced with members buying items such as wreath making equipment, shearing machines, and bow saws. All items were donated by members, with profits going to the CCTA.

Many thanks to Louise Moran for hosting the meeting. We appreciate having the opportunity to visit Crest Farm and learn the nuts and bolts of your operation.

Event Calendar

April 27, 2024: Annual Meeting and Election of Officers. Location, Alhambra Christmas Tree Farm, Martinez, CA

December 14, 2024: Farm Tour and Fall Kick Off. Tentative Date. Location to be announced.

Now Accepting Board Member Nominations

Please feel free to nominate yourself or someone else that you think would be a good candidate for the board.

Membership Renewal

2024 Association Dues can now be paid on the association website.

Suggest a Topic for a Future Meeting

Let us know the topics that you are interested in learning more about.

Reference Library

The Association reference library is housed on our website and contains an abundance of information on all aspects of growing Christmas Trees.

Seedling Sales

By Ted Seifert



The CCTA Seedling Program

The CCTA Seedling Program supports the CCTA and provides quality seedlings at a lower cost to our members. The cost for the seedlings will still be only \$1 each. We are trying to increase the quantity ordered so that this program allows CCTA to expand by having additional funds to support new programs.

CCTA Seedlings Available for 2024 - We currently have available some Incense cedar and Aptos Blue coast redwoods. They are at our nursery at Silveyville (Dixon). Also, we have approximately 4000 Monterey seedlings available for the next 2 months. Cost is \$1 and are part of the CCTA Seedling Program with Cal Forest. Call Ted Seifert at 707-365-9597 for information about these seedlings that are ready to plant right now.

CCTA Seedlings for 2025 Planting - We are putting in orders for the 2025 planting. If you want Monterey pine seedlings from Cal Forest or Monterey cypress from Ponto Nursery for next year's (2025) planting, we need to know in the next week so that they can acquire the correct number of seeds to sew.

Monterey cypress update - We have been informed that Ponto & Sons Nursery will have additional Monterey cypress seedlings available starting in March, 2024. Please contact them directly at 800-300-6003 or 760-724-6003 to order seedlings.



Notes From the Editor

by Paul Illingworth

We know you haven't heard from us in a while, but the CCTA Newsletter is back! We hope to publish the newsletter at least twice a year (maybe even three times), and send it to the CCTA membership via email. So keep an eye out in your email for The Newsletter and other information from the CCTA. Don't let it end up in your spam folder. We hope to keep you informed about happenings and events of the CCTA and the Christmas tree industry. We will periodically publish articles about various Christmas tree issues, promotion, and tips about selling and growing Christmas trees. In fact we are starting a new column called "Growing and Selling Tips" where growers can send in ideas about growing and selling Christmas trees. So we need your help. If you come across an article or publication that you think would be valuable to the membership, send it in an email to the CCTA and we will publish it in The Newsletter.

The Website - <https://cachristmas.com>

The website for the California Christmas Tree Association is chock full of valuable information. If you go to the home page you can find information about the next meeting and the tree locator. Login to the members section and you can pay your membership dues, register for the next meeting, browse through the research library, or view a 5 part video series on "Growing Quality Monterey Pine Christmas Trees".

Christmas Tree Tips

Alejandro Padilla – Do you want to water less and keep the weeds from growing around the base of the tree? Take weed mat (available at Home Depot) and cut it into 12" squares and cut an X in the middle approx. 5" long. After the seedling is planted, put the X part of the mat over the seedling and attach the mat to the soil. Then put 2" - 4" of woodchips over the entire mat. The light colored wood chips will keep the seedling cool during the summer, and the mat will keep the wood chips from degenerating into the soil. Both will allow water to penetrate during the raining season and will retain water during the summer and keep the area around the tree weed free. It's best to have the area weed free before applying the weed mat. This will last for at least 2 years.

Valuable Publication – If you are a grower of Douglas-fir or true fir you need to check out a University of Oregon publication entitled "**Identifying and Managing Christmas Tree Disease, Pests, and Other Problems**". You can go to the OSU website and either download the publication or purchase it for \$33. Well worth the price.

