

Christmas Trees: A Growing NC Business

The Christmas tree industry is growing faster in Western North Carolina than anywhere else in the country, according to the N.C. Department of Agriculture.

Recently, the Watauga Democrat of Boone used the NCDA report as the basis for this update on Christmas tree farming in the area.

Steve Sorrell, with the department's Asheville office, said that while North Carolina ranks behind some states in the Northwest and Northeast, production of Christmas trees is growing faster here than in other states because of the type and quality of trees.

"We are fortunate that North Carolina has the only natural tree stands of Fraser fir, one of the types of trees most in demand for Christmas trees," Sorrell said.

Watauga County, along with Ashe, Avery, Alleghany and Jackson counties, produces most of the state's Christmas tree crop, and the Christmas tree business has a greater impact on the state and local economy than other agricultural products, Sorrell said.

"Christmas tree production is primarily labor intensive," Sorrell said, explaining that with other agricultural products, much more is spent on packaging and marketing, often with out-of-state firms, whereas nearly all the cost of producing and marketing of Christmas trees is spent on local labor. With the exception of some planting and baling, nearly all of the work during the average 11 years it takes to produce a Christmas tree from a seed is done by hand, he said.

For comparison, Sorrell used the example of apple production.

"A bushel of apples may sell for about \$6. Up to half of that is spent on packaging in containers manufactured in Georgia; however, the cost of Christmas trees is spent in the state. Dollars per dollar, Christmas trees may have up to three times the economic impact on the local economy as some other products," he said.

Fox, owner of the Grandfather Mountain Nursery near Fosse and former president of the Watauga County Christmas Tree Association, said that the types of trees available, prices and delivery dates.

"Through these contacts in the major cities and through the Piedmont, we sell trees on an individual basis," he said. "People respond by sending a card saying 'I want a tree'."

Of course, seniors who are armed with the facts and figures are more likely to become victims of unscrupulous schemes. With a S.H.I.P. volunteer to help them review policies and to answer questions about the kinds of things to look for, older adults will become more and more aware of their rights and the agent's responsibilities in an insurance transaction.

Now there is someone in the Mooreville area who has completed this training. Her expertise is now available. And remember, S.H.I.P. volunteers are absolutely not involved in selling or soliciting for insurance.

The role of the volunteer is to help the older adult be a wise consumer. When policies are compared, it is up to the individual to make the final decision about his or her supplemental policy.

Additionally, there are folks who are having difficulty filing Medicare claims. S.H.I.P. volunteers can help with this also. If you or someone you know is having trouble—or even worried—about medical insurance coverage, let the Council on Aging office know of this. Once we have your name and phone number, we'll contact the local S.H.I.P. volunteer and she will in turn contact you. And incidentally, there is no charge for this service.

How much medical coverage is necessary for me? Should I change or replace my current medical insurance?

County Tax Collector Will Be Here Thursday

Houston Johnston of Mooreville, a deputy Iredell County tax collector, will be in Mooreville Thursday for the purpose of collecting county taxes.

He will be in the courtroom at the Mooreville Municipal Building at 413 North Main St. from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

He will have the county tax books for Coddle Creek, Davidson and Bannister Townships.

Persons wishing to pay their county taxes are urged to bring their tax statements with them.

SEEDS FROM THE SOWER

By Michael A. Guide

A little girl sobbed. "Mother, Susie dropped her doll and broke it."

"Did you help her fix it?" she asked.

"No," said the girl. "But I helped her cry."

Our Lord began His public ministry at a wedding. When others were happy, He was happy with them.

But one day He stood by a grave and wept. When others were sad, He shared their sorrows with them.

Isn't it good to know that we have a God who cares?

There's never a trial that He isn't there, never a burden that He doesn't bear, never a sorrow that He doesn't share, moment by moment, you're under His care. Aren't you glad God cares?

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Growers Association, said the growth of the industry may be creating some problems.

"There has been concern about people having too many trees in the area, but each year we seem to be able to market everything," he said.

"Several years ago I became concerned about that, so we set up an operation so that we could produce both Christmas trees and nursery stock. I deliberately did that because of our concern about too many trees."

Fox, who sells a comparatively small number of trees, 1,500 per year, said he believes quality and marketing are far more important than the number of trees grown.

"We set up a marketing scheme for our trees where we could market a large quantity of them on an individual basis; it's a very personal thing," he said. "I think it is just indicative of the situation where people are always looking for innovative ways for marketing trees."

Fox said he mails each tree to contacts, mostly in the Raleigh-Winston-Salem and Greensboro areas, which indicate the types of trees available, prices and delivery dates.

"Through these contacts in the major cities and through the Piedmont, we sell trees on an individual basis," he said. "People respond by sending a card saying 'I want a tree'."

Of course, seniors who are armed with the facts and figures are more likely to become victims of unscrupulous schemes. With a S.H.I.P. volunteer to help them review policies and to answer questions about the kinds of things to look for, older adults will become more and more aware of their rights and the agent's responsibilities in an insurance transaction.

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Iredell County Schools Menu

These lunches are planned in all elementary and middle schools in the Iredell County system during the week beginning Dec. 7. Students may choose one meat, two fruits or vegetables, a serving of bread and a carton of milk.

Monday: Pizza, corn dog, french fries, tossed salad, vegetable soup, baked apples, chilled pineapple, choice of milk.

Tuesday: Spaghetti with meat sauce, pork rib sandwich, french fries, tossed salad, chilled fruit cup, choice of fresh fruit, school baked roll, choice of milk.

Wednesday: Fried chicken, hamburger on bun, cole slaw, mashed potatoes with gravy, fried squash, chilled applesauce, school baked roll, choice of milk.

Thursday: Baked ham, bologna & cheese sandwich, french fries, green beans, buttered corn, fruit cup, school baked rolls, choice of milk.

Friday: Fish fillet, hot dog on bun, cole slaw, baked beans, baked potato/butter, choice of fresh fruit, chilled sliced peaches, school baked roll or cornbread, choice of milk.

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Most cases of frostbite occur on days when the temperature is below 30 degrees F, and the exterior temperature of the body's extremities fall below 25 degrees F. Your ears, hands, especially fingers, and feet, especially toes, are most susceptible to frostbite.

The first signs of frostbite are a tingling sensation and blanching as the blood vessels constrict to conserve heat. That's followed by numbness and pain. Frostbite is caused by the body's trying to use the limbs. Frost that sticks on a hard or wooden feel indicates frozen tissue. In those cases, seek immediate medical treatment, napsaid.

Treatment for frostbite depends on the severity of the injury. Severe cases will need a physician's attention. Under no conditions should the frostbitten area be immersed in hot water. Also, do not rub the affected part with ice or snow. In fact, any sort of rubbing to warm the area may actually pull off damaged tissue.

Use warm, circulating air between 90 and 104 degrees F) to thaw the area. Thawing can take from 30 to 45 minutes, and the area may begin to hurt.

Frostbitten areas should not be warmed in front of a fire, in very hot water or with a hot heating pad. Nerve damage in the frozen area numbs it, and the victim may be burned without knowing it.

Of course, the best treatment of frostbite is avoidance. Here are some tips for when the weather outside is frightful:

—Always wear a hat. Depending on air temperature, up to 50 percent of the body's heat can be lost each hour from an unprotected head.

Dress warmly in layers of loose clothing. Layers of clothing trap warm air around your body. Cotton socks worn under wool socks help keep the feet warm and dry.

Avoid getting wet. As water on the skin evaporates, it cools the blood below the surface. That's a comfortable process in July, but in January it can be real trouble.

If you are so cold it hurts, get inside. The pain is your body's warning signal.

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In Winter, No Pain Could Mean Frostbite

Most of the time, when it stops hurting, you're getting better. But when the winter winds blow and the sense of feeling leaves your fingers or toes, it could be a warning sign of frostbite.

Exposure to cold can dull sensations, and if lengthy, cause ice crystals to form in tissue, a condition commonly known as frostbite, according to Dr. David Knapp, assistant medical director of Duke University Medical Center's Emergency Department.

Most cases of frostbite occur on days when the temperature is below 30 degrees F, and the exterior temperature of the body's extremities fall below 25 degrees F. Your ears, hands, especially fingers, and feet, especially toes, are most susceptible to frostbite.

The first signs of frostbite are a tingling sensation and blanching as the blood vessels constrict to conserve heat. That's followed by numbness and pain. Frostbite is caused by the body's trying to use the limbs. Frost that sticks on a hard or wooden feel indicates frozen tissue. In those cases, seek immediate medical treatment, napsaid.

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Special Visitors During International Weekend

The AFS Club at Mooreville Senior High School served as the host last weekend for American Field Service students from throughout North Carolina. The weekend visit is a regular part of the AFS program designed to introduce AFS students to other people and communities during their stays in this country. Twelve AFS students from surrounding communities took part in the short-term exchange in Mooreville. The local AFS chapter sponsored special activities during the weekend for the AFS students and their local hosts. The visiting students stayed with AFS Club members and their families. Italy, Argentina, Thailand and several other countries were represented during the international gathering, according to R.D. Thompson, advisor for the AFS Club. Christina Thelin, far right, back row, and Ana Victoria, third from right, back row, are Mooreville's two AFS exchange students this year. They were the VIP hosts of the short-term AFS visit. Thelin is from Sweden and Victoria is from Spain.

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