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# Christmas Tree Newsletter

November - January 2020

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## National Christmas Tree Survey

NCTA's 2018 Christmas season consumer survey was conducted within the United States by Nielsen/Harris Poll on behalf of NCTA from January 7-9, 2019 among 2,020 U.S. adults ages 18 and older. Survey respondents were balanced for age, sex, race/ethnicity, education, geographic region and household income to match the actual proportions of the US population. The survey participants' responses are then projected to the 124.59 million US households, as identified by the 2015 US Census.

### Real Market Value 2018

Tree Type	Mean Dollars Spent	Number Purchased
Real Trees	\$78.00	32.8 million
Fake trees	\$104.00	23.6 million



### WHAT THE NUMBERS MEAN

2018 REAL TREE PURCHASES INCREASED 20%, PRICES INCREASED 4% COMPARED TO 2017 - 27.4 million real Christmas trees were purchased in 2017. On average the survey participants reported they paid \$75 for a real tree in 2017.

2018 FAKE TREE PURCHASES INCREASED 12%, PRICES DECREASED 3% COMPARED TO 2017 - 21.1 million fake Christmas trees were purchased in 2017. On average the survey participants reported they paid \$107 for a fake tree in 2017.

### Christmas Tree Purchase Figures Since 2006 (in millions)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Real</b>	28.2	28.2	27.0	30.8	24.5	33.02	26.3	25.9	27.4	27.4	32.8
<b>Fake</b>	11.7	11.7	8.2	9.5	10.9	14.7	13.9	12.5	18.6	21.1	23.6

### Where People Buy Real Christmas Trees

Location	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Choose & Cut Farm	33%	31%	24%	27%	26%	32%	23%	27%	28%
Nursery/Garden Ctr.	12%	15%	11%	8%	13%	10%	16%	15%	10%
Chain Stores	21%	16%	24%	33%	28%	26%	29%	26%	28%
Retail Lots	13%	14%	15%	22%	19%	10%	20%	19%	23%
Non Profit Groups	9%	13%	15%	6%	9%	12%	9%	10%	6%
Other	12%	11%	11%	4%	5%	10%	4%	3%	3%
Online (Amazon & others)									2%

Source: Consumer Surveys commissioned by the National Christmas Tree Association. Data can be found at <https://realchristmastrees.org/dnn/News-Media/Industry-Statistics/Consumer-Survey>

## Safety Tips During Harvest Season

### PPE to Use with Chain Saws

While chain saw accidents may be very infrequent in Christmas tree harvesting, proper PPE can make the difference between close-calls and serious injuries. Those employees who operate chain saws or lift tree branches for chain saw operators should wear the following additional protective equipment: chainsaw chaps or protective pants, hearing protection (ear muffs or plugs with a NRR rating of at least 22), eye protection (goggles or mesh screens), cut-resistant and vibration-absorbing gloves, and cut-resistant boots (ballistic nylon or leather). Hard hats are considered to be optional for Christmas tree harvest. Do not ignore the risk of chronic health problems including hearing loss and hand numbness resulting from chain saw operation.



### Baling

When preparing trees for transport, a baler is usually used. It is important to know how to properly operate the machine. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for set up and usage. If the baler gets clogged with a tree, shut off the power to the baler before trying to release the clog. When the baler is unclogged, power can be restored and work continued. Use care not to catch the twine of baled trees on buttons. Wear gloves of the proper size. They tend to get caught on baler cable and baler twine when handling trees.



### General Harvesting Clothing & Gear

While employees must be responsible for their own clothing, work conditions should be clearly explained upon hiring. Harvest workers should wear layers of sturdy warm clothing without holes or tears that might catch equipment.



They should wear shoes or boots that are comfortable to stand and walk in for extended periods of time that are supportive enough for rough terrain. The soles should have adequate traction. Steel toes may not be needed for all activities, but should be considered when working around heavy equipment and objects. Good ankle support and cushioning will maximize comfort and minimize problems from ankle twisting, sprains and strains. Gloves should not be loose and should be slip-resistant when tools and equipment are involved. Cotton or cotton-blends are best. Vibration-absorbing gloves can counteract the harmful effects of extended use of vibrating tools, such as chainsaws.

### References

<https://christmastrees.ces.ncsu.edu/christmastrees-general-farm-hazards/>  
<https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/2333e>  
<https://christmastrees.ces.ncsu.edu/christmastrees-christmas-tree-farm-safety/>

## Fraser fir Storage and Loading Yard Tips

The following are tips put together by Jeff Owen and Jerry Moody as we are experiencing a very warm and dry harvest. This is a cause for concern both for growers who are already in the middle of harvest and those who are about to begin.

1. Minimize exposure of cut and especially baled trees to sun and wind.
2. Keep trees shaded as much as possible!
3. It is better to irrigate the ground than the trees but.....irrigate.
4. Use finer water droplets to reduce heat.
5. If your interior dead needles have not dropped be careful of the amount of water that you apply.

Adjust your harvest practices to reduce exposure to sun and wind. Dry trees will be very susceptible to sun scald and string burn. Cut trees can lose half their water in a few hours on a hot sunny day. Keep your cutting crew and baling crew close together. Reduce the time trees lay exposed, especially after being baled.

Any shade is better than none. If you have natural shade under hemlocks or pines that would be best scenario. If you are using over head shade keep a buffer or gap of air (2 feet or so) above the tops of the trees and the actual cloth. Store the trees standing up and you will get a chimney effect that dissipates the heat better than if the trees were stacked like cordwood.

If you are irrigating it is best to get the ground wet and not saturate the trees. From last year's observations, we know that if interior yellow needles that normally drop are held inside baled trees, they seem to contribute to mold issues in wet trees. So by irrigating trees that retain lots of interior needles, you might create a similar situation that we observed last year with wet moldy trees. The hottest part of the day is 1-4 pm so concentrate any irrigation during that time to reduce heat. If you can use mister heads which produce finer droplets of water instead of normal sprinklers, you will get more evaporative cooling and less soaking. However, any irrigation is better than none.

We have experienced hot, dry harvests before but the extent of this season may be unprecedented. With little rain in the forecast, we don't know how much additional stress our trees will have to weather when they leave our hands. The better job of caring for your trees that you do on you farm, the better chance there is that trees will hold up on the retail lot and in a customer's home.

We ship a living fresh product. Adequate water content in the tree insures that it will still take up water and be safe in somebody's home. The irony is that stressed live trees can lose needles but dead dry trees no longer drop them. For both fire safety and freshness, we need to maintain water content and minimize stress. "We" being growers and retailers and even consumers.

Also if anything unusual is happening to trees on your loading yard give us a call. We might be able to help you address harvest issues that occur. This will be a learning experience for everyone this year.

## Trees for Troops

Each year families of soldiers have enjoyed live Christmas trees in their homes thanks to programs providing free trees from N.C. tree farms. This year we are looking for growers who are willing to donate quality Christmas trees (5, 6 & 7's).

The drop-off site for the counties west of Jackson county will be in the Big Ridge area (Fowler Rd.) off of Hwy 107 between Sylva and the Cashiers area. Christmas tree grower Scotty Pressley will drive the trees to Avery county where they will be reloaded onto Fed Ex trucks for shipment to varying military bases in the South East. **Deadline for drop-off is Wednesday December 4th 3:00 p.m.** to the Big Ridge area. Look for the loading site and a ziplock bag and paper within where you can write your farm name and address so that a donation receipt will be mailed to you.

For more information contact Scotty Presley 828 743-2275, 828 388-1505 or Christy Bredenkamp at ph # 828 586 4009 or e-mail [clbreden@ncsu.edu](mailto:clbreden@ncsu.edu)

# NCDA&CS Update - Regarding Shipping Christmas Trees & Greenery to Oregon & Other States

Oregon regulations regarding Christmas trees and greenery have changed effective immediately. Recipients of cut Christmas trees and cut evergreen branches are required to pre-notify the Oregon Department of Agriculture.



You may read the full regulation here [https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/ORODA/2019/10/21/file\\_attachments/1308406/FilingNotice%20603-054-0085.pdf](https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/ORODA/2019/10/21/file_attachments/1308406/FilingNotice%20603-054-0085.pdf)

As a reminder the following states of California, Oregon, Washington, Wisconsin, Florida have notified NCDA that they will be watching shipments from NC closely for the presence of Elongate Hemlock Scale. Should you have any questions regarding shipping regulations please contact *Ryan Holquist, NCDA Plant Pest Specialist at 828 421 5445* [ryan.holquist@ncagr.gov](mailto:ryan.holquist@ncagr.gov)

Dr. Jill Sidebottom adds; “additionally other states such as FL, WI, MN, UT, WA, CA had issues last year and a bit in LA can at times - they want all the paperwork to be in order.”

October 30, 2019



## Happy Holidays

Christy Bredenkamp, Extension Agent  
Agriculture-Horticulture

