

Southern Christmas Trees

The Southern Christmas Tree Association Newsletter

Fourth Quarter 2022

December 31, 2022

Highlights:

- Trees for Troops, 2022 Update
- Weed Control in Container Nurseries
- 2022 NCTA-TIP
- SCTA New Board of Directors
- August 12-14, 2022 Annual Meeting Review
- 2022 Tree & Wreath Competition Winners
- Fourth Quarter New Members
- 2023 Membership Dues, Renewal

From the Executive Secretary

Another very successful Christmas season has blessed SCTA membership. Despite some challenging weather, which seems to be becoming the norm, everyone was very pleased with sales, onsite activities and visitor participation. All the hard work paid off with thousands of smiles and many more memories. Obtaining a supply of fresh, pre-cut trees from committed suppliers from the farm source and broker levels has been and continues to be the most challenging issue for members offering retail sales.

Later in the newsletter, I'll review more about the annual meeting but wanted to thank everyone who attended and made the annual meeting a success. Another record was achieved during the Saturday night auction. Thank you contributors. Thank you bidders. Thank you auctioneer Bentley Curry and barker Michael May. And, I thank the rest of you for participating throughout the evening.

The St. Tammany Parish Tourist & Convention Commission even provided sponsorship in support of SCTA's annual meeting. Thank you!

Enjoy this break after Christmas, if you can. Ha! Continue to work safely, stay calm and ready yourself for another good year. Pray (x12) no hurricanes.

Sincerely,
Michael Buchart, Executive Secretary

Please see attached dues renewal. Thank you.

Trees for Troops Program

Excerpts from Rick Dungey's, Trees for Troops, email to SCTA 12/21/22.

Hello Everyone.

We hope you had a great sales season. With this note, we wanted to get you some final tree request numbers and updates from the Trees for Troops program. Final numbers reported:

<i>Military Branch</i>	<i>Bases</i>	<i>Trees Requested</i>	<i>Trees Delivered</i>
Air Force	16	4,400	3,585
Army	25	9,115	7,158
Coast Guard	11	501	442
Marines	9	3,280	2,636
Navy	23	2,950	2,570
<i>Totals</i>	<i>84</i>	<i>20,246</i>	<i>16,391</i>

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We expected around 15,300 total trees this year but all of you came up with about a thousand more! This puts the grand total through 18 years of the program at 293,392 trees donated to the military by Trees for Troops and FedEx.

Did you by chance see the Ford commercial that played for more than a month ... the one that shows the Trees for Troops logo on a banner as an example of community service? Ford made three different banners which they gave to us after finishing their commercial. Great promotion!

Thank you to all of you for your commitment and dedication to making this program happen.

Sincerely,

Rick Dungey, Executive Director, Trees for Troops

www.ChristmasSpiritFoundation.org & www.TreesForTroops.org

Telephone: (314) 416-2245. Email: RDungey@ChristmasSpiritFoundation.org.

Note from the executive secretary: Steve Mannhard of Fish River Trees (www.FishRiverTrees.com) serves as the Trees for Troops program representative for SCTA. He is always available to answer any questions about the program. The executive secretary does not know how many trees originated from SCTA membership but, whatever the participation, it is certain Southern trees brought "a little more warmth" across the country during the historic arctic blast.



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Weed Control in Container Nurseries

Dr. Jeremy Pickens requested the executive secretary include the following “Weed Control in Container Nurseries” article in our newsletter. Normally, the executive secretary would print the article within the newsletter but there are numerous, colorful images and supporting tables worthy of going directly to the PDF file or Internet link. Please see the attached PDF file or search “Weed Control in Container Nurseries” on the Alabama Cooperative Extension System website www.aces.edu.

From Dr. Pickens:

The article goes over principles and practices for using pre-emergent products in nursery containers. If you are just getting started, I would use a granular. You sprinkle it over the top of the pots. Many are safe for our tree species. I would go with Marengo, Tower, or BroadStar and use Gemini G or Snapshot for cool season weeds. Most of these on the list work very well. Check out the efficacy table and pick the herbicide that performs best on your top two weeds.

These granular products are easy and safe to use but you have to use them correctly to get the most bang out of your buck. Most are around \$70 to \$100 per 50 pound bag. The rates are typically 100 to 200 pounds per acre. If you are interested in using them, give me a call and I can walk you through an effective way to treat small areas.

Good luck,

Jeremy M. Pickens Ph.D., Assistant Research and Extension Professor
 Nursery and Greenhouse Crops, Department of Horticulture
 Auburn University, Ornamental Horticulture Research Center
 P.O. Box 8276, Mobile, AL 36689. www.aces.edu.
 Telephone: (334) 319-3829. Email: Jeremy.Pickens@auburn.edu.

2022 SCTA NCTA Tree Industry Partnership (TIP)

Fifty-five SCTA member farms *actively sold trees this year* for which SCTA contributed \$25 per member farm (\$1,375) to support the National Christmas Tree Association’s Tree Industry Partnership.

The TIP program is essential for NCTA’s (www.RealChristmasTrees.org) mission to protect and advocate for the farm-grown Christmas tree industry. The funds collected through the program are vital in supporting NCTA’s legislative and regulatory initiatives, holiday safety, research, national media advocacy and other protection-focused programs and the Real Christmas Tree Locator (<https://RealChristmasTrees.org/all-about-trees/tree-locator/>).

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SCTA's New 2023 / 2024 Term Directors

The 2023/2024 state director positions for Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi were filled by Jacob Wadsworth (AL), Gray Anderson (LA), and Brittany Anderson (MS). Bentley Curry (LA) will resume as SCTA's NCTA Representative. SCTA appreciates Gray, Brittany, Jacob and Bentley for being involved. This will be Brittany's second term as a new-comer and Jacob's first time on deck. Fresh, young blood! Thank you both and all.

The full compliment of SCTA's officers and directors with contact information can be viewed at www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org > Membership > Officers / Directors. The new slate of officers will be updated January 2023.

2022 Annual Meeting

The 2022 annual meeting of the Southern Christmas Tree Association held at the Courtyard by Marriott – Covington (www.Marriott.com/MSYCV) was another popular success. It was very well attended and provided nonstop opportunities to interact, learn, make new friends, pick up supplies and visit a couple of great farms.

Zondra Jones and Tanya Leader with the St. Tammany Parish Tourist & Convention Commission (www.LouisianaNorthShore.com) and their staff did a fantastic job working with the executive secretary and were on hand helping Tim and Brenda Parker (www.ParkerAcresFarm.com) during registration while the executive secretary himself was all over the place. Thank you!

The entire crew of the Courtyard made every effort to make sure SCTA's meeting was comfortable and enjoyable. The general manager, Darius, event specialist, Heather, facilities manager, Nick, Ellen and all the supporting staff provided a great meeting place complemented with delicious meals. The executive secretary would like to add that while he was planning the meeting he learned that the general manager was also very proud to be the head chef. The executive secretary thought about that for a moment then carefully asked, if in the unlikely event there is a problem with the food, who would he approach with the concern. Darius promptly replied with a broad smile "I am *the man*, we love to cook and you will not be disappointed." Awesome! If only more hotels would take note. Thank you Darius and crew!

When folks traveled in on Friday they had the opportunity to visit Brent & Mitzi Dufrene's Tiger Branch Christmas Trees north of Covington. The Friday "open-farm" events, like this one, are becoming increasingly popular since they offer more opportunities to visit areas farms over the annual meeting weekend. The open-farm events are much more informal and laid-back. No frills; just come on in and have a look around. They provide a great location to kick some dirt and ask a few questions.

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Mitzi and Brent did an excellent job preparing their farm for visitors. The executive secretary estimates approximately 75% of meeting participants visited Tiger Branch Christmas Trees.

SCTA sincerely appreciates Brent & Mitzi's effort preparing the farm and opening the gate for everyone. Contact information: 18075 Tiger Branch Road, Covington, LA 70435, Facebook: Tiger Branch Christmas Trees. Telephone (504) 236-4271. Email TigerBranchTrees@AOL.com.

It is the desire of SCTA that more growers offer their farms for Friday open-farm events. If an annual meeting is to be held within a one-hour drive of your place, please be in touch with the president or executive secretary if you are interested "opening your gate". If you have a small start-up farm or just grow trees, do not feel you have little to offer or share. Not the case. There is always something hosts and visitors will learn or offer, just ask Tim and Brenda Parker.

Friday evening the board ate dinner nearby at Don's Seafood (www.DonsSeafoodOnline.com/covington) with family and other members. Their staff did a great job preparing delicious meals and serving the group. Everyone from the general manager, Danya, to servers McKenzie and Carsen did what makes the South proud - they took care of people. Thank you Don's Seafood!

The board met afterwards in the Courtyard to take care of business, review the annual meeting program and make last minute adjustments, made preliminary plans for 2023 and finalized board nominations for membership vote.

Saturday, participants filled both the expanded ballroom and side room to capacity while the two concurrent sessions provided a platform to talk Christmas trees, other revenue generating activities, gift shops, pre-cut mechanics, and etc.

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SCTA is very appreciative of the session facilitators Mollie Anderson of Grant Farms (www.GrantChristmasTreeFarm.com), Kevin Steele of SAJE Products & Parts (www.SteelesSaje.com) and Steve Mannhard of Fish River Trees (www.FishRiverTrees.com) for managing the discussions and the contributing panel members. Tré Haydel of Irrigation-Mart Baton Rouge Region (www.Irrigation-Mart.com) gave a thoroughly informative presentation on irrigation systems and options. Contact Tré Haydel at 13779 Airline Highway, Baton Rouge, LA 70817, telephones (225) 938-3004 & (225) 755-3447, email Tre.Haydel@ Irrigation-Mart.com.

Dr. Jeremy Pickens of Auburn University talked of weed control while incorporating grower member Ric Culberson's of Wedowee Creek Farm (Facebook: Wedowee Creek Farm) successful experiences into his time slot. Dr. Courtney Siegert of Mississippi State University (www.MsState.edu) gave a general update on MSU research efforts. Dr. Jeff Wilson also with Mississippi State University and a SCTA Director talked about native Christmas tree production in North Mississippi. SCTA is fortunate to have research leaders such as Jeremy, Courtney and Jeff interested in supporting the association and its membership.

Neal & Jessica Sharp hosted the Sunday Farm Tour on their Country Pines Christmas Tree Farm (Facebook: Country Pines Christmas Tree Farm) located at 81332 Jim Sharp Road, Covington, LA 70435 in St. Tammany Parish. The Sharps arranged for an equipment display, discussion stations, conducted hands-on demonstrations and hosted discussions under a big tent under even bigger oaks. Boss Hogs Kitchen catered a hearty lunch. What could have been a suppressing hot day was one of comfort and enjoyment. Neal can be contacted by telephone (985) 630-4547 or email CountryPinesTreeFarm@gmail.com. Thank you Neal and the Sharp family for a wonderful day.

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Annual Meeting Exhibitors

A very significant component of SCTA annual meetings is the participation and support of *our* exhibitors. Their attendance not only enhances the educational experience but they will have what you need and can certainly advise you if you are confused or uninformed. The executive secretary encourages growers to communicate with their suppliers and use SCTA events as an opportunity to pick up supplies saving everyone shipping costs.

The 2022 annual meeting exhibitors were:

Julie & Stephanie of *Evans Christmas Products* located 7930 Zeigler Boulevard, Mobile, AL 36608, www.EvansChristmas.com. Telephones: (800) 832-4521 & (251) 633-6008. Email: Julie@EvansAndCompanyInc.com.

Gray Anderson of *Grant Farms* located 17030 Highway 10, Pitkin, LA 70656, www.GrantChristmasTreeFarm.com. Telephone: (337) 789-3072. Email: GrayAnderson88@yahoo.com.

Jill & Mike Carter of *Mills Gourmet* located P.O. Box 1507, Lindale, TX 75751, www.MillsGourmet.com. Telephone: (800) 765-0014. Email: Sales@MillsGourmet.com.

T. Jay Roland (represented by Evans Christmas Products) of *The Kirk Company* located P.O. Box 547, Beaver Creek, OR 97004, www.KirkCompany.com. Telephones: (920) 765-2001 & (800) 426-8482. Emails: TJRoland@KirkCompany.com & info@kirkcompany.com.

Kevin Steele of *Steele's SAJE* located 25184 Blitzens Way, Angie, LA 70426, www.SteelesSAJE.com. Telephone: (985) 848-5133. Email: sheridanrn@yahoo.com.

2022 Tree & Wreath Competition Winners

SCTA members came forth with a good participation for the tree (6) and wreath (6) competitions. Grant Farms, Curry Farms, Yawn Station Christmas Tree Farm, Shearer's Trees, Steele's Christmas Tree Farm and Wadsworth Christmas Tree Farm stood trees. Talson Farms, Yawn Station Christmas Tree Farm, Back to Christmas Tree Farm, Windy Hills Farm, Wadsworth Christmas Tree Farm and Worthey Tree Farm hung wreaths. All was done in good spirit for everyone's enjoyment. Thank you.

And, the winners were:

Tree Competition

Grand Champion & Alabama 1 st	Wadsworth Christmas Tree Farm
Louisiana 1 st (tied)	Grant Farms & Steele's Christmas Tree Farm
Louisiana 2 nd	Yawn Station Christmas Tree Farm
Louisiana 3 rd	Curry Farms
Mississippi 1 st	Shearer's Trees

Wreath Competition

Grand Champion	Wadsworth Christmas Tree Farm
Second Place	Yawn Station Christmas Tree Farm
Third Place	Windy Hills Farm

New Members – Welcome All!

New members who have joined since the last published newsletter are listed below with basic contact information. The executive secretary tries to recognize all new members but sometimes, with apologies, someone might fall through the crack or, more appropriately, between the roots. Established members are encouraged to consider contacting SCTA's newest folks and welcome them into the association. Be sure to look for and meet new growers during the annual meeting as identified on their name tag.

Douglas & Amy Byrd of 475 Moccasin Pond Lane, Richton, MS 39476 planted trees January 2020 where they have a cattle and goat ranch. Telephone (601) 394-3687, email DouglasOrAmy@gmail.com.

Tucker & Lillie Eyre of 271 Tiffany Lane, Pineville, LA 71360 planted trees 2021 on their property. Telephone (318) 880-6682, email EyreFarmsLLC@gmail.com. Facebook: Eyre Farms.

Tony & Tamara Hyatt planted Christmas trees 2021 on their 3 acre farm located 241 Holley Branch Road, Evergreen, AL 36401. Telephone (850) 758-9525, email TamaraHyatt34@gmail.com.

Anthony LeDoux has a farm located 1305 Kingfisher Street, Sulphur, LA 70663 where he plans to plant trees 2023. Telephone (337) 802-2491, email AWLeDoux22@yahoo.com.

Rebecca Graham & Jimbo Shaw own a vegetable farm, Hoss Pen Farms, located 1373 James Road, Gore Springs, MS 38929 where they plan to plant trees 2023. Telephone (205) 310-5891, email Cowgirl5891@gmail.com. Facebook: Hoss Pen Farms.

Tidbits Learned along The Way

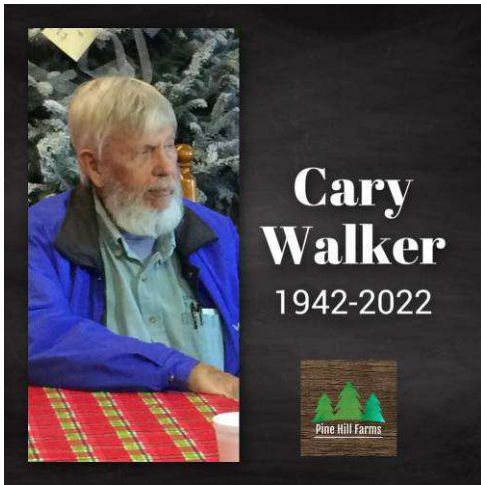
The executive secretary encourages readers to offer tidbits (ideas, unique marketable items, tricks of the trade, inventions, ingenious methods or techniques, anything off the wall that works, especially gizmos) that might be of value, interest or amusement to SCTA'ers. Simply text or email a statement and pictures to the executive secretary who keeps an on-going list of such. *Got Tidbits?*

Tidbit #12 Tree Cookie Ornaments / Memoirs

While the executive secretary was preparing this newsletter, his daughter, Ali, was surfing social media and was excited to see that people are cutting cross sections off the base of their Christmas trees and writing their names and year on the cookie to save as tree ornaments or memoirs. That brought to mind during one of SCTA's farm tours, the executive secretary recalls a member was cutting and dressing tree cookies to sell in their gift shop or hang on a bulletin board with their name on it.

So Tidbit #12: Make something out of tree cross sections. Cut, dry, sand, seal and decorate tree cross sections for sale as coasters, table, wall or tree ornaments. The name of your farm, location and a space for the year might appeal to your customers. Minimally, it would make for a good project for an enterprising youngster.

Fallen Trees



Former member William Cary Walker of Pine Hill Farms near Tarrant, Alabama passed away June 10, 2022 at 80 years. He and his wife Carlene established their Christmas tree farm in 1992 where they enjoyed many years on the farm. Cary had served on the boards for the Alabama Christmas Tree Association and SCTA. Cary's obituary can be viewed at <https://obits.al.com/us/obituaries/birmingham/name/william-walker-obituary?id=35265163>

Membership

SCTA has three (3) levels of membership:

- 1) Regular grower (actively selling trees) dues are \$120.00 (after March 1st \$130.00) annually
- 2) New growers just starting out or people considering the adventure, may join for \$50 annually and can pay the \$50 rate for a maximum of 3 years or until they begin selling trees, whichever is first
- 3) Growers in states other than Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi may join for \$60 annually and will be listed on SCTA's website under their state link. Such growers are non-voting members.

The executive secretary respectfully requests timely submission of dues for it is a time consuming effort to shake the trees. Thank you.

SCTA's Website

If you have recently created your own website or made any changes to your farm contact information please inform the executive secretary by e-mail so the updates can be made to the association's database. It is important you review occasionally.

For those members who do not have a website, SCTA provides a dedicated sub-page (until you have your own website) to facilitate exposure of members actively selling farm grown trees. If you are opening in the coming year, SCTA will post your page with the expected sale season the year before you open. Information posted will be static in nature, i.e. farm name, address, telephone number, county and a brief location description.

If you utilize SCTA's website and have a Facebook page (highly recommended) the executive secretary will provide a link to your Facebook page. However, if you are not already signed in with Facebook the link may not follow through but at least the farm name should get you there.

New growers who are not yet harvesting should consider promoting their farm through social media to develop an early following but be prepared for early arrivals since many will not read the fine print.

SCTA Advertisement, Exhibits, Sponsorships

Feel free to inquire about advertising, exhibiting or sponsoring events with SCTA. SCTA's advertising platforms are the quarterly e-mailed newsletters, the association's website membership page and the annual meeting program packet. When you advertise with SCTA, your placement is with each platform for a 12 month period. Advertisers are requested to provide electronic file (.jpg or .pdf) copies of logos, art work and text suitable for placement in Word documents.

SCTA's 12-month advertisement fee schedule is as follows. Please note, when an advertisement is placed, it is for the following consecutive 12 months beginning with the next full quarter and not bound to a fiscal or calendar year.

One quarter page: \$200.00. A one quarter (approximate) page ad is placed in the quarterly newsletters, annual meeting packet and on SCTA's membership web page.

One half page: \$400.00. A one half (approximate) page ad is placed in the quarterly newsletters and annual meeting packet. A one quarter page ad will be placed on SCTA's membership web page.

Annual meetings are usually late summer rotating in the order of Alabama, Louisiana & Mississippi. Exhibitors and sponsors are always welcome during annual meetings or other events hosted by SCTA. Exhibitor fees vary per event with SCTA keeping costs at a minimum. SCTA strives to make fees agreeable for all. SCTA members or yearly advertisers who exhibit benefit with a \$40 exhibitor discount. If you are interested in partnering with SCTA, please contact the executive secretary.

Current advertisers and sponsors should always check SCTA links for correctness.

Announcements, Deaths, News, Tidbits, Whatever

If you have information worthy of mention in the newsletter, including deaths of past members or significant industry contributors, please inform the executive secretary.

Southern Christmas Trees is a multi-page, quarterly newsletter of activities and interests of the membership including ideas and information beneficial to the industry. The newsletter serves as the official venue for information dissemination to membership. Content is provided by members and secured or derived elsewhere. Every effort is made to use factual information from established, credible sources with references. Subscription is a membership benefit.

Distribution is by e-mail.

SCTA's official website is www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org administered by the executive secretary.

SCTA's "open" Facebook page "Southern Christmas Tree Association" and associated "Members Only SCTA" private group are member benefits administered by the executive secretary. Up-to-date, paid SCTA members qualify for inclusion in the private group "Members Only SCTA".

Michael Buchart, Executive Secretary, 1830 West Fairview Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70816 USA
Telephone: 225.505.6335. www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org, E-mail: SCTAES@gmail.com

SCTA's Advertising Supporters:

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Evans Christmas Products



Attached: Weed Control in Container Nurseries
2023 Membership Dues, Renewal



Friday open-farm Tiger Branch Christmas Trees

DONS LOGO



Friday Board Dinner, Don's Seafood



Brother Harold Gaddy, Pastor Bible Baptist Church, Franklinton



The Pledge



Here We Are 2022!



President Mannhard Welcome



Dr. Jeremy Pickens Auburn University



Ric Culberson Wedowee Creek Farm



Dr. Courtney Siegert
Mississippi State University



Dr. Jeff Wilson
Mississippi State University



Tré Haydel
Irrigation-Mart Baton Rouge Region



Alfred Froberg
Froberg's Farm



Other Than Trees



Michael May & McKayla Carey
Lazy Acres Agritainment



Lunch along The Trees



Dinner



The Courtyard Crew
Game Faces On!



Commissioner Mike Strain, DVM
Keynote Speaker



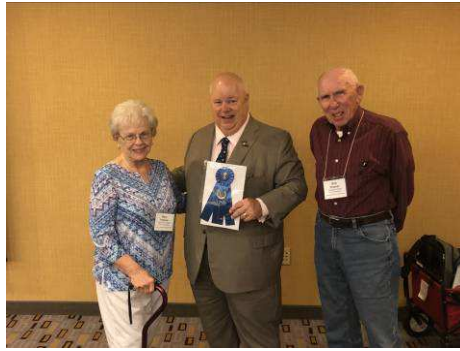
Commissioner Strain
Dr. Lisa & Ricky Peairs
Windy Hills Farm
3rd Place Wreath



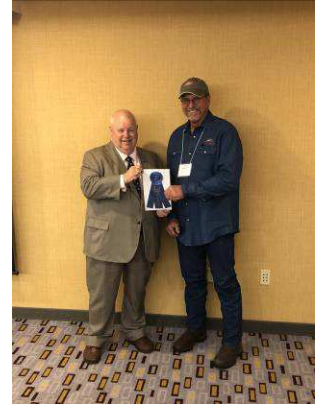
Commissioner Strain
The Gersch Family
Yawn Station Christmas Tree Farm
2nd Places Wreath & Tree



Commissioner Strain
Kevin & Beverly Steele
Steele's Christmas Tree Farm
Louisiana 1st Tree



Commissioner Strain
Bob & Mary Shearer
Shearer's Trees
Mississippi 1st Tree



Commissioner Strain
Gray Anderson
Grant Farms
Louisiana 1st Tree



Commissioner Mike & Susan Strain
Kevin & Beverly Steele
Steele's Christmas Tree Farm



Auctioneer Bentley Curry & Barker Michael May



Jacob, Frank & Lucie Wadsworth
Grand Champions Tree & Wreath



Stephanie Evans & Julie Holland
Evans Christmas Products
The Kirk Company



Gray Anderson
Grant Farms



Mike & Jill Carter
Mills Gourmet



Kevin Steele
Steele's SAJE



Welcome to Country Pines Christmas Tree Farm



Lots of Vehicles



Original Homestead
Now 3rd Generation Farmer



Modern Amenities



Presidential Welcome
Opening Prayer



A Packed Tent



Neal & Jessica Sharp Welcome



Robin & Ashleigh Hughes Are
Ready!



Out with The Good Equipment



Evans Wondering if That is Their Old
Equipment



In with The New Stuff



Into The Field



A Great Field Gathering



Count Us In!



So, you really want to become a Christmas tree farmer? And, then maybe have a gift shop you constructed (ADA approved) with really good merchandise or utilize leftover whatever for whomever would be off their rocker to buy, befriend a really good Santa Claus, find and sell some of them Northern trees knowing someone will tell you the local discount chain sells them 40% less, build and maintain a maize, lay out a jump thing, string up a zip line, plant a bunch of flowers, provide somewhere for several photographers to make lots of easy money with the strangest of props outside the prescribed area, provide a well stocked campfire to roast weenies, stargaze and hope it is all legal, have a bunch of animals you fed and medicated all year praying they will not bite, keep an attractive gate that somehow or another is not in plain enough English that you are either not open yet or you are closed? But, of course, only after you have dedicated 8,760 hours getting ready since you finally closed the gate, fought the bugs, disease and fungi, maintained your equipment, mowed more grass than the best of them while frequently being branch slapped, spent most of last year's profit on everything you can imagine for the next year, suffered inundation, hail, killer freezes, blistering temperatures, oppressive humidity, drought, oh wait – did not even mention hurricanes, downed fields, been bit and stung by every lurking, hidden creature, tried to secure an ample supply of planting stock, laid awake at night wondering if you got the chemicals right because you can't reach your go-to people because they might be fishing, the to-do list becomes scrambled while trying to prioritize. What about the zillion little challenges of the sale season? Was not that tree pre-tagged or marked SOLD? What, your tree died? Then, someone dear to you says "Let's go vacation, tomorrow!"

Not a problem. Christmas tree farmers are some of the stoutest, most innovative, dedicated and serious folks who know why there is a Christmas. And, they enjoy doing it.

Still interested? Want to keep farming? Hang in with The Southern Christmas Tree Association where there is some of the best group therapy available.

Editor's note: this ain't the complete list.