

# Evergreen Bulletin

## Rhode Island Christmas Tree Grower's Association

### Coming Events

- July 31 RICTGA Board of Directors Meeting
- Aug. 15–18 NCTA meeting; Bangor Maine
- Aug. 25 RICTGA Summer Meeting
- Sept.30–Oct. 14 Big E

### Officers and Directors for 2007

President: Jane Durning 364-7599  
Vice President: Karen Menezes  
683-9122

Secretary: Eric Watne 624-4119  
Treasurer: Robert Balme 568-8888

Northern District Directors  
John Emin 231-3317  
Ron Rossi 822-4966

Southern District Directors  
Kevin Durning 364-7599  
Robert Fleishbein 295-1720

Eastern District Directors  
Jay Bento 624-4872  
Don Gavin 635-8582

Director at Large  
Steve Trombley 508-336-9087

Chris Modisette USDA-NRCS  
822-8877

### Stone Wall protection—Boon or Bust

*Reprinted from "The Forest Conservationist"*

Recent actions by several Rhode Island towns to enact ordinances to protect stone walls are seen as an important tool to protect our colonial heritage from being destroyed by developers and miners. For certain, there is a problem out there in certain instances when an old wall is destroyed for the sake of a few dollars. But don't some folks think the same of timber harvesting? (Or Christmas Tree Harvesting?)

Let's take a look at the issue. First of all, there is a website at the University of Conn. Run by Professor Bob Thorson, who has written three books on the origin and meaning of New England's stone wall heritage. The

site, [www.stonewall.uconn.edu](http://www.stonewall.uconn.edu), advocates for the protection of these walls, as are many conservation organizations. Professor Thorson recently addressed the Scituate Conservation Commission Annual Meeting and described New England's stone walls as our, "Pyramids", in that the cumulative effort it took to build all these walls should be honored by their protection.

Existing protection of stone boundary walls is indirectly provided under Chapter 34-10 of the RI General Laws, where a stone wall property boundary is considered a fence. Towns are now incorporating stone wall protection in their subdivision review process, with varying degrees of success, and several towns have passed

ordinances for walls along public ways and those of historic value in the community.

The potential controversy surrounding additional protection involves private property rights. Should government regulate the removal of walls within your property? Is timber harvesting next? What about your right to farm and decide what you grow?

*Editor's Note: Stone walls are as much a part of the fabric of the New England countryside as the seasons. Many of us have stone walls on our farms and this may be of interest.*

## 2007 NCTA Meeting to be Held in Bangor Maine

The National Christmas Tree Grower's Association will hold their 2007 convention and Trade Show Aug. 15–18, 2007 in Bangor Maine. This is a rare opportunity for New England grower's to attend this very well done convention in their own backyard.

You don't want to miss all that the Convention has to offer:

- \*A great lineup of speakers
- \*Educational farm tours
- \*Fun-filled pre- and post- tours
- \*Top-notch industry trade show
- \*NE regional tree contest
- \*National wreath contest
- \*Networking with fellow growers

- A Taste of Maine theme night

All members of the Christmas tree industry are invited. Make plans now to attend!

For more information, visit [www.christmastree.org/convention.cfm](http://www.christmastree.org/convention.cfm) or call 636-449-5070.

## News from the University of Rhode Island

Submitted by Kristen Dame

Over the past year, the University of Rhode Island's Cooperative Extension Agent, Whitney Langone has worked closely with the RICTGA to provide technical support to growers. An unexpected job change on her husband's part has resulted in Whitney moving to Virginia. I would therefore like to take a moment to introduce myself as the new URI Extension Agent.

I come from a long line of Rhode Island farmers: my family has been farming in Johnston for over a century. Our farm is currently home to three draught horses, fruit orchards, sweet corn, summer vegetables, pumpkins and winter squash. For the past five years, I have been working full time on the farm, assisting in both production and marketing.

As your extension agent, I am here to assist you in pest identification, site selection and maintenance, and professional development. Towards those ends, I'd like to put in a plug for the National Christmas Tree Association's 2007 Summer Convention and Trade Show in Bangor Maine, Aug. 15—18. It's a wonderful opportunity to hear from speakers on production, marketing, agri-tainment, and business management. For more details, visit

[www.christmastree.org/convention.cfm](http://www.christmastree.org/convention.cfm)

I hope you will all feel free to contact me at any time. I can't wait to work with you!

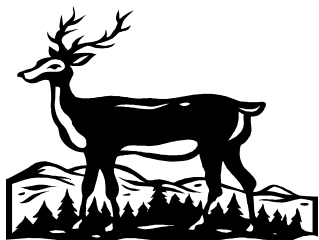
*Editor's Note:*

*On behalf of the members of the RICTGA I'd like to welcome Kristen to her new position as our Cooperative Extension Agent from URI.*

*Kristen can be contacted at 401-874-2967. Her cell phone number is 401-935-7308.*

*We'd also like to Thank Whitney Langone for all her help and wish her the best with her future endeavors.*

## RI Bow Hunter Seeks Farmers in Need of Assistance



Cheryl Briggs, an accomplished RI Bow Hunter would like to offer her experience in helping tree farmers plagued with deer damage to their trees. Solutions

could be immediate or planned in future. Cheryl can be contacted at 413-330-2860. Her email address is [hiker2877@gmail.com](mailto:hiker2877@gmail.com)

## Legislative Session Ends

Submitted by Al Bettencourt, RI Farm Bureau

As I entered the State House on what would be the last legislative day, I bumped into one of my fellow lobbyists. He said if the session ended today ( Fri. June 22) it would be OK with him because no harm had been done to his constituents. He did have a bill he wanted passed, but if the session ended, he knew nothing new would come up to harm his clients. That to a large degree is how lobbyists measure their success. If no laws are passed against you, it's a good year. Based on that criteria farmers in R.I. Had a great year because no legislation passed that hurt us this year. And the fact that we had five pieces of legislation pass that helped us makes it a fabulous year. Unfortunately, our top priority bill did not pass which was to lower the inheritance tax. Baring a veto from the Governor, which is unlikely, the following new laws were passed.

**Notification:** The notification law we had passed 2 years ago was modified to include more farmers. Farmers who register with RI Div. Of Ag will have their names forwarded to cities and towns who must notify farmers in writing if they are going to introduce an ordinance that could affect the farmer's business. All farmers

who have a Class II Tax Exempt Certificate qualify. But again, you MUST register with RIDAG.

**Farm, Forest and Open Space Study** The General Assembly will study the Farm, Forest and Open Space law and make recommendations to improve the law.

**Alpaca Sales Tax:** A Portsmouth Alpaca farmer was told recently that they were supposed to be collecting sales tax on Alpacas and they owed the State \$250,000 for 6 years worth of sales tax. This new law makes it clear animals that produce fiber, such as Alpacas, are exempt from sales tax. Thanks to Senator Alves the bill was made retroactive to 1999 and the Portsmouth farmer should be off the hook.

**Historic Farms can Serve Food:** Under a new law farmers who own homes on the historic register can allow people staying overnight on the farm to help prepare their meals, certain restrictions apply.

In the eleventh hour an amendment was added to the budget that allows people who sell local produce to schools to get a 5% tax credit. Not a bad legislative year

All in all, not a bad legislative year for farmers.

## It's Summertime Again!

*Taken from "The Real Tree Line", written by Tom Rathier*

### Blue Spruce Discoloration

If you did not see improvements when applying Bravo Weather Stick for the treatment of Rhizosphaera and spruce needle rust on Blue Spruce during the 2006 growing season, it might be either not frequent enough sprays or you are not using the correct rate. Many times Bravo is used when spraying for Rhabdocline on Douglas Fir, however the rate for Rhizosphaera and spruce needle rust is nearly 2X. Check the rate for correct application. Some growers who have been using the high rate of Bravo have been seeing significant discoloration, not unlike what happens with horticultural oil, but it doesn't show up until later in the season.. Tom Rathier of Uconn Experiment Station has a trial planned in the greenhouse this month to see if he can repeat the problem and hopefully have something to say before the next spray season.

*Taken from the "Real Tree Line", written by Rich Cowles*

### Scale Insects

At the top of the list of insect pests for most farms are armored scale insects on true firs. Conn. And R.I. Are twice cursed in that both elongate hemlock scale (EHS) and cryptomeria scale (CS) have become established in

plantations. Of all the insect pests reported by growers to be troublesome, armored scales pose the greatest challenge for economical, effective and selective management.

Elongate hemlock scale ( Fiorinia externa) has been observed in native hemlock stands in the state for over 25 years. It does not exclusively infest hemlocks and be found on several different conifers, the true firs and Douglas firs especially.

Cryptomeria scale ( Aspidiotus cryptomeiria ) has been present in the state for a much shorter time. It has been observed on other conifers but it evidently favors true firs. Many plantations are currently finding both scales on their true firs.

Both scales have similar habits. They both disperse as young crawlers by wind from tree to tree. They infest the undersides of needles, typically beginning on denser foliage near the bottom of trees. Once their crawlers are settled, they feed on plant sap by inserting a sucking mouth part into the needle, potentially causing the needle to yellow and eventually die. Females of each scale secrete a protective cover or armor under which they lay eggs. Hatched crawlers are capable of settling beneath these armors.

Crawlers of each scale can emerge over extended periods. The two scales differ in that fewer CS are needed per needle to cause injury or death. EHS can have two generations per year and CS only one. But, in it's single annual generation, CS typically has more viable crawl-

ers, which may account for its ability to more quickly render trees unmarketable.

Management of both scales has been limited by both their location on the trees and the extended timeframe of crawler emergence. Thorough dormant cover sprays of horticultural oil can be effective but success is often limited because it is generally too difficult to get the spray to the undersides of needles on the dense lower branches. Furthermore, adult scales often survive oil sprays. Crawler sprays with other insecticides can be effective but extended emergence patterns usually require multiple sprays for effective management. Dr. Cowles has observed populations of insects that prey upon or parasitize armored scales on true firs in many plantations. Most of these beneficial insects are likely to be harmed when non-selective insecticide sprays are made to trees. There are some new insecticide products becoming available that have systemic properties. He is developing a strategy of limited use of such products to minimize injury to predators, thereby allowing for both chemical and biological suppression. Two products that are especially noteworthy are Flagship and Safari. They are chemically re-

lated To Provado but more effective when used as a foliar spray to kill newly settled crawlers. Safari is extremely systemic and has been the "winner" in two years of field trials. ( EPA registration no. in RI is 33657-16-59639 and is manufactured by Valent USA). Although it is anticipated to disrupt predatory beetles, it is probably non-toxic to wasps that parasitize the




---

*"Volunteers are needed for the ,Summer Field Meeting , Big E, Tree for Troops and State House Trees programs"*

### Have Something to Say?

We welcome contributions to the Newsletter from our members. It's YOUR newsletter and

we value your input! Send articles to Wayne Gunderman for inclusion in future issues.



*Rhode Island Christmas Tree Grower's Association*

70 Burdickville Rd.  
Charlestown, RI 02813

Phone: 401-364-7599  
Email: RICTGA@cox.net

**Rhode Island Grown Better and Fresher**

---

WE'RE ON THE WEB AT  
RICHRISTMASTREES.COM

---

## 2007 RICTGA Summer Field Meeting

The RICTGA will hold its Annual Summer Field Meeting on Sat. Aug. 25 at Greene Tree Farm in Greene (Coventry) R.I. Horatio Chase will be our host for the day.

The day's lineup includes a farm tour, an expert speaker and demonstrations. Food will be provided. The meeting starts at **9 am** and will adjourn in the early afternoon. Included in this newsletter is a form to RSVP for the meeting to allow those responsible to make adequate preparation for the food. A \$10 registration fee is required to cover the cost of food and the speaker.

Our host, Horatio Chase has been growing Christmas trees at Greene Tree Farm since the early 1960's. He is our longest serving member of the RICTGA

and has a wealth of knowledge about growing and selling Christmas trees.

The meeting will be an opportunity to share ideas with other members as well as to learn from those who are doing it. It should be a wonderful day at a very well established tree farm so plan on coming to share it with your fellow RICTGA members!

### DIRECTIONS

From I-95 take exit 5 onto Rt. 102 North. Proceed +/- 5.5 miles and turn left onto Waterman Hill Rd. Bear right onto Hall Rd., Greene Tree Farm is on your right.

## Delayed Launch for Yuletide Tree Gift

The Yuletide Tree Gift program has announced a delay in the launch of the program until the Christmas season of 2008. In an email sent recently by Lewis Randa, CEO of Yuletide Tree Gift, several factors were cited for the delay including the number of cards ordered (10 million) fell short of what many retail stores felt was the acceptable minimum. It is hoped that by extending the deadline for ordering cards to Jan. 2008 that the number of cards ordered can be increased, hopefully by another 5 million.

The RICTGA is a member of the Yuletide Tree Gift Program and as such will receive approximately 2 cents for each card distributed with the sale of a tree by our members. Other beneficiaries of the program include the Salvation Army and the NCTA.

### Trees Needed

The RICTGA will be participating in the Trees for Troops program and the RI State House Trees Program this year. We need donations of trees by our members to make both of these programs work. If each RICTGA member farm donated just 1 tree, we could make both programs a resounding success. Both programs benefit worthy causes and bring attention to R.I. Christmas Tree Growers.

Take a moment to fill out the questionnaire included with the RSVP form for the Summer Meeting included in this newsletter.