

NEEDLE NEWS

A publication of the Inland Empire Christmas Tree Association

Fall 2012

IECTA Gathers Oct. 6 in Newman Lake for Fall Meeting

IECTA's annual fall meeting is scheduled for Saturday, October 6 at a new location. We're meeting at The Center at Word of Life Community Church at 6703 North Idaho Road Newman Lake, Washington.

- 9:00 a.m. Gather & Greet - light breakfast & coffee
- 9:30 a.m. White Pine Weevil Control Update
Jennifer Jensen, University of Idaho Extension
- 10:00 a.m. Break
- 10:30 a.m. Cultivation of Corkbark Fir for Christmas Trees -
Continuation of Dan Barney's Work
Jennifer Jensen, University of Idaho Extension
- 11:30 a.m. To be announced
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 p.m. IECTA Business: vacancies & by-law changes
- 3:00 p.m. Conclusion

Just for the fun of it ...

**Donate a
Door Prize
for the
Fall Meeting**

**Directions to
The Center at Word of Life
Community Church
6703 North Idaho Road
Newman Lake:**

- ◆ Take I-90 Exit 299 at State Line. Head north across the Spokane River.
- ◆ Go 0.4 miles then take a left onto E Wellesley Ave.
- ◆ Go 0.2 miles.
- ◆ Take the a right onto Idaho Road.
- ◆ Go about 1 1/2 miles to The Center next door to the Word of Life Church.

Jim Deitz displays IECTA's yard sign at the summer farm tour. Signs are available from John Myhre. They are made by the Kootenai High School computer graphics class.



Grand Fir Seedlings Available

Place your order for 2015 by November 1, 2012 using the attached order form.

Contact Tom Leege at 208-664-3725 if you want seedlings for spring 2013 or 2014.

IECTA Bylaws Changes for Members to Consider & Vote On

At the spring 2012 meeting we discussed possible changes to the Inland Empire Christmas Tree Association Constitution and Bylaws (referred to as the "bylaws") including eliminating the requirement to have the president countersign checks, a dues increase, and eliminating the requirement for a bond. These changes would continue our ongoing effort to update the IECTA bylaws.

We have been operating without two signatures on checks written by IECTA. Officers can review the association's financial records at any time, and the bank has been

processing our checks with one signature. Removing the requirement for the president to countersign checks would more accurately reflect the reality of our operations.

We discussed increasing annual dues and not charging for meeting attendance. This would make the treasurer's job easier and may encourage more people to attend meetings. Our bylaws require approval by the membership for changes in dues.

The bylaws require a bond. We have been paying \$100 a year, but we're not sure what this buys us. We did not renew the bond this

year. Lisa Beckman checked with the insurance company, and they can't tell us what the bond covers.

Members should consider these changes and be ready to vote on them at the fall meeting on October 6, 2012.

Another possible change to the bylaws should be considered. Our current bylaws refer to a nominating committee. We have not been operating with a nominating committee, and at the fall meeting we should discuss eliminating references to the nominating committee and be prepared to vote on that at the spring 2013 meeting. ▲

Leeges Attend NCTA Convention & Farm Tour in Sacramento

The NCTA Convention and Trade Show took place in Sacramento, California on August 8-11. In addition to the scheduled convention events, the ever popular optional tours were a highlight. Theme night was held at the California State Railroad Museum and featured tours of historic trains, a barbecue dinner and a barbershop quartet. The museum is located in "Old Sacramento" and we had an opportunity to explore that area.

We joined a post-convention tour to the Eastern California Foothills that included McGee Christmas Tree Farm, Carson Ridge Evergreens, and Indian Rock Tree Farm. Lunch was served at Madrona Vineyard

where we explored the wine-making industry and enjoyed many of the fresh products from the area coupled with Madrona wines. In addition to Christmas trees crops grown among the rolling hills include apples, pears, grapes, blackberries and nuts. It is a beautiful and productive area to visit.

Leading researchers, Gary Chastagner and Chal Landgren gave workshops on root rot and grafting. The concurrent sessions always provide the Christmas tree farmer a wide array of subjects to choose from on continuing education and focused on progress with

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Grand Fir Seedlings Available from IECTA

2015 seems like a long way off, but if you want grand fir seedlings from the Sandpoint seed orchard for planting in 2015 we need your order by November 1, 2012 so that Silvaseed can stratify and plant the seed in early 2013. See the attached order form.

We will also have about 2000 P+1 seedlings available for purchase and delivery at the spring 2013 and spring 2014 meetings. The cost is 50 cents a piece. Contact Tom Leege at 208-664-3725. ▲

**IECTA
Fall Meeting
Saturday, October 6**

**The Center at
Word of Life
Community Church**

**6703 North Idaho Road
Newman Lake, WA**

IECTA Summer Farm Tour was at Rusty Gate Tree Farm

The summer meeting and tour of the Inland Empire Christmas Tree Association was held July 21, 2012 at Rusty Gate Tree Farm in Harrison, Idaho. John and Lynette, with sons Marshall and Graydon, operate the tree farm in the Panhandle of Idaho, which consists of 70 acres of Christmas and landscaping trees and timberland.

John planted the first trees in 1985 and expanded the farm in 2000. The Myhres grow a wide variety of evergreens: grand, concolor, balsam, corkbark, fraser and Nordman fir; Norway, Serbian, Meyer, Black Hills, Englemann, and blue spruce; bristlecone, border, Austrian, dwarf and tree mugo, stone, ponderosa, eastern white, Korean, and scotch pine.

They open the farm for choose and cut customers the day after Thanksgiving. They also wholesale trees earlier in the season and sell landscape trees for digging in the spring.

But where was the Rusty Gate? We didn't find a Rusty Gate. The farm is affectionately named after a yellow Labrador that lives on in namesake. However, two friendly chocolate labs welcomed us as we arrived at the gathering. We were also welcomed into a lovely red-roofed log home that John and Lynette constructed themselves from Idaho white pine timbers.

Hail damage on trees from a summer storm was of particular concern. Needles were torn from the branches and tender new growth severed from the limbs shortly after budbreak in June. New buds were sprouting, but



Vic Deitz listens to John explain his farm operations, equipment, and hail and bark beetle damage.

Trees will not be harvested in that area of the field this year.

John demonstrated several tools that he finds useful on the farm. An Echo basal pruner from Kelco was helpful for that otherwise back-bending job. John recommended "plant stress glasses" that identifies trees that are struggling in the field. They are available at forest supply businesses. John also recommended an electronic pruner by Felco and displayed tree stands that they use for pre-cut trees for the Christmas season.



Carolyn Leege takes notes during IECTA's summer farm tour of Rusty Gate Tree Farm near Harrison, Idaho.

John shared an observation about fields that were planted to grass in between rows of trees. He felt that the grass was competing for moisture and because of the stress the fir engraver beetle attacked. He opened the bark and illustrated how the engraver carves a horizontal tunnel or gallery in the cambium layer.

Carolyn Leege

IECTA President's Field Notes

Our fall meeting is coming right up on Oct. 6. In the business meeting we will address the changes to bylaws and filling some vacancies. We need to fill the treasurer position, webmaster position, and a board member position. We need ideas for meetings and activities to be relevant to you, our growers and members.

We have been trying to improve our organization by examining our structure and procedures and recommending changes. Through Lisa Beckman's work we have examined costs and revenues. We have reduced our mailing list, streamlined the newsletter, and offer E-mail options to reduce costs. We have dropped our insurance coverage for standard meetings and hope to drop the treasurer surety bond. We did not fill the National director from IECTA. Our current editor has elected not to take newsletter pay. We streamlined bookkeeping by dropping the association's role in magazine subscriptions and hope to change the double signature requirements. If we can adopt a new revenue structure by reducing meeting charges and increasing yearly dues we might be able to budget expenses on known revenue amounts rather than waiting to see how many members show up for meetings. We are trying to live within our means.

I sure enjoyed the summer meeting at our place in July. It is gratifying to talk over things with other growers. Our hail damaged buds are now shaking out of trees in the western plots and don't look totally devastated but rather similar to frost damage. This is not the case with the five acres really hammered by the hail storm. These trees will take at least a year to recover. Cutting and burning grand fir infested with fir engraver beetles seemed to prevent further damage, though the wet spring probably also helped.

Remember when Dr. Richard Old told us about getting a used android phone and downloading his *XID Broadleaf* app? Well for 65 dollars for the unactivated used phone, 10 dollars for the app, and the help of a teenager I am now keying out weeds from a downloaded database. I think I might download a bird identification app next.

Don't forget the meeting has moved to The Center next to the Word of Life Church. This is a very impressive, brand new building. It will be a great place for our fall meeting. I'm looking forward to seeing you all and have built a little extra room in the schedule to give us time to catch up.

John

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current challenges and future threats. Keynote speaker, Jack McCall, focused his humorous presentation on "Challenge of Change". Breakout sessions covered legislative issues, safety practices, succession planning, pests, fire code, wildlife control, tree keepability, credit cards, and other topics.

A blue spruce grown by Russell and Beau Estes, owners of Peak Farms in Jefferson, N. C. was named 2012 Grand Champion of the National Christmas Tree contest, earning the Estes family the right to present the official White House Christmas Tree this year. Paul Smith, owner of Cool Springs Nursery of Banner Elk,

N.C. was selected as the Reserve Champion with a Fraser fir. Those North Carolina folks grow beautiful trees! Winners of the National Wreath Contest were Rene Scarcella of Washington (undecorated) and Gary Hague of Pennsylvania (decorated).

The convention and tours always provide an opportunity to visit with acquaintances old and new from across these vast United States, and those attending from far away farms. Tom and I send special thanks to the California crew for hosting such a fine opportunity to learn and enjoy.

Carolyn Leege

