

NEEDLE NEWS

A publication of the Inland Empire Christmas Tree Association

Summer 2012

Summer Farm Tour at Rusty Gate Tree Farm July 21

The summer farm tour will be at John and Lynette Myhre's Rusty Gate Tree Farm at Harrison Flats, Idaho on Saturday, July 21 beginning at 9:00 a.m. We'll have the farm tour in the morning then gather for a potluck lunch. John and Lynette will provide the meat and drinks. Please bring a potluck dish, salad or dessert to share.

Rusty Gate is located at 12000 E O'Gara Road near the junction of Hwy 3 and Hwy 97. See maps.

Directions to Rusty Gate Tree Farm:

From Coeur d'Alene take I-90 east over 4th of July Pass to Exit 34. At Exit 34 head south on Highway 3 for 23 miles to the junction of Highway 97. Take a right onto Hwy 97. Go a half mile to O'Gara Road. You'll see the sign for Kootenai Schools. Go one half mile on O'Gara Road. Our driveway is on the left.

From St. Maries take Highway 3 north to Highway 97. Take a left at the "Y" onto Hwy 97. Go a half mile to O'Gara Road. You'll see the sign for Kootenai Schools. Go one half mile on O'Gara Road. Our driveway is on the left.



**Please call
208-689-9868**

**or
email**

**rustygatetreefarm@gmail.com
if you plan to attend the
summer farm tour.**

Thank you!

Fall Meeting Saturday, October 6

IECTA Annual Fall Meeting
Saturday, October 6
Word of Life Community Church
6703 North Idaho Road
Newman Lake, WA 99025
Watch your mail for details!

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 was not discussed at the spring meeting but 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.

IECTA President's Field Notes

We will be meeting at our farm in about a month for the summer tour. Tours have always been my favorite IECTA meetings, learning from other operations and having time to kick the dirt and visit. I hope that we can catch up on our farm work a little bit beforehand because I am behind schedule more than ever this spring. Since May 1, we have had 15 inches of rain which has slowed down or eliminated several activities.

We are having trouble with fir engraver bark beetle in our grand fir plantings. This hit us once about ten years ago. It wasn't too serious then, but this time we have lost hundreds of 4 to 7-foot trees. Some trees looked poor last November and then throughout the winter and spring more trees have proven to be affect-

ed. The whole tree often dies or maybe only a few limbs. Peeling off the bark shows the distinctive horizontal egg galleries of this beetle. The entrance holes are not very noticeable. The literature says that endemic fir engraver primarily hits overstocked or otherwise stressed native stands of grand fir. The forestry recommendations are to thin these stands for less competitive stress, covert to other species not attacked, to harvest affected trees and to burn, remove or chip the slash to reduce future attack from developing broods. We are burning all the apparently affected trees this spring and are hoping to prevent further damage. Joel Fields of Wilbur Ellis suggested a couple of chemical treat-

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Mary Ann Storms Recovering after Accident

Mary Ann Storms suffered broken vertebrae in her neck as a result of a vehicle accident just before the spring meeting. Mary Ann said she is recovering nicely and hopes to get the neck brace off soon. She will start physical therapy once the doctor says she has healed enough to remove the brace. In a card to IECTA Mary Ann wrote:

Dear IECTA friends,

Thank you so much for the beautiful lily that Tom and Carolyn delivered to me at St. Lukes rehab. The plant brightened my room and your good wishes raised my spirits. Jim and I were sorry to have missed what we hear was an excellent program. Believe me, we'd much rather have been with our good IECTA friends than where we were. We look forward to seeing you in the fall.

With many thanks for your cards and good wishes -

Mary Ann Storms

Treasurer's Report

Balance 1/1/2012	\$3,985.93
Income as of 3/30/2012	\$2,091.00
Expenses as of 3/30/2012	-\$459.05
Balance 3/30/2012	\$5,710.16

Submitted at the 2012 spring meeting by
Treasurer, Lisa Beckman

IECTA Spring Meeting Minutes – March 31, 2012

The Inland Empire Christmas Tree Association held their spring meeting at Foothills Community Center in Spokane, Washington on March 31, 2012. Our new president, John Myhre, welcomed members and guests after muffins, fruit, coffee, tea and juice. We also enjoyed breakfast burritos, a new treat that we were invited to taste and try. On the agenda was the delivery of grand fir seedlings from our seed orchard that have tested excellent in a needle retention study. 100 extra trees were available, so Beckman, Jasper and Hanson purchased them for 40 cents each.

Our first speaker of the day was Jena Lassiter, from Community Growth Web. She specializes in designing and developing web sites and optimizing sites for high search engine ranking. She also has experience designing and developing interfaces for next generation cellular phones.

Our members learned ways to help their business be “found” on the internet. Jena suggested the following ideas to draw links to our websites and therefore earn a higher rank on the search engine:

- Change information often to increase links
- Give merit by linking to a University
- Look at other successful web sites to see how they do it
- List specific trees on tree farm websites
- Write articles and link to your site
- Link to other related interests

Jena told us about an upcoming class at the NIC Workforce Training Center in Post Falls for further study on the subject.

Our next speaker was Dr. Richard Old, who has earned many titles along the way, including “Weed Warrior of the Year” and “Weed Hall of Fame Award. He has been the weed identification specialist for Washington State University and the University of Idaho and the author of the “1,000 Weeds of North America” on interactive CD and the “1,200 Weeds of the 48 States and Adjacent Canada” on interactive DVD. Dr. Old is a renowned national and international speaker on the subject of interactive plant identification and forensic botany. He is also the president and founder of XID Services Inc., which creates interactive identification software. It has been used by others to produce “smart keys” to identify insects, fishes, rocks, diseases, etc. For example, Flora ID Northwest, LLC uses the XID software platform and has created the largest species level plant identification database ever produced.

Dr. Old walked us through an exercise of keying out the common dandelion using a dichotomous key, then compared it to his computer software system. The exercise demonstrated that he had developed an easier way to find out a name of a plant. He reminded us that we do want to know the name of a plant to know how to control it in our Christmas tree fields. He suggests placing a plant in a scanner, or photographing it and sending it to someone for identification. Dried out specimens are often difficult to identify.

Wayne Stewart from Wilbur Ellis conducted a question/answer session. Wayne has been assisting our organization for many years and members thanked him for his faithful service and attendance at our meetings.

Our business meeting followed. Marve Kaschke made a motion, seconded by Mike Yackley that the minutes from the fall meeting be

approved as published in the newsletter. Motion carried. Lisa Beckman, treasurer, reported a balance of \$5,710.16. Tom Leege made a motion, second by Larry Cook that we accept the report. Lisa also completed an audit and a projected budget for the coming year.

The financial issues triggered much discussion. In hopes of reducing the cost of doing business, Mike Y. made a motion, seconded by Tom L that we drop liability coverage and ask for a refund for the remainder of the year. Motion passed unanimously. It was further suggested that, if we plan an event in the field or in public during the year, we would purchase a one day liability policy. We tabled further discussion and will revisit the issue again as old business at the fall meeting.

Subscriptions have caused much confusion with members reporting that they did not receive publications as ordered. Mike B moved, seconded by Dave Tysdale, that IECTA suspend collecting magazine payments and allow members to attend to their own subscriptions. Motion carried.

By-law changes were our next topic. Eliminating two signatures on checks, a dues increase (suggestion to have a higher annual fee and no charge for individual meetings) and eliminating the bond are issues to be discussed and studied over the next few months and voted on at our fall meeting.

Our summer farm tour and potluck was scheduled for July 21, 2012 at Rusty Gate Tree Farm on O’Gara Road near Harrison, Idaho. We will gather at 9 a.m. for refreshments and a tour. The Myhre’s will supply the main dish and members are invited to bring salads and desserts for lunch.

Tom Roberts volunteered to host the fall meeting at his church on Idaho Road. Tom L made a motion, second by Mike Y. that we give the new location a try. Motion carried. Rent costs for the facility are quoted to be the same as the Foothills location and it may be more conveniently located. Tom will book October 6, 2012 for that meeting.

Dellora Gauger, web page manager, gave notification that she will step down from her position this fall. Lisa Beckman volunteered to assume that role for us. IECTA thanks them both. Nikki Shockley resigned as Needle News Editor. The spring issue was her last. IECTA thanks Nikki for her hard work and expertise these last two years. It was through her efforts that our membership was kept informed.

Marve Kaschke mentioned the fine news coverage IECTA has enjoyed in our National magazines, Christmas Tree News, Christmas Tree Magazine and the NCTA Journal.

Door prizes were donated by Cooke’s Forever Green Tree Farm, Myhre’s Rusty Gate Tree Farm, Beckman’s Legacy Tree Farm, Aldrich’s Nursery, and Leege’s Blue Haven Tree Farm.

Respectively submitted,
Carolyn Leege, IECTA Secretary

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ments that may be effective to protect trees. These include systemic insecticides Safari and Lada which are applied by bare soil drench, trunk spray, and broadcast. It looks like the cost could be about \$1-2 dollars a tree per treatment for the product. If sanitation doesn't work for us, this may be something I will consider in the future. I have been considering what has triggered this attack. Perhaps establishing total grass cover in the attacked fields may have resulted in too much moisture stress on these trees when combined with a very dry summer of only 1.7 inches of rain June through September in 2011. In contrast, my other grand fir in bare soil treatment had no beetle attack. I am considering killing more grass around the trees to lessen moisture competition. You might watch for this pest and burn affected trees as soon as you can or consider pesticides.

Another destructive episode was a strong thunderstorm microburst of hail and gale force wind June 4. I have never experienced a wind this strong. The 15-minute storm shredded buds and broke off tender leaders of those trees in the most delicate stages of shoot elongation. It will be interesting to see if the trees will recover this year or will need more time. Lots of trees lost the buds entirely on the windward side and are looking pretty rough.

We look forward to seeing you all at our place on July 21 for tour of our farm, a potluck lunch, and, most importantly ... time to visit!

John

Mark Your Calendars

- **July 21:** Farm Tour & Potluck
- **October 6:** Fall Meeting