

# NORTH CAROLINA CHRISTMAS TREE ASSOCIATION

## FARM TOURS



## SATURDAY, AUGUST 7<sup>TH</sup>

### Farm Tour 1

This tour will visit **Bottomley Evergreens** headquarters and greenery manufacturing facility, the largest operation of its kind in NC, a wholesale Christmas tree and pumpkin farm operated by **Wishon Evergreens**, the **NCDA&CS Upper Mountain Research Station** which produces the greatest concentration of Christmas tree research at one location on the East Coast, and a tour of Mistletoe Meadows, provider of the 2007 White House Christmas tree.

- At Bottomley Evergreens, we will tour cold storage, manufacturing, and shipping facilities as well as greenery waste utilization and state-of the-art labor housing.
- At Wishon Evergreens Duncan farm, we will see one of the first installations of permanent deer fencing on an NC Christmas tree farm, a Christmas tree loading yard designed for efficient movement of tractor trailers, a demonstration of unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) used to inventory Christmas trees, and pumpkins grown as an alternative crop.
- At the Upper Mountain Research Station, tour stops will include Fraser fir progeny tests, the next generation Fraser fir seed orchard, glyphosate (Roundup) resistant weed control research, Fraser fir substrate and container seedling research, and a demonstration of an agricultural spray drone.
- The tour will end at Mistletoe Meadows wholesale and choose & cut farm owned and operated by Joe Freeman where Fraser fir production can be seen from sown-seed to wholesale shipment.



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#### Farm Tour 2

The tour will begin at **Frosty's Choose & Cut**, one of the largest Choose & Cut farms in NC, owned and operated by brothers who are fourth generation Christmas tree growers. Next stop is **Appalachian Christmas Mountain Farms**, a 100+ acre wholesale Fraser fir farm that has recently added choose & cut to the farm's operations, all while learning to adapt to changing conditions of the land. The tour will progress to **Circle C Choose & Cut farm**, a family farm covering 30+ acres, with a 150 year-old restored farmhouse and a newly restored barn that serves as a wedding and event venue. The tour will then travel to Avery County to visit **Avery Farms**, a 200 year-old farm featuring a variety of U-pick crops, where the Avery family and their friends will treat tour guests to a pig pickin'. Last stop will be a short tour of the **NC Forest Service Linville River Nursery** Fraser fir container seedling nursery in Crossnore.

- At Frosty's Choose & Cut farm, we will see facilities used for a fall pumpkin festival and winter Christmas tree sales. Just one part of a larger wholesale operation, we will hear about the vital and important role that direct marketing can play.
- At Appalachian Christmas Mountain farms we will see a scenic wholesale/choose & cut farm located in Watauga County on the Eastern Continental Divide, owned by two large-scale Christmas tree growers. With a prime location just off the main highway, this farm is set perfectly for choose & cut traffic, but the farmers continue to face changing land and climate conditions including phytophthora.
- The Circle C Choose & Cut Farm operated by Dennis Cook and Jim Henson is inside the Boone City limits. They are a linchpin of the local Choose & Cut promotional effort that has created "Choose & Cut Season" between "Leaf" and "Ski" seasons for the booming local tourism industry. Listen to their story and the grower collaboration with the tourism industry.
- Avery Farms has been an industry innovator for a generation and has diversified across multiple crops and different market niches. Learn from one of our industry's giants as Waightstill Avery and his family discuss history of the farm, developing a mail order Christmas tree market, and their version of a Choose & Cut venture.
- NC Forest Service Linville River Nursery has supplied Fraser fir seedlings to NC growers since 1970 -- as bare root seedlings for most of its history, but more recently as container-grown plugs. Recently, local growers and the NCCTA rallied together to save this important industry resource. We will tour their seedling production greenhouse and learn about their tree improvement program.



*Trinity Tree Company - Avery Farms*



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#### Farm Tour 3

This tour will highlight several farms representing the greatest concentration of Christmas tree farms in any county east of the Rocky Mountains. The first stop will be at **River Ridge and Peak Farms** loading yard owned and operated by Rusty and Beau Estes and Jessie Davis, suppliers of the 2008 White House Christmas Tree. The next stop will be the largest Christmas tree container seedling and transplant nursery in NC, **Barr Evergreens Nursery** operated by Rusty Barr. Our last stop, **Hart-T Tree Farm**, is both a wholesale Christmas tree farm and retail lot operation that continues to diversify. This tour will traverse scenic roads that wind through the New River Valley.

- At River Ridge & Peak Farms, featured stops will include Christmas tree fields from which a national contest winner was harvested, a large wholesale loading yard, a glyphosate resistant weed herbicide trial, and a demonstration of unmanned aerial vehicle (drone) inventory management.
- Barr Evergreens nursery presents a diverse array of container crops and best management practices. While Rusty Barr and his team currently produce some of NC's finest Christmas tree seedlings and transplants, the business grew from a "hair-brained idea." Challenge your own perceptions as you view media mixing, container filling, seedling and transplant production, and ornamental nursery production all in one compact facility.
- Hart-T Tree Farms have repeatedly broken the bounds with fresh ideas and new markets. See their new Choose & Cut event center, their "Little Saps" online seedling gift enterprise, and Christmas tree fields that reach the horizon. Topics of discussion will include leadership development, dealing with the Department of Labor, controlling cones on Fraser fir Christmas trees, a different weed management study, and the consequences of Phytophthora root rot.

