

# Message for Prospective New Entrants

Hello and Welcome to the Christmas Tree Industry,

We're glad to hear that you're interested in getting started with Christmas trees! Our council has a plethora of knowledge and resources for any inquires throughout the time of building your business and working with your trees!

The Christmas Tree Council Nova Scotia is the umbrella organization, or coordinating body, for the three regionally based Christmas tree grower associations in Nova Scotia. **We highly recommend to join one of the associations as they are full of experienced producers that have great networking opportunities, are able to give great advice, and have regular field days and meetings presenting on useful topics.**

The Associations are the

- Lunenburg County Christmas Tree Producers' Association (LCCTPA) serving the South Shore of Nova Scotia
- Cobequid Christmas Tree Producers' Association (CCTPA) serving central Nova Scotia area of the province
- Northeastern Christmas Tree Association (NeCTA) serving Northeastern Nova Scotia.
- *Producers from Cape Breton are hoping to develop a group.*

There is a huge range of CTCNS/producer aid material to check out as well. It all comes in various forms and there are continually new developing materials every month released on our website, emailed, or mailed out. In the meantime, I've listed some online resources below for you to check out.

- **Nova Scotia Christmas Tree Journal** – A quarterly journal with articles from the community. Printed journals are included with an association membership. See <https://ctcns.com/association/journal/>
- **Christmas Tree Grower's Manual Atlantic Canada** – Available for free for association members and for purchase (\$50+hst). A 2021 'how to grow Christmas trees in NS' development in collaboration with Dept. of Ag, Dalhousie, Nova Scotian Producers, and more.
- We have developed an online **New Entrant Kit** - <https://ctcns.com/association/new-entrants-kit/>
- **Christmas Tree Forum** - The Christmas Tree Council of NS (CTCNS) developed an online conference platform known as the Christmas Tree Forum (Previously known as the Balsam Fir Forum). The platform has speaker sessions from the industry's top technical specialists and covers every aspect of the industry. The platform is still available for 2021 and can be accessed at <https://www.christmastreeforum.com/>

- **Christmas Tree Grading Course** - Many growers took advantage of the free online Grading Course offering in 2021. This course is designed to provide an overview of the United States Christmas Tree Grading System, encouraging a standardized grade across Christmas Tree Farms. We've hosted the first in-person course in Fall 2021 and will continue to host it in-person and online in the coming year. Growers that completed the exam portion of the course received a Grading Certificate from CTCNS. For more information or to register, reach out to [resource@ctcns.com](mailto:resource@ctcns.com).
- **2021 Lunch Break Sessions w/ Christmas Tree Specialist Jay Woodworth:** Topics include Mental Health, Weed Identification, Herbicide Recommendations, Soil Survey Summary, Safe Loading Practices, Marketing, Starting Seedling Nurseries Small Scale, and more. Sessions take place via the Zoom application during the last week of each month. New for 2021, sessions will be made available through the Real Trees, Real Talk podcast on your favourite streaming platform. To receive log in details for the sessions, please reach out to Gillian at [resource@ctcns.com](mailto:resource@ctcns.com).

We have many other platforms, social media, and websites as well. All are full of resources, media, and general knowledge about the Christmas Tree industry in Nova Scotia.

- **ctcns.com** – Resources for Growers. Factsheets, research articles, links to other useful webpages, Management Resources, New Entrant Kit, wholesale directory, buy & sell page, smarttree.ctcns.com, brand & sales support, etc.
- **iloverealtrees.com** – Resources for the public on where they can find a real Christmas tree, news and events, u-cut directory, contests and photo gallery.
- **christmastreeforum.com** – Education about industry topics from professionals across the global. Topics include Taking Care of Business, Fertility, Integrated pest Management, Succession planning, and much more! This platform hosts the Certificate in Christmas Tree Grading course.
- **media.ctcns.com** - The CTCNS Media page hosts all the CTCNS media in one spot! The Lunchbreak Series, Real Trees, Real Talk Podcast, Industry Research Videos, a huge Gallery of photos, a meet the team page, and all the on-going projects can be found here!
- **Facebook** – Christmas Tree Council of Nova Scotia
- **Instagram** - @christmastreecouncilnovascotia
- **Twitter** - @iloverealtrees
- **LinkedIn** - Christmas Tree Council of Nova Scotia
- **YouTube** – Christmas Tree Council NS
- **Spotify** – Real Trees, Real Talk – Why Nova Scotia Loves Real Christmas Trees

There are a couple of starter books that we recommend. Their links below in case you're interested. Keep in mind these will be heavily based on production in the US but they do have very good sections on getting started and business planning. I usually have copies of these on hand, among other resources, if you wanted to borrow them.

- <https://books.google.ca/books?id=CbXIAwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=book+growing+christmas+trees+patrick+white+and+lewis+hill&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiFm d3vzZnmAhWKMd8KHWSnBFMQ6AEIKTAA#v=onepage&q=book%20growing%20christmas%20trees%20patrick%20white%20and%20lewis%20hill&f=false>
- <https://books.google.ca/books?id=rBbZtqi6RaEC&printsec=frontcover&dq=christmas+trees+for+pleasure+and+profit+chapman+wray&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiR7JKGzpn mAhUrxVkkHTcOCq4Q6AEIKTAA#v=onepage&q&f=false>

If you're currently looking for land or have land, here are a few tips on site selection for Balsam Fir or Christmas tree lot, which you can find more information on in a Lunchbreak session.

- Avoid frost pockets. These are usually in low-lying locations with tall or thick stands on their lower sides.
- Aim for a flat site. It's easier to manage and harvest trees when they aren't on heavy slopes.
- Try to get eastern or northern exposure. Trees on south-facing slopes are prone to frost damage and western slopes are prone to wind damage.
- Look for a site with good drainage. Conifers are resilient but they don't like to have wet feet. You'll have far more success if your site is well-drained.
- You want deep, moist soils with high organic matter content; they'll hold the moisture and nutrients better. Avoid heavy clay soils.

Our CTCNS staff contacts are as follows for any inquires:

Angus Bonnyman – Executive Director - [angus@ctcns.com](mailto:angus@ctcns.com)

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That should get you started but if you have additional questions, don't hesitate to reach out again. We do usually complete soil sampling and a site evaluation for new entrants to confirm that the site is a good prospect and introduce them to our team and services. Our team would be happy to set an appointment with us if you're interested!

All the best,

- The CTCNS Team and Council