Grading

The grading of Christmas trees may be thought of as a system of communication between the grower or seller and the retailer.

As with any other product in the marketplace, it is important that buyer and seller understand what they are dealing with regarding the standards of the product, or what they are supposed to be.

Christmas trees, of course, are not manufactured gadgets that all look exactly alike.

A good deal of common sense and a fair-minded approach are critical when grading. Since all grading is based on a visual assessment and the judgment of the grader, most systems of grading allow a margin for error usually between 5 and 10 percent. There are many systems of grading trees, but they are all aimed at describing characteristics such as density, taper, defects and sometimes color, butt length, and size. The better the understanding between buyer and seller of what is expected from any grading system, the better their relationship will be when it comes to paying for the trees.

Most grading systems for balsam fir are based on two key factors: Density & Symmetry.

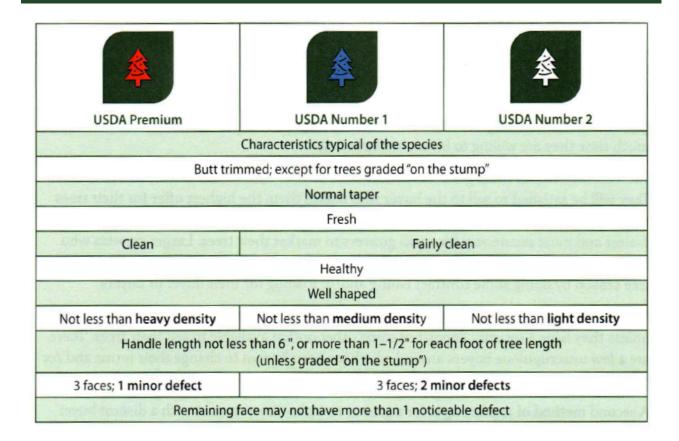
Density refers to the abundance of needles and is influenced largely by the number of branches. This is sometimes described in terms of amount of stem coverage. Most trees require shearing to produce heavy foliage Trees with the heaviest density receive four or five shearing's. Classifications of density are usually heavy, medium, or light. Symmetry is a measure of the evenness, taper, and balance of the tree.

Nova Scotia has moved to adopt the United States Department of Agriculture Christmas Tree Grade. This allows for standardization of Nova Scotia Christmas trees and better communication throughout the industry.

Training courses are provided for those wishing to be employed as graders and for growers who wish to increase their knowledge base in their Christmas tree lots and in the marketplace.

For more information, refer to the Certification in Christmas Tree Grading Course available at: https://ctcns.com/courses/grading/.

USDA Grade System Definition Chart



USDA Grade System Comparison Chart



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