

REDROCK FARM NEWS - October 2005

We feel lucky to live in Vermont as another good year has passed at Redrock Farm. We sympathize with all our friends and customers along the Gulf Coast, but hope that everyone had at least some pleasantness during their year as we approach the holiday season. If you have been displaced and this letter gets to you, let us know and we'll see what we can do to help your Christmas be brighter. At a discount, of course!

HOW DID OUR SEASON GO? We started out as soon as the snow was gone (early April) by cutting stumps to the ground, then applying herbicide to try and get a jump on the weeds. In late May we planted 2300 new seedlings. Right after that, we fertilized every tree for the first time. During June and early July, we continue to mow the rows between the trees and continue to fight off the weeds. On the 9th of July, we began the shearing process. Every tree gets individual attention; shearing, basal pruning, and weeding around the bases come first, then another dose of fertilizer for each tree. Right after we're done with each field, we go through and count, then grade each tree so we know how many premium trees we have to send to you all. The last two weekends we have been promoting Christmas trees at Tunbridge World's Fair and Big E. Now we do some final top pruning, cleaning up and mowing fields, and moving equipment around in preparation for cutting and boxing. Steph and I are the only ones who work our fields (with a little help from my Dad Walt, son Kabray and nephew Mike Russell) and we do everything by hand, so when we get ready for Christmas and we have a great batch of very nice trees like we do this year, we feel gratified!

ADMONISHMENT?? We've noticed that some of you have begun to push the freshness envelope by receiving your tree before Thanksgiving. Even the freshest balsam fir may not hold it's needles through Christmas if we send it that early. We suggest that if you are going to order your tree very early that you try a Fraser fir. It will hold it's needles a little longer if properly cared for.

2005 ORNAMENT: It is really a beauty! The second of what we are trying to make an annual thing, our 2005 ornament is a Vermont product made of rock maple. The Maple Landmark Product is 2.5 inches in diameter and comes with a gold ribbon in a red felt pouch. Only \$8, or less, if bought with a tree and or wreath as a package! It's shipped free when you buy any other product! Very importantly for our future, we need to sell ornaments and other "side" products to keep the price of trees down.

THIS YEARS NEW THING: A Mini-Christmas tree. Decorated hand picked tips in the shape of a mini Christmas tree. The tree sits in a bowl so they the tips stay watered.

WREATHS will be the same high-quality double-faced type we've shipped for many years. If you need a special bow or decorations please call and we'll fix you up. Steph will continue to make that fresh, thick garland that we sold last year.

SUCCESS OF LAST YEAR and NEW THINGS: We shipped to 38 states and Iraq last year. Top five receiving states were Florida, New York, California, Virginia, and Texas with New Jersey, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Illinois, and Georgia rounding out our Top 10.

In 2004 we offered 6-7 ft. Fraser firs and 8+ ft. balsam firs for the first time. Both had highly successful debuts, but the odd thing was that we ran short of 6+ balsam firs as we neared Christmas.

AWARDS! One of our premium balsam firs was the Vermont State Champion at the New England Exposition (Big E), Steph had the Best of Show decorated wreath at the Champlain Valley Expo, we had two blue ribbons at the Tunbridge World's Fair. Because of our Best of Show tree in the Vermont Farm Show in 2004, Vermont Governor Jim Douglas came to the farm to cut his Christmas tree last year. He brought along the Channel 3 news crew and publicity, which brought us many new friends and customers from around the area.

Remember that our trees and wreaths make excellent gifts and that we can add a gift card with your words on it.

We wish that gas prices will stabilize so that more of you can come and visit us next year!

We hope that your upcoming holidays are filled with family, peace, and joy!
Rich and Steph Rockwood