

REDROCK FARM NEWS - Fall 2006

Greetings from the beautiful hills of Chelsea, Vermont.

First, **please note that our e-mail address has changed to redrock.farm@hughes.net**

2006 will be our 15th year of shipping Christmas trees all over the world, so first we'd like to give our newer customers a little history of Redrock Farm. My Mom and Dad, Walter and Beverly, started growing and selling Christmas trees in the 1980's after retiring from "foreign service."

They began mailing Christmas trees to their friends overseas and throughout the U.S. and each year more friends and others wanted trees, so our "mail order" business was born.

In 2000 the URL christmastrees.net became available and I talked my Dad into purchasing it, and about the same time Steph and I agreed to take over the tree farm upon retiring from the Navy in 2003. Steph and I have been helping out with sales during the Christmas season since 1998 when we returned from duty overseas, so transition to ownership was easy. Since inception, we have shipped nothing but freshly cut premium trees and wreaths, and have always prided ourselves with the personal touch. I personally box every tree and Steph every wreath that leaves here, just as my Mom and Dad always did. My Mom passed on in 1999 and she "watches over" the farm from a site above our largest field and the farm pond. My Dad and stepmother, Jean Peterson, who live on a neighboring hilltop, help out during the busy season.

We have around 10,000 trees in our fields here in Chelsea and do all field work ourselves, with help at times from my Dad, son Kabray and family, and sister Pam and family. Each year we plant at least one tree for every one harvested (more than 2000 this year) and continue to push the woods back to plant more trees. In recent years our mail order business has grown enough that we buy some premium trees and wreaths from nearby members of the New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association.

We have always made our picturesque farm available for those of you who can to come and tag your tree for the coming year and we hope to meet more of you out there each year.

Our goal is to grow large enough so that I don't have to work away from the farm to make ends meet. I'm lucky to work the rest of the year for my brother Tim as a field surveyor for Pathways Consulting, LLC, who allow me to take off whenever necessary to take care of farm work. On weekends and off-days I care for our trees, fertilizing, basal pruning, shearing, controlling weeds and pests, and so on. Steph takes care of the home front, mowing the tree fields, greeting visitors, and expanding our gardens as we try to grow other plants and foods for sale at the local farmer's market. Check out some of her other creations on our web site.

Steph and I are active members of NH-VT Christmastree Association (I'm a Director/VP) and the Vermont Farms Association, so we attend many fairs every year to promote farming and Christmas trees. We take our best trees and Steph makes great wreaths, so we annually win top prizes. Maybe we'll see some of you at the Vermont Farm Show, Tunbridge World's Fair (Steph is the Superintendent of Vegetables) or the Eastern States Exposition!

This past winter we decided to upgrade our web site in hopes of making it a little easier to use now and in the future. You will now be able to log on to an account and keep track of what you ordered in the past. Please visit and let us know what you think.

One of our biggest hurdles shipping trees, wreaths, and other goods from rural Chelsea is to overcome being treated like the small farmer by FedEx or UPS. We always try our best to ship things you order to arrive when you want them, but we are shipping stuff at the busiest time of year for the shipping companies and they don't always cooperate in getting those big boxes out first. Please continue to let us know of problems, but help us in letting them know of their service failures (and successes) as well.

You will see if you visit our website that we have expanded our product line enough so that we can't get everything on the order form. However, as a returning customer, you are eligible for a 10 percent discount if you mail in your order before November 15th! We have no objection if you wish to copy the order form and give it to the neighbors in order to give them that 10 percent as well.

Lastly, we thank you for ordering our beautiful trees and wreaths and we want you to know that we are doing our best to please you year after year. We are human (and tired humans during the pre-holiday time) and we know that we screw up from time to time, so please let us know so that we can make things right. That said, we really appreciate those phone calls, e-mails, and pictures expressing gratitude about your tree or wreath.

Our 2006 ornament, hand made by Jalin of Vermont, is beautiful and unique.

We hope your holidays are full of peace, joy, and family!

Rich and Steph Rockwood

www.christmastrees.net