

Holiday Spirit

from the Ground Up

What gets you in the holiday spirit? Some may prefer silver bells to caroling, but choosing and decorating a Christmas tree is a surefire way to celebrate the season! The average time it takes to grow a full-size tree is seven years¹, leaving plenty of time for pests to wreak havoc. Today's agriculture helps reduce tree loss, enhance quality and quantity, ensuring that Christmas trees (and holiday fun) remain intact.

In the Pacific Northwest and North Carolina, Noble and Fraser fir Christmas trees face root rot disease with **losses ranging from 30% to 75%**.² Soil fumigation is commonly used to reduce the amount of fungus in the soil.³

From tracking growing degree days (a measure of heat accumulation used to predict plant and animal development rates such as the date that a flower will bloom, or a crop will emerge from dormancy), or a crop will reach maturity) and regular scouting of their fields, **farmers use integrated pest management methods to monitor and treat pests.**⁶

Swiss Needle Cast is a common foliage disease specific to Douglas-fir that causes yellow needles and decreased needle retention. In 1981 Swiss Needle Cast caused **pre-harvest losses of \$3.4 million in western Washington and Oregon.**⁴ Farmers use fungicides to reduce and control effects of the disease.⁵

Christmas tree farms are sustainable and help the economy: there are approximately 15,000 farms that grow Christmas trees in the U.S. and more than 100,000 people are employed in full- or part-time positions. To ensure a steady supply of trees, **one to three seedlings are planted in the spring for every tree that is harvested the previous year.**⁷

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¹<http://christmastree.org/Education/Quick-Tree-Facts>

²<http://www.apsnet.org/publications/apsnetfeatures/pages/christmastree.aspx>

³<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/management-of-phytophthora-root-rot-in-fraser-fir-christmas-trees>

⁴<http://www.prwcta.org/member-resources/agricultural-research/>

⁵http://www.cof.orst.edu/coops/sncc/pdfs/pubs/Stone%20et%20al...2007_fungicidal%20suppression.pdf

⁶<http://www.farmingmagazine.com/woodlots/christmas-trees/integrated-pest-management-christmas-tree-production/>

⁷<http://christmastree.org/Education/Quick-Tree-Facts>