

## REDROCK FARM AND NURSERY NEWS - Fall 2008

Wow! Another year has passed too quickly. Greetings from Vermont!

First, a little history for our newer customer friends, especially those from Elysian Hills Farm. We are in our 18th year of "mail ordering" Christmas trees and wreaths, making us one of the oldest (maybe the oldest still operating) in the business. Our sales have increased every year so we know we have good fresh products and we pride ourselves on our personal attention and customer service.

Fulfilling a long-standing agreement with my Mom and Dad to take over the farm, Steph and I have operated Redrock Farm since 2003, when I retired from the Navy after a 21 year career all over the world. We had been helping about the farm at least part of the time when we were on leave from the Navy for many years and every Christmas season since 1996, so the transition was smooth. Steph and I have been enlarging the farm and our line of Christmas products ever since.

This past year we finished erecting our second greenhouse, where Steph has begun to grow all types of plants including tropical flowers and vegetables. The first greenhouse, erected in 2007, is in it's second crop of Christmas tree plug seedlings. They are now available as wedding or event favors, seedling stock for other farmers, and future trees for us and you. We will have about 100,000 seedlings per year for sale.

Because of the new nursery and a new five acre cleared area in which we have already planted nearly 2000 trees, I have stopped working away from the farm and am now officially a full time farmer. Steph and I should be able to get everything done by ourselves except during the shipping season, when we'll have to hire some seasonal personnel.

We are still "small enough" that we give personal care to every tree we plant. I calculate that I visit each tree in the fields at least 10 times each year (mowing, fertilizing, weeding, inspecting, mowing again) and give additional personal attention when I basal prune and shear. We use organic practices as much as possible because we have a lot of wildlife and visitors. We haven't used any pesticides except oil and use herbicides as sparingly as possible, but weeds would totally take over if we didn't use some. Weeds and wildlife are our biggest "pests." Deer eat our Fraser fir in winter (and a moose destroyed a couple balsams last winter), woodchucks dig holes in the fields, robins break the tender treetops in spring, ant nests sometimes kill seedlings, and yellow jackets have nailed me six times so far this year from hiving in our plantations. But it's nice to see spotted fawns and bucks frolicking, all of the different birds nesting, and the hawks circling overhead. We have squirrels, chipmunks, skunks, rabbits, raccoons, foxes, coyotes, bears, minks, ospreys, herons...and so on. And, I think we can grow every weed native to new England, especially this year with all the rain we've had. Sometimes it's hard to grow trees and live with all the pests, but we struggle onward.

This years trees are very nice, and have grown exceptionally because we've had too much rain this summer. Some years we have a few outstanding trees, but this year we have a huge amount (most ever) of very nice ones. We had the Best in Show tree at Tunbridge World's Fair and no doubt will be Vermont State champion at the New England Expo. We had a blue ribbon balsam and wreath at the 2008 Vermont Farm Show.

What is a Redrock Farm premium tree? Without getting too technical, one that you'd be proud to put in the center of your room or that would win a blue ribbon at a tree competition. No tree is perfect, but many have only a couple minor flaws (crooked top, small holes).

We are doing our best to keep our prices as low as possible, yet still be able to operate the farm. Gas, fertilizer, herbicides, boxes, ribbons, shipping, and so on all went up this year, so guess what? And FedEx shipping fuel surcharge is WAY UP this year! We will charge credit cards at the time we receive your order; saves a ton of paperwork time...thanks!

New things. -A 6 foot tree for a few dollars less than a 6.5 to 7 foot tree. Shipping will be nearly the same price because we'll use the same box as the larger tree. A "mixed greens kit" will include various types of greens, cones and faux crab apples for creating your own decorations. A mixed greens table runner. A large Box of Brush...instead of 6-7 pounds, you can get 15 pounds! These things are in the shopping cart on [www.christmastrees.net](http://www.christmastrees.net), but not on the order form.

**Every customer who buys a tree will receive a \$5 shop card from Cost Plus World Market, so look for that in your box.** You will also be able to donate to or buy a tree for Trees for Troops. We have donated 10 trees every year to the FedEx Trees for Troops program and this year we've giving all of you a chance to participate as well. As president of the New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association, my goal is to be able to boast to the members that Redrock Farm donated 100 trees!

A MOST JOYOUS CHRISTMAS SEASON TO ALL AND TO ALL A FANTASTIC 2009!

Rich and Steph Rockwood  
[www.christmastrees.net](http://www.christmastrees.net)