

2009 NEWS FROM REDROCK FARM AND NURSERY

Happy Fall to all! We hope that everyone is in good health and surviving this "interesting" time. 2009 has certainly been a challenge for us just as we're sure it's been for you. But don't let challenge dampen your spirit of Christmas or keep you from planting an evergreen tree. Here's hoping that our wonderful, fresh, green, fragrant goods of the season will brighten your lives!

First, many thanks to all of you who donated to the Trees for Troops program. Through our combined generosity Redrock Farm was able to donate 29 trees and \$330 in cash to the Christmas Spirit Foundation for Trees for Troops. We will participate again this year, especially because about 1500 Vermont National Guard troops will begin a deployment in Afghanistan. That's a lot of folks gone from a small state like ours.

Steph and I have found that it's easier and more enjoyable for us to do all the work on the farm ourselves. During our busy season we will work until the work is done! Continue to be aware that when you order a product from Redrock Farm, you are dealing directly with Steph and me, we grew or made the product, and we packaged it for delivery to you! If you have a concern, you will be dealing with one of us directly. We think that is what may make Redrock Farm a little more special than some of the "big guys." And by the way, this is the 17th year of shipping trees for Redrock Farm.

We have just completed our yearly local Christmas tree marketing at the Tunbridge World's Fair. Steph is the superintendent of the Gilman building where all vegetables, hay, eggs, and that type of things are displayed and competed. She was super busy this year because it was "the year of the vegetable." The building looked magnificent!

I operate the New Hampshire-Vermont Christmas Tree Association booth and sell our seedlings, answers questions, and promote real Christmas trees. The association also sponsors the Christmas tree display and competition, where Redrock Farm had a first and third place.

We will attend the Eastern States Exposition (Big E) from Sep. 29 through Oct. 1 and market real Christmas trees and seedlings in the Vermont building.

During December 2008 we were tested by an ice storm and heavy snows on the weekends just before Christmas, but managed to dry all the needed trees for shipping! We're fairly sure we lost some sales locally. We had "feets" of snow in January and were kept busy pushing and shoveling it away from our greenhouses. Mother Nature confronted us with three hard freezes in late May and killed growing buds and new growth on many of our balsam firs. And both spring and summer were cooler and wetter than we needed. We will shake or shear off the dead growth and those trees will develop extra buds for next year... we just may be a few trees short this year. Fall weather has been great...a payback for the days of rain earlier.

In early July we started our third crop of plug seedlings, filling 112,560 holes with growing medium and seeds. The second crop brought out of the greenhouse in June was much better than the first, and we're certain the third will be better than the second. Maybe in 20 years we'll know exactly what we're doing; in the meantime, we'll enjoy learning all the little things that plants teach us as they grow and Mother Nature teases us with from year to year. We offer our plug seedlings as wedding and event favors and as planting stock at very reasonable prices. We also have a larger supply of 1 to 3 foot potted trees to sell.

We know that our on line shopping cart is a little cumbersome, but we can maintain it ourselves at a fairly reasonable cost and it's secure. Please, if you have any trouble with it, let us know and we'll do our best to fix the problem or make it better.

This year's newsletter is being posted on our web site and not being sent to everyone as it has in the past. Everyone should get an email or postcard notification of it's location on our web site.

Our prices reflect what we need to receive in order to continue to operate our farm. Ordering early really helps our planning and therefore we will continue to offer a 10 percent discount if you order before November 10th. And, as we've always done, the early orders get our best trees. And be aware, because of the frost damage, we will be short of balsam firs this year, so don't wait until the last minute.

Please order any other special items like garland, Christmas balls, and centerpieces as early as you can....last minute orders during our crush time in early December sometimes have to wait a few extra days because we make everything fresh to order. That said, if you need something special made like garland with certain types of greens, or a special type of wreath, call us and Steph can do it, as long as it's ordered a little in advance!

2008-2009 AWARDS: Best of Show tree at Tunbridge World's Fair 2008, Vermont State Champion tree at Eastern States Exposition 2008, Blue ribbon tree and wreath at Vermont Farm Show 2009.

We hope all is well with you and your family and wish you a blessed Christmas season.

Rich and Steph Rockwood