

Southern Christmas Trees

The Southern Christmas Tree Association Newsletter First Quarter 2020

March 31, 2020



Important:

- *Re-cap* of January 25, 2020 SCTA Board of Directors Meeting
- *Cancelled* Mississippi Grower Field Day April 4, 2020
- *Still on* 2020 Annual Meeting August 7-9, Gulf Shores, AL
- *New / Returning Advertisers* Byron Lakeview Nursery & Veldsma & Sons / Peak Seasons

From the President

Unfortunately each and every one of us is facing a challenging and scary time. The best we can do is follow our faith, strengthen our families, limit exposure to others and ourselves, conserve, be innovative and remain calm as leaders for those who need direction and comfort.

SCTA cancelled, for obvious reasons, the Saturday April 4, 2020 workshop near Columbia, Mississippi that was to be hosted by Wesley and Sandra Bass, the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service and grower members. A future date has not been scheduled. As opportunities and host locations arise, SCTA will continue to offer workshops / field days throughout our core states of Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. When the next workshop / field day is planned, announcements will be made through SCTA's newsletters & website, Facebook and each farmer market bulletins of our core states. SCTA appreciates those who pre-registered. The executive secretary will either return your check as "voided" or reimburse you with a JP Morgan Chase check mailed by USPS from Chase in a discreet envelope. SCTA asks for your patience while the executive secretary processes everything. Workshop registrants who are not SCTA members will receive one free quarterly newsletter with the opportunity to become a member.

Plans for the August annual meeting are continuing. Obviously, SCTA will assess the situation as time approaches and make the appropriate decision based on our commitment with the site hotel - The Lodge at Gulf State Park.

From the Executive Secretary

Pre-registration for the cancelled April 4 workshop was strong and encouraging. Nineteen different entities registered for 39 attendees three of which are not SCTA members. Awesome!

2020 Annual Meeting August 7, 8 & 9 in Gulf Shores, Alabama

SCTA's 2020 annual meeting is still a go for August 7, 8 & 9 in Gulf Shores, Alabama at The Lodge at Gulf State Park, A Hilton Hotel. There will be at least one Friday mini-farm tour on Friday. Steve and Sandra Mannhard of Fish River Trees (www.FishRiverTrees.com) will host the Sunday farm tour near Summerdale, Alabama.

Please visit The Lodge at www.LodgeAtGulfStatePark.com. The physical address is 21196 East Beach Boulevard, Gulf Shores, Alabama 36542. The telephone number is (251) 540-4000. A room reservation rate for Run of House Rooms of \$219.00 (without tax) or Guaranteed Gulf Front Rooms of \$249 (without tax) has been established. A block of rooms has been reserved *August 6-9* for participants with a group rate reservation *cutoff date of July 7, 2020*.

SCTA invites corporate sponsorship to help offset expenses for the annual meeting, especially for this event. If you or someone you know might be interested in partnering with SCTA for the 2020 meeting, please be in contact with the executive secretary.

The 2020 annual meeting planning committee consists of Paul Beavers, Michael Buchart, Michael Duncan, Steve Mannhard, Michael May and Jeremy Pickens. SCTA appreciates these members who are willing to make the 2020 meeting a successful event for you.

Please refer to www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org for updates.

Welcome Member & Former Exhibitor Byron Lakeview Nursery, LLC as a New Advertiser

Jonathan and Bambi James of Byron Lakeview Nursery, located near Byron, Georgia have been members of SCTA for several years who also exhibited during the 2012 annual meeting. Byron Lakeview Nursery is a family owned and operated business in central Georgia offering high quality liners at an affordable price. SCTA appreciates their support as member-advertisers and as a past exhibitor. Contact: 2149 Lakeview Road, Byron, GA 31008, phone (800) 717-2362, email ContactUs@ByronLakeviewNursery.com, www.ByronLakeviewNursery.com.

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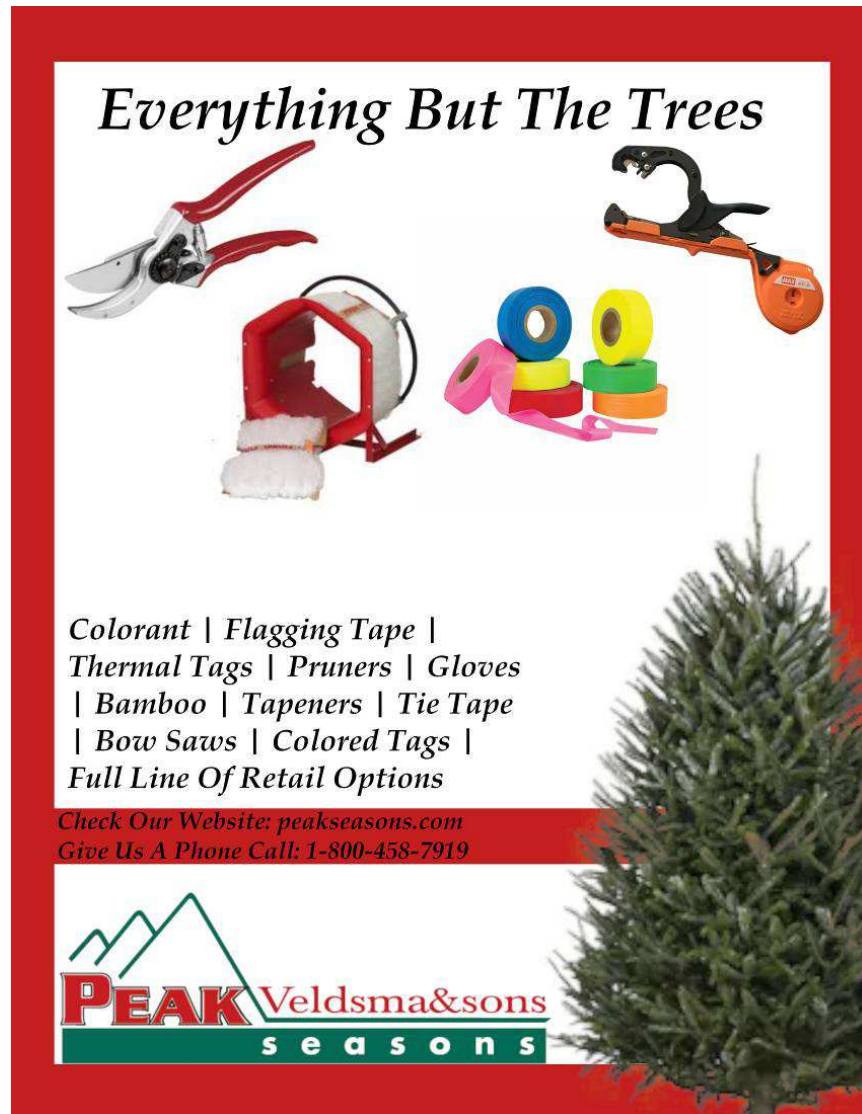
2145 Lakeview Road, Byron, Georgia 31008 www.byronlakeviewnursery.com

2020 Wreath Competition

Remember, there will be a wreath competition during the 2020 annual meeting. The wreaths will be another interesting focal point throughout the weekend and, with the trees, a great opportunity to promote the industry. During pre-registration, the executive secretary will query participants about their intent to compete with trees and/or wreaths. Winners of each can easily promote their farm. Winning contestants who are members of NCTA may qualify for the national tree/wreath competitions. Brittany Anderson of Talson Farms near Laurel, Mississippi has assumed the leadership role finalizing guidelines. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Brittany at TalsonOutdoors@hotmail.com or (601) 433-4794. Thank you Brittany and thank you Danna Day for your groundwork. More information will be forthcoming in newsletters and on www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org.

Welcome Back Returning Advertiser Veldsma & Sons / Peak Seasons

A former member and now a returning advertiser, Veldsma & Sons / Peak Seasons has resumed advertising with SCTA. Headquartered in Riversdale, California, the company serves both national and international markets as a leading manufacturer and provider of Christmas tree supplies and flock to retail lots and farms. Thank you for returning Veldsma & Sons / Peak Seasons! Contact: 7240 Sycamore Canyon Boulevard, Riverside, CA 92508, email Info@PeakSeasons.com, phone (800) 858-8733, www.PeakSeasons.com.



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The advertisement features a red border. At the top, the text "Everything But The Trees" is written in a cursive font. Below this, several items are displayed: a pair of red-handled pruning shears, a black and orange bow saw, a red and white thermal tag dispenser, and several rolls of colorful flagging tape (blue, yellow, green, orange, pink, red). A large, green Christmas tree is visible on the right side of the advertisement. At the bottom, the company logo is shown, consisting of a green mountain range icon above the word "PEAK" in red, "Veldsma&sons" in black, and "seasons" in white on a green background.

Andrew Bosserman, CPA - Coronavirus Stimulus for Christmas Tree Farmers

The executive secretary recently had discussions with Andrew Bosserman about Christmas tree farmer applicability for coronavirus stimulus benefits. And yes you do qualify. Andrew is a former Christmas tree farmer and Internal Revenue Service employee who is currently an operating, licensed CPA and soon to graduate law student. Looks like Andrew will have his bases covered. He has contributed tax related articles to the Christmas tree industry and to SCTA. If you would like to learn more on the subject of the federal stimulus package from your perspective, an easy route would be to go directly to www.AndrewBosserman.com. Andrew has offered to speak to the Southern Christmas Tree Association.

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The executive secretary was employed by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry for 30 years and was involved in every aspect of industrial development within agricultural and forestry businesses. It can not be overly emphasized that growers *must* maintain excellent records of farm activities, particularly financial, to apply for any state or federal assistance especially disasters or major disruptions. Minimally, growers must keep meticulous records, receipts, photographs and daily logs when qualifying for any assistance. Better yet, enlist the services of a professional CPA familiar with farming activities and begin a relationship.

Prayers and Support

Kevin and Beverly Steele's young grandson was recently involved in an all terrain vehicle accident and has been in intensive care since. His condition is improving but will do even better with your prayers. Both Kevin, Beverly and their family thank you.

2020 New Members

Please welcome SCTA's newest members:

Sarah and Billy Barnes have a farm, Boughs of Blessings, near Walnut, Mississippi in Tippah County where they are planting trees this season and hope to learn from the association. Contact: 1621 CR 112, Walnut, MS 38683, email SKBarnes7815@yahoo.com, (662) 223-6779.

David and Shelley Ozbirn live in Belmont, Mississippi and have recently acquired a family farm Ozbirn Plantation near Vina, Alabama in Franklin County where they will be planting Christmas trees. Contact: 100 Vina Road, Vina, AL 35593; phone (662) 660-4802; email ShellRose64@gmail.com, Facebook "Ozbirn Plantation".

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2020 New Members continued

Dana and Terri Springfield, former members of the Alabama Christmas Tree Growers Association, have a long established farm, Springfield's Christmas Tree Farm, near Boaz, Alabama in Marshall County. Dana and Terri are excited to "rejoin" the association after so many years. Contact: 595 Mount Vernon Drive, Boaz, AL 35957, phone (256) 558-4123, email DSpring1953@gmail.com, Facebook "Springfield Christmas Tree Farm".

Tim and Kendra Risner of Risner Christmas Tree Farm near Citronelle, Alabama in Mobile County planted their first trees in 2013. Tim and Kendra are anxious to meet members. Contact: 16640 D Prine Road, Citronelle, AL 36522, phone (251) 610-3594, KendraRisner84@gmail.com, Facebook "Risner Christmas Tree Farm".

Bennett and Beverly Westbrook own Evergreen Acres near Wetumpka, Alabama in Elmore County planted their first trees 2017. Bennett and Beverly look forward to association events. Contact: 188 Westbrook Circle, Wetumpka, AL 36093, phone (334) 850-7207, email Westbrook4716@bellsouth.net, Facebook "Evergreen Acres".

Tidbits Learned Along The Way

Beginning with this first tidbit, the executive secretary may at times print tidbits learned along the way. These tidbits and where they are demonstrated are what make SCTA activities so important and valuable to members. Those fortunate enough to have witnessed Larry Massey's home made stake puller saw a great example of a tidbit but then again that was really a work of art. So, *Tidbit #1*: To safely and properly store pre-cut trees, consider digging a trench 1-2 feet deep and about the same wide and however long under shade. Be close to a water source or a hose. Construct a sturdy rail along one side tall and strong enough to lean several bundled, pre-cut trees against. Fill the trench with water and line up your trees. Pull continuously watered trees when needed.



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January 25, 2020 Board Meeting

The board meeting was held 10:00 AM Saturday January 25, 2020 at Michael & Cathy May's Lazy Acres farm near Chunky, Mississippi. Business was routine covering the necessary annual year end reports and discussing past and future activities of the association. The board identified the annual meeting planning committee and made preliminary decisions for the event in Gulf Shores, Alabama. The Mays, as always, were very hospital and provided a delicious lunch. Thank you!

The board was honored with the presence of three special people: *Drs. Sarah Siegert, Josh Granger* and the One-and-Only *Stephen Dicke* - all associated with Mississippi State University.

Sarah and Josh attended the meeting as guests to better understand SCTA, its membership, and grower challenges and needs, They were actively engaged with the board throughout the meeting and following lunch were better equipped to plan their strategy for assisting Southern Christmas tree growers. Member growers should be expecting communication from Sarah and Josh and be prepared to assist their research. As with any effort from SCTA's supporting universities, this is not "big brother" getting into your business, it is "fellow researchers and friends" exploring and addressing problems and ways to improve what you do. If there is opportunity to provide information or study plots on / of your farm, please consider it as the next step for improvement. The board is encouraged that Mississippi State University continues to demonstrate strong support for SCTA. Thank you MSU!



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The board was fortunate that Stephen Dicke was able to visit, share lunch, stories and good ole memories. The board used the opportunity to present Stephen with a plaque recognizing his exemplary service and awarding him lifetime member status. Congratulations Stephen! After retirement, he set up Shady Arbor, PLLC offering professional services as a forester and arborist. Contact: 407 Pebble Brook Drive, Clinton, MS 39056, phone (601) 906-6541, StephenDickeMs@gmail.com, Facebook "Stephen Dicke". The executive secretary apologizes for the poor picture but it will at least offer a glimpse of the presentation.



Dr. Stephen Dicke



The SCTA board presents Dr. Stephen Dicke with a lifetime membership status and recognition for "a lifetime of unending professional support and knowledge; unfailing participation; and, developing a respected organization while facilitating SCTA's steady growth".

Annual Membership Enrollment

Please see the attached 2020 annual membership form which is also posted on SCTA's website www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org. Your support of SCTA allows the association to function as a focal point for everything you do as a southern Christmas tree farmer. SCTA and your fellow members thank you for your participation.

SCTA requests that membership dues are submitted promptly during the first calendar quarter and received no later than March 1st. After March 1st, a \$10.00 late fee will be assessed. Please do so. Thank you.

If, for whatever reason, you decide not to continue your membership, please be considerate enough to discuss with the president or executive secretary so the association can strive to improve. If you are hesitant to join, you do not need to contact the executive secretary for a sales-job which he will gladly offer, just simply ask a grower member why you should join. The executive secretary has yet to learn that any departing member left for dissatisfaction of the organization.

SCTA has three (3) levels of membership:

- 1) Regular grower (actively selling trees) dues are \$120.00 (after March 1st \$130.00) annually
- 2) New growers just starting out or people considering the adventure, may join for \$50 annually and can pay the \$50 rate for a maximum of 3 years or until they begin selling trees, whichever is first
- 3) Growers in states other than Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi may join for \$60 annually and will be listed on SCTA's website under "Other States". Such growers are non-voting members

SCTA Website

If you have recently created your own website or made any changes to your farm contact information please inform the executive secretary by e-mail so the updates can be made to the association's database.

For those members who do not have a website, SCTA provides a dedicated sub-page (until you have your own website) to facilitate exposure. SCTA will post your page with the expected sale season the year before you open or sooner (your preference). Information posted will be static in nature, i.e. farm name, address, telephone number, county and a brief description.

If you utilize SCTA's website and have a Facebook page (highly recommended) the executive secretary will provide a link to your Facebook page. New growers who are not yet harvesting should consider promoting their farm through social media to develop an early following.

SCTA Advertisement, Exhibits, Sponsorships

Feel free to inquire about advertising, exhibiting or sponsoring events with SCTA. SCTA's advertising platforms are the quarterly e-mailed newsletters, the association's website membership page and the annual meeting program packet. When you advertise with SCTA, your placement is with each platform for a 12 month period. Advertisers are requested to provide electronic file (.jpg or .pdf) copies of logos, art work and text suitable for placement in Word documents.

SCTA's 12-month advertisement fee schedule is as follows. Please note, when an advertisement is placed, it is for the following consecutive 12 months beginning with the next full quarter and not bound to a fiscal or calendar year.

One quarter page: \$200.00. A one quarter (approximate) page ad is placed in the quarterly newsletters, annual meeting packet and on SCTA's membership web page.

One half page: \$400.00. A one half (approximate) page ad is placed in the quarterly newsletters and annual meeting packet. A one quarter page ad will be placed on SCTA's membership web page.

Annual meetings are late summer rotating in the order of Alabama, Louisiana & Mississippi. Exhibitors and sponsors are always welcome during annual meetings or other events hosted by SCTA. Exhibitor fees vary per event with SCTA keeping costs at a minimum. SCTA strives to make fees agreeable for all. SCTA members who exhibit benefit with a \$40 member-exhibitor discount. If you are interested in partnering with SCTA, please contact the executive secretary.

Announcements, Deaths, News, Tidbits, Whatever

If you have information worthy of mention in the newsletter, including deaths of past members, please inform the executive secretary.

Southern Christmas Trees is a multi-page, quarterly newsletter of the activities and interests of the membership including ideas and information beneficial to the industry. The newsletter serves as the official venue for information dissemination to membership. Content is provided by members and secured or derived elsewhere. Every effort is made to use factual information from established, credible sources with references. Subscription is a membership benefit. Distribution is by e-mail.

Michael Buchart, Executive Secretary, 12263 Brookshire Avenue, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70815 USA
Telephone: 225.505.6335. E-mail: sctaes@gmail.com.

SCTA's Advertising Supporters:

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Standing, L>R: Gray Anderson, Michael Duncan, Michael May, Courtney Siegert, John Kushla
Steve Mannhard, Wesley Bass, Valerie West, Jeremy Pickens. Kneeling, L>R: Paul Beavers
Kevin Steele, Michael Buchart, Josh Granger
January 25, 2020 Lazy Acres, Chunky, Mississippi