



Matt Quinn, President
 Bryan Mayo, Vice President
 Heidi Watson, Exec. Secretary/Treas.
 Dugald Kell Jr, Newsletter Editor

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Greetings from our President

Matt Quinn

This spring has been full of new experiences at the tree farm. In April, I took a trip to Sherbrooke, Quebec to pick up transplants to bring back into the states. It was a little bit of a process, but with the help of my vendor, I was able to get the things I needed to be able to cross, and he had gotten all the paperwork set up through a broker so that customs would be a breeze. Or so we thought.

It was a dreary April day, overcast and raw as I set out from Worldwide HQ in Cornville to Downy Tree Company in Cookshire. The fastest route was up past Sugarloaf and to cross at Coburn Gore. It's a beautiful ride, even in early spring. Customs into Canada was easy enough and when I arrived at my destination, the trees were ready to go. William gave me the paperwork I needed, and after a tour of his operation, I headed back toward the States.

When I pulled up to the U.S. Side of the border, the customs agent looked a little confused. "What is that?" he asked. I'm not sure he'd seen baby trees before. "Christmas Tree Transplants, we're going to plant them this spring," I replied. "Go Park over there," he said, "Come on inside and we'll get you sorted out."

The agents were quite friendly, but there was a little problem, the broker company didn't send one key piece of paper, an ACE manifest whatever that is. Apparently, the broker agent screwed up, and here it is a Sunday afternoon and I'm in the middle of nowhere, with iffy cell service trying to figure out what I was going to do with all these trees.

Luckily, William back at Downey was able to make some phone calls and after a two-hour layover, I was back on my way home no worse for the wear.

It's scary doing new things, but once you do them, they're not new anymore. It was a great experience, and I learned a few lessons. I also found out that Coburn Gore isn't a good place to cross when you're bringing seedlings back stateside. While I was waiting, the agents told me that they really needed to go through Jackman.

On the way home, I thought about all the things I have learned over the last 8 years growing trees. From selling 60 C and C in my parents' driveway to traveling into another country to get transplants. It's important to look back from time to time and see how far we've come, especially when we're frustrated about how far we have to go.

Another first this spring has been the raised row project at the farm. Last fall I hired a forest mulcher to clean up some of the fields that were overgrown. About 2 acres in total, it was expensive, but worth it. In talking to some of my tree mentors, I decided to wait until June to start my work reshaping the land. I bought a moldboard plow, a harrow and a bed shaper, all in an effort to get my tree out of the root rot that's been the latest hurdle that we tree farmers are facing.

[continued on page 3]



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SECRETARY'S REPORT

Heidi Watson

Dear Members,

Ahhh, the beauty of warm sunshine, summer showers, and longer days to work—or play—has finally arrived! While summer isn't exactly a season of rest for Christmas tree growers, it is certainly a season of sowing, tending, and watching our trees thrive. Bud break remains my favorite part of growing Christmas trees. I never tire of watching the fresh new growth emerge and flourish each year.

As I reflect on the past year, I am reminded that what makes the Maine Christmas Tree Association so special is its people. I am grateful for our members, volunteers, industry partners, and supporters who continue to strengthen and promote Maine's Christmas tree industry. Thanks to your dedication, we have enjoyed a year of excellent meetings, grown our membership to 130 members, and maintained a healthy financial position with a bank balance exceeding \$55,000.

We are already looking ahead with excitement to our Fall Meeting, September 12–13, at Boiling Spring Tree Farm in Dayton. Tent camping is welcome, and there is limited space available for campers, so please reach out if you plan to bring one. There are also several local Airbnbs available, and the Ramada by Wyndham is conveniently located just eight miles away.

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our association. I look forward to seeing many of you in Dayton this September!

Also, I have MCTA hats, t-shirts, and signs available for sale!

Hats	\$30
Short Sleeve T-shirts	\$20
Long Sleeve T-shirts	\$30
Membership Signs	\$100

Warm regards,

Heidi Watson

Secretary, Maine Christmas Tree Association



In Memorium: Brian H. Ketchum (1937–2026)

The Maine Christmas Tree community mourns the passing of Brian H. Ketchum of Mars Hill, Maine, who passed away peacefully on April 13, 2026, at the age of 88.

Brian's lifelong passion for agriculture began on his family's potato farm in Bridgewater and remained a defining part of his life. A graduate of the University of Maine with a degree in agricultural economics and farm management, Brian built a successful career in the potato industry and commodity trading, becoming a respected leader in agricultural markets and serving as chairman of the NYMEX committee overseeing potato futures.

Later in life, Brian turned his passion for growing Christmas trees into one of Maine's largest Christmas tree farms. He completed two full rotations of Christmas trees before retiring, leaving a lasting legacy in Maine's Christmas tree industry. Brian's dedication, innovation, and love of farming were evident in every endeavor he pursued.

MCTA member Rob Mulvey recalls Brian's helpfulness. "Brian planted my first and second field of Christmas trees in Aroostook, and he was always willing to give me information on how to grow trees and how to treat my fields as problems arose."

A faithful member of the Mars Hill United Methodist Church, a proud Mason and Shriner, and a devoted husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, Brian was deeply committed to his family and his community. Even in retirement, he continued serving others through his homemade jelly-making ministry, sharing his creations with local nonprofit organizations.

Brian will be remembered for his entrepreneurial spirit, his generosity, his unwavering work ethic, and his deep love for the land. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Diane, his children and grandchildren, and all who had the privilege of knowing him.



Greetings from our President (continued from page 1)

Matt Quinn

It's been an interesting process. I have learned that moldboard plowing isn't easy, and the soil doesn't always go where you want it to go. But it seems to be working. My raised rows seem to be draining nicely while any stand water is confined to the mow rows of the field. I'm still trying to figure out how to get a good height for my rows and how I might be able to get more soil into a higher mound.

Yesterday I put down pre germinated grass seed, which hopefully will take root in the next few days and green it all up. We will plant it next spring.

It's important to try new things. Take calculated risks and see what works the best for you and your farm. It may be a little scary, but it's worth it in the end.

Matt Quinn



MCTA FALL MEETING

SEPTEMBER 11-13TH, 2026

We are delighted to invite you to our Fall Meeting, hosted by Boiling Spring Tree Farm in Dayton, ME. This seasonal gathering is a wonderful opportunity to connect with fellow growers, share knowledge, and prepare for the busy harvest season ahead. Attendees can look forward to informative sessions, expert speakers, and engaging discussions on best practices, industry trends, and innovative techniques.

Your participation helps strengthen our community and supports the continued growth of our industry.

LODGING RECOMMENDATIONS

Holiday Inn Express - Biddeford (207) 294-6464

Ramada by Wyndham - Saco/OOB (207)747-0368



BOILING SPRING TREE FARM

101 GORDON ROAD, DAYTON, ME

MCTA FALL MEMBER MEETING

September 12–13, 2026 • Boiling Spring Tree Farm • Dayton, Maine

MEETING REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Email: _____

Farm/Business Name: _____

Programs are held on Saturday, 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m., and on Sunday, 8:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

Register Before September 1

- Member, two days with lunch: **\$120** × _____ = \$ _____
- Non-member, two days with lunch: **\$150** × _____ = \$ _____
- Member, One day with lunch: **\$60** × _____ = \$ _____
- Non-member, one day with lunch: **\$75** × _____ = \$ _____

Registration After September 1

- Member, two days with lunch: **\$140** × _____ = \$ _____
- Non-member, two days with lunch: **\$170** × _____ = \$ _____
- One day with lunch: **\$70** × _____ = \$ _____
- Non-member, one day with lunch: **\$85** × _____ = \$ _____

Register Online

using this QR code



or visit the MCTA website and
choose Member Area / Events

Attendee Names

1. _____

3. _____

2. _____

4. _____

Vendor Registration \$50 per booth or donate a \$50 gift certificate for the event drawing.

Business/Vendor: _____ Amount: \$ _____

Lodging Information

Tent camping is welcome on-site. Limited RV/camper spaces are available—please contact us in advance. Local Airbnbs are available, and the Ramada by Wyndham is approximately 8 miles from Boiling Spring Tree Farm.

Make checks payable to: MCTA

Mail to: MCTA, 918 Richville Rd., Standish, ME 04084

Question? watsonoutdoors@gmail.com • 207-576-5076 •

TREASURY REPORT

Heidi Watson

Summary of MCTA's account balances as from January 1, 2026 through June 26, 2026:

Account	General	Marketing	Website	Seed Orchard	Meetings	Scholarship	Totals
Beginning Balance	\$18,719.83	\$1,429.99	\$9,030.50	\$17,960.09	\$1,880.22	\$7,461.82	\$56,482.45
Income	\$6,182.54	\$0.00	\$1,470.00	\$0.00	\$807.31	\$0.00	\$8,459.85
Expenses	\$3,307.04	\$260.00	\$430.00	\$0.00	\$3,204.80	\$2,200.00	\$9,401.84
Net Balance	\$21,595.33	\$1,169.99	\$10,070.50	\$17,960.09	(\$517.27)	\$5,261.82	\$55,540.46
Transfers	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Ending Balance	\$21,595.33	\$1,169.99	\$10,070.50	\$17,960.09	(\$517.27)	\$5,261.82	\$55,540.46

Seed Orchard Committee

Calvin Luther

The Seed Orchard Committee reports that 19 of the transplants successfully grafted in 2025 by Len Price and myself were planted at the Huff Hill seed orchard in Hartland on May 10 by Len Price, Jim Hummer and Calvin Luther. This is in addition to the 27 trees planted in 2025, for a total of 46 trees outplanted. There has been some mortality of last year's trees, 3 of which died, so we have 43 live trees at this point. The Huff Hill seed orchard has 9 rows of trees (rows 25' apart), with 8 trees per row (trees 20' apart within rows). All trees received some fertilizer last month and a mowing of the competitive vegetation on the Huff Hill site.

This spring we did not perform additional grafting of scion from the 7 superior trees with the best needle retention, however we will make every effort to do this next year, as we do have many potted seedlings for root stock growing under Len's care at his farm.

We still have about 30 pounds of seed collected at the 2023 seed collection event, being stored in freezers at Todd Murphy's and my home, for future shipment to Downey Nursery in Quebec when needed. An inspection of the Norridgewock seed orchard will be conducted soon.

Have a great summer,

Calvin

Trees 4 Troops Ornaments

Melba Fisher

Hi all, Ornament packing for T4Ts was June 9 at our home in Belmont We had 14 hearty souls to do the job at hand. We started at 9am, finished at 11:30am, cleaned up and had a great potluck lunch to finish out the day.

We have 6 extra large boxes with a total of about 5-6 thousand ornaments to send with the Trees in Nov./Dec. The VFW in Burlington, ME, provided the bulk of the ornaments as in years past. Some of the folks from Burlington came down and helped with the packing.

We are always in need of materials for making ornaments. An item we really could use is boxes, which this year we had to go out and buy. If anyone has access to boxes in the extra large size, 27x15x17, we sure could use them. We would even come and get them--yeah, "Road Trip"!

Some materials we use for making ornaments are yarn or pieces, bread clips and corks.

Melba Fisher

Fryeburg Fair

Gary Fisher

Following is the Fair Trees and Wreath info for 2026 Fair, please read as changes have been made and rules made clear for entries.

The Fair will run Oct. 4-Oct. 11 for this year, the tree and wreath drop off dates and times are listed below please read.

All of the volunteer positions have been filled and contacted. We always have needs for help, please contact us for info for each fair year. Judges for trees and wreaths have been selected, we really appreciate help in judging, set up and the booth help during the week.

Changes for the NEW ENGLAND CHRISTMAS TREES & WREATHS DEPARTMENT 35 MARCH 11, 2026

CHRISTMAS TREES (Pine tree division deleted, due to lack of entries)

Division Description	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
1. Balsam Fir (only)	\$72.00	\$66.00	\$61.00	\$55.00	\$50.00	\$45.00
2. All Other Fir (includes Balsam crosses)	\$72.00	\$66.00	\$61.00	\$55.00	\$50.00	\$45.00
3. Spruce (includes all Spruce)	\$72.00	\$66.00	\$61.00	\$55.00	\$50.00	\$45.00
(1 entry of each species per exhibitor)						
Grand Champion: \$85.00 Plus Ribbon						
Reserve Grand Champion: \$60.00 Plus Ribbon						
In addition, a ribbon will be awarded by the Fryeburg Fair to the TREE & WREATH judged #1 by a PEOPLES CHOICE VOTE.						

The “PEOPLES CHOICE” vote will take place Sunday & Monday and the First place tree & wreath will receive their ribbons. Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion will be placed on the stand and all trees and wreaths will receive exhibitors name tags and ribbons if placed, Mon. Eve.

CHRISTMAS WREATHS & PREMIUMS

All wreaths shall be made from any natural evergreen, brush or tips. Wreaths shall be made on 12” rings. Single or double face wreaths are permitted. An exhibitor may enter one decorated wreath and one undecorated wreath. All entries must be tagged with the creators name, and address. Addresses will not be shared with the public unless it is requested it be shown, in the case of a farm or commercial producer.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th
Decorated	\$60.00	\$50.00	\$41.00	\$36.00	\$32.00	\$28.00	\$23.00
Undecorated	\$60.00	\$50.00	\$41.00	\$36.00	\$32.00	\$28.00	\$23.00
Judging will be based on the guidelines established for judging the National Christmas Wreath Contest.							

Gary Fisher “alonghere492@gmail.com”
MCTA exhibit “Superintendent”

AGCOM

Gary Fisher

- ◆ Up coming AGCOM plans and functions:
 - 2026 Gubernatorial forum (Oct. 1,2026, Vista of Maine vineyard)
 - 146 N. Hills Ridge Rd.,Greene,Me. 04236 Sponsored by AGCOM, meet the candidates, what are their plans and thoughts. 10am-12pm.
 - 2026 Legislative Tour, this is an every two year event that is a chance for business's to showcase their farms, etc... . This helps when legislation comes up that may affect farms.
 - This year Southern Maine will be the Tour area. Selected locations will be on the Tour. August 12 will be the date this year.
- ◆ There is an opportunity to put some items in the Swag bag for the attendees from businesses or associations. MCTA has participated in this before.
- ◆ Senator Collin's is helping with funding for Spruce Bud Worm.
- ◆ LD299 - A bill to aid Agriculture from drought and other situations did not get passed, so we will keep trying.

If anyone has a desire to sit in on an AGCOM meeting, let me know--anyone can attend. Meetings are the last Tuesday of the month, 9am-12am.

Gary Fisher

Trees for Troops

Rob Mulvey

Trees for Troops is a national charitable program run by the Christmas Spirit Foundation that provides free, real Christmas trees to active-duty military members and their families. Since its inception in 2005, the initiative has partnered with FedEx Freight to deliver more than 340,000 farm-grown trees to dozens of military bases across all major service branches.

We are proud as an organization to commit to donating 300 trees each year, and we thank Rob Mulvey for organizing this. Rob is a veteran himself and knows firsthand what an encouragement receiving a Christmas tree is to families serving in our troops.

We currently have commitments for 140 trees so far. We need 160 more donated trees to reach our commitment goal. You can reach Rob by text at 207-592-0593 to donate trees or you can purchase trees directly from him for \$40 each.

Marketing Committee

Ryan Liberty

The Marketing Committee looks forward to managing or supporting the following initiatives this year:

- ✓ We're working with Fryeburg Fair superintendents, Gary & Melba Fisher to lay out a strategy for a successful 2026 Fryeburg Fair.
- ✓ The Blaine House has committed to Nov 30th as the tentative date for the presentation of the Blaine House Christmas trees and wreaths. We'll be organizing that day's events and will keep all parties updated along the way.
- ✓ We'll continue to survey membership on their thoughts regarding our current image, and whether we should consider a brand refresh.

Marketing Committee (continued)

Ryan Liberty

- ✓ We hope to begin a ‘Featured Farmer’ piece for our next newsletter – The goal is to hi-light a new farmer in each newsletter.
- ✓ I continue to sort through the MCTA archival material that Joanne gave me so that it can be organized and digitized for future generations. I encourage membership to share anything that they have that helps to tell the story of our organization.
- ✓ In April we picked up and delivered 500 seedlings to the Maine Department of Corrections in support of the seedlings that they’ve planted for a future donation to Trees For Troops. We ordered 500 more seedlings for them next spring. We expect they’ll have trees ready for donations in four years.
- ✓ We encourage more MCTA members to participate in future Maine Open Farm Weekend events. It’s a great way to hi-light your farm and to enhance the value of your trees by showing all the work that goes into growing trees year-round. If interested, please reach out to Anne Trenholme of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry.
- ✓ I continue to represent the MCTA as a liaison to the Northeastern Christmas Tree Research Alliance. This organization’s mission is to ensure the prosperity of our industry through the research and study of the trees that we grow.
- ✓ In my role as the current MCTA liaison to the National Christmas Tree Association, I’ve joined the NCTA Journal committee. I’ll be supporting Rick Dungey in his role as chair. Please reach out with any ideas for future articles.

Regards,

Ryan

A Note from Your Vice President

Bryan Mayo

Hello fellow growers,

As we head into the heart of the growing season, I look forward to our Annual Fall Meeting with great anticipation. It is a time for us to gather, trade notes, and celebrate the work that makes our industry a vital part of Maine’s landscape. It is also a moment we get to ignore mowing, shearing, and weed management for a moment.

This year, we have curated an agenda designed to serve every member of our association—whether you are just planting your first seedlings or managing a large-scale commercial operation. Our sessions will bridge the gap between foundational growing techniques and cutting-edge innovation.

Event Highlights

- The Future of Forestry: We are thrilled to host a live demonstration of agricultural drones. Seeing how this technology can streamline precision spraying, scouting, and mapping is a must for anyone looking to increase efficiency and sustainability on their farm.
- A Legacy Passed Down: Perhaps most importantly, we will honor the history of one of our long-standing members. We will hear the story of their farm’s journey through the decades, culminating in a touching transition as the operation is passed down to the next generation. It is a powerful reminder that while we embrace new technology, the heart of this business remains rooted in family and tradition.

This meeting is as much about the community we’ve built as it is about the trees we grow. I hope to see you all there to learn, connect, and celebrate the continuity of our craft.

Cheers,

Bryan Mayo , MCTA Vice President

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting - May 14th, 2026

Heidi Watson

Call to order: 6:02 pm Roll Call

Board of Directors: Matt Quinn, Bryan Mayo, Tom McNeil, Arianna Pildis, Karen Bragdon, Doug Fortier, Jim Hummer, Gary Fisher, Julie Kearns, Heidi Watson, Ryan Liberty, Jeffrey Patterson, David Karas
Staff: Jennifer Hicks Guests: Len Price, Calvin Luther Absent: Dugald Kell

Declaration of Quorum - Yes

New Business:

Len Price - Gave a brief update on the seed orchard.

Special Tree in Brooklin, ME - Calvin and Len took a trip to see it.

The Gift Seed Project - Samples of the top Christmas Tree Characteristics of Balsams, and do a genetic profile of them, and compare them. Do we want our seed orchard genetics to be included in this?

- Pros * Collaborative effort, throughout the native balsam range in the Northeast. Looking at complicated DNA. Balsam is one of the most complicated genetic sequences of anything out there. It will benefit everybody in the region.
* Create something that can sustain us for the future.

- Cons * If the Balsam Mafia wants to get hold of our DNA sequences and genetically engineer seeds by the thousands. Proprietary vs. Cooperative. We have great genetics in our seed orchard.

Motion: To authorize the seed orchard to move forward with this collaboration. - Tom McNeil, Seconded by Bryan Mayo.

Discussion: Should we talk to other seed orchards? Could we discuss this with other stakeholders in the region?

Motion Passed

Scholarship Committee - Two application deadlines a year, a spring and a fall? Or go back to just the fall.

Motion: To solidify the previous decision to have two deadlines a year, spring and fall. - Arianna Pildis. Seconded by Doug Fortier

Discussion: The student must show a bill from an institution.

Motion Passed

Old Business:

Special Tree in Brooklin, ME - Len suggested we get cones from this tree. Great needle retention, tall, unsheared, beautiful tree.

Website - Jen read Dugald's report and provided an update on her experience and professional advice for reducing vulnerabilities on our website. Jen's recommendation is to retain Pinepoint Creative's services. Rough estimate of content and functionality around \$7,000.00, and Host and be available to the organization for a monthly fee of \$200/month. This would ensure we don't have an issue like the one we just had.

Discussion: Request a proposal, so we have a price. RFP written by Jen. One suggested that the \$7,000 is a reasonable number. Right now, we have one person; if we hire an organization, there's someone there if anything happens to that person. We have old code. We'll address this at the June Meeting.

Motion: Motion to Adjourn 7:25 pm. - Doug Fortier. Seconded by Julie Kearns. Motion passed.

Northeastern Christmas Tree Research Alliance (NECTRA)

Ryan Liberty

NECTRA recently published their first Research Bulletin. In this 17 page issue are two main articles:

“Managing Weeds in Christmas” Trees by Dr. Jatinder S. Aulakh

“Delphinella Shoot Blight” by Julie Marcoux, DTA, and Dominique Choquette, P.Ag. (MAPAQ)

The Research Bulletin is posted for download on the MCTA website in the Member Area on the Resources page. (<https://mainechristmastree.com/resources/>)

The North Eastern Christmas Tree Research Alliance is a cooperative association composed of invested growers and leading Christmas tree specialists and researchers from the northeastern area of the United States and Canada. Our objective is to facilitate research, enhance dialogue, assist growers and coordinate opportunity and advancement for the Christmas tree industry. We are a registered non-profit society.

Website Report

Dugald Kell Jr

In April, the MCTA website had a serious outage. The site was hacked and malicious code was inserted that brought the site down. The outage was discovered quickly but it took four weeks to get it running without it crashing again. However, some very positive outcomes resulted from this event because we made necessary improvements that the developer and I had been discussing. The website was moved to a more secure, reliable and compatible host service, and we now have control of our domains and email addresses.

The Website Committee met and discussed possible improvements to the website. Many of those are content related--improvements to current webpages and new webpages. Developing these ideas requires knowledgeable individuals to generate the content (write the text, collect photos and video, etc.). If you are willing to contribute to this effort, please contact me by email or phone.

Several improvements to the website have already been made in the past year. Most notably is the event ticketing. Online registration for upcoming MCTA meetings is available on the website. Other smaller improvements are on your member profile page. At the bottom are two new checkboxes--one to “Hide Email Address” and one to “Hide Member from Tree Farms” lists. Members may want to use one or both of these checkboxes at certain times, such as a new tree farm member just starting out.

Budget Report

Dugald Kell Jr

The MCTA financial accounts warrant attention. Our overall bank balance is at its lowest since 2022, and nearly \$7,500 below what it was one year ago. Every sub-account is down except the Website and Seed Orchard. And those two accounts will likely incur extra expenses in the next few years. The website committee has discussed improving the site, and seed harvest expenses could arise in the near future. While the situation is not yet dire, we need to review the stability of our revenue and the necessity and priority of individual expenses.

Date:	5/24/2022	6/28/2023	6/15/2024	6/05/2025	6/26/2026
Balance:	\$51,545.91	\$64,066.29	\$57,231.80	\$63,006.60	\$55,540.46

Account:	General	Marketing	Website	Seed Orchard	Meetings	Scholarship
Balance 6/26/2026	\$21,595.33	\$1,169.99	\$10,070.50	\$17,960.09	(\$517.27)	\$5,261.82
Balance 6/05/2025	\$29,350.85	\$1,429.99	\$8,320.50	\$12,428.77	\$5,837.51	\$5,638.98
Change	(\$7,755.52)	(\$260.00)	\$1,750.00	\$5,531.32	(\$6,354.78)	(\$377.16)





If undeliverable, return to:

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Milbridge, ME 04658-0160

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