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Norma Corliss, Rec. Secretary
Joanne Bond, Exec. Secretary/Treas.
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174 Bond Spring Rd
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A Publication of the Maine Christmas Tree Association

June 2022, Issue #270

Greetings from our President

Artie Mingo

Hello All,

As we come into summer, I hope your planting season went well and the weather cooperated with your needs. I have heard some growers increasing their plantings which is good to hear.

Again this year our phone has been quite active early with buyers looking for trees. This is our first indicator for a strong market for Maine trees again this year. Wholesale buyers seem to be more aggressively seeking trees to ensure they have an adequate supply. The media continuing to highlight a "shortage" of trees each year helps drive this, whether we see this good or bad.

It wasn't long ago that many of our wholesale wreath customers would prefer Canadian trees for their customers, mostly driven by Canadian marketing and promotional boards. But we are noticing a shift toward the popularity of Maine trees more each year, with quality and condition improving. I can assure all members that the MCTA marketing committee and all other committees within the Association are focused and are doing great things for us all.

The Maine Board of Pesticide Control has made recent changes in policy and regulations which prohibit the distribution of products containing the active ingredient Chlorpyritus (Lorsban, Dursban). Please be aware of the changes and visit the Board's Rulemaking Page for more information.

Wishing you all a great growing season and keeping your knives and shears sharp.

Respectfully yours,

Artie Mingo
President



IMPORTANT ITEMS IN THIS ISSUE!

Balsam Fir Transplants Need Survey (page 6)

Fall Meeting Information (pages 2 & 4)

Membership Application/Renewal Form (page 9)

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Dugald Kell, Jr.

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207-546-7989 dugald@kelcoindustries.com

SECRETARY'S CORNER

Joanne Bond

I hope this newsletter finds everyone in good health. Things are going well for the Association, our membership is up to 132 plus 3 Lifetime members and our bottom line is holding it's own at \$51,545.91. A lot of the members have not paid their 2022 dues and website fees yet, because the January meeting had to be canceled and there was no winter newsletter. Look for the membership/renewal application in this newsletter if you haven't already paid you dues.

On a lighter note, some of us are meeting at Gary and Melba Fisher's home in Belmont on June 29th at 9:00 AM to bag up ornaments for the Trees for Troops program. If anyone would like to help please call the Fisher's at 322-8716 and let them know. And please remember that we all bring something to share for lunch.

Lastly, if any of you wholesalers have an availability of trees please let me know ASAP as I am always receiving calls.

Thank you very much,

Joanne Bond

Executive Secretary/Treasurer

bondjoanne1947@gmail.com

TREASURY REPORT

Joanne Bond

Following is a summary of MCTA's account balances:

Account	Balance 1/01/21	Balance 1/01/22	Balance 5/24/22
General	\$19,923.39	\$17,842.89	\$21,836.51
Marketing	\$86.79	\$2,559.11	\$2,459.11
Website	\$4,667.50	\$5,587.50	\$6,127.50
Seed Orchard	\$11,558.45	\$11,426.66	\$11,426.66
Meetings	\$7,586.28	\$7,211.89	\$7,211.89
Scholarships	\$3,616.75	\$4,484.24	\$2,484.24
Totals	\$47,439.16	\$49,112.29	\$51,545.91

MCTA Fall Meeting September 17th/18th, 2022

Mark your calendars for the 2022 MCTA Fall Meeting on Sept. 17th & 18th in Madison/Cornville (near Skowhegan). More information is on page 4 of this newsletter in the Marketing Committee Report.

MCTA February 2022 Directors' Meeting Minutes

Margaret Schmidt

Date/Time – February 3, 2022 @ 6 PM (2.5 hours)

Roll Call – Ryan Liberty, Artie Mingo, Len Price, Rob & Donna Palmer, Joanne Bond, Calvin Luther, Stephen Higgins, Matt Quinn, Dugald Kell, Margaret Schmidt

Presidents Welcome – In the month of January has been able to meet with some of the wholesale customers. Lots of people are short of trees. Larger customers had great reviews about Maine trees... very encouraging for our future.

Review of Meeting Minutes – Reviewed Fall meeting minutes. Approved

Treasurer's Report – Jim requested taking out \$125 expense to be removed from the general fund. \$4,609.24.

Secretary Report –

117 members, 3 lifetime members = 120 total

We sponsor Maine Agriculture in the Classroom for \$100 a year.

Maine School Garden Network looking for a donation of \$100.

Trees For Troops Report – More to come...

Marketing Report – Ideas discussed were:

Fryeburg Fair

- Create a wall of fame along with the history of the organization. Form a committee to get ideas together
- Short write up on farm that has a tree displayed - create connection with community

Create a history board(s) to be displayed at each meeting we have

Blaine House Christmas Trees Project - Finest Kind

Do we want a dedicated marketing person. Paid position?

NCTA Director's Report – NCTA coordinated the delivery of Christmas trees in Washington, DC for the White House Blue Room and the Vice President's house.

Dugald has transitioned out of the position of NCTA President and will serve as Past President for the next two years. Then he will be out of the board. In a year in a half we will need to be thinking about who to elect as our Director.

NCTA will have a board meeting this summer. Plans had tentatively planned to go to Nova Scotia in July. With the challenges of border crossings it is looking less likely. Full Board and Executive Board will meet somewhere this summer.

New Book!



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MCTA February 2022 Directors' Meeting Minutes (continued)

Seed Orchard Report – Mike S. is phasing out of the seed orchard because he is not feeling well. Todd Murphy is to chair the seed orchard committee. Calvin, Len, Dugald, & Stephen on committee.

Committee needs to come to some sort of conclusion as to where the seed orchard is heading.

Do we want to bring a contract grower in to collaborate with the MCTA seed orchard committee?

Fryeburg Fair Report – Ryan is going to reach out to Jim and Norma and see what the best way to transition knowledge for the next people whenever that might be.

Scholarship Committee Report – Thanks to Kelco donation and MCTA kick in 2 scholarships were given out. Each a \$1000

Nominating Committee Report – Ryan reaching out to Jim

New Business –

Tree donation for goat farms... be transparent with what pesticides you are using.

MCTA hall of fame

60th MCTA Anniversary - lets do something special at the Fall meeting.

The Fall meeting will be held at Matt Quinn's at Lakewood Theater in Madison, ME, September 17 & 18.

Margaret Schmidt

(filling in for Norma Corliss, Recording Secretary)

MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT

Ryan Liberty

MCTA Fall Meeting – The committee has met with our MCTA Fall Meeting host, Matt Quinn, to discuss details around this year's meeting. So far we've lined his family's business, The Lakewood Restaurant, for our meetings on Day One (Sept. 17), to be followed by dinner and a play at the Lakewood Theater on the same property. These venues sit on the shores of beautiful Wesserunsett Lake in Madison, Maine. Day Two (Sept. 18) will be spent at Quinn's Tree Farm just 16 minutes from Lakewood. More to come related to the agenda.

<https://www.lakewoodtheater.org/lakewood-inn-restaurant>

<https://www.lakewoodtheater.org/lakewood-theater>

Fryeburg Fair – Communications have begun related to this year's Fryeburg Fair. Gary and Melba Fisher made a trip to the Fryeburg Fair fairgrounds recently to take an inventory of what needs to be done prior to this year's event. We've reached out to the governor's staff to ensure they're once again aligned to receive the winners of this year's Christmas tree competition. More to come on that. The committee continues to meet.

Trees For Troops – We've reached out to the new owners of Piper Mountain Christmas Tree Farm to see if they will continue to host this event. They've confirmed that they're committed to taking on this initiative and look forward to working with the rest of the MCTA members to make it a success.

Hall of Fame Committee – The Hall of Fame Committee has met and begun to vet ideas for hall of fame qualifications, as well as how members will be presented. Discussions continue.

Best,

Ryan Liberty, Chairperson

Mark you calendars for Sept. 24th, 2022

The NH/VT CTA will hold their Fall Meeting on Saturday, Sept 24th at Downey Tree Farm & Nursery in Hatley, QC. This is 1-week after our meeting & some MCTA members may attend.

Seed Orchard Committee Update

Todd Murphy

The MCTA Balsam Fir Transplants Needs Survey is included in this newsletter (on page 6). The committee would appreciate it if everyone would fill out the survey, even if you do not plan to order any MCTA seedlings. Membership participation is important. Note that once the seed is sowed, it takes five years to get a good transplant. Larry Downey at Downey Tree Farm & Nursery is the contract grower. The estimated MCTA Balsam Fir transplants available for Spring 2023 are 45,000 3-2 transplants. Larry sowed 16.5 pounds of the MCTA Balsam fir seed this spring. Larry will be updating the contract for the MCTA fall meeting. Between mid-May and the end of May, I will be inspecting the Norridgewock Seed Orchard for insects, disease and cone production. Steve Higgins has been actively checking our Ashland seed orchard to see if it's feasible to get a cone harvest this season. David Schaible and Len Price have been actively searching for a future seed orchard site. We have also been discussing collecting scions to produce newly grafted trees. For any questions or comments pertaining to the seed orchards, feel free to contact Todd Murphy at todd@trees-to-please.com.

About Todd: I was asked to be chair of the MCTA Seed Orchard Committee. I own Trees To Please in Norridgewock, Maine. Trees To Please is a Christmas tree farm and garden center. In addition to growing Balsam fir and a variety of other conifers for our nursery, Choose & Cut and Maine garden centers, we grow flowering annuals, perennials, trees and shrubs for spring and garden mums and pumpkins for the fall. We offer Choose & Cut, precut trees, a large variety of outdoor decorations including wreaths, kissing balls, etc., and a gift shop. We also grow and sell fir, spruce, cedar and pine transplants to homeowners and small landowners.



NCTA Director's Report

Dugald Kell Jr.

The 2022 NCTA Board Meeting has been scheduled to coincide with Michigan Christmas Tree Association Summer Meeting. The Michigan meeting is July 27 and 28 at Blake's Orchard and Cider Mill, Armada, MI. The NCTA Board Meeting will be held at 2:00 pm ET on July 28 at the Hampton Inn Detroit/Utica-Shelby Township.

NCTA publishes a 4-color trade magazine, the *National Christmas Tree Journal*, twice each year. The 2022 Spring/Summer issue is now out. NCTA Members receive this publication as part of their membership. Maine Christmas Tree Association members can purchase a subscription for \$37 a year (50% off the full price) because MCTA participates in NCTA's Tree Industry Partnership (TIP). To get your subscription visit this web page:

<https://realchristmastrees.org/member-center/publications/>.

On a sad note, Ellis Schmidt, a tree grower from Pennsylvania, recently passed away. Ellis tirelessly reviewed the fire codes and advocated for sensible, evidence-based revisions to the codes on behalf of NCTA and the farm-grown Christmas tree industry. Ellis was an asset and a dedicated NCTA member.



Ellis Schmidt working the booth at the National Fire Prevention Association show.

MCTA Balsam Fir Transplants Needs Survey 2022

The MCTA Seed Orchard Committee is conducting a survey to determine the future MCTA Balsam fir transplant needs of MCTA members. In order for our contract grower(s) to produce enough transplants for those MCTA members interested in purchasing MCTA Balsam fir transplants, your participation in this survey is necessary. By participating in this survey, you will be helping the MCTA Seed Orchard Committee plan cone harvesting for seed and helping the contract grower(s) plan for future seeding and growing of MCTA Balsam fir transplants for MCTA members. The transplant quantities provided in this survey by individuals will not be made public; it will be used solely within the MCTA Seed Orchard Committee for planning.

THIS IS A SURVEY ONLY and does not serve as a method of placing an order for your MCTA Balsam fir transplants.

Please provide the information requested below as it pertains to your operation.

Full Name _____

Farm Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Please provide an estimate of the MCTA Balsam Fir transplants you may need over the next five years:

Spring 2023 - quantity of MCTA Balsam Fir transplants 10" and over _____

Spring 2024 - quantity of MCTA Balsam Fir transplants 10" and over _____

Spring 2025 - quantity of MCTA Balsam Fir transplants 10" and over _____

Spring 2026 - quantity of MCTA Balsam Fir transplants 10" and over _____

Spring 2027 - quantity of MCTA Balsam Fir transplants 10" and over _____

Two options to submit your survey information to
MCTA Seed Orchard Committee Chair, Todd Murphy:

Option 1: Email the above information to todd@trees-to-please.com with the subject "MCTA Balsam Fir Transplants Survey"

Option 2: Fill out the form and mail to Todd Murphy, 416 Mercer Rd, Rome, ME 04963



It's Caterpillar Time Again

Text with web links (hyperlinks) are footnoted and the URL's are listed at the end of this article.

How do you mark the passing of the seasons? Here at the Extension office we know the seasons are changing when calls start pouring in about caterpillars nibbling on people's trees and shrubs. Make sure to get a positive identification before taking any action, contact us for help!

Spongy moth (*Lymantria dispar*)

The moth formerly known as Gypsy moth has been renamed as of this spring. Learn more about the [Better Common Names Project here](#) (1). Maine, and Oxford County in particular, is in year two of an outbreak of these **invasive** moths. Outbreaks typically last 2 - 5 years. Fingers crossed for a wet spring so their populations can be controlled by their natural enemy, the [fungus *Entomophaga maimaiga*](#) (2).

It's probably not worth trying to control populations in large hardwood trees which can survive several years of having all their leaves eaten. However, if you want to limit injury to smaller landscape plants you can hand pick them off, wearing protective gloves to avoid the irritating hairs.

Several sprays are also an option, including Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), but catching the caterpillars when they are small (<1") is the best time to spray.

Lastly, learn to recognize their signature spongy egg masses on tree bark so you can destroy them to control next year's population.



[More info on Spongy moth and spraying here](#) (3). Photo: Jon Yuschock, Bugwood.org.

Browntail moth (*Euproctis chrysorrhoea*)

So far Oxford County has been relatively unscathed, compared to Coastal Maine at least, by these nasty **invasive** caterpillars. A winter survey found web counts to be low but present in towns along the eastern boarder of the County including Hartford, Buckfield, Hebron, and Oxford plus Paris and Norway.

If you're not familiar with the rash caused by the hairs of the browntail moth caterpillars, count yourself lucky. Because these hairs can linger and gather on outdoor surfaces, dealing with these caterpillars is worth the effort.



Browntail moth caterpillars are out and about now so [watch out for hitchhikers](#) (4) if traveling to an infested area.

[Lots more info including management of browntail moths here](#) (5). Photo: Andrea Battisti, Bugwood.org.

Native Caterpillars

With all the news coverage of invasive caterpillars, callers to our office often assume any large congregation of hungry caterpillars are bad. We actually have several species of native caterpillars that feed in large groups.

The eastern tent caterpillar (*Malacosoma americanum*) and the forest tent caterpillar (*Malacosoma disstria*) are similar in appearance, although the forest tent caterpillars have a white keyhole pattern on their backs (I think it looks like a row of penguins.).



Native caterpillars are an essential [food source for birds](#) (6). So while caterpillar feeding damage can be unsightly, it's worth trying to tolerate some for the sake of our birds.

If one of these species is munching on a plant in your landscape you'd really rather they didn't, [here are some control measures](#) (7).

[More information on both species here](#) (8). Photo: top two caterpillars are eastern tent and bottom is forest tent with signature pattern. Ronald F. Billings, Bugwood.org.

Learn more about [identifying Maine's defoliating caterpillars with this video](#) (9)!

This article appeared in the *Oxford County Farm & Garden Newsletter*, May 26, 2022. You can learn more about this free e-mail newsletter and sign up to receive it at:
<https://extension.umaine.edu/oxford/oxford-county-farm-and-garden-newsletter/>

Footnoted Web Links

- (1) <https://www.entsoc.org/publications/common-names/better-common-names-project>
- (2) <https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/a-virus-and-a-fungal-disease-cause-spongy-moth-outbreaks-to-collapse>
- (3) <https://extension.umaine.edu/ipm/ipddl/publications/5024e/>
- (4) <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/MEDACF/bulletins/318662b>
- (5) https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/invasive_threats/browntail_moth_faqs.htm
- (6) <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/pinellasco/2018/04/18/exotic-plants-starving-birds-12-things-you-can-do-to-help/>
- (7) <https://extension.umaine.edu/ipm/ipddl/publications/5022e/>
- (8) https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mfs/forest_health/insects/tent_caterpillar.htm
- (9) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHDrCigNOXM>

Application for Membership Maine Christmas Tree Association, Inc.

Date _____ Business/Farm Name _____

Owner's Name _____ Telephone _____

Physical Address _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Website _____

Do you wish to receive the MCTA newsletter by email? ☐ Yes ☐ No
(for the foreseeable future, a hard copy will also be mailed to your mailing address)

Please check the items that describe your operation:

- ☐ Wholesale Grower ☐ Choose & Cut Grower ☐ Wreath Maker
☐ Retail Grower ☐ Tree Retailer ☐ Related Products

Membership Class (check one):

- ☐ Regular (\$75)
☐ Sustaining (\$100) *Upgrade your membership to help keep MCTA strong*
☐ Junior (under age 18 - enter birth month/year: ____/____)

Total Amount for
this Section:

\$ _____

MCTA Website Application and/or Renewal

To be listed on the website, you must be a member of the MCTA and grow/produce Christmas evergreen products in Maine.

Once you have paid the appropriate fee, a website account will be created for you. You will be sent the information to log on and set up your listing. Features include listing in any of three categories, customizable links to your own website and/or Facebook pages, as well as your own web page on the site where you can describe your product offerings, hours, location, etc.

Total Amount for
this Section:

\$ _____

Website Fees (check one): ☐ New Listing (\$60) ☐ Renewal (\$30)

Send completed application with a check to the treasurer at the following address:

Joanne Bond
174 Bond Spring Rd
West Newfield, ME 04095

Payment Due:

Check # _____ Amount \$ _____
Payable to: **MCTA** Add 2 Amounts above

Membership Application can be done online at mainechristmastree.com. Payment can be made by PayPal

Signature _____ Date _____



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