

# Trees Tested

A Christmas tree "disease garden" is being established this spring at the Plant Pathology Farm of The Pennsylvania State University, located 10 miles west of the campus at the Rock Springs Agricultural Research Center.

Aim of the project is to select the most disease

resistant strains of Scotch pine and Douglas fir, the two most popular Christmas trees grown in the Commonwealth. Plantings will be made from genetic stock already selected for appearance and color in the PENNSYLVAN Program. The latter is a tree improvement program

developed in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Christmas Tree Growers Association.

Directing the research is Dr. William Merrill, associate professor of plant pathology at Penn State. Research assistant with the project is Barry Kistler of Promised Land. Eventually the research will include spruces as well as Scotch pine and Douglas fir.

Seedlings now being planted are 2 to 3 years old. When the trees are 7 to 8 years old, they will be inoculated with disease spores. Initial emphasis will be on needlecast diseases of Scotch pine and Douglas fir. Such diseases are widespread on Scotch pine and damage Douglas fir in parts of northeastern and southwestern Pennsylvania.

The Penn Staters claim

diseases cost Pennsylvania Christmas tree growers about 2 1/4 million dollars each year. The wholesale value of Christmas trees in the Commonwealth, they add, is about 15 million dollars annually.

"To the best of our knowledge, this is the first such disease garden established anywhere to

study disease resistance in Christmas trees," he affirmed. He added that similar procedures have been used to evaluate resistance of southern pines to fusiform rust and white pines to blister rust.

From the PENNSYLVAN project, promising strains of Scotch pine will be planted not only from Pennsylvania but also from strains originating in Greece, Turkey, France, Spain, and Scotland. Seedlings of Douglas fir will be grown from seed coming from British Columbia, New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado.

After the trees are about 10 years old, breeding stock developed in tree selection and improvement studies in the Northeast and Lake States will be grafted onto them. In this way the disease resistance of newer selections can be compared with other strains or seed sources.

Scotch pines will be planted initially in blocks. Each block will contain 12 different selections, and each block will be repeated 9 times. The blocks of Scotch pines will be separated from adjacent blocks by barrier rows of Douglas fir. Nine selections of Douglas fir will be used. These also will be planted in blocks and repeated 9 times.

## Broken Bit 4-H Club

The Broken Bit 4-H Horse Club met at the Lincoln Fire Hall with president Natalie Immel presiding. Kelly Ackley and Kyle Buck were welcomed into the club as new members.

Final plans were made for the annual open horse show to be held May 25 at the Friendly Horsemen's Show Grounds, Denver. The show will start at 11:00 a.m. and feature 21 classes of western and English style riding. Several classes will be special for the 4-H club. Quality tack or money and ribbons will be awarded to class winners and special championship division awards will be made.

Jane Gregory reported on 4-H County Council and gave information about giving demonstrations. Brian Immel demonstrated ways to tie a horse. Martha Gregory and Jon Keller will be attending the 4-H teen leader retreat at Dublin Gap.

Club leaders, Robert Gregory and Mr. and Mrs. Chester Immel spoke to the members about their project books. Also, Coggins test for horses were explained.



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