

Berks Mayor

(Continued from Page A1)

growth are many. They need to contend with ice, wind, hail and drought damage. Then there are diseases, rodents, rabbits and deer that cause injuries. Some are accidentally mowed down and "sticky fingers" claim others. "We figure we only harvest about 5,000 trees out of 7,500 plantings," DeLong said.

March finds the DeLongs busy with planting. "We use a lot of part-time help to get them in as soon as the weather permits," DeLong explained. The trees are placed alongside of the stump of a tree that has been harvested the season before. "We don't fertilize," he said, "because the roots of the former tree has broken up the ground and provides a nutrient-rich bed for the tree to become established."

During the growing months, a Roof mower, light weight and designed for easy steering between the Christmas tree plantings, is used to keep grass and weeds down. When Mayor Haggerty took the seat, he found that despite the mowers light weight, it took strength to manipulate it. After zooming between trees, the mayor remarked, "I think I could get into this. Mowing may be my forte—until the mower breaks down."

June and July are typically pruning months. As DeLong instructed the mayor in proper pruning methods, Haggerty struggled to follow them. DeLong grabbed the shears and joked, "We can't spend too much time pruning; we pay by the hour." Within seconds, DeLong, who has a doctor of forestry degree, snipped extended branches to produce a perfectly shaped cone. His speed brought gasps of admiration from the mayor.

DeLong brushed aside the compliments by explaining that with practice, speed comes because judging distances between branches comes naturally.

In November, the DeLong farm buzzes with both excitement and chain saws as 5,000 trees are



A forester by profession and an employee of the PA Department of Environmental Resources for many years, Thomas DeLong said bureaucratic government was not entirely foreign to him. On the day he presided over City County with Mayor Warren Haggerty, DeLong said, "I'm impressed with how organized everything is."



Is this the perfect tree? Anne and Thomas DeLong point out the positive qualities of the tree to Mayor Warren Haggerty, right.



Tom DeLong shows the mayor how healthy seedlings should look before being transplanted.



"I could get into this," Mayor Haggerty joked as he mowed around the trees.

harvested annually for prospective customers. With a three man team, a tree baler can wrap 90 trees each hour—"without coffee breaks," Ann DeLong emphasized.

During the November and December months there aren't many moments for coffee breaks as the DeLongs push to meet the demand by "hiring anyone we can get to help." About 90 percent of the trees are sold wholesale, the remaining retail from their farm.

"Even though it's hectic during that time, it's the time we enjoy the best," DeLongs claim. "It's so exciting to see people thrilled to find 'the perfect tree.'"

DeLong agreed. "We enjoy Christmas longer than the average

person. In retail sales, you get to see the customer's reaction—their pleasure in finding just the right tree."

On Wednesday, October 19, DeLong took the mayor's helm by chairing the Berks City Council. While DeLong sat in City Hall with the leaded stained glass windows depicting the city, federal, and state coat of arms in the background, he looked comfortable. Later, he said his impression of City Hall was "bustling." He added, "I'm amazed at their good organization with so much constant activity. I'm more of a recluse since I enjoy working with inanimate objects. Working in City Hall is extremely interesting

for one day, but I like the solitude my job offers without the pressure of phone calls and people running in and out.

The mayor agreed. "There's much to be said about the benefits of solitude and woodland."

DeLong stressed, "I'm thankful you're doing your job and I'm doing mine. I admire how comfortable you are working with people."

The mayor summed up his reaction to the exchange by saying, "I found the whole thing enjoyable. I'm a city boy, but I love the earth

and nature. DeLong has a very scenic property."

Haggerty, DeLong and others who took part in the farm business person exchange, will share their views and slides of the event at the fifth annual Farm-City banquet held at Stokesay Castle, Reading, on November 10. Tickets may be purchased for \$12. Make checks payable to Berks County Extension Special Account, Berks County Ag Center, P.O. Box 520, Leesport, PA 19533.



DK 636 Performance Stands Out In A Crowd.

When the trucks start hauling in the harvest, it's pretty hard to miss who planted DK 636. It's also hard to miss the fact that in last year's National Corn Growers Association state yield contests, DK 636 finished in the top 3 no less than 24 times.

Your DEKALB-PFIZER dealer or Agway representative can tell you more about the great results you can expect from DK 636. But be sure to see him soon. Because a lot of people are going to notice performance that stands out like this. And you wouldn't want to be left waiting in line.





**STRIKE
IT
RICH!**

SELL
IT
WITH
A

**LANCASTER
FARMING
CLASSIFIED**

