

The Pitch & Needle

September 2009



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About this newsletter

The Pitch & Needle is a semi-annual publication of the Oregon Department of Agriculture and is intended as an aid to anyone involved in the growing and shipping of Christmas trees. Through this bulletin, we hope to provide you with the most current shipping information as well as other topical information related to the Christmas tree industry. If you have any suggestions for topics or articles for the next issue, contact Gary McAninch at 503-986-4644 or e-mail <gmcaninc@oda.state.or.us>.

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2009 Christmas tree certification requirements for shipments to states and territories of the US

Below, is a summary of requirements to ship cut Christmas trees to states and territories of the United States and to selected foreign countries. Inspections and certifications are provided by Oregon Department of Agriculture personnel. Review the information in the summary and contact the department to arrange field inspections prior to harvest and certification. Please provide at least five (5) days notice before the actual shipping date when requesting certificates. Requests need to be scheduled as far in advance as possible. Destination shipping requirements are subject to change.

Christmas tree brokers must submit, to the Oregon Department of Agriculture Plant Division, a list of all growers and growing locations from which Christmas tree harvest and shipping will occur.

All states

All bills of lading, invoices, and bills of sale should bear county of origin, as well as, the name and address of the shipper. All shipments of Christmas trees grown in Oregon are required by Oregon law to be accompanied by a shipping permit.

Arizona

Oregon Christmas tree shipping permits are required. The Arizona Department of Agriculture will inspect all trucks as they enter the state (including transit shipments). If pests are found, the shipment will be held at the border station pending identification. The Arizona Department of Agriculture estimates a four-hour turn-around on pest identification during business hours. Trucks arriving after business hours may be held until the next business day. Trucks arriving Friday afternoon or over the weekend may be held until identification can be made the following week. Shipments may be rejected if any pest on the Arizona quarantine list is found.

Arizona law requires all trucks carrying agricultural products and participating in the "Pre-pass" Program to stop at Arizona weigh stations.

California

County of origin and species of Christmas tree (Douglas fir, Scotch pine, etc.) must appear on shipping documents. Mail-order Christmas trees shipped to customers in California, via US Mail, UPS, Federal Express, etc., must have the county of origin and species of Christmas tree clearly marked on the outside of each shipping carton. The best location for the county of origin is on the shipping label or adjacent to the label. 1.



All shipments that include pine species destined for California must be accompanied by a European pine shoot moth (EPSM) certificate. These certificates are only available for growing grounds that have been trapped during the 2009 trapping season. Contact your area horticulturist for additional information. Only certificates dated 6/1/09 to 5/31/10 are valid and may be obtained for eligible growing locations by calling the department horticulturist for your area at 503-986-4644.

Shipments of EPSM uncertified pine Christmas trees may be shipped through California to other states provided the name and complete address of the consignee are present on the invoice, bill of sale, or bill of lading and the Christmas trees are shipped in a closed van (open trucks or trailers will not be allowed to pass through California if the shipment includes uncertified pine). Note: pine Christmas trees must also be accompanied by a cereal leaf beetle certificate.

Cereal leaf beetle certification is required for Scotch pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), red pine (*Pinus resinosa*), and Austrian pine (*Pinus nigra*). Any of these trees originating in infested Oregon counties (Baker, Benton, Clackamas, Columbia, Crook, Deschutes, Jefferson, Lane, Linn, Malheur, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Tillamook, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa, Washington, and Yamhill) are prohibited from shipment into California unless they are treated and certified before shipment. Regulated articles coming from uninfested counties must be certified by the Oregon Department of Agriculture as to origin before the shipment is made. Regulated pine species originating from infested counties may be shipped through California to other states when accompanied by a "Cereal Leaf Beetle Statement of Transit Compliance Agreement." Requests for certification should be directed to ODA's Plant Division, 503-986-4644.

Pine boughs in wreaths are exempt.

Delaware

An Oregon Christmas tree shipping permit is required.

Florida

Signed compliance agreement with the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

See attached article entitled, "European brown garden snail certification." The deadline for signing and returning the compliance agreement to the Department of Agriculture is October 15, 2009. In addition, a European brown garden snail certificate is required.

Hawaii

1. Container inspection.

Containers must be free from soil and debris and care must be taken to prevent contamination of Christmas trees and containers with soil during storage and loading procedures.

2. Trees shipped to Hawaii must be shaken to qualify for certification.

Shaking options are:

- a. Each individual unbound tree shall be lifted or raised not less than 18-inches above ground level with the butt of the tree struck onto a solid surface with sufficient force to dislodge any "hitch-hiking" insects and other contaminants, such as arachnids, gastropods, amphibians, etc. The tree shall be shaken after each strike using a minimum of three or more strikes, and/or the procedure shall continue until most of the dead needle fall is eliminated.
- b. 100 percent of the trees in the consignment may receive mechanical shaking (motor or PTO driven shaking unit). Each unbound tree shall be mechanically shaken for a period of time sufficient to dislodge any "hitch-hiking" insects and other contaminants, and/or until most of the dead needle fall is eliminated.

If no live yellowjacket (*Vespula* spp.), snails and slugs were found during examination, the entire lot of trees can be allowed for shipment to Hawaii and be certified as being "apparently free of live yellowjacket (*Vespula* spp.), snails and slugs"; or

If one or more live yellowjacket (*Vespula* spp.), snails, or slugs were found during examination, the entire lot of trees shall be considered "infested" and shall not be certified for shipment to Hawaii under this protocol.

3. Inspection.

Each containerized shipment of trees shall be accompanied by a valid phytosanitary certificate that has been issued at the point of origin by an agriculture official from the participating domestic regulatory agency. The certificate shall be conspicuously affixed or located on the inside door panel of the container and shall contain the following added declarations:

- a. 100 percent of the trees have been mechanically or manually shaken
- b. The trees have been grown and originate from an area free of gypsy moth and sudden oak death

- c. The shipment is apparently free of yellowjackets (*Vespula* spp.), snails, slugs, and other detrimental pests

4. Port-of-entry inspection procedures

Any and all containers will be inspected at the port of Oahu by the Hawaii Department of Agriculture. If no certificate is provided at the inspection, the HWDOA has the authority to reject the shipment, submit it for treatment at the owners' expense, or recondition the shipment by 100% mechanical shaking, also at owners' expense. The shipment may be refused entry if the owner does not wish to comply with treatment or reconditioning of trees.

Guam and other Pacific trust islands

Oregon state phytosanitary certificate is required. The Guam Department of Agriculture is requiring all imported Christmas trees to be shaken, starting this year. Written declaration of shaking must be on certificate.

New Mexico

A shipping document showing origin of trees is required.

North Carolina

Requirements are the same as for Florida, in addition, prenotification is required. Notification can be forwarded via fax to 919-733-1041, Attention: Dan Wall, or e-mail <Dan.wall@ncmail.net>.

Oregon

The Oregon Christmas tree law requires that a shipping permit accompany each shipment of Oregon grown Christmas trees. Living "balled and burlapped," potted, or containerized trees are regulated as nursery stock and require a nursery license.

Puerto Rico

An Oregon state phytosanitary certificate is required. Additional declaration: The Christmas trees in this consignment are free from pine shoot beetle, *Tomicus piniperda*. All shipments are inspected on arrival. If any actionable pests are found, the trees will be fumigated, rejected, or destroyed at the option of the exporter. To avoid the possibility of rejection, it would be advisable to process the trees with a mechanical shaker.

Virginia

Requirements are the same as for Florida.

2009 Christmas tree certification to foreign countries

Aruba

Aruba has no known requirements, but certificates can be issued.

Canada

A Canadian customs invoice is required. Phytosanitary certificates are no longer required for cut pine Christmas trees, wreaths, and boughs. Shipments must be accompanied by documents verifying their origin.

Costa Rica

A federal phytosanitary certificate and import permit are required. Trees and containers must be free of soil. Do not certify unless an import permit is presented.

El Salvador

A federal phytosanitary certificate and import permit are required. Trees and containers must be free of soil.

Guatemala

A federal phytosanitary certificate and import permit are required. Trees and containers must be free of soil.

Hong Kong

A federal phytosanitary certificate and import permit are required. Trees and containers must be free of soil.

Japan

A federal phytosanitary certificate is required. Trees and containers must be free of soil. To avoid the possibility of Japan rejecting or fumigating because of live insects or dead or diseased needles, it would be advisable to process the trees with a mechanical shaker.

Korea

A federal phytosanitary certificate is required. Pine is prohibited. Douglas fir from Curry County is prohibited. Trees and containers must be free of soil. Add an additional declaration, "This shipment was inspected and found free of *Phytophthora ramorum*."

Mexico

See article on page 7.

Palau

Federal phytosanitary certificate and import permit are required.

Panama

Import permit and federal phytosanitary certificate showing the trees' origin are required.

Singapore

Neither IP nor PC is required. PCs can be provided as a courtesy.

Taiwan

Douglas fir and true fir trees (including Christmas trees) are prohibited because they are *Phytophthora ramorum* hosts.

The Philippines

Federal phytosanitary certificate and import permit required. Trees and containers must be free of soil.

All other foreign countries

1. Phytosanitary certificates are required.
2. The foreign importer (buyer) should obtain a plant import permit from the ministry or department of agriculture of the importing country.
3. Christmas tree growers may wish to contact the importing country's nearest consulate office in the United States for agricultural inspection and customs requirements.

For a specific country's shipping requirements, contact the Oregon Department of Agriculture, Salem, 503-986-4644, or USDA-APHIS, Portland, 503-326-2814.

European brown garden snail certification

The Oregon Department of Agriculture has entered into the Master Permit Program with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture, and the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, for the purpose of certifying Christmas trees grown in Oregon and offered for sale in Florida, North Carolina, or Virginia. The Master Permit Program establishes a list of Oregon Christmas tree growers whose plantations are certified to be free from European brown garden snail. The Master Permit Program will allow Christmas trees produced by participating growers to clear agriculture inspection with minimum delay.

To meet the Master Permit Program requirements for shipping Christmas trees to Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia, Oregon Christmas tree growers must comply with the following.

Compliance procedures

1. The grower shall notify the Oregon Department of Agriculture of intent to ship Christmas trees to Florida, North Carolina, or Virginia by completing the enclosed compliance agreement. Return the completed form to the Oregon Department of Agriculture Plant Division, 635 Capitol Street NE, Salem, Oregon 97301-2532. Only the names of growers who have completed and returned compliance agreements by October 15, 2009 will be included on the list

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Certification request

In order that we may supply you, in a timely manner, with the various certificates that you need for the coming Christmas tree season, please take a few minutes to complete and return this form. Your cooperation will eliminate delays and save time for everyone. Thank you.

Business name _____

(1) Shipping permits/certificates

Please indicate the number and type of certificates you need.

Quantity *Type of certificate*

_____ Christmas tree shipping permits

_____ European brown garden snail certificates
(required for Christmas tree shipments to AL, AR, FL, MS, NC, TN, VA).

_____ European pine shoot moth certificates (required for shipping pine Christmas trees to California). Only pines from fields that have a negative trapping history for pine shoot moth are eligible.

(2) Exporting Christmas trees

Christmas trees shipped out of the continental United States usually require an inspection and phytosanitary certification prior to shipping, and may also require a pre-harvest field inspection. If you plan to export Christmas trees to Mexico, Hawaii, Japan, Puerto Rico, or other foreign area, please complete the section below

Country or area of destination

Approximate number of loads

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Please list the field location(s) where the trees for export are being grown (use a separate sheet if necessary). Indicate the approximate acreage of the field, the types of trees (nobles, grands, Dougs, pines, etc.) and include maps, addresses, and other references as needed.

Return completed form to:
Gary McAninch
Oregon Department of Agriculture
635 Capitol Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301-2532

European brown garden snail compliance agreement

As authorized in ORS 570.306 through ORS 570.310, and because a quarantine (OAR 603-52-129) has been established against the introduction and spread of European brown garden snail, *Helix aspersa*, an agreement is hereby established between the Oregon Department of Agriculture and the Christmas tree grower identified below for the purpose of maintaining Oregon cut Christmas trees free from European brown garden snails.

Business name _____ License # _____
(please print)

Owner's name _____
(please print)

Street address _____
City State Zip

Telephone _____

Please indicate the state(s) listed below to which you will ship Christmas trees.

- Florida Number of truck loads _____
- North Carolina Number of truck loads _____
- Virginia Number of truck loads _____

The above named Christmas tree grower agrees to comply with the terms as specified in the compliance procedures.

Owner's signature Date

Return completed form to:

*Gary McAninch
Oregon Department of Agriculture
635 Capitol Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301-2532*

- sent to Florida, North Carolina and Virginia.
2. The Oregon Department of Agriculture will conduct a visual inspection for the presence of European brown garden snail.
 3. Christmas tree plantations found to be free from European brown garden snail infestation shall qualify for master permit certification.
 4. The department will prepare a list of all qualified growers and forward the list to Florida, North Carolina and Virginia agriculture officials.

Reminder

A European brown garden snail certificate must still accompany each shipment.

Mexico shipping update

Contributed by Gary McAninch, program supervisor and Dennis Magnello, horticulturist

Will Mexico's regulations pertaining to importation of Christmas trees change this year? The answer is we don't know. As of today, Mexican importation requirements for Christmas trees remain the same as last year. Mexican officials have been particularly concerned about pests and diseases on Douglas-fir. They are likely to strictly enforce tolerance levels for all pests and diseases, especially Douglas-fir twig weevil and Douglas-fir needle midge. Trees showing symptoms of either of these pests may be held for further examination. Those not meeting importation requirements will be returned or destroyed.

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) will be especially vigilant when certifying trees to Mexico. Trees not meeting Mexico's phytosanitary requirements will not be issued phytosanitary certificates. As was the case last year, those shipping Christmas trees into Mexico will be required to sign a compliance agreement guaranteeing the trees have been mechanically shaken. It is especially important that you notify the Oregon Department of Agriculture as early as possible if you plan to ship to Mexico. This will give our inspectors time enough to evaluate each field for compliance with Mexico's importation requirements.

Please feel free to contact your ODA inspector if you need additional information.

New user fee and certificate information

Phytos enter the digital age

If your Christmas tree farm ships trees out of the United States, then this article is for you! There is a new online system for requesting and producing a Federal Phytosanitary Certificate (FPC, also known as a 'phyto'). The system is called PCIT (Phytosanitary Certificate Issuance and Tracking System). It's use and acceptance has grown rapidly across various commodities since it was first deployed in December 2005.

PCIT is a national online system administered by the United States Department of Agriculture and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA APHIS). Exporters electronically submit an application for a FPC online. ODA staff then access the system, complete the application and print out a FPC on special dedicated paper issued by the USDA. If an import permit is required for the shipment, the shipper must scan and attach that import permit into PCIT when they submit their request. Currently all federal agencies that issue FPCs require the use of PCIT. Eventually, all state agencies working with exporters will be required to quit using the old handwritten phytos that we currently recognize.

Currently, there are 3 Christmas tree growers using the PCIT system, compared with 25 nurseries and 10 lumber companies that use the system (486 phytos were issued last year). Most agree that they really like the PCIT system. The ODA is planning to have all companies that have 10 or more international shipments online with the PCIT system by the Summer of 2010. For Christmas tree growers, this will be for the 2010 season.

USDA APHIS will start charging a fee, called the "pass-through" fee, to issue FPCs. The charge for growers utilizing PCIT will be \$3.00 per phyto as opposed to \$6.00 for handwritten phytos effective 10/01/2009-09/30/2010. On 10/01/2010 the fee will increase to \$6.00 for PCIT-issued phytos and \$12.00 for handwritten phytos. This USDA fee will be in addition to the \$15.00 fee charged by the ODA to issue a FPC. Eventually USDA APHIS will collect both the federal and state fees with PCIT through a secure online account. Growers will deposit money into their PCIT account and the fees will be withdrawn, as with a debit, as services are rendered.

This just in!

The ODA will no longer be able to bill for phytos because of the way the USDA will collect fees for PCIT. Starting October 1, 2009, nursery inspectors will be required to collect phyto fees at the time that handwritten certificates are issued. This new arrangement will be quite a hassle for nursery inspectors, as well as nurseries, and you may find that your inspector has an increased interest in getting you on the PCIT system as soon as possible.

Mailing/shipping labels

Gary McAninch, program supervisor

Most states, including Oregon, do not regulate cut flowers, cut branches, or products produced from them such as wreaths, garlands, door-swags, bulk branches, and boughs. Even though wreaths and cut boughs are not regulated, most states have the authority to inspect packages containing plant products.

As the holiday season approaches the following information may help with interstate delivery of your bulk and finished Christmas greens. The state of California's labeling requirements are the most restrictive, therefore, if your labels comply with California requirements, they will also meet the requirements of all other states.

For bulk shipments of greens or finished wreaths, your invoice or bill of lading must include the following information:

1. your company's name and address
2. statement of origin such as, "manufactured in Marion County"
3. the name and address of the consignee
4. an itemized list of the products included in the consignment.

For direct market sales, your mailing or shipping label must include:

1. your company's name and address
2. statement of origin
3. consignee's name and address
4. statement of contents: such as "one holiday wreath."

Mailing/shipping labels that do not include this information are generally held for inspection by agriculture officials. The shipping carton is opened and inspected to assure compliance with pest cleanliness regulations.

Note: Pine boughs and cones in manufactured wreaths are exempt from California's European pine shoot moth and cereal leaf beetle quarantines and will not require origin or treatment certificates to ship into California.

Shipments of holiday greens to customers in foreign countries must be accompanied by a phytosanitary certificate. Contact the Oregon Department of Agriculture Plant Division at 503-986-4644 to arrange for inspection and certification.

Christmas tree survey

The USDA-NASS (National Agricultural Statistics Service) Christmas tree survey will be sent out to growers this spring. This survey is helpful to the Oregon Christmas tree industry in tracking its place nationally. Statistics gathered help measure the annual growth and change of this important agricultural commodity. The survey is paid for with funds allocated by your Christmas Tree Advisory Committee.

The survey is voluntary but your participation is needed to ensure accurate results. Individual data is kept confidential. The final report is released for public use and is used to make decisions that affect the Christmas tree industry.

Each grower who receives a survey is encouraged to take a few minutes to complete this important survey.

Shipping permits

Shipping permits are provided to growers who are selling wholesale shipments of trees, both in state and out of state. They verify that the trees have been grown and inspected by ODA inspectors. Please don't share your shipping permits with other vendors. The license numbers are for your business only. If your license number is associated with trees that have not been inspected by the ODA, your trees may be at risk. There have been reports of non-licensed Christmas tree growers using shipping permits belonging to legitimately licensed growers. Safeguard your trees and your license number.



Plan ahead for Christmas tree exports

By Dennis Magnello, horticulturist

Most Christmas tree shipments to foreign countries or to US territories overseas require an inspection and certification in the form of a federal or state phytosanitary certificate. For some destinations an import permit, issued by the importing country, is also required.

Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) horticulturists can provide the necessary inspections and certification. Adhering to the following guidelines can help exporters receive these services in a timely and efficient manner:

Determine the export requirements to the destination country or territory. If you are uncertain about the requirements, contact the ODA Plant Division at 503-986-4644. This issue of the ODA Christmas tree newsletter, "The Pitch and Needle," contains information about certification requirements for foreign and domestic shipments of Christmas trees.

Provide the ODA horticulturist in your area (your nursery and Christmas tree inspector) with a map of the plantations from which Christmas trees for export will be cut. The trees may then be inspected in the field to determine whether they meet the export requirements for freedom from insects and diseases. The preferred time to inspect trees is during the months of September and October. In November, inspectors are busy issuing certificates and little time is available for field inspections. Waiting until November to request field inspections will lead to delays in inspecting and certifying your shipments. In some cases, trees may also be inspected in the shipping yard prior to loading.

Obtain any necessary import permits and fax legible copies to your inspector, along with your request for phytosanitary certificates. Requests should be made one week in advance. Requests for each destination should include the number of certificates needed, the date needed, the exporter's name and address, the importer's name and address, the type and quantity of trees being shipped, the method of transportation, the origin of the trees and, if needed, the import permit number associated with each shipment. The inspector can then make an appointment to meet you at your office or shipping yard to issue the certificates. The fax number for the Plant Division in Salem is 503-986-4786.

Christmas tree growers who are not exporting trees to foreign destinations may also request field inspections if they have problems with their trees, or as a precautionary procedure to identify significant insect or disease problems.

Useful Web sites

Oregon Department of Agriculture

<http://oregon.gov/ODA>

Pacific Northwest Plant Disease Control Handbook's online version

<http://plant-disease.ippc.orst.edu/index.cfm>

Pacific Northwest Insect Management Handbook's online version

<http://pnwpest.org/pnw/insects>

Pacific Northwest Weed Management Handbook's online version

<http://weeds.ippc.orst.edu/pnw/weeds>

Washington State University Extension—Christmas trees

<http://smallfarms.wsu.edu/crops/christmastreesindex.htm>

Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Association

<http://nwtrees.com>

2009 Christmas Tree Advisory Committee

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