

Christmas tree prices expected to rise amid shortages

Farmers can't keep pace with market demand

By JONATHAN BACH
Statesman Journal

SALEM — Americans will pay more for pre-cut Christmas trees this year as shortages deepen from the country's top two producers, Oregon and North Carolina.

Joe Territo sells Oregon trees in San Jose, California. But he's becoming increasingly frustrated with rising costs, from the trees to labor. Territo says the only figure going down is profit.

"It seems like every year, it's harder and harder," Territo said. He expects to sell 6-foot Noble firs for about \$75 a piece this season, up from about \$69 last year.

The problem is one of supply. Christmas tree growers are coming up short as their 2017 harvest enters its critical period, with trees being shipped coast-to-coast and abroad.

Around the time of the Great Recession, growers had an oversupply of trees after planting too many in the early 2000s. Subsequent low prices forced many farmers out of the Christmas tree business, leaving other growers to tend to the market.

But now, with only so many trees to go around, remain-



Jason Hupp, whose family owns Hupp Farms near Silverton, examines a Noble fir grown for boughs in 2016. The Hupp family grows nursery conifer seedlings, Christmas trees, boughs and timber.

ing farmers can't keep up with demand — and they might not catch up for years. It can take nine years before some trees are ready to be cut and sold.

Oregon top harvester

Oregon farms harvest the most trees in the United States, exporting them to places like Asia and California. Trees from North Carolina are generally shipped to states east of the Mississippi River, such as Florida.

Casey Grogan is a manager at Silver Bells Tree Farm, a few hundred acres outside of Salem. He reckons the farm has received 20 times its normal number of customer inquiries.

"We just have enough to supply the customers we've been supplying, so we're not able to help them," Grogan said.

But Grogan is optimistic for fellow Oregonians who should be able to find fresh

tree will be able to get one," O'Connor said.

Christmas tree farmers aren't so confident.

"Right now, there's a tree shortage. It's been coming down the line for the last eight or 10 years, or so," said Jason Hupp, who helps manage Hupp Farms near Silver Falls State Park in Oregon.

"So our biggest challenges are having enough trees to supply customers and just getting phone calls after phone calls after phone calls of people desperate for trees that don't exist," he said.

One recent morning, a helicopter piloted by Terry Harchenko swooped over Hupp Farms, snatching up bundles of trees after Raul Sosa, a lone worker clad in high-visibility orange, connected them to a hook on the chopper's dangling line.

It's dangerous work — the hook could swing and strike Sosa — but worker and pilot worked gracefully in concert.

"It's like air ballet. It's crazy," Hupp said beforehand.

The helicopter dropped the heavy trees in a nearby lot, where other workers pulled away ropes holding them together. Many Hupp Farms trees will head down south to California.

Wholesale growers estimate they're raising prices at least 10 percent year-over-year. Growers don't expect normal harvest levels for

Christmas trees to return until at least 2021 or 2025.

Turning away orders

Like Hupp Farms in Oregon, Barr Evergreens in North Carolina can fulfill wholesale orders for its existing customers but has to turn away new ones, said owner Rusty Barr.

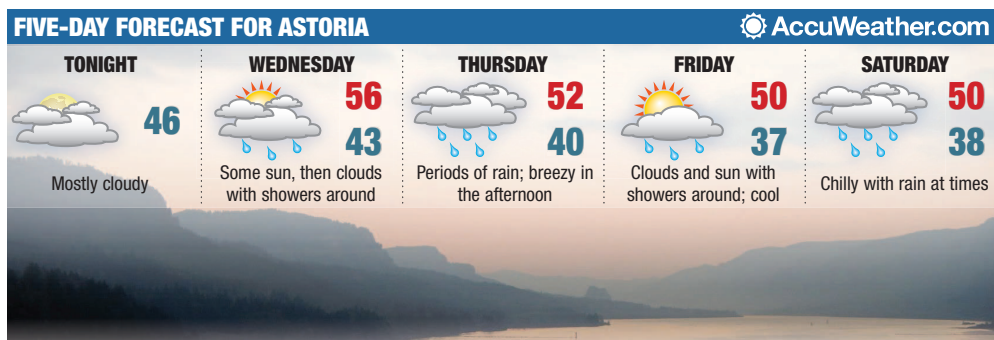
Barr expects to raise prices \$2 to \$3 for pre-cut Fraser fir trees at his retail outfit. That's on top of the \$60 to \$80 they've sold for in the past, depending on size.

North Carolina harvested an estimated 3.5 million trees in 2016, according to the Pacific Northwest Christmas Tree Association. The state was followed by Michigan (3 million), Pennsylvania (2.3 million) and Washington (1.5 million).

By contrast, Oregon cut down approximately 5.2 million trees.

For Oregon growers, popular Noble firs are especially lucrative — but they only grow so fast, often spending nine years in the ground to grow to 6 feet in the Pacific Northwest.

"That's the Cadillac of the industry," said Bob Schaefer, general manager of Noble Mountain Tree Farm. The Salem area wholesaler is massive, usually harvesting about half a million trees a year from the more than 4,000 acres the company grows on in the Willamette Valley.



ALMANAC
Astoria through Monday.

Temperatures

High/low	63°/38°
Normal high/low	57°/43°
Record high	68° in 1949
Record low	28° in 1935

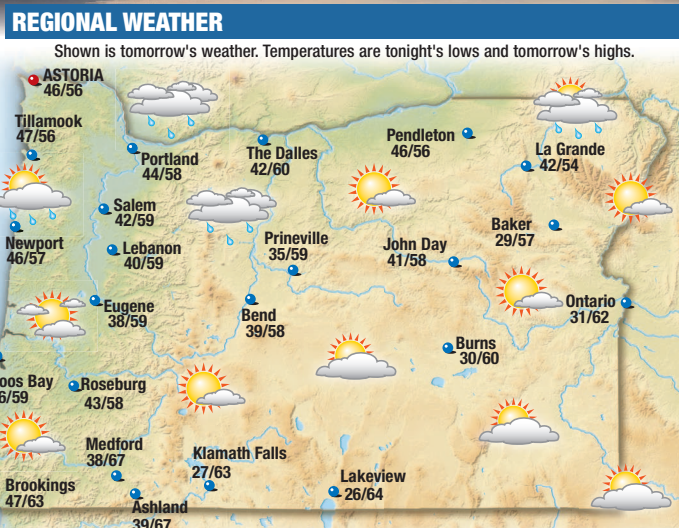
Precipitation

Monday	0.00"
Month to date	8.93"
Normal month to date	5.70"
Year to date	62.14"
Normal year to date	45.94"

SUN AND MOON

Sunset tonight: 6:03 p.m.
Sunrise Wednesday: 7:56 a.m.
Moonrise today: 4:42 p.m.
Moonset today: 3:28 a.m.

Phase	Date
Full	Nov 3
Last	Nov 10
New	Nov 18
First	Nov 26



UNDER THE SKY
Tonight's Sky: Capricornus, the sea-goat, stands almost due south at nightfall.

Source: Jim Todd, OMS

TOMORROW'S TIDES
Astoria / Port Docks

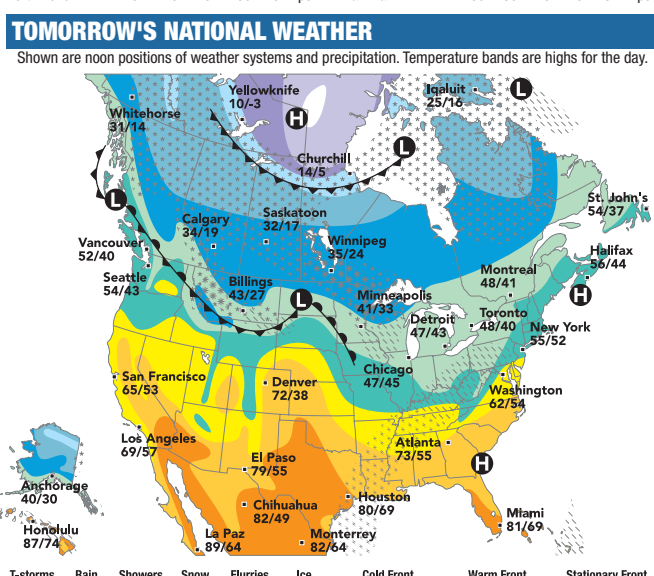
Time	High	Low
12:00 p.m.	8.5 ft.	0.9 ft.
6:24 p.m.	0.6 ft.	

NATIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Wed.
Atlanta	70/49 s	73/55 pc
Boston	58/41 s	55/49 pc
Chicago	43/31 pc	47/45 pc
Denver	52/38 sf	72/38 pc
Des Moines	42/30 pc	52/42 pc
Detroit	44/32 pc	47/43 c
El Paso	72/54 c	79/55 pc
Fairbanks	32/23 pc	31/19 pc
Honolulu	86/75 sh	87/74 t
Indianapolis	44/32 pc	48/45 r
Kansas City	41/31 pc	55/48 pc
Las Vegas	80/57 pc	79/58 s
Los Angeles	70/60 pc	69/57 pc
Memphis	59/47 pc	67/62 sh
Miami	79/66 pc	81/69 pc
Nashville	58/43 s	65/57 c
New Orleans	77/62 pc	77/66 c
New York	56/43 s	55/52 pc
Oklahoma City	52/38 r	72/52 pc
Philadelphia	57/40 s	56/50 c
St. Louis	47/37 pc	52/50 c
Salt Lake City	58/42 pc	69/48 s
San Francisco	66/51 pc	65/53 s
Seattle	59/46 s	54/43 sh
Washington, DC	61/44 s	62/54 c

REGIONAL CITIES

City	Today	Wed.	City	Today	Wed.
Baker City	59/29 s	57/31 s	Olympia	61/42	55/39
Bend	64/39 s	58/34 pc	Pendleton	62/46	56/42
Brookings	66/47 pc	60/47 s	Portland	60/44	58/45
Eugene	59/38 s	59/42 pc	Roseburg	61/43	58/44
Ilwaco	58/49 s	55/47 sh	Salem	62/42	59/44
Klamath Falls	61/27 s	63/30 s	Seaside	59/47	55/46
Medford	70/38 s	67/41 s	Spokane	49/35	50/34
Newberg	62/43 s	58/46 pc	Springfield	59/38	58/43
Newport	60/46 s	57/46 pc	Vancouver	60/44	56/46
North Bend	64/46 s	60/46 pc	Yakima	60/36	62/31



Convicted sex abuser dies in prison

The Daily Astorian

A man convicted of dozens of sex crimes in Clatsop County died Monday in a state prison.

Mark Buckner, 56, was pronounced dead at 2:30 p.m. after complaining minutes earlier to a cellmate at Snake River Correctional Institution in Ontario that he wasn't feeling well.

Prison staff responded to the cell but were unable to resuscitate him. Though Oregon State Police investigates all inmate deaths, Buck-

ner apparently died of natural causes, according to a release from the state Department of Corrections.

Following a 2011 trial, Buckner, of Westport, was sentenced to 47 years in prison on 51 counts — including five counts of first-degree sodomy, 20 counts of first-degree sexual penetration and one count of first-degree sex abuse. The charges stemmed from years of abuse — more than 1,000 incidents in nine years, according to prosecutors — against a girl starting when she was in kindergarten in the late 1990s.



Mark Buckner

ON THE RECORD

DUII

- At 9:35 p.m. Friday, Jason Pietrzykowski, 41, of Anacortes, Washington, was arrested by the Seaside Police Department on the 400 block of S. Roosevelt Drive and charged with driving under the influence of intoxicants and reckless driving. His blood alcohol content was 0.33 percent.
- At 11:45 p.m. Friday, Jamey Shane Wilson, 45, of Astoria, was arrested by the Astoria Police Department on the 100 block of Klaskanine Avenue and charged with DUII and refusing a breath test.

- At 2:09 a.m. Saturday, Alysha Ann Satiacum, 29, of Astoria, was arrested by the Warrenton Police Department on the 100 block of N. Main Avenue and charged with DUII, recklessly endangering another person and reckless driving. She allegedly was driving at a high rate of speed prior to her arrest.
- At 1:46 a.m. Sunday, Tomas Aguilar Vidal, 31, of Seaside, was arrested by the Astoria Police Department on U.S. Highway 101 and E. Harbor Street in Warrenton and charged with DUII and driving without an operator's license.

His blood alcohol content was 0.13 percent.

- At 6:12 p.m. Monday, Loree Lipman Sakai, 64, of Portland, was arrested by the Oregon State Police on U.S. Highway 26 and charged with DUII and reckless driving. Her blood alcohol content was 0.13 percent.
- Assault**
- At 7:03 a.m. Monday, Brandon L. Harrington, 33, of Astoria, was arrested by the Seaside Police Department on the 1000 block of Avenue I and charged with fourth-degree assault. He allegedly head-butted someone.

DEATHS

Oct. 30, 2017
ELDER, William Charles, 99, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

FLUHRER, James, 84, of Warrenton, died in Warrenton. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

WEDNESDAY
Warrenton-Hammond School District Financial Committee, noon, district offices, 820 S.W. Cedar Ave.
Seaside Improvement Commission, 6 p.m., City

Hall, 989 Broadway.
Warrenton Town Hall, 7 p.m., on the library levy and city parks, City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.
Gearhart City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.

LOTTERIES

OREGON
Monday's Pick 4:
1 p.m.: 5-2-7-9
4 p.m.: 4-9-8-5
7 p.m.: 0-6-8-3
10 p.m.: 6-8-6-5
Monday's Lucky Lines: 02-08-12-15-19-22-27-29
Estimated jackpot: \$29,000

Monday's Megabucks: 12-26-27-29-31-46
Estimated jackpot: \$1.4 million

WASHINGTON
Monday's Daily Game: 8-8-6
Monday's Hit 5: 03-04-19-22-23
Estimated jackpot: \$120,000

Monday's Keno: 09-13-14-15-21-22-24-28-29-31-37-41-47-50-53-58-63-69-77-80
Monday's Lotto: 03-05-14-16-18-26
Estimated jackpot: \$2.2 million
Monday's Match 4: 03-09-14-22

APPLIANCE PACKAGE DEALS

J&S

APPLIANCE AND HOME FURNISHINGS

529 SE MARLIN, WARRENTON
503-861-0929

OVER 30 YEARS IN CLATSOP COUNTY

Mattresses, Furniture & More!

HOURS OPEN: MON-FRI 8-6 • SATURDAY 9-5 • SUNDAY 10-4
We Service What We Sell

VISA MasterCard

The Daily Astorian
Established July 1, 1873 (USPS 035-000)

Published daily, except Saturday and Sunday, by EO Media Group, 949 Exchange St., PO Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103 Telephone 503-325-3211, 800-781-3211 or Fax 503-325-6573. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Daily Astorian, PO Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103-0210

www.dailyastorian.com

MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Associated Press is entitled exclusively to the use for republication of all the local news printed in this newspaper.

SUBSCRIBER TO THE NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE
MEMBER CERTIFIED AUDIT OF CIRCULATIONS, INC.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
Effective July 1, 2015

HOME DELIVERY	MAIL
EZpay (per month).....\$11.25	EZpay (per month).....\$16.60
13 weeks in advance.....\$36.79	13 weeks in advance.....\$51.98
26 weeks in advance.....\$70.82	26 weeks in advance.....\$102.63
52 weeks in advance.....\$135.05	52 weeks in advance.....\$199.90

Circulation phone number: 503-325-3211
Periodicals postage paid at Astoria, OR

ADVERTISING OWNERSHIP
All advertising copy and illustrations prepared by The Daily Astorian become the property of The Daily Astorian and may not be reproduced for any use without explicit prior approval.

COPYRIGHT ©
Entire contents © Copyright, 2017 by The Daily Astorian.
Printed on recycled paper