

# Supplies remain tight for Oregon Christmas trees

By **GEORGE PAVEN**  
EO Media Group

A lingering shortage from Oregon growers means Americans will once again pay more for Christmas trees this holiday season.

Chal Landgren, a Christmas tree specialist at Oregon State University, said tight supplies are the result of overproduction during the late 2000s that deflated prices and forced roughly one-third of farms to drop out of the business.

Oregon is still the top producer of Christmas trees in the U.S., though Landgren said there are about 400 fewer growers now compared to just three years ago, turning what was a glut of cheap trees into a deficit.

"It's this sort of boom and bust (cycle) of agriculture," Landgren said. "When people weren't making any money, they just got out of the business."

While the USDA did not conduct a survey for Christmas trees in 2018, Landgren said Oregon growers will likely ship around 5.2 million trees to retailers nationwide — or about the same as 2017. Past years' harvests had been as high as 7 million to 9 million trees, he said.

It could take another six to 10 years for supply and demand to balance, Landgren added, based on the time it takes to grow popular species such as Douglas fir and Noble fir from seedling to holiday height.

"It takes a long time to go through the cycle of a Christmas tree," he said.

According to the National Christmas Tree Association, consumers reported spending an average of \$75 per tree in 2017. Gary Snyder, president of the Kirk Co., a large tree grower with offices in Oregon City, said prices have risen 10-15 percent each year for the last three or four years.



Kelly Lyon/The Register-Guard via AP

**Christmas trees get bailed on Thursday in Cheshire, and will be shipped to Idaho.**

Snyder said prices will be up a little bit again this year, but there should still be plenty of trees available.

"I don't think there should be any issue with people finding a real tree," Snyder said.

Bob Schaefer, general manager of Noble Mountain

Tree Farm in Salem, said quality this year is "exceptional," despite a record-setting drought and heat over the summer. Dry conditions actual helped production during harvest, Schaefer said, while timely rains in October provided some much-needed relief.

"The only thing that really impacted us was the

hot, dry summer, but that didn't impact our crop trees. It impacted our seedlings," Schaefer said.

The weather-related impacts to seedlings is a concern for Landgren at OSU, since most of the region's Christmas trees are grown without irrigation. Anecdotally, some farms reported up to 70 percent seedling mortality this summer, Landgren said, which is much higher than the average of 10-15 percent.

Landgren said the university is experimenting with ways to reduce seedling mortality, such as shading and chemical sprays to reduce water transpiration. If young trees continue to die at a rapid rate, he said it could result in another shortage five years down the road.

"Trying to get these trees to survive has been a bit of a challenge," Landgren said. McKenzie "Ken" Cook,

of McKenzie Farms based in Estacada, said the industry has dealt with a long, hard struggle to rebound from this latest shortage. He said the number of trees grown in Oregon has fallen from 90 million to fewer than 40 million.

His company, which grows around 8 million trees in the Willamette Valley, faced nearly closing, with Cook having to go out of pocket to stay afloat, he said. Fortunately, he said the business was able to survive and is working to stabilize supply and demand.

Once that happens, Cook said he believes farmers are growing smarter now in order to avoid a similar situation in the future.

"I don't see them jumping back in this category as a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow," Cook said. "After four miserable cycles over a 40-year period, I don't think this will be repeated again."

# Brown's budget gears up for more fights with Trump

By **AUBREY WIEBER**  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregon's government has been at legal war with President Donald Trump and his adminis-

tration for two years. This week, it moved to arm itself for more fights.

Gov. Kate Brown carved out \$2 million in her proposed 2019-21 budget for suing the

Trump administration.

Whether it's over a travel ban, attempted repeal of the Affordable Care Act or sanctuary policies, Brown and Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum have repeat-

edly argued that the federal government has become an affront to Oregon values.

Since Trump's election, Oregon has participated as a plaintiff with other states in 14 lawsuits against his administration. As of June, the state has incurred \$185,000 in costs even though state Justice Department attorneys under Rosenblum's direction have been handling the work.

"I want to personally thank Governor Brown," Rosenblum told the Capital Bureau in an email. "The additional funding in her budget will help us continue to protect our environment and defend existing health care, civil and consumer rights as well as our immigration laws."

Among the lawsuits Oregon joined were multiple versions challenging Trump's ban on people from several Muslim-majority countries to come into the United States. The lawsuits were effective in halting the travel ban several times, though the U.S. Supreme Court eventually ruled that most of the ban was legal.

Oregon also sued to stop the federal government from attempting to withhold funds due to its sanctuary state law. Oregon has had a sanctuary law since 1987, and voters recently reaffirmed it.

Oregon has also joined

lawsuits challenging the U.S. Census Bureau's decision to ask about citizenship and Trump's effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act and the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals.

Brown has repeatedly talked about defending the state from the federal administration and has labeled the money proposed for current and future lawsuits as the "Oregon Defense Fund."

"The federal government is receding from its role as a strong partner in navigating this moment," Brown told reporters Wednesday.

Funding the lawsuits over the past two years has been difficult, said Misha Isaak, one of Brown's policy advisors. The Justice Department is largely funded by fees charged to other state agencies for legal services, much as a law firm would bill its clients. The agency had to cobble together resources to join the lawsuits, Isaak said.

Rosenblum requested the \$2 million purse for continuing the legal fights.

"I think as we move through the biennium, if that proves to be insufficient we probably would support an ask to the emergency board," Isaak said.

Isaak said the state could partner with attorneys working as volunteers or retain outside lawyers who specialize in such lawsuits.

Isaak said the \$2 mil-

lion will fund pending lawsuits and allow the Justice Department to respond to new actions by Trump. Isaak said Brown is specifically worried about Trump shrinking the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, reducing funding for reproductive health services and rolling back protection for discrimination against transgender people.

"I cannot predict what the administration in the White House is going to do," Brown said. "What I know is what I will do. And that is, I will continue to fight for and protect Oregonians and Oregon values."

Brown has also taken to combating Trump on other fronts. In her budget, she asks for \$2 million to provide legal services for immigrants facing federal deportation proceedings.

"They may not be able to provide soup-to-nuts representation of everyone in removal proceedings, but at least they would make sure that everybody would have some access to communicating with a lawyer," Isaak said.

Brown said that Oregon has "been a place that is considered to be welcoming and inclusive to all who call Oregon home. And I want to make sure that our immigrant and refugee communities feel safe and welcomed in the great state of Oregon."

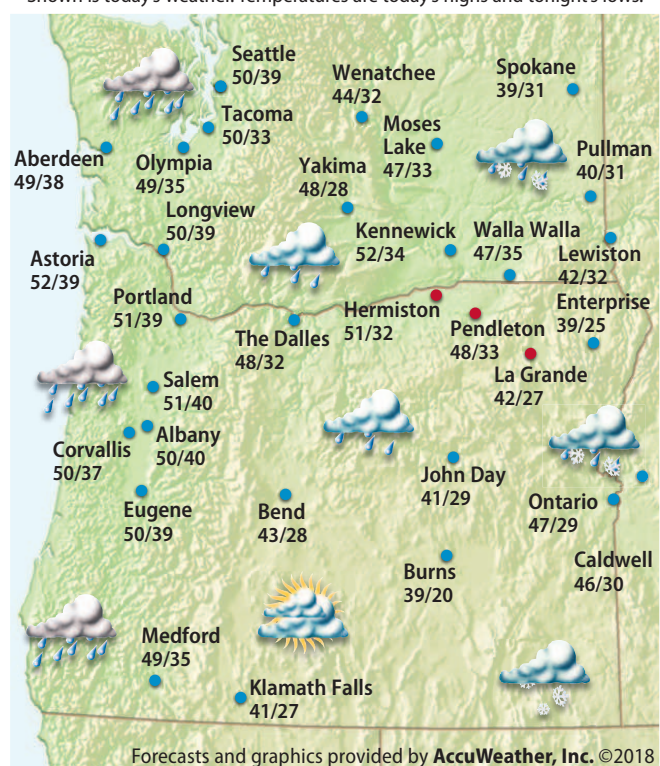
## Forecast for Pendleton Area

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TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
Mostly cloudy with a shower	A rain or snow shower in spots	Mostly cloudy and chilly	Partly sunny and chilly	Chilly with clouds and sun
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
48° 33°	42° 32°	40° 26°	40° 25°	37° 21°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
51° 32°	44° 32°	44° 29°	42° 27°	40° 24°

## OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today's weather. Temperatures are today's highs and tonight's lows.



## ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	48°	33°
Normals	43°	29°
Records	72° (1892)	-13° (1896)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.05"
Month to date	0.55"
Normal month to date	1.42"
Year to date	8.70"
Last year to date	15.26"
Normal year to date	11.41"

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

TEMP.	HIGH	LOW
Yesterday	47°	35°
Normals	44°	30°
Records	67° (1973)	8° (1985)

PRECIPITATION

24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.06"
Month to date	0.35"
Normal month to date	1.15"
Year to date	6.80"
Last year to date	8.76"
Normal year to date	8.43"

WINDS (in mph)

	Today	Sat.
Boardman	WSW 6-12	NNW 4-8
Pendleton	WSW 7-14	WNW 4-8

SUN AND MOON

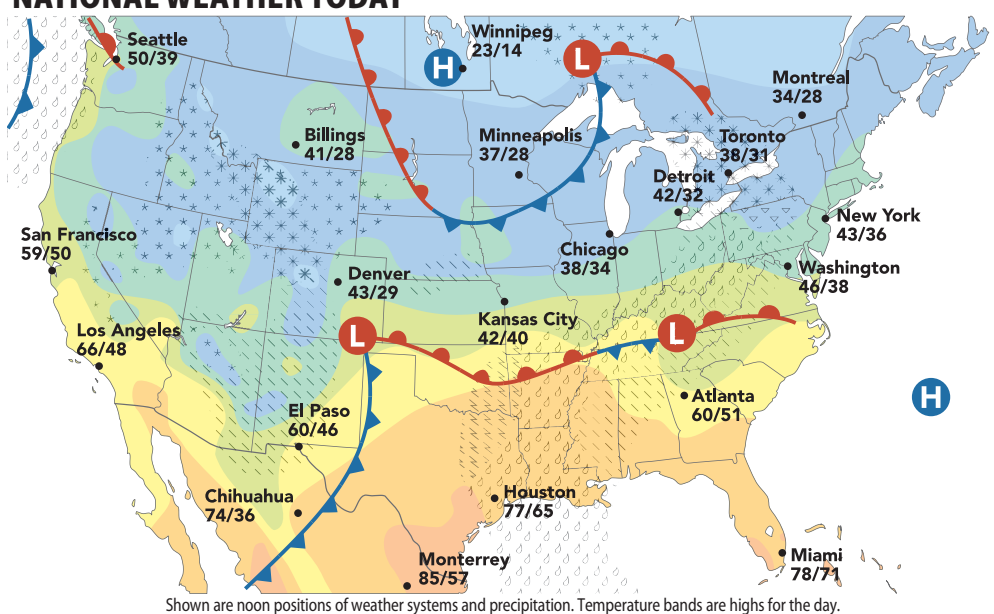
Sunrise today	7:14 a.m.
Sunset tonight	4:13 p.m.
Moonrise today	none
Moonset today	1:17 p.m.

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

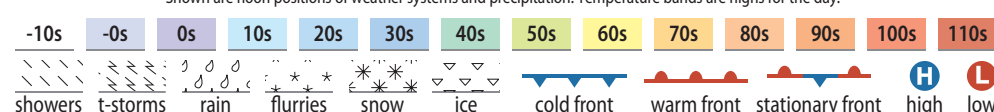
Yesterday's National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 84° in Llano, Texas Low 5° in Stanley, Idaho

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Shown are noon positions of weather systems and precipitation. Temperature bands are highs for the day.



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