

Christmas Tree Cutting Rewarding Family Event

"Christmas tree, Oh, Christmas tree, how lovely are thy branches" is sung from coast to coast this time of year.

And whether the branches visualized are pine, fir, hemlock or cedar depends to a great extent upon the state in which the singer spent his early childhood, Rogue River National Forest Service personnel pointed out this week, discussing the cutting of family Christmas trees as it is carried out in this forest.

For the choice of tree, like all other traditions associated with Christmas, reverts to the home.

In Oregon, family Christmas tree pickers are granted their choice, D. F. Keiser, timber sales officer for the Rogue River National Forest Service, stated, but 90 per cent on the Rogue River National Forest choose firs, he noted.

The ranger from Pennsylvania wants a Norway pine. The man from Virginia a sugar pine. The Oklahoman will ask for an incense cedar. This season, in California, Christmas tree vendors are pushing lodge pole pines.

Favored on Coast
The lodge pole pine is also favored on the Oregon coast, or was a few years ago, according to Keiser, who was stationed in the Siuslaw forest when he observed that to many people in the Reedsport and Florence areas it was the lodge pole pine "that had the smell of Christmas."

Christmas tree gathering on the Rogue River National Forest, where commercial sales were a matter of course a few years ago, is limited this year to families and organizations, such as Boy Scouts, who sell trees to help finance a community project.

Last year there were 4,100 trees cut on the Rogue River Forest. Of this total approximately 2,000 were cut as family Christmas trees. By Dec. 12, 1962, Keiser said, there had been 1,500 trees cut, most of them from the Union Creek Ranger district which always leads in sales because it is the land of the firs, particularly the "silver tips." The most favored tree in this area is the silver-tipped fir.

Last week end Phil Gilman, forester in charge of Christmas tree cutting on the Union Creek district, reported 350 trees cut. This week end will probably be the biggest in Christmas tree sales, (the families pay \$1 for each tree) Keiser said, but there will still be people wanting to go into the woods for a Christmas tree the last Sunday before the holiday, Dec. 22.

A Family Project
This Christmas tree cutting is a family project and a rewarding one in the opinion of foresters. Keiser said he planned to take his own family out for a tree today. He expects the highways to be lined with parked cars and the woods to be filled with men, women and children in search of the fragrant evergreens, without which Christmas just isn't Christmas to many people.

The trees are being sold on four ranger districts. There are rangers on duty to direct the Christmas tree seekers into the most accessible areas on the Butte Falls, Prospect and Ashland as well as the Union Creek Ranger Districts.

Few people have been lost in pursuit of Christmas trees in the Rogue River Forest but it is one of the hazards rangers must guard against.

One Family Lost
Last year, Keiser said, one Medford family was lost while Christmas tree cutting on the Union Creek Ranger District.

This section, foresters believe, is the one in the Rogue River

Nation, forest cutting region where there is the most likelihood of persons becoming lost. Therefore, a program has been designed to thwart this possibility, Keiser explained. The cutting region is divided into sections and the man in charge asks each person in search of a tree which section he plans to enter. Each person or family going into the woods is required to register and to report in upon leaving the district.

The last Sunday before Christmas last year dark descended with one party still in the woods. Rangers went out on an inspection tour and found the car on the highway at the point specified but no sign of the owner and his small children. The rangers fanned out into the woods and about 10 p.m. found the man and his small children definitely lost. They helped carry the children and tree back to the car for him and got the family on its way to Medford and a Merry Christmas.

Snow Hampers Cutting
Silver-tipped firs are found on the Ashland Ranger District also, but snow often hampers the cutting there, more than it does in the Union Creek area, Keiser said. There was snow last week at the 3,000 foot elevation, so a sled may be a useful piece of equipment on the Christmas tree cutting jaunt today.

Christmas tree cutting can be damaging where a reforestation program is under way or in an area where there are just enough trees to insure the proper number reaching maturity. For this reason the cutting on forests is controlled and some private areas that are understocked have been posted against cutting.

Trees are still sold commercially occasionally when there is an area that has to be cleared for some reason such as establishment of an access road, Keiser explained. Then the Rogue River National Forest calls for bids. This process also is used on some timber sales where it is known that logging will damage the young trees. They are sold as Christmas trees to commercial buyers if the timing can be worked out satisfactorily.

Accepted Number
From 50 to 100 trees per acre is accepted as the best number to be brought into maturity so this usually leaves leeway for considerable Christmas tree cutting, Keiser said. When he was on the Zigzag Ranger District of the Mt. Hood National Forest, Christmas trees were sold by the tens of thousands to Portlanders.

Back in 1941 when the Rogue River National Forest Service was encouraging the commercial movement of trees, particularly the Shasta firs (silver-tipped Christmas trees) sales brought in \$4,550 for 13,000 trees. The previous year the forest had sold 3,009 silver-tipped firs for \$1,736. To illustrate the value of this particular tree on the Christmas market a comparison was made with sales on other forests. That same year the Olympic National Forest sold 11,930 trees for \$597.

The one silver-tipped fir which brought the most money during five years of selling was purchased by movie stars for a Christmas party on shipboard. They paid \$200 for the tree.

Individuals Grow Trees
Now, many individuals are growing firs for Christmas trees.

One of the smallest acreages is in the Table Rock district, where Robert W. (Bob) Sage, principal of Medford's Roosevelt School, is growing Christmas trees on two acres as a hobby. His planting was under the Soil Conservation program, which specifies that the trees be



SCOUTS SELL TREES — For those people who can't go into the Rogue River National Forest to choose their Christmas trees, Boy Scouts of Troop 2, under direction of Dick Swan, Scoutmaster, and H. A. Mauck, assistant, are selling the forest service trees this season. They are offering the trees to the public in two locations. Some are at the Swan home, 2501 Lyman Ave., in Medford, and others at the Traveldodge Motel, 22 N. Riverside Ave. Photographed with their trees at the latter lot, close to the swimming pool, are (left to right) Victor Hass, Ted Mauck, Paul Bowers, Bob Waugh, holding up a choice fir; and Don Nelson.

allowed 10 years to grow. He has four years to go before any will be cut for the Christmas trade.

Some have had to be pruned back to keep them from growing beyond the proportions desired for indoor trees. For, he explained, fir trees, like any others, grow better on good land. The trees on the far end of his property are in richer soil and the problem is to keep them from becoming giants while encouraging the others in less-fertile ground to reach "apartment size."

One of the largest plantings was made in 1957 in the Applegate area, where Glen Best, Glenn Hunter and Billy Joe Hunter planted 400,000 trees on a 450-acre farm. They are now harvesting some of them for the Christmas trade. Some are 10 feet tall and others are just apartment size. Many others never grew and Mrs. Glenn Hunter explains it with this bit of poetry — "Only God can make a tree."

Canada Bothered By Lumber Bill

WASHINGTON (UPI)—Canada Thursday expressed "deep concern" over a bill nearing the final stages of congressional action to require Canadian lumber imported into the United States to be marked as to country of origin.

Canadian Ambassador Charles S. A. Ritchie indicated in a meeting with Deputy Undersecretary of State U. Alexis Johnson that Canada would consider the action a violation of Canadian-U.S. trade agreements under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

The lumber marking provision was agreed on by a House-Senate Conference Committee as an amendment to a bill passed in different forms by Congress. Approval by both houses of the compromise bill is all that is needed to send the measure to President Johnson for signature. The marking requirement was a keystone of U.S. lumber industry efforts to cut back Canada's \$280 million a year soft wood lumber sales to the United States. It would enable enforcement of "Buy-American" practices by government agencies and would serve as the foundation for a drive to extend "Buy-American" requirements.

Recreation Area Open Hours Stated

The H ward Prairie Recreation area will be open to the public starting at 10 a.m., Dec. 26, according to R. T. Johnston, concessionaire.

Road and weather conditions could change the opening date, Johnston stressed.

Current plans are to have the area open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily through Jan. 1, and open Saturdays and Sundays in January if the weather is cold enough so ice conditions are favorable for skating.

The restaurant will be open during the hours the public is allowed in the area, Johnston said. Ice skate rentals will not be available at the lake, but will be available at the Medford Johnston Store, he explained.

Since there is no telephone communication at the lake, residents will have to depend on reports of ice and road conditions.

Hatfield Envisions Satellite Industries

PORTLAND (UPI)—Gov. Mark Hatfield Thursday night envisioned a \$12 million plant with satellite industries as a result of development of black sand iron deposits near Astoria. The Bunker Hill Co. of Kellogg, Idaho, has been prospecting the sands at the mouth of the Columbia River.

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