

Christmas Tree Grower Workshop Agenda

Saturday April 13, 2024

Farm Host: Steele's Christmas Tree Farm

www.SteelesChristmasTreeFarm.com

The Southern Christmas Tree Association

www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org

Gray Anderson , Grant Farms 716 Whitaker Road, Grant, Louisiana 70644 www.GrantChristmasTreeFarm.com 337.789.3072, GrayAnderson88@yahoo.com	Wesley Bass , Bass Christmas Tree Farm 103 Riley Road, Columbus, MS 39429 www.BassTrees.com 601.731.8232, BassTreeFarm@gmail.com
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Kevin Steele , Farm Host SCTA President 2024-2025 Location: 25184 Blitzens Way, Angie, LA 70426 985.966.1401; SheridanRN@Yahoo.com	Dr. Valerie West , Area Forestry Agent Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service 204 Burt Boulevard, Benton, LA 71006 www.LSUAgCenter.com 318.965.2326, VWest@AgCenter.LSU.edu

SCTA's workshop protocol: the agenda was prepared for generalities. There is simply too much to write down and a world of subjects to cover. As with all SCTA functions, discussions will develop on any number of topics. Today's SCTA speaker-members have combined experiences of more than 170 years of farming and marketing Christmas trees. Do not be shy with questions or comments. Understand the speakers are still learning as well. This is an informal workshop so bring lots of questions even those you consider stupid or embarrassing (give us a good laugh or forever hold your peace) and bring any new or innovative ideas to the field. SCTA strives to network and build relationships with fellow members. A word of advice: if you are not a member – join. You are SCTA's strength.

Kevin Steele will moderate sessions. Each of the presenting team will interject where appropriate.

07:30 Gate open, registration with the executive secretary, fellowship

08:00-08:15 Kevin Steele, Farm Host & President
Opening Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance to the US of A
Welcome, today's overview. (Identify officers & directors, those with no-trees-in-ground-yet, trees-in-ground-but-have-not-yet-sold, out-of-state neighbors)
Bentley Curry, National Christmas Tree Association Representative
What we do here at Steele's Christmas Tree Farm

08:15-09:15 Session 1: Planning & Preparation
Farm & field layout
Tree spacing
Soil preparation
Employee Management: family, hired, records, personal protection, training, assigning leadership roles

09:15-10:15 Session 2: Planting

Planting stock suppliers

Order at least one preferably 2 years in advance

What kind of stock to purchase, differences

Species selection

Planting stock preparation, holding & care

Planting practices

10:15-10:30 Break

10:30-11:30 Session 3: Managing Trees

Competition

Disease

Fertilization

Irrigation

Pests: Insects and animals

Pruning: when & how to shape trees

11:30-12:30 Session 4: Selling Season Preparation

Advertisement

Customer flow layout

Employee assignments, important jobs

On & off farm signage

Toilets

12:30-01:30 Lunch

01:30-02:30 Session 5: Open for Sale

Display systems

Customer care

Cutting, handling, loading, & securing trees

Tree sales, handling & accounting

Payment methods

Security

Handling problem customers

02:30-03:30 Session 6: Agritainment & Other Income Options

None, just trees

Gift shops

Hay rides, petting animals, flowers, Santa & elves, pumpkins, mazes, playgrounds,
live entertainment, eating or function venues, photography

03:30-05:00 Field Demonstrations

Planting

Different shearing equipment: SAJE, Beneki, pole & hedge trimmers, knives, etc

First year tree, trimming demonstration

Following shaping & demonstration

Final trimming for marketable trees

What to do with problem trees

Spray equipment

Fertilizing

Mowers

Irrigation

Anything else that makes work easier & better

05:00 Adjourn.

Make your reservations for the September 13-15, 2024 annual meeting.

Check www.SouthernChristmasTrees.org for more information

Please pick up and tidy your area so Kevin can get back to work on his 10,000 tasks remaining this weekend.

Thank you and travel safe!

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