



# Holiday Roundup



## Grower tells how to choose best holiday tree

By LORRY WILLIAMS  
Business Editor

This year's Christmas tree crop is "excellent" and better than last year's crop, according to an area Christmas tree grower.

Scott Williams, owner of Village Landscape Construction Co., operates The Christmas Tree Lot, located between Main and Weaver streets across from NCNB National Bank in Carrboro. Williams, now in his 23rd year of operation, leases property in Avery County, N.C., where he grows his own Christmas trees.

This year's crop is better because the trees didn't have to contend with a drought like last year's crop did, Williams said.

The Christmas Tree Lot offers potential Christmas tree owners 19 varieties of trees, both cut and replantable. The trees range in height from 2 feet to 28 feet, with the 28 feet trees only available cut.

"I sell about 65 percent cut and 35 percent replantable," Williams said.

People should look for several things to ensure getting a quality Christmas tree that will last throughout the holiday season, Williams said.

For cut trees, it's important the trees are fresh; they should be cut no later than one week before purchase. Williams said fresh trees would have sap on their bases.

With a fresh tree, the purchaser will not have to cut off the trunk. He also will get the tree's aroma, Williams said.

Another test for Christmas tree buyers involves seeing if the tree is shedding needles. A freshly cut tree should be able to withstand a person's pulling at its branches and running the branches through his hand without having needles fall out, Williams said.

"That's true for all trees," he said. "Spruce will not hold its needles for 24 to 25 days unless it's fresh cut."

Fraser's Fir is the best tree for durability, Williams said. They hold up and retain their aroma well.

"Fraser's Fir is by far the first choice," he said.

The trees Williams recommends for durability, in descending order, are: Norway Spruce, White Pine, Scot's Pine and Blue Spruce.

When purchasing a tree, Williams said, buyers should know the price was determined by the quality of the tree and not necessarily by its size.

"The quality is determined by the amount of care and

pruning the tree receives," he said.

A "heavy" or full tree is one that has been heavily sheared and pruned. The thinner trees have been left pretty much on their own to grow and haven't had the attention and care the fuller trees have had.

"With a thin one you can just let it grow — water it and fertilize it every now and then," he said. "The heavier tree requires more work."

The average price for heavy or thick Fraser's Fir is about \$7.75 per foot. Thinner trees are about \$4.75 per foot. With White Pines, the heavy trees are about \$5 per foot, and the thinner ones are about \$3 per foot.

When distinguishing between the types of trees, buyers can tell if they are purchasing a spruce or a fir tree by its needles. A spruce tree has very prickly needles, whereas the fir tree has softer needles.

Trees go bad when they are exposed to extreme temperatures, Williams said. "If the sun has been on them for a long time then the needles will drop off," he said.

After purchasing the Christmas tree, the buyer needs to know how to care for it. The tree trunk should be trimmed to fit the Christmas tree stand. Williams also recommends putting lukewarm water and a small amount of Sprite or a tablespoon of sugar into the stand. The Sprite or sugar helps the tree's tissues absorb water quicker, he said.

The container should be kept within one-half inch full of water. People should follow the above procedures every time they add water, he said.

Christmas tree shoppers looking for replantable trees also have a few things to look for while they search for the perfect tree.

"Make sure you go to someone who is reputable and who'll be there if you have problems," Williams said.

Williams said that a rule of thumb for replantable trees was that they should have a rootball about one-quarter the size of the body of the tree. The rootball is the dirt and roots tied together in a burlap bag.

"If the trunk of the tree is loose from the rootball then don't buy it," he said, adding that this may indicate the tree had been torn away from its roots.

It also is important to keep the rootball moist, not wet, until it is ready for planting.

After that, the only thing the buyer needs to do with the tree is decorate it.



Scott Williams showing off one of his Fraser Firs at The Christmas Tree Lot in Carrboro

DTH/Larry Childress

## Campus yuletide activities include tree trimming, films

By DONNA LEINWAND  
Staff Writer

Several student organizations will usher in the holidays with yuletide activities.

Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity will kick off events today with its traditional lighting of a Christmas tree in the Pit.

"It's been done for a long time," said Ricky Gessner, a junior from Raleigh and member of APO. "It's just something to do for campus... I guess to make it more like home."

Holiday spirit at the Student Union will take the form of painted windows. The Carolina Union Activities Board's Social Committee, which is sponsoring the event, has opened the activity to anyone who has a holiday design

suitable for the windows. The social committee will supply the paint.

This is the last week for potential artists to submit their designs to the social committee, said Kimberleigh Jordan of the Carolina Union Performing Arts Committee.

The Student Union's spirit isn't only on the outside. An exhibit of holiday books will be in the gallery display cases.

The Carolina Union Film Committee will sponsor two exam breaks. It will show *Bob Dylan: Don't Look Back*, a rock documentary, at 7 and 9:30 p.m. Saturday and *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* at 7 and 9:30 p.m. Dec. 11. Both movies are free.

The Clef Hangers and the Loreleis have scheduled some holiday performances. Monday night, the Loreleis

sang at the Morehead Confederation banquet. Both groups will sing at 9:45 tonight at Cobb dormitory's Christmas party.

The Clef Hangers will do their regular show.

"We don't know any Christmas songs," said Hugh Tilson, the Clef Hanger's business manager and a senior from Raleigh. "We have finals and other things, and it wasn't worth it for us to learn new songs. We'll probably sing the carols along with The Loreleis."

The Loreleis have been working on four or five new songs, said Phyllis Drake, Loreleis president and tour director.

"We have been doing some humorous, satirical pieces and some Christmas carols," she said.

## 'Tis the season to buy unique gifts

By GORDON RANKIN  
Staff Writer

If the usual holiday gift items are starting to look about as interesting as wilted mistletoe, the following suggestions may put the spirit back into your Christmas shopping.

Relax Video, a New York City company specializing in environmental videos, has introduced a new means of releasing tension and stress. It has developed two new programs, "Fireplace TV" and "Aquarium TV," for home use.

"Fireplace TV" displays a crackling hearth in a mountain cabin, and "Aquarium TV" soothes the viewer with its aquatic images. Each cassette takes about an hour to view and is available in VHS or Beta format.

Anna Freemont, an employee at Ivey's department store in University Mall, says 1985 seems to be the year of the teddy bear. Towels, curtains, bedspreads and other linens bearing the teddy logo have become very popular in recent months.

Also available is the "Party Bear," a stuffed toy with lighted eyes that chuckles and raises a can of Budweiser to its mouth, for \$29.95.

For the stylish person on your list, consider the biggest fad in timekeeping since the sundial: the Swatch watch. Swatch also has expanded to shirts, handbags and sunglasses. The watches retail for about \$30; an additional \$3 will buy a colored plastic "guard" to keep the timepiece looking new.

Coca-Cola no longer makes just a variety of soft drinks. It now is one of the latest names in fashionwear. Included in its long line of newly introduced clothing are sleeveless shirts, slacks, hats and other accessories. The products once were made abroad, but now Coca-Cola has commissioned various N.C. textile companies to produce much of the clothing in this state.

The enthusiastic reader you have in mind for Christmas gifts has probably exhausted the halls of Davis Library and is ready to move on to bigger and better things. How about some books by local authors?

*Chapel Hill: An Illustrated History* by Jim Vickers, a hot item at the

Intimate Bookshop on Franklin Street since its introduction earlier this year, includes little-known trivia about Chapel Hill and Carrboro. Also popular on the bookshelves is *On the Road* by UNC alumnus and CBS news personality Charles Kuralt.

"Money to Burn," available at Spencers stores, is a package of make-believe dollar bills for anyone who has dreamed of literally tossing some cold hard cash into the hot yuletide fire. This novelty can be purchased for around \$4.

No matter how you fill your shopping carts this holiday season, you won't be at a loss for unique gifts if you explore all the possibilities at the many area stores.

## Religious activities

Students looking for a study break during exams or who cannot go home for Christmas may want to participate in yuletide activities sponsored by some members of the University Chaplain's Association.

Campus Christian Fellowship will hold a Christmas party 7 p.m. Wednesday at its campus house, 209 Glenburnie St.

The party is open to everyone, said Debbie Dodson, wife of Fellowship minister Frank Dodson. The evening's activities will include making freshman exam survival kits and caroling at neighborhood houses. Anyone needing transportation to the party can call 942-8952.

Music lovers can tune their vocal cords and join students at Chapel of the Cross Episcopal Church for caroling and a pizza dinner. Carolers should meet at the church parking lot, 304 E. Franklin St., at 5:30 Saturday.

Yuletide church services at Chapel of the Cross include: celebration of the Great Litany during the 10 p.m. service this Wednesday; a Lessons and Carols service at 9 and 11:15 a.m. Dec. 15; the Christ Mass (Midnight Eucharist) 11 p.m. Christmas Eve; and a Christmas-morning service at 11.

Chapel of the Cross Area also is hosting an Advent meditation series, in which area clergy are participating, 12:15 to 12:45 Monday and Thursday afternoons in the chapel through Dec. 23.

Call 929-2193 for more information about Chapel of the Cross events.

Lutheran Campus Ministries will hold a Christmas meal 6 p.m. Wednesday at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 300 E. Rosemary St. A Christmas candlelight service will follow the meal at 7 p.m.

The service will include Christmas music and Holy Communion, said Larry Hartsell, Lutheran Campus pastor.

"It will be a beautiful service," he said. "A lot of carols will be sung

and different readings from the Christmas story will be read. Part of the service will be only by candlelight."

People plan to go caroling at six to eight homes of Holy Trinity members after the candlelight service, Hartsell said. He stressed that these activities were open to everyone. Call 942-2677 for more information.

Newman Catholic Student Center, 218 Pittsboro St., will hold a midnight Mass on Christmas Eve and services at 9:15 and 11 a.m. Christmas. Students are invited to attend the service and also to join a choir, said Cathy Rusin, student campus minister. Call 929-3730 for more information.

United Church Campus Ministry will hold a candlelight service 11 p.m. Christmas Eve. On the last Sunday before Christmas, students can join an Ecumenical Church Walk beginning 3 p.m. at United Church, 211 W. Cameron Ave. Participants will tour the downtown churches and will end the walk with a reception, said the Rev. Jill Eden. Call 942-3540 for more information.

A Lovefeast in the Moravian Tradition will be held 7:30 p.m. Sunday at Wesley Foundation, 214 Pittsboro St. The service will include traditional Moravian music, the sharing of coffee and Moravian buns and the lighting of candles to signify "that Jesus is the light of the world," said Manuel Wortman, Foundation chaplain. The Wesley Singers and a Brass Choir will perform during the ceremony, which is open to the public.

Saturday night the Foundation is sponsoring a community sing-along of Handel's "Messiah." Call 942-2152 for more information.

Features Editor Sharon Sheridan, State and National Editor Andy Trincia and staff writers Rachel Stiffler and Kerstin Coyle contributed to this article.

## Sales should give retailers happy holidays

By LORRY WILLIAMS  
Business Editor

The day after Thanksgiving marks the official opening of the Christmas shopping season. Although economic analysts aren't forecasting huge retail sales increases for this year, area merchants remain optimistic about Christmas sales.

The significant thing about this year is the so-called "shopping season," said Hans Krusa, lecturer in the UNC School of Business Administration.

This year Christmas shoppers have six fewer days to purchase holiday gifts, and those six days could make a difference to retailers.

"If people are buying, they will have to buy more in a shorter period of time," Krusa said.

The weather also is expected to play a part in determining how well retailers do this season. November was unseasonably warm, and some analysts say the warmer weather doesn't put holiday shoppers in a buying mood.

Even so, Chapel Hill merchants are stocking up and preparing for the final days.

Jeanette Falk, owner of The Children's Store Inc. in University Mall, said she noticed a distinct difference in shoppers when the "shopping season" officially opened Friday.

"People seemed to think Christmas," she said. "They were more decisive about gifts."

The shorter holiday shopping season will mean people have fewer days to shop, but they still will have

to buy for the same number of people, she said.

"It's a little early to say how the season will be," Falk said. "But I don't see any indication for there being a big increase."

Kristen Wickliffe, owner and chief candy maker at The Chocolate Mousse in University Square, said she was doing an average business now but added The Chocolate Mousse had not really begun its Christmas season.

"Because it's homemade candy we don't make it way ahead," she said. "We're expecting to do about one-third of our yearly business during Christmas."

"It's a big candy time. You can give candy to anyone. We're looking forward to a really big season."

Barbara Sears, assistant manager for Reeds Jewelers in University Mall, said Reeds should average the same or slightly higher sales than last year's Christmas season.

"According to last year's figures we should do a little better," Sears said, adding that November's sales were slower than last November's.

"We can judge a little (of how our sales will be) by lay-aways and things," she said. "Lay-aways have picked up, so we expect to do okay. But you can never tell until it gets started."

University Mall caters to a varied group of patrons, Sears said. Shoppers range from retired people to students and young married couples. The Chapel Hill store competes with the Reeds in Durham and has to sell harder to its market, she said.

Some analysts have said shoppers this Christmas season would stay away from higher-priced items because of big buying investments they had made during the year. At Reeds, Sears said the amount of the investment depended on the age of the person doing the buying.

"Larger pieces, more expensive pieces have sold pretty well," she said, adding that people 30 years old and older were the ones who tended to invest in more expensive pieces of jewelry.

Although most merchants have six fewer shopping days this year, the Metropolis at University Mall seems to be doing well.

David Doss, one of the owners, said, "Things have been going really well. The Christmas season started early for us."

People began shopping the Metropolis before Thanksgiving, and sales haven't slacked since, Doss said.

"Our business is up 80 percent over last year," he said. "If we had started even earlier we would have made up for those six days."

Sales at the Record Bar in University Mall also have increased since last year, said Anne Wilkinson, assistant manager.

Many music buyers are investing in compact disks in addition to records and tapes, Wilkinson said.

Whether it's compact discs, chocolates or diamond rings, the merchants are ready... what are you waiting for?