



Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*), native to this area, is now grown as important timber tree

in Australia from seed collected near Davenport.

♦ ♦ ♦



Scotch Pine — (*Pinus Sylvestris*) — one of Europe's leading timber trees. Because of its timber value in Europe

it was imported into this country early, by American foresters.

♦ ♦ ♦



Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga taxifolia*) — traditional western Christmas tree is a native to

Santa Cruz county, also found in the Sierra Nevada and the Rockies.



White Fir (*Abies concolor*) — a native of California's northern coastal range and the Sierra

Nevada. Sometimes mistaken for the high-elevation Silver Tip—or Red fir.

Christmas Tree Time — Family Fun For Everyone

By Margaret Koch
CHRISTMAS TREE . . .

The very words sound green and prickly and sharply fragrant. Santa Cruzans are holiday-lucky. They can bundle the kids into the car and drive a short distance to "choose and cut" their own fresh tree.

They can wander at will through the rows of

tree. Hmmm . . . I wonder what kind it is?"

Truly, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Most people know what they like when they see it. But few know what they are looking at — in the way of a Christmas tree, that is.

Take the westerners' traditional Christmas tree — the Douglas fir. It is

sometimes mistaken for the high-altitude Silver Tip which it resembles. White fir is short-needled and symmetrical, a more formal Christmas tree than the Douglas fir. And because it's slower growing, it's also more costly.

All the fir trees are short-needled. Needles range in

ular here as Christmas trees and are grown on local plantations.

The Monterey pine has been termed by some tree fanciers as "the Christmas tree of the elite." It's considered by some to be a more sophisticated tree than the firs.

The Scotch pine also is bushy and round, but a lighter green in

Sequoia Park fame, also is available at several local plantations. It's a cousin to Santa Cruz county's native Sequoia sempervirens, the gigantea has more rigid branches which may be decorated without drooping clear to the floor as the weaker coastal tree will do.

Its "leaves" are flat and more



Where You Can Choose, Cut

Here's where you can "choose and cut." The following list includes member-growers of the California Christmas Tree Growers association in Santa Cruz county listed by area:

Christmas Tree Time

By Margaret Koch

CHRISTMAS TREE . . .

The very words sound green and prickly and sharply fragrant. Santa Cruzans are holiday-lucky. They can bundle the kids into the car and drive a short distance to "choose and cut" their own fresh tree.

They can wander at will through the rows of a number of tree plantations, selecting — rejecting. Everybody gets into the act:

"Mama, I want that one."

"No — I think it's a little lopsided."

"Then how about THAT one — the great big one?"

"No, because it looks a bit thin here and there. But here's a nice

tree. Hmmm . . . I wonder what kind it is?"

Truly, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Most people know what they like when they see it. But few know what they are looking at — in the way of a Christmas tree, that is.

Take the westerners' traditional Christmas tree — the Douglas fir. It's a dark green, rich-furred, full-bodied and joyous-smelling tree in most cases. The old-time westerner snorts at "tin trees" and "painted trees" and any other kind — except the Douglas fir. To him Christmas IS a Douglas fir in the living room, twinkling with lights and gorgeous with ornaments and tinsel.

There's the White fir too. It is

sometimes mistaken for the high-altitude Silver Tip which it resembles. White fir is short-needled and symmetrical, a more formal Christmas tree than the Douglas fir. And because it's slower growing, it's also more costly.

All the fir trees are short-needled. Needles range in length from one to one and a half inches long. Each needle is placed individually on the limb or twig. The fir tree's over-all general shape is triangular.

Pines have longer needles (from four to five inches) which grow in clusters or fascicles, giving the tree a "puffed out" or more rounded look.

Several kinds of pines are pop-

ular here as Christmas trees and are grown on local plantations.

The Monterey pine has been termed by some tree fanciers as "the Christmas tree of the elite." It's considered by some to be a more sophisticated tree than the firs.

The Scotch pine also is bushy and round, but a lighter green in color, tending almost toward the chartreuse tints. Just to further complicate the problem of identification, its needles are shorter — only about two and one-half inches long. But it can be identified easily as a pine because they do grow in the characteristic fascicles.

Sequoia gigantea — the giant redwood of Giant Forest and

Sequoia Park fame, also is available at several local plantations. It's a cousin to Santa Cruz county's native *Sequoia sempervirens*, the gigantea has more rigid branches which may be decorated without drooping clear to the floor as the weaker coastal tree will do.

Its "leaves" are flat and more like scales than leaflets, but it makes a spectacular and "different" looking Christmas tree.

Also to be had locally are several other pines which include the Coulter pine (a gray-green tree), and Australian and Shore pines.

A word of two of caution:

1. All growers do not have all kinds of trees. Check the list accompanying this article — or telephone the plantation first to find out.

2. Not even a fresh-cut tree will hold up well unless it receives the proper care. Place it in a bucket of water in a cool, shaded spot.

3. Remember — plantation owners have their problems. It takes from five to eight years to grow a tree to the six or seven-foot marketable size. Then the trees must be sold during the shortest marketing period for any commodity: three consecutive weekends of two days each, with about six hours of daylight each day. Some sales are scattered through the weekdays. But the majority of them fall on weekends.

If you choose to visit the most popular plantations you may run into traffic problems. Growers are making efforts to improve facilities for handling large numbers of people and cars. But don't expect miracles — these things take time. So don't go to cut a tree "in a hurry."

4. Cut the tree as the grower requests: just above the first whorl of branches (so the tree will be able to reproduce itself in a few years.)

5. Dress warmly for a tree-cutting jaunt. And wear walking shoes.

6. And most important of all: Have fun — and a Merry Christmas!



Mrs. Jim Downing of Downing's Forest on Day Valley road off Freedom boulevard, shows how a "turn-up tree" can start from a properly cut stump. At least one whorl of limbs must be left at the time of cutting. This tree happens to be a Douglas fir but the principle is the same for pines and firs.

How To Tell Them Apart



The Monterey pine, top picture has long needles which grow in little clusters (or fascicles) of three. The Scotch

Pine has two needles in each cluster. The Douglas fir, bottom picture, and all true firs have individual needles which are placed singly on branches and twigs.

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APTOS: Downing's Forest, 1155 Day Valley road. Turn onto Freedom boulevard at Mon Desir restaurant. Follow signs to trees which are located at above address, two miles East of Highway 1. Phones: 722-1541 and 724-9184. Trees grown: 1000 Monterey pine, 4000 Douglas fir, 100 Scotch pine, and 100 Sierra redwoods.

EMPIRE GRADE ROAD: Crest Ranch, 12½ miles north of Santa Cruz. Phone: 426-1522. Trees grown: 6000 Douglas fir, 6000 Scotch pine, 2000 White fir, 500 Austrian pine and 1000 Shore pine.

FELTON: Cheney ranch, 2340 Zayante road. Phone 33 5-4992. Trees grown: 100 Monterey pine and 500 Douglas fir.

SKYLINE BOULEVARD: Triangle ranch, 19715 Skyline blvd., Los Gatos. Location of trees: nine miles south of Saratoga Gap between Gist road and Bear Creek road. Phones: 354-8275 and 354-1423. Trees grown: 8000 Monterey pine, 2000 White fir, 6000 Douglas fir, some Coulter pine.

SOQUEL: Robison ranch, 9000 Glen Haven road. Phone: 475-1388. Trees grown: 40 Douglas fir, 70 Scotch pine and 20 assorted kinds.