

# *New Hampshire* Agriculture in the Classroom

Holiday Crops

December 2014

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## Notes from **New Hampshire**

**We have been out and  
about at these events:**

### **NH Science Teachers' Fall Conference**

Common Core Standards, agricultural literacy, story books, baseball, Ag Mags, hydroponics, garden in a glove, Nutrients for Life and much, much more were discussed at this great conference. Science teachers from around the state took part in a workshop to learn more about incorporating agricultural concepts into their classroom.

### **NH Farm Bureau Annual Meeting**

This was a great opportunity to meet with New Hampshire

## Christmas Trees

"Long before the advent of Christianity, plants and trees that remained green all year had a special meaning for people in the winter. Just as people today decorate their homes during the festive season with pine, spruce, and fir trees, ancient peoples hung evergreen boughs over their doors and



windows. In many countries it was believed that evergreens would keep away

witches, ghosts, evil spirits, and illness." (1)

German settlers in Pennsylvania are reported to be the first to display a Christmas Tree in America in the 1830's. In 1851, Christmas trees were first sold commercially, taken randomly from the forest. Now we have tree farms dedicated to growing trees for Christmas.

The smell of a farm fresh Christmas Tree is not only a classic sign of the holiday season, but representative of their contribution to our state's economy. In 2012, the value of Christmas trees sold in NH was over \$3 million which makes NH 14th in the country for sales. Click [here](#) for a list of where to find pre-cut Christmas trees, cut your own trees and other holiday necessities.

According to the NH Christmas Trees website:

- Approximately 25-30 million real Christmas trees are sold each year in the United States.
- There are close to 350 million real Christmas trees currently growing on Christmas Tree farms in the United States, and they were all planted by farmers.
- Christmas trees are grown in all 50 states, but 80% of artificial trees worldwide are manufactured in China, according to the U.S. Commerce

farmers and other agricultural professionals to discuss how NHAITC pursues agricultural literacy throughout the state and how we can expand the effort together. Programs such as Farm Quests, Adopt a Farmer, Farm Tours and School to Farm Days were of interest.

### **Geography Awareness Week**

A great opportunity to speak with geography and social studies teachers about how easily agricultural concepts can be incorporated into their curriculum. There was even a chance to chat with pre-service teachers.

**Mark your calendar:** The [Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom Conference](#), Saturday March 7th in Palmer, MA. Click [here](#) for more information on "Growing Minds Through Agriculture". They are also looking for interesting workshop ideas.

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### **Lesson Links**

Below are links to some helpful lessons and activities.

#### **Forests for People**

Free online curriculum and packets available for purchase from the National Association of Conservation Districts. Grades K-6+

#### **Do the Rot Thing**

Composting activities for grades K-12

#### **Growing a Nation**

"Growing a Nation is an interactive multimedia instructional tool that utilizes innovative technology that links to online teacher resources and complements

Department.

- Real trees are a renewable, recyclable resource. Artificial trees contain non-biodegradable plastics and possible metal toxins such as lead.
- For every real Christmas tree harvested, 1 to 3 seedlings are planted the following spring.
- There are about 350,000 acres in production for growing Christmas Trees in the U.S., much of it preserving green space.
- Nearly 15,000 farms in the United States grow Christmas trees, employing over 100,000 people full or part time.
- It takes four to 15 years to grow a 6-7-foot Christmas tree, with an average growing time of 7 years.
- Trees provide vital habitat for wildlife, from birds to bears including many endangered and threatened species.

Christmas Trees and tree farms are the perfect vehicle for bringing agriculture in to the classroom with science, math, language arts, social studies, art and economics.

(1) "History of Christmas Trees." History.com. A&E Television Networks, 2009. Web. 22 Oct. 2014.

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### **Pointsettias**

Native to Mexico, colorful Poinsettia plants add a festive touch to any holiday decor. First introduced in the US by Joel Roberts Pointsett while serving as the first US Ambassador to Mexico. They are now the second most valuable flowering potted crop sold in the United States with a reported wholesale value in 2011 of \$139 million in the top-15 producing states.

Some interesting Poinsettia facts from the University of Illinois Extension:

- The showy colored parts of poinsettias that most people think of as the flowers are actually colored bracts (modified leaves).
- In Mexico the poinsettia is a perennial shrub that will grow 10-15 feet tall.
- Poinsettias are not poisonous. A study at Ohio State University showed that a 50-pound child would have to eat more than 500 leaves to have any harmful effect. Even so, you might want to keep your pets from snacking on poinsettia leaves. Eating the leaves can cause vomiting and diarrhea, plus they are reported to have an awful taste.

existing America History textbooks and high school history curricula. Growing a Nation's chronological presentation of significant historical events focuses on the important role agriculture has played in America's development." (MAITC)

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[Wikki Stix 3-D Life Cycle of a Poinsettia Craft for Kids!](#)



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## Calendar

**Farm & Forest Expo**  
February 6th & 7th, 2015  
Radisson Hotel  
Manchester, NH



**NH Association of Education for Young Children Spring Conference**  
April 18th, 2015  
Plymouth State College

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## Contacts

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Deb Robie,

Poinsettias provide plenty of opportunities to teach science, math, history, economics and Mexican culture. From determining a production schedule which includes calculating flower initiation dates, vegetative growth needs, pinching and transplanting dates and fertilizer rations to learning about photoperiods, the poinsettia provides a whole host of areas for student education.



UNH will be hosting their popular Poinsettia Open House this year December 4th through the 6th. Over 100 varieties will be on display and a broad selection will be available for sale along with fresh wreaths. More information can be found [here](#).

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## Classroom Connection

[Real Trees 4 Kids](#) The story and science of tree farming for grades K-12

[Adopt a Forevergreen Tree program](#) where kindergarten students plant their own tree at the Rocks Christmas Tree Farm. The students can watch them grow until they are in 6th grade, at which point the trees are harvested.

[Discover Christmas Trees](#) by the NY Agriculture in the Classroom for grades K-8

[Poinsettia Fan Craft](#) for preschool

[A variety of Poinsettia crafts](#) for all ages

["The Legend of the Poinsettia"](#) activities. More can be found [here](#) (use this link to preview the lesson) If you are interested, let us know and we can email it to you.

[Poinsettia Production](#)

UNH Cooperative Extension: [Poinsettias Care and Reflowering](#)

**Books available for loan** by from NHAITC:  
(email us to check on availability)

"Christmas Tree Farm" by Ann Purmell (K+)  
"The Littlest Christmas Tree" by R. A. Herman (P-3rd)

Grafton County Coordinator  
[wehunt4@myfairpoint.net](mailto:wehunt4@myfairpoint.net)

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"The Tree Book for Kids and their Grown-ups"  
by Gina Ingoglia (can be adapted for most any age)  
"The Legend of the Poinsettia" by Tomie de Paola (P-3rd)

"The Poinsettia From Cutting to Shelf in the Classroom" - a middle school science module that highlights the use of Integrated Pest Management when growing this popular plant.

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