



Environmentally correct Christmas tree

by Stephen Russell

A new environmental twist could change the face of Christmas for many people this year. It involves spraying of pesticides on Christmas trees, a widespread practice in the Nova Scotia Christmas tree industry. Many of the pesticides are potentially dangerous.

The Christmas tree industry itself accounts for 6,000 part and full-time jobs in the province, including about 3,000 growers.

A Royal Commission on Forestry reported that half of Canada's tree exports come from Nova Scotia, with 1.8 million trees (96 per cent of its total) going to the U.S. This is not a small cottage industry by any means.

David Orton, a prominent Nova Scotian environmentalist, points out there are 40 pesticides used by Christmas tree growers. Of these, chlordane is known to be toxic to fish and birds, and diofol (which also happens to contain 7-12 per cent DDT as a contaminant) is toxic to fish and bees.

Orton also notes "once a pesticide has been authorized for use by Agriculture Canada, the application is essentially unregulated."

Lance Makmillen, a Halifax resident who's been fighting the spraying of pesticides for two years, says this means growers can spray as much as they want, whenever they want. This means trees may be sprayed right before harvesting.

After Christmas when the trees are taken down, residue can remain in the home for up to two months.

Makmillen, whose home in Caledonia borders on a Christmas tree plantation, had his doctor contact Poison Control in order to find out if it was safe for his wife, who was

pregnant at the time, to be in the vicinity of these pesticides.

They replied that he and his family "should minimize their exposure to minimize their risk." Reading this risk as meaning cancer, the Makmillen family promptly left.

Many environmentalists say the reason growers spray their trees is twofold. The first factor is the Christmas tree industry has become increasingly competitive and, as a result, has become increasingly dependent on the chemical industry.

The second factor is a little less obvious and is just as much a result of consumer attitudes as of the growers' negligence. The notion of symmetry in cultivation (or the "perfect tree" at maximum profit) has become an obsession among growers who are merely following the consumer wish for a perfect tree for a perfect Christmas.

Considering the supertree has proved to be so dangerous, perhaps we should learn to love diversity and its inherent beauty much more than we do.

Both Orton and Makmillen offer two alternatives for those who don't wish to buy a sprayed tree every this year.

First of all inform yourself. When buying a tree, ask whether it's been sprayed. If it's not organic, don't buy it. Chances are that if people ask — knowing how market forces work — growers, sensing the profit, will revert back to organic methods.

Secondly, if you can't find an organically cultivated tree and you still want one, buy an artificial one.

And for those who say an artificial tree just isn't the same as the "real thing", the reply can be offered that a chemically manufactured and poisonous tree is also, hardly like the real thing.

We travel together, passengers on a little spaceship dependent on its vulnerable supplies for our air and soil; all committed for our safety to its security and peace, preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work, and I will say the love we give our fragile craft.
A. Stevenson

Metropolitan Authority's Guide on Where to Recycle in Metro

Recycling helps save valuable resources and that helps the environment! There are lots of places to take your recyclables right here in Metro. But Remember: Prepare your Recyclables Properly

Glass Containers - Rinse clean, remove lids, metal foil and neck rings, sort by color. No ceramics, shatterproof glass, pyrex or window glass.

Aluminum Cans - Empty, remove straws.

Tin (Steel) Cans - Rinse clean, remove ends and labels, flatten.

Newspapers - Bundle and tie or put in grocery bag. Don't put out on wet days. No glossy fliers.

Plastic Grocery Bags - Only those with LDPE-4 in the bottom corner, not the crinkly kind. Make sure they are clean, empty and turned inside out.

P.E.T. pop bottles - 2 litre plastic pop bottles, caps off and flattened.

Rigid Plastics - Shampoo and detergent bottles, yogurt and ice cream containers. Make sure they are clean.

Corrugated Cardboard - Flatten; No waxed or soiled cardboard, No cereal or shoe boxes (boxboard).

• **Please Note:** Some depots may have specific requirements for preparation. Not all depots take all these materials. Contact them for details.

City of Halifax

Newspapers (no glossy fliers, place in plastic grocery bags)

If you have curbside residential garbage pick-up, place 3 feet away from regular garbage by 8:00 a.m.

on your regular collection day. Jim Bauld 421-6962 or Don Beatty 421-6567

City of Dartmouth

Newspapers; bundle and tie or in grocery bags (no glossy fliers)

Place away from regular garbage by 7:30 a.m. on collection day. Don't put out on wet days.

Mark Bernard 464-2183

Metro Schools

LeMarchant-St. Thomas

6141 Watt Street

Glass, aluminum and tin cans, plastic grocery bags. Last Saturday of every month, 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon.

Parent Teacher Association

422-4960.

Sir Charles Tupper

6455 Norwood Street

Aluminum and tin cans, glass, corrugated cardboard, white bond, plastic grocery bags. Second Saturday of every month, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Parent Teacher Association

425-3737

Commercial Recyclers

Look in the Yellow Pages under "Scrap Metals", "Recycling Depots" or "Bottle Exchanges" for information on commercial recyclers or call the Clean Nova Scotia Foundation at 424-5245 for a copy of their Recycling Guide.

Always Remember the 3R's

Reduce waste first, then

Reuse things again, and finally,

Recycle as much as you can

For more information and updates call: 421-8576.

Ask not what your environment can do for you but what you can do for your environment

by Maureen Strickland

Massive consumption coupled with our lifestyles has resulted in a huge impact on our natural environment.

In one year the average Canadian consumes 95,000 litres of water, 2,000 litres of gas, 193 kilograms of paper and produces 620 kilograms of solid household waste. Canadians are the highest users of energy per capita in the world and along with other industrialized nations consume eighty-six percent of the world's metals.

We are eating up natural resources, polluting the air, land and water, destroying wildlife habitat, and driving animals to extinction. These are just a few of the negative environmental impacts which can be attributed to our lifestyle.

The Campus Environmental Action Group will be holding two workshops on Nov. 28 to assist people in transforming their environmental concern into positive action in their daily lives. The Environmental Lifestyles Workshop will demonstrate how everything we do depends on and impacts

upon the environment and how personal lifestyles can be changed to reduce that impact.

A Bicycle Workshop is also planned to assist people in winterizing their bicycles. Bicycles are an environmentally sound alternative to the automobile for urban transportation. Eighty percent of all travel within urban areas is by automobile. Automobile use contributes to oil depletion, noise pollution, air pollution, acid rain and global warming. Bicycle use is clean, and it is faster than walking and is also good exercise.