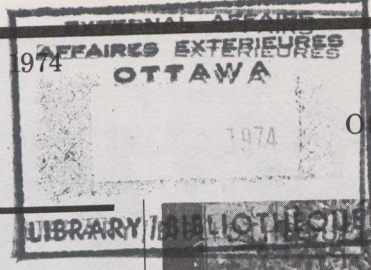


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Canada's Christmas trees

Export sales are the mainstay of Canada's Christmas tree industry. In 1971, just over 4.1 million trees with a value of \$3.9 million were exported. About 98 per cent of these went to the United States with the balance being shipped mainly to countries in and around the Caribbean.

Although precise information on exports by species is not available, it is clear that balsam fir is the leader, followed by Douglas-fir, and then the spruces and Scots pine.

From 1961 to 1971, the number of trees exported dropped by 55 per cent, although the corresponding decline in sales value came to only 32 per cent because of the steadily-increasing price during that period.

The decline in exports is explained, in part, by strengthening competition from artificial trees in the United States, together with the development and growth, over the past two decades in that country, of an extensive plantation-based Christmas tree industry. The current United States demand for carefully cultured and shaped plantation trees has special significance for Canadian wild tree exports.

In Canada, in Metropolitan Toronto, a survey showed that 38.6 per cent of families had a natural tree, 32.9 per cent an artificial tree, and 1 per cent had one of each. It is estimated that domestic consumption is about 2 million trees, or roughly half of the current exports of natural trees.

What is a good tree?
A variety of species are produced across Canada mainly according to their natural occurrence in a particular region or locality. British Columbia supplies Douglas-fir and Alberta produces lodgepole pine. The Maritimes, Quebec, and, to a lesser extent, the Prairies are the major sources of



Crombie McNeil
Italian children in national costume put finishing touches on Christmas tree during a pageant at the National Arts Centre, Ottawa.

balsam fir and spruce. Ontario is the principal producer of plantation-grown Scots pine. Less important for Christmas trees are red pine, red spruce, Norway spruce, and Austrian pine.

Irrespective of species, most buyers look for evergreens with dense deep-green or blue-green foliage. They want trees with compact, symmetrical, tapered form; trees that will hold their needles indoors and whose branches will readily support ornaments; and trees that have a fragrant smell and come in heights ranging from five-and-a-half to eight feet.

Some species exhibit the desired natural characteristics to a greater degree than others. Scots pine, for example, holds its needles well but sometimes lacks depth of colour. Spruces, on the other hand, tend to lose their needles quickly but exhibit the more intense

Season's Greetings

and a

Happy New Year