**The Year on a Tree Farm**

Note – the months are approximate given the normal progression of tasks through the year. The weather can make a huge difference in timing, especially bud break, so it’s necessary to observe the trees rather than just go by a calendar. Farms located in different microclimates can have very different timing of tasks.

**January/February**

* Clean up after the season
* Cut the stumps as close as possible to the ground.
  + Treat the cut stump with liquid urea or boraxo (or cover it with dirt) to prevent infection with Annosus Root Rot spores
* Basal prune any trees that need it
* Finish removing sticks from the leaders that weren’t removed before the season. (Note – if the leader isn’t straight, leave the stick but loosen the twist-ties so they don’t cut into new growth.)
* Stake any little trees that got stomped on during the season
* Cull trees that just aren’t going to make a Christmas tree
* Hand prune wonky branches caused by shearing.

**March/April**

* Get your seedlings planted as early as possible
  + Ground must not be frozen and water table must be low enough that the holes don’t fill up.
  + Spray rows with glyphosate at least 3 days prior to planting to kill weeds that have over-wintered.
* Spray Neem oil on Frasers
  + Spray before bud break and after planting to kill spider mites.

**May/June**

* Watch for signs of bud-break.
* Spray with glyphosate by hand (i.e. not over the tops of the trees) to kill off spring-germinating weeds.
* After bud break, when new growth is about an inch long, spray a mixture of chemicals. (See recipe for Mike’s Magic Elixer at the end of this document.)
  + Spray all trees – large and small
  + Spray dying trees to prevent infecting surrounding trees
  + Spray stumps to kill armillaria.
* Start working tops after spraying
  + Choose one leader for each tree and remove competing leaders.
  + The closer you choose the leader to bud break, the more likely it is to straighten up on its own without sticking.
* Apply slow-release fertilizer after bud break.
* Start mowing

**July/August**

* Start shearing trees
  + Start with Nobles, Fraser and Nordmann – they shouldn’t need hard shearing and need to have time for the brown ends to heal.
  + After those trees are done, shear the Grands and Dougs
    - Trees with drooping ends should not be sheared until the ends stand up.
* Work tops as you go through the field
  + Leaders on market trees that haven’t straightened up by themselves should be tied up with sticks.
* Keep mowing

**September/October**

* With the warmer falls, you should spray market Grands, Nordmann and Frasers again with Movento/Ultor. Mixing with colorant makes it obvious which trees have been treated and perks up the color.
* Weed whack between the trees to make things look tidy.
* Tag the market trees for sale.
* Keep mowing – this should be the end of it.

**MIKE’S MAGIC ELIXER**

In a 55 gallon drum, mix up the following:

* 3 C Bravo – protects from fungal infections.
  + - Nobles, Grands, Frasers - interior needle blight.
    - Doug firs – Swiss needle cast
* 1 C Movento/Ultor - systemic insecticide kills any insect that eats on the tree.
  + - Doug firs - wooley adelgid
    - All trees - aphids.
    - Systemic insecticides are effective for roughly 90 days.
* 1 C ProTek – foliar fertilizer
* 3 C Garden Phos – Systemic fungicide
  + - Supposed to protect from root rot & Sudden Oak Death syndrome
* ½ C Induce – Surfactant
* 3C Epsom salts – magnesium enhances the needle color and nutrient uptake

Amount depends on the size of the trees. On our farm, we needed 8 drums in past years when we had larger trees. This year we only needed 5 drums for the same acreage.