



Trees on a Farm

When students finish working through this section:

1. They will be able to describe REAL TREES as a crop comparable to other cultivated crops.
2. They will have discovered facts and figures concerning REAL TREE traditions.

The section deals directly with the concept of growing trees as a managed, sustainable crop. Many students may be unaware that the holiday trees for sale on retail lots come predominately from tree farms rather than forested areas.

REAL TREES are grown as crops much like corn, cotton, soybeans, and wheat. While there are many commonalities, there are also quite a few differences. One of the primary differences is the length of time a crop of trees remains in the field ... 4 to 10 years! Tree growers constantly have a crop in the field regardless of season. They harvest each year and replant to replace what was harvested.

Possible Discussion Points/Activities:

- Compile a list of all of the crops grown in your community, state, and region. Compare them with crops grown in other areas. Ask students to look at the cause/effect relationship between climate and the types of crops grown in an area.
- Compare and contrast the work required to successfully manage a crop of trees with that of another type of crop. This is a GREAT guest speaker opportunity!
- Ask students to research the organisms that would find a tree farm a suitable habitat. Are other crops habitats for other animals?
- Ask students to print and complete the *Think Tank* assignment. This can be done as a whole class, in small groups, or as an individual activity. Discuss and share!

Words to Know in this Section:

- cultivate: to grow or take care of a plant or crop ... to help grow
- crop: cultivated plants or agricultural produce, such as grain, vegetables, or fruit, considered as a group
- sapling: a young tree

Link Up! in this Section:

- Locate a Farm - <http://www.realchristmastrees.org/teachers.html>
This link has been shorted in this document to make it easier! Enter the link and click on *Find Farms with School Tours*.

Fast Facts in this Section:

- Today, 98% (98 of every 100) of the trees grown for the holidays are grown on farms.



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Think Tank: The Hunt!

Test your research skills. Use the Internet and resources from the library to find these fascinating facts!

HINT: Start your search at www.yahooligans.com or www.realchristmastrees.org.

- Who was the first US President to have a Christmas tree in the White House?
Answer: Franklin Pierce (1865)
- When was the first national Christmas tree lit? Who was president?
Answer: 1923 - Calvin Coolidge
- What are the top Christmas tree producing states in the US?
Answer: Oregon, Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, California, and North Carolina
- How did the tradition of having and decorating a tree for the holidays begin?
Possible Answer: Martin Luther decorated a tree in the late 16th century to show his children how the stars twinkled on a dark night.
- What are the top selling species of Christmas Trees?
Answer: balsam fir, Douglas-fir, Fraser fir, noble fir, Scotch pine, Virginia pine, and white pine
- Conifers have been chosen as the state tree for many states. Name 5 of those states and the tree that represents their state.
Possible Answers: <http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/collections/statetreeflower.html>
- Find the native regions of these Real Tree species. A native region is the place that these species would grow naturally ... without farming.
 - a) balsam-fir - Great Lakes and Eastern United States
 - b) Douglas-fir - Pacific Northwest
 - c) Fraser fir - Eastern United States (Appalachian and Smoky Mountain Areas)
 - d) noble fir - Pacific Northwest
 - e) Scotch pine - Midwest
 - f) Virginia pine - Southeast and Midwest
 - g) White Pine - Eastern and Central United States (Appalachian Mountains)
- How tall was the tallest Christmas Tree ever to be decorated? Where was it located?
Answer: 221 feet. The tree was a Douglas-Fir and was decorated at the Northgate Shopping Center in Seattle, Washington.