

WSU PUYALLUP HIGHLIGHT

October 13, 2006

Field tour for Christmas tree growers addresses needle disease that can impact tree harvests and seasonal sales.



(Above **left**: Gary Chastagner welcomes local growers; **middle**: noble fir test plots; at **right**: Chal Landgren explains grower evaluation form).

Over 20 local and regional growers came out to hear why some of their Christmas trees have suffered from a physiological needle disease that makes their trees unfit to sell in the current season. "It can vary from tree to tree," says Gary Chastagner, WSU Plant Pathologist, "but our working hypothesis is that its due to calcium uptake in newly expanding cell wall tissues." Noble and Grand Fir trees grown at higher elevations are less susceptible than those grown at lower elevations.

As the tour moved through three research areas, participants were asked to evaluate trees based on their own opinions considering if the tree could sell at this year's retail market. They compared susceptibility in Noble, Nordmann and Turkish fir and also looked at the results of different seed sources. Seeds came from a variety of sources: research labs, government and university labs and even a few squirrels.



(At **left**: Jan Sittnick, Technical Assistant II greets participants; at **right**: (L-R) a grower listens to comments from Norm Dart, Extension Coordinator, Gil Dermott, Plant Technician II, and Annie DeBauw, Ag Research Technologist I.)

WSU Puyallup: Solutions for the Region; Programs for Its People

Weekly Highlights is provided by the people and programs of WSU Puyallup. To include a highlight in an upcoming announcement, please contact either Tanyalee Erwin, terwin@wsu.edu, 253-445-4504, or Jon Newkirk, jnewkirk@wsu.edu, 253-445-4568. If your email is set to text messages only and you wish to see the graphical version of this Highlight, please email Tanyalee and she will send this Highlight as an attachment.