

# WHY SHOULD I BELONG?

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The interesting fact regarding this article is that initially it will be read by members of the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association (WCTPA); however it can serve two goals. This article is intended to reinforce why a current member should continue their membership in this exceptional organization and secondly, as important as the first, is to serve as a marketing tool for prospective members. Currently (April 2019) there are approximately 323 licensed Christmas tree growers in Wisconsin. However, not all of these growers are members of the WCTPA. As members of this great organization, it should be “our” goal to encourage all growers to join.

The Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association is an organization made up of Christmas tree growers from the state of Wisconsin and its adjoining states. The topics addressed and discussed in this organization are germane to Wisconsin Christmas tree producers with an emphasis on how various problems and solutions will impact Wisconsin tree growers in particular.

Membership in any organization must provide significant benefits to its members. If the members, or potential members, do not see an individual benefit; there is little need, in their own mind, to join any organization. Most people, in general, are not interested in broad spectrum or philosophical beliefs of many organizations. They look at what they themselves could benefit from membership. The Wisconsin

Tree Producers Association does provide direct advantages to its individual members with a membership roster composed of Wisconsin growers whose goal is to produce great trees.

The first benefit of belonging to the WCTPA comes with the subscription to the Quarterly Journal that you are presently reading. Marianne and I look forward to receiving this journal because there are multiple articles that prove beneficial for the individual grower. The Journal begins with a message from the current President of the WCTPA which is always very informative and is followed with Administrative news by our Executive Secretary, Cheryl Nicholson. Then, immediately beneficial, is the perennial article by Steve Rosenthal – “Chemically Speaking” - where Steve shares with the members what is on the horizon in regard to fertilization and chemicals. From an economic standpoint, some of these articles inform the members of various chemicals that are coming off of patent so that we can appreciate savings on these products. “Chemically Speaking” makes us aware of this, many times before the occurrence, which reflects itself as a significant economic advantage to the individual members. In addition, major issues are addressed by representatives of the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture and published in the Quarterly Journal and there are many items and bargains advertised in the Buy/Sell/Trade section. Each publication contains scientific articles

that, as a grower, you may not have readily available to you without this journal. This publication can be studied from cover to cover and the information gained will be immeasurable.

Marianne and I joined the Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association through the encouragement and invitation of Charlie and Karen Buehler (now Karen Fahey). We attended the winter meeting and joined the organization before we planted our first section of Christmas trees in 1992. At this winter meeting, the Buehler's introduced us to many of the associates that they had worked with through the years. These people included other growers, vendors, and key people in the organization that they felt we should know. To this day we deal with and are friends with many of the people that we were introduced to back in 1992. Great People – sharing a common goal – growing great Christmas trees. Karen Buehler now (Karen and Roger Fahey) maintain such loyalty to the WCTPA that even in retirement they maintained a full active membership.

This brings us to the value of attending the various meetings. In retrospect, neither Marianne nor I can recall a single meeting, summer and winter that we've attended, that we, as growers, did not come away with helpful suggestions and information. The information presented by the experts as well as interacting with other members has been invaluable.

At both the winter and summer conventions the members are given the opportunity to attend the business meetings. These sessions allow the members and directors to share and discuss their opinions that are based on

observation and fact which is beneficial to not only the organization, but to the members themselves. Change cannot be brought about from a distance. Membership gives you a voice.

Through the years, the opportunity will arise to meet new acquaintances and make new friends within the WCTPA organization. The nurturing of Christmas trees is an extremely unique operation. It has many benefits but it is also wrought with unique problems. There is a statement in education: "No man has alone become what he is – each man stands on the shoulders of his Predecessors". The opportunity to "commiserate" with other growers and share the problems that "crop" up through the year is a definite advantage of attending all of the meetings. We cannot emphasize enough the amount of guidance that can be gained if you have an opportunity to make that phone call to a member when you run into a significant problem to see if this problem has been one other growers have encountered; and most importantly, whether there is advice that can be given to help you out of your individual problem. We cannot express the gratitude to the multitude of people that have shared information with us through the years to help us in the nurturing of Christmas trees.

We hope this article will serve as a basis for an enthusiastic boost for continued membership as well as an invitation to anyone entering into this industry to think about joining and becoming involved.

See the website at: [www.RealTree4me.com](http://www.RealTree4me.com) or [www.Christmastrees-wi.org](http://www.Christmastrees-wi.org)  
Contact WCTPA at [info@christmastrees-wi.org](mailto:info@christmastrees-wi.org) or phone 608-742-8663.