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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wyckoff's Christmas Tree Farm Named NCTA's 2013 Grand Champion Christmas Tree Growers

Will Provide 2013 Official White House Christmas Tree

August 28, 2013 (Chesterfield, MO) – A Blue Spruce Christmas Tree grown by John Wyckoff, of Wyckoff's Christmas Tree Farm in Belvidere, NJ, has been named Grand Champion of the National Christmas Tree Association's (NCTA) 2013 National Christmas Tree Contest. As growers of the Grand Champion tree, the Wyckoff's have earned the right to present the official 2013 White House Christmas Tree this season. Since 1966, NCTA members have presented the official Christmas Tree for display in the White House Blue Room.

Rodney Richardson, of Mt. Rogers Christmas Tree Farm, in Whitetop, VA. was named Reserve Champion of the contest. Traditionally, the Reserve Champion farmers have provided a Christmas Tree for the residence of the Vice President.

Trees entered in the NCTA contest must fit into one of five species categories: True Fir, Douglas-fir, Spruce, Pine or Other. A panel of judges, made up of long-time growers and past contest winners, select the first-, second- and third-place winners in each category, then attendees of the NCTA conference and a panel of consumer judges vote for their favorite among the species finalists. Those vote totals determined the Grand Champion and Reserve Champion trees, which were announced August 10 at the NCTA conference being held in Arlington, VA.

"The fact that an American farm family gets to provide a Christmas Tree to be displayed in the White House indicates just how important a farm-grown Christmas tree is to the traditions of our country," said Cline Church, NCTA president and a Christmas Tree grower from Fleetwood, N.C. "Our whole industry is proud of the Wyckoff family for showcasing our crop in the most famous house in America."

To enter NCTA's national contest, growers must first win their state/regional competitions in the previous 12 months. While this is their first time to be Grand Champions of the NCTA contest, the Wyckoff's are no strangers to winning their state competitions. Their farm was New Jersey Grand Champion in 2013, 2012, 2011, 2008, 2007, 1999, 1992, 1990 and 1978.

The Wyckoff Farm has been in the family since 1839, passing from generation to generation. The farm is currently owned by John W. Wyckoff, Jr. and Judy Wyckoff Morris. The current John Wyckoff is the 6th generation to farm the land. His two sons, John and Bill along with their families help on the farm, especially during the Christmas season. "We sort of epitomize the concept of 'family farm' I guess," said Wyckoff. "For us, Christmas Tree farming is truly a family affair."

White House staff members typically travel to the Grand Champion's farm in October to select the tree that will serve as the centerpiece of the Blue Room holiday decorations. The Blue Room tree will need be about 18 ½ feet tall, much bigger than the 6- to 8-foot trees entered in the contest. The selected tree is typically cut and presented to the White House shortly after Thanksgiving.

Species Category Finalists

Spruce - John Wyckoff, Wyckoff's Christmas Tree Farm, Belvidere, NJ – Grand Champion

True Fir - Rodney Richardson, Mt. Rogers Christmas Tree Farm, Whitetop, VA – Reserve Champion

Pine – Judy & Stuart Smith, Wright's Christmas Tree Farm, Ward, SC

Winners of the National Wreath contest, also held during the NCTA conference were:

Undecorated Category: Joe Freeman, Mistletoe Meadows, Laurel Springs, NC

Decorated Category: Joe Freeman, Mistletoe Meadows, Laurel Springs, NC

ABOUT NCTA

About the National Christmas Tree Association (NCTA)

The National Christmas Tree Association is the national trade association representing the farm-grown Christmas Tree industry. NCTA represents more than 700 active member farms, 29 state and regional associations, and 4,000 affiliated businesses that grow and sell Christmas Trees or provide related supplies and services. It is estimated that those affiliated with the NCTA produce roughly three-quarters of the farm-raised Christmas Trees in the United States. To learn more, visit www.realchristmastrees.org or call 636/449-5070.