UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Radio Service

OFFICE OF INFORMATION

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Wednesday, December 7, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "CHRISTMAS TREES AND HOLLY" Information from the Forest Service, U.S.D.A.

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Listeners, the news today is about Christmas trees and greens. It comes from many States--all the way across the country from Washington and Oregon to Delaware, Maryland and States south where farmers are bury harvesting holly, and from Wisconsin to New Hampshire and Vermont where they are cutting and shipping Christmas trees.

As perhaps you know, the mild moist climate of the Pacific Northwest, much like the climate in England, is ideal for growing English holly. So, many farmers in that region have holly ranches where they raise different varieties of English holly as a Christmas cash crop. On one farm in King County, Washington, men are hard at work cutting, sorting, packing and shipping shiny dark-green leaves and red berries. Most of these go to eastern cities but some even go to foreign countries. The thousands of holly trees on this one farm supply tons of Christmas decorations. The holly goes out in packages of all sizes, in refrigerated cars as well as by parcel post express.

Across on the Atlantic Coast, lower Delaware and the Eastern Shore of Maryland are great centers for the holly harvest. This is the region where out native American holly grows so well. About 10 thousand people--whole families together--engage in the annual holly harvest on the Maryland Eastern Shore and together bring in more than 150 thousand dollars at Christmas. Men in the Forest Service believe that the center of American holly production is moving southward so that more holly will be going to market from Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia and even Florida.

Once upon a time--not so long ago either--before destructive cutting had killed off so much of our beautiful native holly, holly trees grew from Massachusetts to Missouri and south to Florida and Texas. Today you'll find no holly farther north than central New Jersey except on carefully protected property. But farmers and home owners may do much to keep it from dying out altogether by planting and raising it. If you are going into the business of raising American holly, Forest Service men say that your best location is from Norfolk, Virginia, to Florida within 50 or 60 miles of the coast. English holly is not so hardy as American holly so will probably not survive any farther north than Washington, D. C. But as I mentioned a moment ago some sections of the Pacific Northwest are probably as "likely places" for growing holly as the southeast coast.

By the way, did you know that the Department of Agriculture had a bulletin on holly? Maybe you'll want this bulletin for your home library. It is written for the man interested in growing holly as a business, but it contains much useful

information for any listener who would like to have some holly trees growing in the yard just for decorative purposes. The name of this bulletin is: "Growing Christmas Holly on the Farm." The number is 1693. And you can have a copy by writing the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Now for a little Christmas tree news. Have you heard that farmers in several states today have Christmas tree cooperatives? There's one in Wisconsin, recently formed, called the Northland Yuletide Greens Cooperative. Wisconsin farmers in two counties formed this organization in advance of the holiday rush. Patrons may purchase trees in a limited number of towns for the first year. If the cooperative succeeds, a larger force will be added and extensive sales begun in other towns next year. This group plans to have uniform standards for cutting trees and greens under good forestry practice and cooperative labels on all trees and greens it sells. This is the first effort of its kind in Wisconsin and its members hope that it will bring satisfaction both to the farmer who grows the tree and the family who buys the tree as well as to make sure that the evergreens will not be cut in such a way as to destroy forest stands.

New Hampshire has a Christmas tree cooperative, too, called Forest Products Association, Inc., which supervises cutting, grading, bundling and shipping. As a result of the work of this cooperative, New Hampshire tree farmers are putting better quality trees on the market. Trees are sold as "fancy" or "standard" and labeled with attractive tags. Bundles of trees are tied with red string. Last year's experience proves that all this extra effort pays because dealers are willing to pay more for better trees. As a result of the cooperative marketing program, New Hampshire now finds it needs to build up a supply of trees and landowners are planting balsam fir extensively. New Hampshire's annual Christmas-tree income averages 75 thousand dollars, which does not include employment for men, teams and trucks.

Speaking of Christmas trees reminds me of another Department of Agriculture bulletin, another for the farm family interested in a Christmas cash crop. This bulletin is number 1664. Its title is: "Christmas Trees as a Cash Crop for the Farm." You can order a copy from the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. It is free as long as the supply lasts.

Just to be sure you didn't miss names or numbers, let me repeat that you are welcome to Bulletin 1693 called "Growing Christmas Holly on the Farm", or Bulletin 1664 called "Christmas Trees as a Cash Crop for the Farm." They are free from the Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

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