



2021 TREE SALE

COVID-19 AND

Online Sales AND

Drive-thru Pickup,

OH MY!

For 61 years, Whatcom County Farm Forestry Association has been holding an annual Tree Sale. Depending on the species, trees are ordered one or more years out and we had 19,700 trees that had been ordered for our 2021 sale by our “everything trees” guy, **Tom Westergreen**. That includes collecting seeds, working with nurseries, ordering trees, picking them up, bagging them and much more.

Not wanting to break our 61-year record, but also being realistic about the impacts of COVID-19, **Lisa Tiemersma**, Tree Sale Chairperson, and other members of the Board put our thinking caps on and decided to treat the Tree Sale, like online grocery shopping. We had to set up an entire “Store” online. Each of the 16 species of trees had a description, 30-year height, characteristics and uses. Jon Matson, who had recently been instrumental in the redo of the Washington Farm Forestry Association website, contributed a great many hours to help us tread these unfamiliar waters. Many thanks go to Jon for sharing his expertise.



First off, we had to modify our roadside signs and flyers that our members help us post all over the County.

That done, we opened up online sales for members January 27. On February 6, the public took us by storm placing almost 100 orders by February 13. We ended up with 259 online orders and 22 waitlisted orders. OH MY!

Lisa was the Head Honcho and coordinated the Sale, did publicity, coordinated volunteers, answered buyers questions pre-sale, shifted around to offer a waitlist option so we could sell more trees, organized supplies and so much more.

We ran out of our first tree species on February 19 – Deodar Cedar and our last tree species on March 13 – Ponderosa Pine. And while we started with 19,700 trees that had been ordered, given the strong reception to our online Store, **Tom** tracked down some more trees and we ended up selling 23,030 trees! Because online sales were via credit card, we had to pay a 3.3% fee on each sale. We had given buyers the option to make a donation to our Association, and five did, donating \$50 which was put towards the credit card charges.

Thank you volunteer members:

Marilyn Curtis, Rich Dawson, Jed Dawson (& daughter), Greg & Allie DeBruin, Jim DeWilde, Jackie Edge, Bradlee Frierott & Denali Ohana, Janet Gilda, Ruth Heft, Israel Jacob, Jerry Kudsk, Suzanne Lange, Jenn Parker, Russ Pfeiffer-Hoyt, Arnold Theisen, Jerry Van Dellen, Liz & Mark Wiegand, Dean Zender, Don & Carol Assink, Helen Arntson, Herb Barker, Karen Bellingar, Dan Koehler, Conrad & Jeanne Koehn, Dave New, Lisa & Mark Tiemersma, Jan Volmer, Tom & Bonnie Westergreen, Ed Westergreen, Wendy Wefer-Clinton

Wendy Wefer-Clinton took on dealing with the orders and organizing a system for distribution as well as creating a COVID-19 plan and drafting member and public communications

Before distribution, we had to have something to distribute. We set up stations for each tree like we normally do. On Friday night, volunteer members wrapped up the bundles of trees ordered by our volunteer member “buyers.”



Thank you volunteer family members and friends:

Jake DeBruin, Paul Clinton, Tami Elias, James Fain, Jim Green, Laura Holien, Vicki, Olivia & Beth Huizenga, Trevor Kudsk, Jake Lange, Grace Shintaffer, Vincent Simons, Cole, Molly & Jenna Tiemersma, Josh & Nathan Van Dellen, Gabe, Aja, Brayden, Mahaila & Korben Westergreen along with Scott Hackett and his Boy Scout Troop.

Bundles of trees were placed in a large bag and then sprayed with water. The bag was then rolled up and tied with twine. Then the 350 bags got “tagged” with the order information, some information about Farm Forestry Associations and a reminder of when our Tree Sale will be next year (mark your calendars for **March 19, 2022**).



Three hours were allotted for buyers to pick up their trees. They all received a reminder along with special instructions to follow due to COVID-19.



We had a total of three lines available for pick-up. Each line had several teams of Delivery Duos – consisting of a member and a bag runner. Order slips were shown to the buyers, to make sure it was their order and then the order was placed in their car. We had lots of people comment that they really appreciated not having to stand in line for a couple hours and then have the trees they wanted to purchase be sold out.



Many thanks to all our members who helped at the Sale and posted flyers and told friends and neighbors about our Tree Sale. As well as family members and friends – sometimes having three generations present – truly exemplifying “family tree farms.” Also thanks to the **Lynden Tribune** for the tremendous article celebrating 61 years of Tree Sales, **KGMI** for hosting **Lisa** on-the-air with Tree Sale information and updates and Frances & staff at the **Northwest Washington Fairgrounds**.

**The annual Tree Sale takes a VILLAGE to pull off.
Thanks for being a part of our VILLAGE.**