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SUPPLIER OF FIR TREES FOR 40 YEARS

MARIO PITRE
TRANSLATED BY CATHLEEN JOHNSTON
mario.pitre@tc.tc

DECORATION. Every year, quite a number of families take a little outing to the country to purchase their Christmas tree in Hinchinbrooke from Réal Desgroseilliers who has been selling trees for more than 40 years.

We wanted to find out why and headed out to meet him. As soon as we arrived at his property on route 202, approximately 12 kilometres south of Huntingdon, our noses were filled with the scent of some 250 evergreens on display for sale.

And for good reason, as Desgroseilliers informed us that they were Cook Firs, a variety of balsam fir. «They produce a good fragrance and don't shed many needles,» he said. The Department of Agriculture (MAPAQ) describes it as a tree «of a bluish green colour, with strong branches, robust growth and large buds.»

The seller offers trees in a variety of grades and sizes which easily find buyers in the first weeks of December; the Town of Huntingdon has purchased a dozen. «By the time we get to Christmas, there aren't many left, at most a dozen, but last year I was sold out by December 17,» declared the seventy year old.

FROM PRODUCER TO SELLER

For as long as he can remember, Réal Desgroseilliers has loved fir trees. Already by the 70s, he had planted some 10 000 on his land in Hinchinbrooke, while also working at Cleyn & Tinker.

The amount of work involved and the cost effectiveness of operations caused him to abandon production. Since 1989, he has sourced from only one producer, Simon Lemieux of Sapins Céleste in Nantes near Lac Mégantic. That is where he went on November 24 to take



Desgroseilliers sources his trees from a producer in Nantes, near Lac Mégantic.

Photo TC Média Pierre Langevin

5 tips on how to care for your natural tree

1: Check it for freshness

Squeeze a branch between your thumb and index finger and pull towards you. If the tree is fresh, no more than 5 to 10 needles should stay in your hand.

2: Storage

Once you have bought your tree, store it in a cool location and out of the wind, for example in a garage, until you are ready to decorate it.

3: Maintenance

Cut the end of the trunk 2 centimetres (1 inch) above the original cut and place it immediately in a Christmas tree stand that can hold a minimum of 4 litres of water.

4: Check

Check the water level in the Christmas tree stand every day to see if the tree needs water. A new tree will absorb 4 litres of water the first day and then 1 litre per day. If your tree is out of water (for a period of over two hours), make a new cut in the tree trunk.

5: Recommendation

It is recommended using a Christmas tree stand that can hold more than 6 litres of water.

(Source: Association des producteurs d'arbres de Noël du Québec)

Fir trees no longer hold any secrets for Réal Desgroseilliers. Photo TC Média Pierre Langevin

possession of his 2016 crop. The firs which grow for between 8 and 10 years are shipped in refrigerated containers by the producer in the Eastern Townships to as far away as South America and Asia. Desgroseilliers claims that in the time of artificial trees (some even pre-decorated), the charm of real fir trees remains ever present. And what could be more authentic than going and buying one directly from a local supplier as part of an outing to the countryside.

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Grove Hall
Avalon Singers Prepare
for Winter Concert

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Two concerts
Madrigal Choir to Perform
in Time for Holidays

PAGE 4

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The Receding Foundation of Knowledge

It seems that Aristotle was right.



STÉPHANIE MCBRIDE
info@stephmcbride.com

OPINION. I used to think that I knew everything. I thought that I was a witty, wise pre-teen—a belief that only got worse when I

went full-fledged teenager. And you'd better believe that I thought that I was brilliant going into my twenties. Things have changed.

Since then, I've surpassed the age of 30—I've also had two children. If you asked me today how knowledgeable I am, I'd probably have a fairly

good laugh. These days, I feel as if I know nothing. Despite all the wisdom you'd think a know-it-all teenager could have accumulated, you'd be wrong. It seems that Aristotle was onto something when he wrote the words "The more you know, the more you know you don't know." The need to act as if I know what I'm doing has also disappeared...

Instead, I am the first to admit that I am floundering. But here's the kicker—sometimes I wonder if perhaps my attitude in my twenties prevented me from adding to my immature knowledge base. I say this regretfully—my grandmother tried to teach me how to sew and knit, while my father was one of those types that could do everything from stone masonry to carpentry (he was a less reluctant teacher, as working alongside a teenager posed its own

challenges). In his defense, he did try to teach me how to mow the lawn, but I somehow drove the tractor into the brook, which ended that effort (I also never had to mow the lawn, which presented a learning curve when we moved out here).

I look at my own children and see how my eldest is fierce and confident. These are good things—but there are already bits of my own witty resilience visible in him. So where's the balance? Our children need confidence to make their way in this world, but they need to be just humble enough to be open to the selected teachings of others. When I consider these facts, it seems nothing sort of a miracle that my parents managed to navigate me to my independence.

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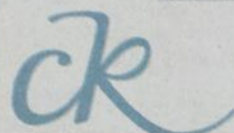
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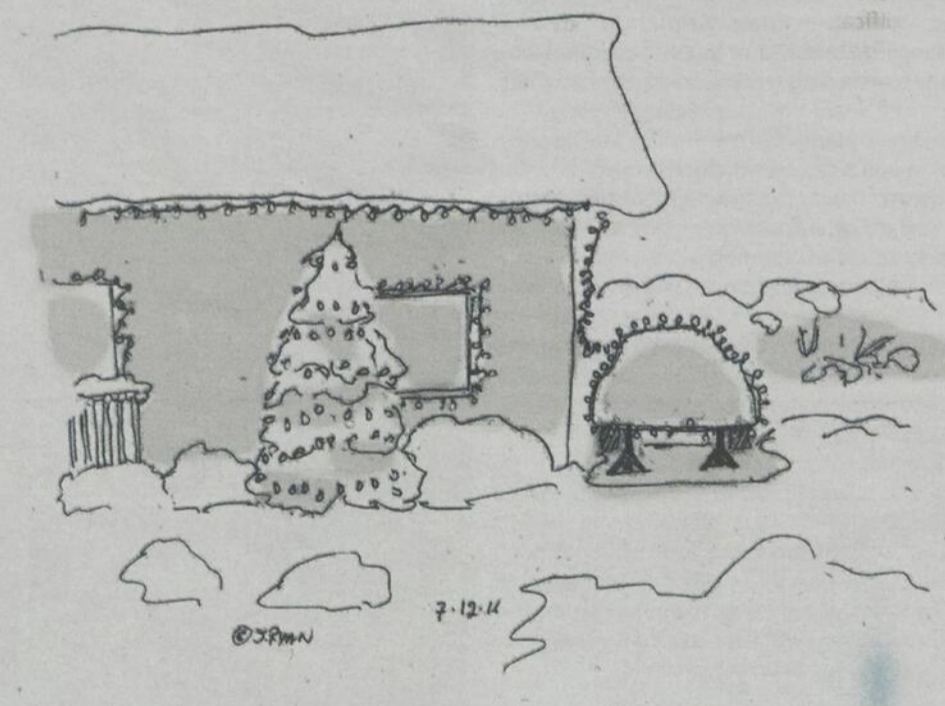
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Ormstown November weather

The average temperature for November was 3.9 degrees, compared to 5.0 last year and the ten year normal of 3.3.

PETER FINLAYSON

Precipitation included 51 mms or 2.0 inches of rain, plus 31 cms or 12 inches of snow which stayed on the unfrozen ground for six days.

The total of rain and melted snow was 81 mms or 3.2 inches, which is in the normal range.

The average temperature by decade for October and November.

	Oct.	Nov.
1967-1976	8.8	1.6
1977-1986	7.9	1.9
1987-1996	8.4	1.7
1997-2006	8.6	3.3
2007-2016	9.4	2.9
Average	8.6	2.3

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The Gleaner

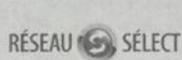
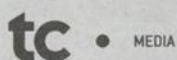
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Avalon Singers Prepare for Winter Concert

Since its inception in 1999, the Avalon Singers have been performing twice a year for the pleasure of the community.



STÉPHANIE MCBRIDE
info@stephmcbride.com

MUSIC. Under the trusty direction of Pamela Selkirk the Avalon Singers are to present two well-loved works from the eighteenth century choral repertoire on Saturday, December 17th. "After the dark days of Fall, there's nothing like glorious music to raise our spirits," says group member Nora Quinn about the upcoming concert.



Avalon Singers performing at 2016 spring concert. Nora Quinn

During the first half of the program, the choir is to sing Giovanni Battista Pergolesi's joyful Magnificat, a piece in six short movements. A Christmas time favourite, Magnificat, also known as the "Song of Mary", is a hymn of praise and thanksgiving sung by the Virgin Mary. For the second half, the choir will perform Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Vespers, a musical setting of evening service, traditionally held around twilight. "Laudate Dominum, the fifth movement of the Vespers, begins with one of the most beautiful soprano solos composed by Mozart and will be familiar to many audience members," explains Quinn. To complete the evening, the choir will send guests on the

way with two songs sure to put everyone in the mood to celebrate the holidays. On the evening of the concert the Avalon Singers will be accompanied by the chamber orchestra. The concert will be held on Saturday, December 17th at 8:00 P.M at Grove Hall (165 Châteauguay Street, Huntingdon). Tickets are \$15 and may be bought at the door or in advance from choir members.

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Foire de Noël Christmas Fair

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MUSIC

Madrigal Choir to Perform in Time for the Holidays

Over three decades old, singing group Madrigal Choir encourages locals to indulge in live Christmas music.



STÉPHANIE MCBRIDE
info@stephmcbride.com

MUSIC. The Madrigal Choir will kick off the holiday season with seasonal carols at two locations this year.

Performing at Hemmingford's St. Luke's Anglican Church on December 9th and at St. Malachie's in Ormstown on December 10th, the group's traditional Christmas music will be sure to lift your spirits. As in the past, a reception will follow at Macdougall hall at the close of the Ormstown concert. Both shows will begin at 8:00 P.M.

It is with sadness that the choir bids farewell to director, Sophie Bjerke, who has embarked on a new journey in Ottawa after a year working with the choir. This will be Bjerke's final concert with Madrigal, leaving the choir looking for a new director.

The choir, which will be donned in their traditional uniform of black come Friday-Saturday, prepares two major shows a year. One during the holiday season, which focuses entirely on traditional Christmas music, while the other, which takes place in the spring, is more explorative.

Admission is \$15. Please remember to bring a nonperishable food item for the local food bank or a tooney contribution.



MORE INFORMATION
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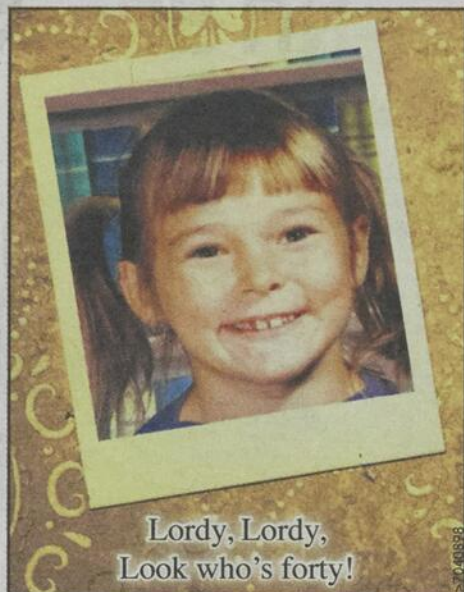
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condolences
to the bereaved families.

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Avalon Singers
Pamela Selkirk, Director
Mozart Vespers
Pergolesi Magnificat
with chamber orchestra
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THIS AND THAT

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Everyone is invited to celebrate Lois Duncan's 80th birthday on December 10th at MacDougall Hall in Ormstown, with an afternoon tea from 2-4:00 P.M. Best wishes only.

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

The Huntingdon Legion will be presenting «Souled» on Saturday, December 10th, at 8:00 P.M. A \$10 donation is appreciated.

CHRISTMAS FAIR FUNDRAISER FOR REFUGE RR FOR HORSES

On Saturday, December 10th, the Refuge RR for Horses will be hosting a Christmas Fair at the Centre récréatif municipale (2555 rue du Parc) in St-Antoine-Abbé from 9:30-4:00 P.M. There will be over 27 artisans and over 30 prizes to be won. While admission is free, the organization is asking that attendees consider bringing a donation of animal feed.

BUDGET WORKSHOP

The "Get Smart Financial Literacy Workshop" will take place on December 10th, at 10 A.M. at St Edward's Church Hall, 72 rue des Écossais, Beauharnois. Admission is free. Refreshments provided.

THE HUNTINGDON FAIR AGM

The Huntingdon Fair will hold its Annual Meeting on Wednesday, December 14th at 7:30 P.M. at the Brasserie du Village in Huntingdon. Everyone is welcome.

EXPO ORMSTOWN AGM

The Annual Meetings for both Expo Ormstown and the Livestock Breeders Association will be held on Wednesday, December 14th at the Ormstown Curling Club at 7:00 P.M. All members, volunteers, exhibitors, sponsors and fair pass holders welcome.

CALL FOR PROJECTS FROM ARTISTS AND ARTISANS

The organizing committee for the second edition of the *Gala reconnaissance en bénévolat* (Gala in recognition of our volunteers) innovate this year with the launch of a project appealing to area artists and artisans, accomplished professional or amateur, for the design of a trophy to be presented to the recipient of the "Volunteer of the Year" award. The Vision Bénévolat organization as well as the Haut-Saint-Laurent MRC are offering a \$1,000 grant to the local artist/artisan whose work is selected. The objective in inviting local artists and artisans to design a unique work of art is that they will then have a trophy that will withstand the test of time and be presented year after year to outstanding volunteers in the region. Those interested have until December 15 to submit their application. The winning design will be selected by a committee that will convene the following week. The winning artist will have to conform to a number of criteria. The details of the application process, as well as all of the design specifications are available at website www.mrchsl.com. The winning artist will be invited to the *Gala reconnaissance en bénévolat* on April 28 to present his or her work to the recipient. For more information, contact Charles Gascon at 450 264-5252.

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