

# CELEBRATE KINGS: *Pride in our people, places & products*

## *O Christmas Tree, O Christmas Tree...*

In Black Rock, Kings County, on a hillside overlooking the majestic Bay of Fundy, the scent of evergreen wafts on the air from Christmas trees that could soon be gracing homes anywhere from locally to across the continent – and beyond!

Grown with great care and respect for the environment, each tree on the 85-acre Bezanson Family Christmas Tree Farm is assessed and grown to meet a specific niche in the marketplace. Specializing in the Nova Scotia Balsam Fir, owner Steve Bezanson has been growing and shipping these “traditional” Christmas trees since the 1992-1993 season.

“The Christmas tree industry in Nova Scotia is very large,”

says Steve. “And people don’t always realize how big the industry actually is right here in Kings County.”

Before taking over the family property and the Christmas tree farm initially established by his father, retail management was Steve’s business. He adapted that knowledge to the new endeavor, mapping the path to its growth.

“I’ve made good use of my sales background,” says Steve. “I’ve established my own market, and now I sell out every year. I do not retail – everything is wholesale and mainly export. I make great use of the internet.”

Educating his industry on improved marketing practices is important to Steve, as is ensuring his clients have the proper knowledge to purchase the right tree. “I get to know my customers. I want to sell to the same customers until I’m not able anymore.”

To be certain both parties are on the same page, Steve will send clients photos depicting the size and type of trees to be purchased. To ensure future viability, he makes certain he’s received 75 per cent of payment before shipping the trees.

Steve has observed that, since 911, “real” Christmas tree sales have increased. “People are more nostalgic - and more educated. They know the majority of artificial trees give off gases and end up in landfills. Plus, these trees are usually made by children and women in third world factories. Real trees naturally decompose and benefit the environment, provide jobs in the local economy, and smell wonderful!”

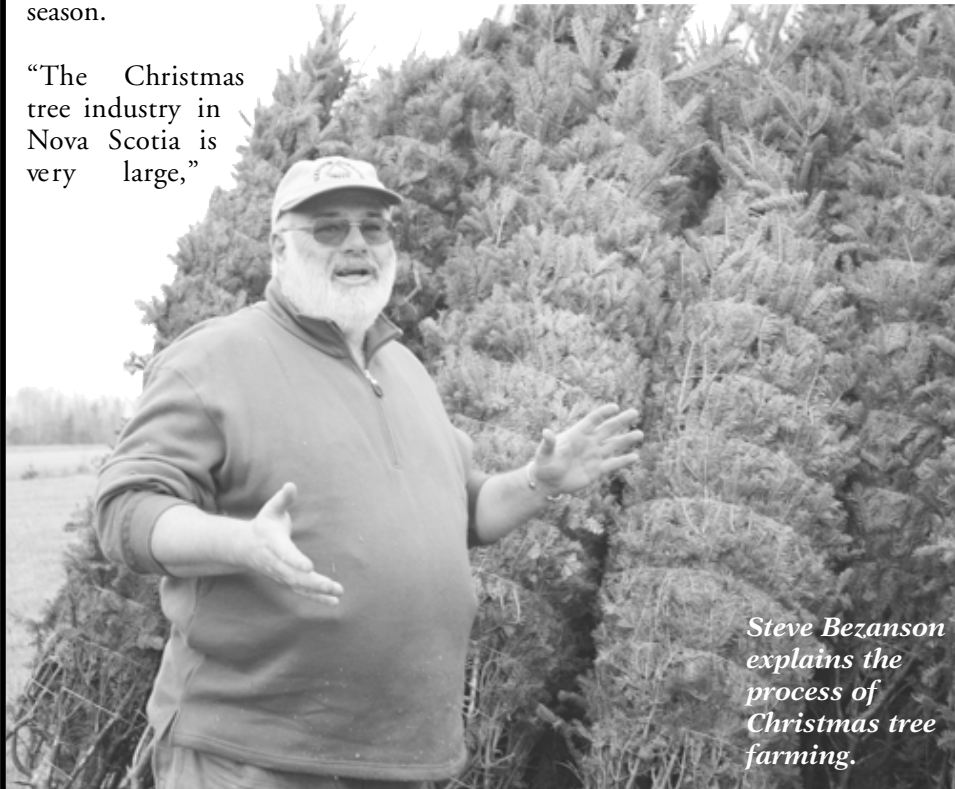
Always active in his industry, Steve logs many community volunteer hours. He

works with Kings CED to promote forestry. He is past president of the Lunenburg County Christmas Tree Producers Association, and past vice president of the Christmas Tree Council of Nova Scotia, as well as its small exporter representative.

Along with farming Christmas trees, Steve also manages a woodlot. His goal is to establish his woodland to its original Acadian forest state. “I’m working to bring back the original mix of hard and soft wood as opposed to the dominance of softwood. I’m trying to restore nature’s natural balance.”

Kings County – home – has special meaning for Steve. “This is where I grew up and where I returned. It has it all. And you can’t find a better place to grow Christmas trees than the North Mountain – the soil, climate, moisture from the fog. I like to make it happen, and there’s no better place than here!”

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*Steve Bezanson explains the process of Christmas tree farming.*



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