

## **2017 Christmas tree farmers Winter Convention to be held in Binghamton**

The Christmas Tree Farmers Association of NY has announced that their 2017 Winter Convention will be held Jan. 26-28, at the DoubleTree by Hilton, Binghamton, NY. This year's Convention theme is Stronger Together. The program kicks off on Thursday evening at 6 p.m. with an informal Taste of Binghamton reception in the exhibit hall. More than 25 vendors are expected to be present.

This is a change of location for the Convention, which has been held in Syracuse for the last several years. The move, and the Convention theme – Stronger Together, was motivated by a desire to reach out to growers in the southern part of New York State, as well as in neighboring Pennsylvania. Several of the Convention's presenters are well-known PA-based researchers and educators including Paul Shealer; and Sarah Pickel and Dr Ricky Bates from Penn State.

Also new for 2017, in addition to regular programming, a day-long educational session on Sat. Jan. 28 dedicated to meeting the needs of new and beginning growers. People thinking of getting into Christmas tree farming are also welcome to attend. This will be an excellent opportunity to network with other growers, have one-on-one interactions with the industry's leading suppliers, and learn from experts in the field.

The Saturday morning keynote will be delivered by Marsha Gray from the national Christmas Tree Promotion Board. She will provide an update on the marketing, research, and information order implementation; and is also seeking input from growers on promotional opportunities.

NYS Ag and Markets Commissioner Richard Ball is invited to speak during the Friday luncheon; and Emma Mullen from Cornell's Dept. of Entomology will talk about "The Buzz Around Pollinators" and what Christmas tree growers can do at a farm level to encourage a healthy pollinator population. On Friday evening, the banquet entertainment will be something the whole family can enjoy - the SUNY Binghamton men's acapella group, The Crosbys.

Both days, there will be several opportunities to receive NYS-DEC Pesticide Applicator Credits (pending DEC course approval) and a special session on the new worker protection standards. PA applicator credits will also be available (pending course approval).

The program will also include the annual wreath contest, awards presentation, drawings for prizes to benefit the CTFANY scholarship program, and a trade show with industry vendors. Download the complete schedule of events and a registration form from the CTFANY website – [www.christmastreesny.org](http://www.christmastreesny.org).

A block of rooms is being held at the DoubleTree through Dec. 24. To reserve, call 607-722-7575; and mention "Christmas Tree Farmers".