



# Michigan Christmas Tree Association Summer Meeting

## TUESDAY, JULY 26TH

11:00am–5:00pm Exhibit Show Setup (Tent In Front of Funland)  
6:00 pm MCTA 9-hole Golf Outing at Cherry Creek Golf Club →

### MCTA 9-HOLE GOLF OUTING

Cherry Creek Golf Club 52000 Cherry Creek Dr. Shelby Township, MI 48316. Cost is \$30 and is paid at the course. If you are interested in golfing please email [info@mcta.org](mailto:info@mcta.org) to add your name to the list of golfers.

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 27TH

8:30am–10:00am Registration & Exhibits (Tent In Front of Funland)  
10:00am–10:15am Welcome & Overview (Orchard Square Tent)

	Apple Barn	Tours – Meet at Orchard Square Tent	Christmas Tree Fields – Wagon Loading Under Cider Mill Carport	Orchard Cafe/ Orchard Square Tap
10:00am–11:00am	Christmas Trees 101	The Blake Family Story & Property Tour	Land Clearing & Jutek Demo	Marketing & Events 101 (Orchard Square Tap)
11:00am–12:00pm	Christmas Trees 101	The Blake Family Story & Property Tour	Land Clearing & Jutek Demo	DIY Workshop – Evergreen (Orchard Cafe)

12:00pm–1:30pm Lunch & Vendor Exhibit Time

	Apple Barn	Tours – Meet at Orchard Square Tent	Christmas Tree Fields – Wagon Loading Under Cider Mill Carport
1:30pm–2:30pm	General Session: Update of Invasive Pest Management MDARD	DIY – Flower Arrangement (Orchard Cafe)	MSU Field Tour #1
2:30pm–3:30pm	General Session: Managing Weeds in Christmas Tree Production/CTPB Update	Sweet Cider & Bakery Tour	MSU Field Tour #1
3:30pm–4:30pm	General Session: National Update/Trees for Troops Update	Hard Cider Tour	

4:30pm–6:00pm Happy Hour – Exhibit Area (Tent in Front of Funland)

6:00pm–9:00pm Dinner – Orchard Square Tent

## THURSDAY, JULY 28TH

8:30am–10:00am Registration & Exhibits (Tent In Front of Funland)

	Apple Barn	Tours – Meet at Orchard Square Tent	Christmas Tree Fields – Wagon Loading Under Cider Mill Carport
9:30am–10:45am	Blake's Christmas Operations	Blake's U-Pick Tour	MSU Field Tour #2
11:00am–12:15pm	Blake's Christmas Operations	Blake's U-Pick Tour	MSU Field Tour #2

12:00pm–1:30pm Lunch (Orchard Square Tent)

1:30pm–3:00pm The Blake Family Story & Property Tour

There is lots to see and do at Blake's. We have a full agenda of educational sessions and tours to choose from. As you are planning your day, please note some of the tours repeat and that is so you can build your own schedule based on your interests.





# Educational Sessions and Field Tours

## WEDNESDAY JULY 27TH

10 am to 12 pm

### Christmas Trees 101

New to the Christmas tree industry? Michigan State University U.P. Forestry Innovation Center Director, Dr. Jessie Randall will provide an overview of all things Christmas trees to help you get started in the industry.

### General Session:

1:30 pm to 2:30 pm

### Update on Invasive Pests in Christmas Tree Production

Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) Export and Compliance Specialist Amber Neils will provide an update on invasive insects Spangly Moth, Spotted lanternfly, and Balsam Woolly Adelgid.

2:30 pm to 3:30 pm

### Managing Weeds in Christmas Tree Production: Latest Research and Updates from Michigan State University

Michigan State University assistant professor Dr. Debalina Saha will discuss the importance of weed control programs for Christmas tree production and provide an update on current research.

3:30 to 4:30

### National Updates

Trees for Troops, National Christmas Tree Association, and Christmas Tree Promotion Board

## MSU Field Tour #1

1:30 pm to 1:45 pm

### Overview of Blakes Christmas Tree Farm Operation

Farm manager Brent Christensen will give an overview of the challenges and opportunities of Christmas tree production at Blakes Orchard and Cider Mill.

1:45 pm to 2:30 pm

### The Art and Science of Shearing

Michigan State University professor emeritus Dr. Melvin Koelling will provide a discussion and demonstration of shearing various Christmas tree species.

2:30 pm to 3:00 pm

### Soils and Nutrient Management

Michigan State University Extension Christmas tree educator Bill Lindberg will provide an overview of soil types, sampling procedure, and nutrient management recommendations for Christmas tree production.

## MSU Field Tour #1

3:00 pm to 3:15 pm

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### Soils and Nutrient Management

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## THURSDAY JULY 28TH

## MSU Field Tour #2

9:30 am to 10:00 am

### Disease Management Update

Michigan State University Dr. Monique Sakalidis will provide an update on Christmas tree diseases.

10 am to 10:45 am

### Matching Species to Site

Michigan State University U.P. Forestry Innovation Center Director, Dr. Jessie Randall will discuss matching field characteristics to Christmas tree species to have the best production possible.

## MSU Field Tour #2

11 am to 11:30 am

### Disease Management Update

Michigan State University Dr. Monique Sakalidis will provide an update on Christmas tree diseases.

11:30 am to 12:15 pm

### Matching Species to Site

Michigan State University U.P. Forestry Innovation Center Director, Dr. Jessie Randall will discuss matching field characteristics to Christmas tree species to have the best production possible.

# Blake's Tours and Workshops

**The Blake's Family Story & Property Tour** — Enjoy a walking tour of the Blake's Property where you will hear the family story and how Gerald and Lovey Blake and their 13 children grew up on the farm. This tour will take you around all the areas of our property including the Cider Mill, Funland and Tasting Room and will encompass all general operations. Learn how we have continued to expand and diversify our offerings over the last 75 years. This is a walking tour.

**Marketing & Events 101** — Learn basic marketing strategies that can help drive more customers to your farm! From basic digital marketing strategies to activations & events learn how you can offer a unique experience for your guests that gives you the advantage over other competitors.

**DIY Workshop – Evergreen Arrangement** — Design your unique holiday arrangement alongside us in real-time. Using lovely, unusual evergreens with vibrant Ilex berries, cones, and seasonal foliage accents, we'll create a long and low fresh evergreen arrangement for your table, mantle, or console. This is a hand on class, all materials provided, gloves are encouraged & bring your snips if available.

**DIY Workshop – Flower Arrangement** — It's summertime and a season of spectacular flowers. Wow your guests this summer, as our instructor teaches you step-by-step how to make this impressive, photo-worthy floral arrangement using farm-fresh flowers. You'll learn design basics such as color, scale, and combination and gain the confidence to design more stunning arrangements for your home or next event. This is a hand on class, all materials provided, bring your snips if available.

**Sweet Cider & Bakery Tour** — Get a behind the scene tour of our NEW Sweet Cider facility where we press, pasteurize & bottle Blake's Premier 5 Apple Blend Sweet Cider. Then head over to our bakery where you will see our team producing donuts, baked goods, fudge, caramel apples & kettle corn. This is a walking tour, closed toed shoes & hair/beard nets will be required/provided.

**Blake's Hard Cider Tour** — Join our Hard Cider team on a behind the scenes tour of Blake's Hard Cider production facility! Our team of apple techs will show and explain to you how juice is turned into alcohol. This is a walking tour, closed toed shoes, safety glasses & hair/beard nets will be required/provided.

**Blake's Christmas Operation** — Join the Blake's team for a session all about our Christmas season! Learn how we accommodate thousands of guests each season & sell 5,000+ Christmas trees. From welcoming our guests on the property, transporting them to the Christmas tree fields, shaking & bailing, shopping our holiday markets, enjoying a meal on the farm to seasonal events & entertainment learn how to elevate your guest's experience.

**Blake's U-Pick Tour** — Ride along Blake's Orchard Express with our Manager of Farming Operations where we will take you through over 150 acres of U-Pick crops. Learn about the different varieties of fruit, vegetables & flowers we offer for our customers to pick throughout the season. Get an understanding of our basic u-pick operations and how expanding your offerings can extend your season and attract more customers to your farm.

