

**Hooray! Twenty-five years and counting!**

In March 1979, with a '70 Ford pickup, a chain saw, lopping shears, a shovel, a bucket of small seedlings (most of which died) , and a heck of a lot of determination, the first clearings and plantings were done. The land had been cleared, but an eighty-year-old forest had replaced the farmland. Bill and Julie did not live on the farm at this time, but built their home in 1986. Interestingly, they have the preliminary plans for a 24-house sub-division proposed by the previous owner. Anyway, the land use is now for Christmas trees, timber, cordwood, blueberries and wildlife habitat. We hope that these will continue forever!

Speaking of wildlife, a new record of wild turkeys was observed this year, with 29 “turklets” and four adults convening on the front lawn early this summer. We were also fortunate to be able to watch small flocks of turkeys fly to the large pines in front of the house to roost for the night this past winter. Hawks, owls, songbirds, deer and fox also seem to like the area. We are quite happy to share this forest with them.

As for the Christmas trees, have you noticed a more natural, less sheared look, particularly on fraser fir? This is the result of using primarily hand shears, rather than a shearing knife or mechanical equipment. The effect is a more open, natural appearing tree. We debate the appearance achieved by this technique. Let us know what *you* think.

As I write this letter, I am enjoying the brilliance of a New England autumn. Perhaps next year you should come in October to see the leaves that decorate the Christmas trees. It is truly beautiful! Although we do not allow reserving trees, you are welcome to scout.

Thank you again for coming, and Merry Christmas from Bill, Julie and the crew.