ADVERTISING FEATURE

Frenchay Christmas Tree Farm celebrates 20 years!

AS the picture shows, Father Christmas visited Frenchay Christmas Tree Farm in person this year, during his relaxing summer holiday. He came to wish the Christmas tree growers a very happy anniversary: 20 years of growing and cutting Christmas trees. Not only did he hand out presents to a few lucky children, he also remarked how beautiful the trees were. "Thousands of trees! Enough for everyone!"

Having started out as a fairly modest concern of 6,000 trees in 1999, production has steadily increased to 35,000 trees to date, hoping to rise to 40,000 trees by 2021. So there really is plenty for all. For the growers, Peter and Simon Maughan, it has also been a gradual learning experience. "We pick up a lot of tips and techniques from our colleagues at the British Christmas Tree Growers Association, but often we just learn the hard way – when things go wrong! Flooding in 2012, plagues of aphids in 2009, and drought in 2018. In each case we weather the storm and adapt accordingly."

"One thing that I am particularly proud about," explains Simon, "Is that we have stayed true to our environmental principles." The farm was set up in 1999 with wildlife in mind. "While we are focused mainly on growing excellent Christmas Trees, I estimate that perhaps as much as 60% of our land is not covered by tree foliage, and it is in places like these – in the hedgerows and in the spaces between trees – that native wildlife can exist."

"With over 97% of the UK's wildflower meadows lost since the 1930s, it is important that we do what we can to conserve these habitats. We mow between the trees, rather than spray with weedkiller, which allows wildflowers to grow, and we have a lot of insect and animal life as a result."

2019 looks to be a promising year for Frenchay Christmas Tree Farm. The warm wet summer has boosted growth, producing full-bodied trees with good foliage, and the general appearance of the trees is very good. Most excitingly, a new fully biodegradable Christmas tree net will be on trial. The first of its kind, it will be a huge step towards keeping the farm free of plastic.

Frenchay Christmas Tree Farm will be welcoming visitors from late November until Christmas Eve, 9am-5pm every day. "Choose and Cut" runs for as long as stocks last. Prices start from just £25. See you there!

www.frenchaychristmastreefarm.co.uk
Instagram: @frenchaychristmastreefarm