



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

December 16, 2025

2025-2026 Board Members

President Patrick Baker
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Past Pres Kim Brattain
Secretary Bill Gill
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Exec Dir Christine Cipriano

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Linwood Bolles &
Shelley Dean

Programs

Elizabeth Teagarden



Dr. Will Kohlway *Extension Specialist for* *Christmas Tree Production &* *Marketing at NC State* *University*

by Layne McGuire

The Rotary Club of Charlotte wrapped up our final meeting of the year with a presentation from Dr. Will Kohlway, Extension Specialist for Christmas Tree Production and Marketing at NC State's Extension's Forestry and Environmental Resources. We learned fascinating facts about the Christmas centerpiece we all love and gained new respect for North Carolina's Christmas tree industry and the state's signature Fraser fir. While North Carolina is the second-largest producer of Christmas trees in the U.S., it ranks first in value, thanks largely to the popularity of the Fraser fir, often called the "Cadillac of Christmas trees."

Native only to the highest peaks of the Southern Appalachian Mountains, the Fraser fir is prized for its soft needles, strong branches, excellent needle retention, and natural fragrance. It takes 10–12 years and extensive hands-on care for a tree to grow from seed to harvest.

The industry supports more than 900 farms in Western North Carolina and contributes hundreds of millions of dollars annually to the state's economy, including wreaths and other greenery products. Members also learned about challenges facing growers, including pests, wildlife damage, climate change, and recent severe flooding. Despite these challenges, farmers demonstrated remarkable resilience, continuing to supply trees nationwide.

North Carolina has provided more White House Christmas Trees than any other state, with the Fraser fir being selected most often. The selection of a North Carolina tree in 2024 was a testament to the resilience of Western North Carolina.

The meeting recording can be found here:

With Slides: <https://vimeo.com/1147194636?fl=pl&fe=sh>

Without Slides: <https://vimeo.com/1147394376?fl=pl&fe=sh>

Your introduction starts at about 26 minutes and 25 seconds.