

Weeds Are Out — Groundcovers Are In!



There's a change taking place in the Christmas tree industry in western North Carolina. Bare soil around trees is becoming a thing of the past. Tall weeds that compete with Christmas trees are being controlled by managing low growing ground covers.

What is a ground cover? These include low growing clover, strawberries, violets, buttercups, and many other woodland perennials making a green carpet that has many benefits which include:

- ◆ Reducing erosion so the tree farm is sustainable year after year and streams stay clean.
- ◆ Reducing soil temperatures so tree roots take up soil nutrients better to grow a faster tree with great foliage color.
- ◆ Providing habitat for natural insect predators so fewer pesticides are used and there is less pest damage.
- ◆ Providing a habitat for wildlife including quail, rabbits and turkeys.

These fields aren't just let go. It takes a shrewd manager to keep the right kind of ground covers thriving while keeping problem weeds under control. With these current production practices, mowers and weedeaters which can damage trees are seldom used.



Ground covers make sense. And they help make a pretty tree!

For more information, contact your county extension agent.