

Details and Requirements of Judging Christmas Trees and Wreaths At the Minnesota State Fair

Overview of Proposed Changes to Judging:

Instead of having just three judges who are tree growers/industry professionals, we are expanding the number of judges to include discerning real-tree consumers who approximate the demographics of current tree buyers.

Objective:

We are hoping to make judging of the Christmas Trees and Wreath exhibitions at the State Fair more representative of how the real-world consumers of Christmas Décor perceive and select the “best trees”, the “best wreaths and decorations” as well as how they perceive the most “beautifully decorated real Christmas Trees”.

Scoring:

Christmas Trees, decorated trees, wreaths and other decorations are ranked best to least. If there are 7 trees in a class just rank them 1 through 7, with the best tree for each judge getting a 1, second best a 2 and so on. Scores for all judges will be entered into a spreadsheet and the tree with the lowest total score will be the winner. In the event of tie, the tree, wreath or decoration with most total number 1 scores will be the winner. You may be asked to give input on why you ranked the way you did.

Christmas Tree Judges:

Judges must fill out an application and submit it to Ann Marie Theien, MNCTA Executive Director, no later than August 1, 2025, 4:30pm. There will be no more than 20 judges to include three tree growers and 17 tree customers selected. MNTCA will evaluate the applications and submit a list of recommended judges to the MN State Fair. The MN State Fair makes the ultimate decision on who will be extended an invitation to become a judge.

After judging all classes of trees, blue ribbon trees from each class will be grouped together and ranked first to last. The tree with lowest and second lowest combined score from all judges will be the Grand Champion and Reserve Champion trees respectively.

RTC Judge Criteria

- RTC judges must have purchased or procured a real tree three out the past five years.
- RTC judges must be discerning, selective, “critical” consumers.
- RTC judges can NOT be immediate family or employees of exhibitors.
- RTC do NOT have to be from Minnesota.
- RTC judges must sign a waiver saying they have not discussed, viewed, or been informed about trees that will be entered by any exhibitor.

Judge Demographics.

To create a representative cross section of real-tree consumers, and maintain continuity, judges will be selected to fill the slot as listed below....as best as possible.

Conifer Professionals

Tree Grower	(2)
Extension/Industry Expert	(1)

RTC Judges (fill at least 15 of the slots)

Female 18-39 urban, suburban	(4)
Male/Female 18-39 rural	(1)
Male 18-39	(3)
Female 39-55 urban, suburban	(3)
Male/Female 39-55 rural	(1)
Male 39-55	(3)
Female/Male 56 over	(5)

Decorated Trees/ Wreaths and Other Decorations Judges:

Judges must fill out an application and submit it to Ann Marie Theien, MNCTA Executive Director, no later than August 1, 2025, 4:30pm. There will be no more than 10 judges to include two tree growers and eight tree customers selected. MNTCA will evaluate the applications and submit a list of recommended judges to the MN State Fair. The MN State Fair makes the ultimate decision on who will be extended an invitation to become a judge.

RTC Judge Criteria

- RTC judges must have purchased or procured a real tree three out the past five years.
- RTC judges must be discerning, selective, “critical” consumers.
- RTC judges can NOT be immediate family or employees of exhibitors.
- RTC do NOT have to be from Minnesota.
- RTC judges must sign a waiver saying they have not discussed, viewed, or been informed about trees that will be entered by any exhibitor.

Judge Demographics.

To create a representative cross section of real-tree consumers, and maintain continuity, judges will be selected to fill the slot as listed below....as best as possible.

Conifer Professionals

Wreath Manufacturer	(1)
Extension/Industry Expert	(1)

RTC Judges (fill at least 7 of the slots)

Female 18-39 urban, suburban	(1)
Male/Female 18-39 rural	(1)

Male 18-39	(1)
Female 39-55 urban, suburban	(1)
Male/Female 39-55 rural	(1)
Male 39-55	(1)
Female/Male 56 over	(2)

Judges are required to be available from 9 am to 3 pm on the Monday before the State Fair opens. Judges will be provided lunch, a free admission ticket to the fair, and a commemorative “judges’ pin”.