

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

### Patchen California Adds to Its Green Portfolio

Los Gatos, Santa Clara County, CA - November 12, 2010 - Patchen California Christmas Tree Farm plans to expand its tree recycling operation by including locations in Scotts Valley and Los Gatos where anyone can drop off a used Christmas tree.

By expanding its recycling reach, the choose-and-cut tree farm in the Santa Cruz Mountains adds to its list of eco-friendly practices that include its cultivation methods.

Since 1969, Patchen California has reused its tree stumps. How? Owner Jim Beck teaches customers how to cut trees while leaving a minimum of five finger-sized branches on the remaining stump. This method keeps the root system alive and able to grow another tree, ready to harvest in five to eight years.

Beck prefers to keep a succession of trees at different stages of growth. "If I was to clear-cut a whole area, that would create a problem with the first big storm we had," Beck says. "It would wash away a lot of the topsoil, not to mention the animal habitat lost."

Beck's sustainable tree farm practices include:

- \* Using wood chip mulch instead of herbicides to control weeds
- \* Gentle pest defense:
  - Trapping gophers (no poison)
  - Keeping trees healthy so they are resistant to insects
  - Redirecting deer migration paths
- \* Using natural fertilizers such as local manure and wood chip mulch
- \* Not heating any of the six buildings used in the tree farm operations
- \* Converting property lights to LEDs, which use significantly less energy
- \* Recycling
  - Tree branches for mulch or for wreaths to sell (no bonfires)
  - Cider cups and any plastic or glass left by customers
  - Trees brought back by customers after Christmas
- \* Composting garden waste and adding to soil around trees
- \* Repairing or refurbishing tools instead of replacing with new
- \* Irrigating only newly planted seedlings
- \* Reusing healthy tree stumps to generate new trees

In addition to reusing, recycling and conserving, Patchen California donates hundreds of trees each year to schools, churches and charities that include Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, City Team Ministries, Loaves and Fishes, Job Train, Cupertino Community Center and many others.

For 41 years Patchen California - named for the historic, 19th century mountain town - has been patronized by families seeking a nostalgic trip to the woods to cut their own trees. Beck says that several families are approaching or have surpassed their 30th year as customers. Although most come to cut trees, some come for the custom-made wreaths or to have picnics at one of many picnic sites among the trees.

Contact:

Jim Beck (or Margaret Ryle 925-708-5581 mobile)  
22217 Old Santa Cruz Hwy.  
Los Gatos, CA 95033  
408-353-1615  
[Jim@Patchen.CA](mailto:Jim@Patchen.CA)  
[www.PatchenCalifornia.com](http://www.PatchenCalifornia.com)

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Keywords: recycling, eco-friendly, choose and cut, Christmas trees, Patchen California, reuse, donate, sustainable

About owner Jim Beck:

Jim Beck grew up in the country and later moved to Sunnyvale, California where he worked in the technology industry. His interest in electronics and optics led him to research and develop a system whereby weeds are detected as separate from crops, resulting in less herbicide use. He holds many patents, including over a dozen for the WeedSeeker® system. Since 1969 he has lived in the Santa Cruz Mountains, operating the tree farm.

Patchen California Facts:

Address: 22217 Old Santa Cruz Highway, Lost Gatos, CA 95033

Approximately 15 acres between two locations in Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties

The trees are mostly Monterey pine, Douglas fir and Sierra redwoods.

Everything is provided, including saws - insurance disallows customer owned chain saws.

Hours are from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. from Thanksgiving Day through Christmas Eve.

Patchen hires temporary help each year, including at least one through a job-training program.

Margaret Hoehner Ryle  
925.708.5581 mobile