

Tradition of Christmas trees goes back 500 years

By Debbie Arrington, Sacramento Bee

With brisk temperatures and vistas of a snowcapped Sierra, it's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas at Apple Hill – great news for the area's Christmas tree farmers.



“This weekend is our big one,” said Jody Franklin, director of tourism for the El Dorado County Visitors Authority. “Every other car will have a Christmas tree on it.”

In the Apple Hill area near Placerville, about 40 farms raise Christmas trees – almost as many operations as the hill's famed apple farms. While wintry weather often keeps visitors away during apple season, it's perfect for tree hunters.

“(Apple) growers have had a pretty slow season,” Franklin said. “It was booming in the beginning with perfect weather (in late September). But then we had rain, and people decide to wait and put off their trip.”

“But with Christmas trees, the time is now. (Visitors) love it if it's snowing. They bundle up. There's a bite in the air and warm cider at the farms. They have that ‘white Christmas’ experience and something to talk about. It's a tradition.”

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