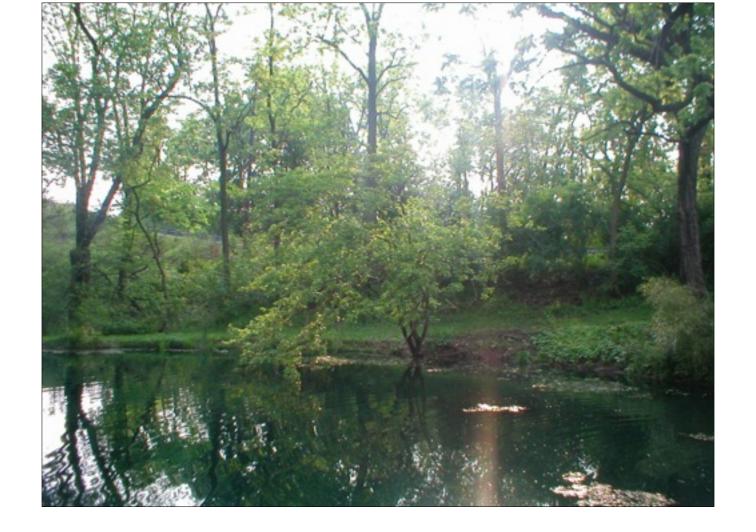CHRISTMAS
TREE FARMIN'

with Harry Schwartz

Yup.

We've got a little farm.

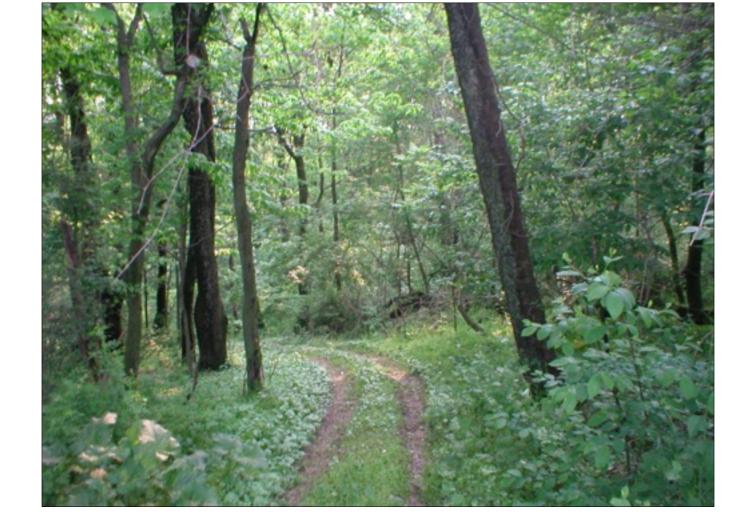Family's been farming in Lancaster, PA for a few hundred years.
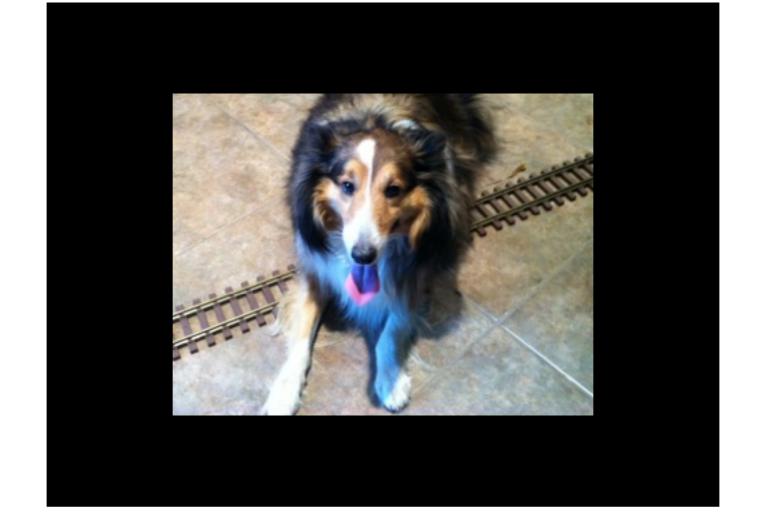
We've got a pond.

Got a shed.

Got this sweet barn.

Got some woods.

Got a dog.

This is "Rudy." Mom took a picture of him lying on some rails. Get it? It's "Rudy on Rails!"

My family. Funny people.

It's kind of a family commune.

Mom runs a soap business out in the barn.

Aunt edits an herbal magazine.

I'm the black sheep.

"Frog Hollow Evergreens"

Dad runs the farm.

Let's talk trees.

Types of trees:

Pine   Fir   Spruce

So let's talk trees. These are all evergreens. There are three important *genera.*

Differences: needles, branch strength, time to grow. 5–7 years.

Styles change: Red cedar (40s & 50s) -> Scotch pine and white pine (80s) -> Fraser & Balsam fir (now).

Farm has a yearly lifecycle…

Spring: Planting.

In March: no irrigation, counting on April showers.

Get them as seedlings (usually 4 years old).

Plant them in a modified tobacco planter dragged by the tractor.

Spring: Dig trees for landscaping.

Digging by hand is hard. Use a "tree spade" attached to a skid loader.

Wrap up the balls in burlap.

Summer: Gotta trim, spray for pests, mow.

Mowing's good since it keeps the weeds low, so we spray less.

We've got ~8,000–10,000 trees (about 1,000/acre)

So there's a lot of year-round labor: it's not just *waiting*.

Fall: Eventually chop 'em down.

3–5 really busy weekends.

We do choose and cut, so the customers do the sawing/hauling. Which is great.

We bail them.

We also drill them, usually ->

Screw stands are terrible. We sell stands with pins.

They need to be drilled with these weird machines, but every farm has 'em.

(BTW, holes have no impact on water uptake)

Tips for getting a tree:

- Get a fir. Concolor is great. Canaan, Fraser, and Douglas are good too.
- Shape doesn't really matter.
- Pin stands: awesome.
- Saw off the bottom.
- Just use regular water. Don't let it get dry.
- Turn off the lights, stay away from radiators, etc.

The takeaways.

Thanks! Questions?