

Michigan Christmas Tree Association Research Fund 2026 Request for Proposals

The Michigan Christmas Tree Association announces a call for research proposals for 2026.

STRATEGIC RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The Michigan Christmas Tree Association's Research Committee is a five to seven member committee of Christmas tree producers appointed by the MCTA Board of Directors.

The Michigan Christmas Tree Association's Research Committee has developed general, as well as specific research priorities. The following is a list of more general **research priorities**: (Not in priority order)

Michigan Christmas Tree Industry Research Priorities 2026

1. Plantation management
 - Managing cone formation in Fraser fir (e.g., PGR's or herbicides to reduce the cost of picking cones).
 - Improving seedling/transplant establishment
 - Improving nutrient management in plantations and nursery
 - Improved genetics for Michigan (seed orchard development, new tree selection)
2. Integrated pest management
 - Emerging pest issues – Hemlock and balsam woolly adelgid, spotted lanternfly, midges, etc.
 - Evaluate new pesticides (insecticides, fungicides, herbicides) for use in Christmas tree production
 - Non-chemical weed control (e.g., mulches, cover crops)
 - Herbicide resistance issues – Stinger, Velpar and Round-up
 - Organic options
3. Farm management
 - Understanding costs production
 - Consumer preferences and marketing
4. Irrigation
 - Understanding of irrigation monitoring and needs
 - Impact of vegetative and non-vegetative impact on irrigation needs
 - Impact of seedling establishment in regard to irrigation
 - Assessment of methods and new technologies in irrigation

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Whether your proposal is a continuation of a current project or a new project, you are requested to submit a proposal. The proposal will be no more than three pages as outlined below, along with a cover sheet and budget.

- **Cover Page:** A cover page should be attached to your proposal.
- **Problem Statement:** What is the problem/opportunity and why is it important to the future of Michigan's Christmas tree growers? How does it address MCTA's research priorities?
- **Objectives and Hypothesis**
- **Overview of Methods and Procedures:** Briefly, how will hypotheses be tested?
- **Impact of research on Michigan Christmas tree industry:** What does this mean to Michigan's growers and how will it affect them economically, environmentally, etc.?
- **Budget:** Completed Project Budget should be attached to your preliminary proposal including notation of other funding sources from which you have received or applied for funds.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. on December 1, 2025. A proposal development number is required for each proposal. Researchers should submit their proposals electronically, through the MSU's KC system.

PROPOSAL REVIEW

The Michigan Christmas Tree Association Research Committee will review proposals in January. Funding decisions will be announced in early 2026.

The following criteria will be used to judge the merit of the proposals:

Evaluation Criteria

- Relationship to Michigan Christmas Tree Association research priorities
- Scientific soundness; appropriateness of methodology
- Leverage of funds
- Potential impact on the Michigan Christmas tree industry
- Extent of partnering with Christmas tree producers and users
- Appropriateness of budget

FUNDING CONDITIONS

- A printed research report and presentation are due to MCTA to be presented during the Annual Winter Meeting in March. (Final report can be presented during the Summer Meeting in August if agreed upon by both the association and researcher) Final reports for multi-year projects should show each year's progress. Research reports will be printed in the Great Lakes Christmas Tree Journal (or the current MCTA publication) and will be made available to Christmas tree growers.
- Timely and quality progress reports are expected, and lack of such may result in loss of funding.
- The Michigan Christmas Tree Association may request that team leaders and/or their representatives participate in MCTA public events and radio programs that highlight research activities when requested.
- Multiple year projects are funded one year at a time and are subject to annual evaluations. Second year continued funding is not guaranteed.
- The Michigan Christmas Tree Association is a grower-funded organization. As such, it is imperative that the Michigan Christmas Tree Association be recognized as a funding source whenever possible.

If you have any questions please contact Amy Start, Executive Director, Michigan Christmas Tree Association, 517-545-9971, info@mcta.org or Sara Haller (MSU) at bolessar@msu.edu.