



Hi All,

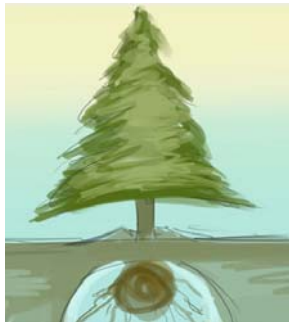
The CoP will be having a break during January 2016. Look out for the next edition in Feb 2016.

I did my usual 'this time of year' trick and google searched "soil and Christmas" and "soil and new year". Learnt lots about growing Christmas trees, Christmas cacti, reindeer impact on arctic soils, how to prepare Santa Claus melons, and a Soweto band called "The Soil" with a song "New Years Resolution".

May you and your family have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Cheers

Brian



## Soil Fertility Recommendations for Christmas Trees

*Joe Heckman, Extension Specialist in Soil Fertility*

*Mark Vodak, Extension Specialist in Forestry*

Christmas trees are grown on about 6,300 acres in New Jersey. When plantations are established on fertile soil and properly managed, Christmas tree production can be a profitable business.

Christmas trees can be successfully grown on a variety of soil types, but well-drained, loamy soils are best for Christmas tree production. Careful management of soil fertility can improve tree

quality and appearance, as well as shorten the number of years needed to grow a Christmas tree to market size.

<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/fs1187/>

## Santa Claus Melons

Please note: This fruit needs at least 5 months of summer. You can grow by starting 5 weeks indoors and using heavy mulches to keep the ground warm. Possible experimentation with high tunnels and green houses are needed when growing this fruit.

Choose a site that gets full sun and good air circulation. Make sure the spot is protected from strong winds – melons won't perform at all if cold.

Amend the soil with plenty of compost or well-rotted manure to ensure fertility and good drainage. (Construct raised beds if your climate is cold or humid or your soil is heavy.) The soil's pH should be from 6.0 to 7.0.



<http://farm2u.org/growing-guide/santa-claus-melons/>

## What Kind of Soil Should I Use to Grow a Christmas Cactus?

by Jenny Harrington 🍷



Water, soil, light and temperature affect the cactus' health and flowering.

Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgesii*) blooms in winter, producing red, pink or orange flowers on the tips of its succulent leaves. Although hardy in U.S. Department of Agriculture plant hardiness zones 10b through 11, it is grown most often as an indoor holiday plant. A Christmas cactus requires repotting every three years in spring. Planting your Christmas cactus in the correct type of potting soil will help the plant remain healthy. <http://homeguides.sfgate.com/kind-soil-should-use-grow-christmas-cactus-99987.html>

## **Reindeer grazing and tundra soil carbon storage under changing climate**

Porolaidunnus ja tundramaan  
hiilivarastot muuttuvassa ilmastossa

Contact person: [Dr Sari Stark](#)

Research group: Global change

Start of the project : 1st May 2012

End of the project : 31st July 2014

### Research

At present, tundra ecosystems store large quantities of soil carbon that has been accumulating to the soil over centuries and millennia. It is currently predicted that increasing temperatures by global change will enhance decomposition of these large soil carbon stocks. As a result, tundra soils may start contributing to the increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide. In this project, we experimentally simulate effects of global change with specifically designed warming chambers (ITEX standard open top chambers) in a sub-



Analyzing net ecosystem carbon exchange in the field.  
Photo: Sari Stark.

<http://www.arcticcentre.org/EN/RESEARCH/Projects/Pages/Reindeer-grazing-and-tundra-soil-carbon-storage>

## The Soil

Musical Group

The Soil is an award winning South African acapella group formed in 2003. [Wikipedia](#)

**Origin:** Soweto, South Africa (2003)

**Record label:** Sony Music Entertainment

**Albums:** Nostalgic Moments, Reflections Live in Joburg, Reflections: Live in Johannesburg, The Soil

**Members:** Buhle, Ntsika, Phindo, Samkelo Lelethu Mdolomba

**Awards:** South African Music Award for Best R&B/Soul/Reggae Album





**“Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads.”**

— Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*