



2025



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## Report European Summer Meeting Netherlands 2025

July 1st to 3rd, 2025 – The Netherlands

### 1 – Tuesday, July 1st, 2025

The meeting started at 11:00 AM, immediately after the CTGCE board meeting, with a warm welcome speech from the VNK board. The Dutch association currently has 30 active members and shows high engagement: on average, 90% of the members attend the three to four meetings per year.

In the Netherlands, a wide assortment of Christmas trees is cultivated. Besides the well-known Nordmann fir, species such as Omorika, Fraseri, Norway spruce, and blue spruce are also popular. A significant portion of the trees is sold with root balls or in pots, fitting the market demand and suitable soil conditions. The total area of Christmas trees in the Netherlands covers approximately 1,800 hectares.

This year, 100 participants from ten countries attended the meeting:

- Austria: 25
- Germany: 22
- England: 6
- Denmark: 5
- Switzerland: 4
- Belgium: 3
- Ireland: 2
- Norway: 2
- France: 1
- Netherlands: 20 Dutch participants joined later.
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After lunch, the group traveled by double-decker bus to **Christmas Tree Nursery William Lenders in Venlo**. Despite the tropical heat (more than 30°C), the tour could proceed thanks to the necessary water bottles and umbrellas against the sun. In the shade of the adjacent forest, a demonstration was given with a Damcon digging machine for root-balled trees.



Lenders cultivates a wide assortment (mainly *Picea* species) on dry sandy soil and primarily supplies domestic customers, both through farm sales and direct buyers.



In the evening, everyone returned to the hotel for an extensive buffet.

## Day 2 – Wednesday, July 2nd, 2025

After the breakfast buffet, the group departed for **PT Potcultures in Someren**, where a remarkable 3.5 million conica mini-trees are grown in pots annually. In the greenhouses, participants received explanations about the propagation process and further cultivation.



After good rooting of the plant material, the saplings are first placed in the greenhouse on rolling tables, and then continue to grow and harden off outdoors via these rolling tables.



In the Netherlands, an estimated 10 to 15 million mini Christmas trees are produced and sold throughout Europe annually.

After the visit, the program continued at **Tree Nursery De Ontginning in Maarheeze**, where owner Hans Maas welcomed the group with a lunch in the barn. A demonstration of various classic diesel engines and tractors took place on the premises.



During the guided tour – in English and German – the family business was explained: since 1990, Christmas trees, yew, and beech have been cultivated here on 20 hectares. Due to the heat (35+ °C), the program was slightly shortened, and everyone returned to the hotel early in the afternoon, where the air conditioning was well appreciated.

### Day 3 – Thursday, July 3rd, 2025

After a refreshing rain shower, the temperature this day was pleasant. The morning began with a visit to **Van den Berk Nurseries in Sint-Oedenrode**. Van den Berk specializes in large trees and has an area of 450 hectares with more than 1,500 species and cultivars. A presentation was given in the reception hall showcasing impressive projects from all over Europe.



During the tour, participants saw, among other things, a self-designed digging machine that can extract root balls up to 3 meters in diameter.



In addition, Van den Berk also offers tree care courses to customers and publishes an extensive reference work with comprehensive information on tree species.

After a group photo, the company traveled on to **Christmas Tree Nursery Gebr. Geraerts**

**in Hapert.** Lunch consisted of typical Dutch snacks, served from a classic chip stand at the tennis club.



Subsequently, Siem Geraerts, one of the four brothers, welcomed the participants. The field, where mainly *Picea* species are grown, was visited in two groups. Halfway through, a demonstration was given with a digging machine that loosens trees in the row. The first trees are loosened at the end of October and remain in the ground until delivery.



The meeting concluded with a speech by the chairman of the VNK.

Despite the heat on the first days, enthusiasm was high, and a very successful meeting could be looked back upon.



You can view (or download) photos from these days by clicking the following link:

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/LbAXi4zTRsF832oDA>