

NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION SOUTHERN TIER CHAPTER FALL 2012 NEWSLETTER

Woods Walk Planned for September 15th

Join us for a very informative woods walk on the 210 acre forest property managed by Bruce Phetteplace, near Oxford, in Chenango County. Bruce self-harvests mature sawtimber for sale to a local mill, has some sawlogs processed onsite for sale as boards, and sells a lot of firewood that he runs through his commercial firewood processor. The main theme for this woods walk will be regeneration, and we will observe several small clear-cuts ranging in age from five to thirty years, with varying degrees of successful regeneration. The walk will give us an opportunity to discuss what works and what does not, under differing conditions. Bruce will also crank up and demonstrate his firewood processor and, although he is phasing out his ginseng business, will be happy to answer questions any of us may have about this agro-forestry activity.

A tractor-pulled wagon will be used to get us from stand to stand, so this event will not require a lot of walking. Wear long pants and sturdy shoes however; there is lots of brush and briars. The woods walk will begin at 9:00 and should finish before noon.

Participation in this woods walk will be limited to 30 people, so please call (607) 648-2941 to reserve a spot. Directions: Bruce's address is 701 Lyon Brook Road, Norwich, NY 13815. From Route 12 in Oxford, cross the Chenango River and turn North on Route 32 (East River Road). Go about 2 miles and turn right on Lyon Brook Road. Go about 2 miles and look for the number #701 on a wall on the left. Bruce's house, barns and log yard are up a long dirt driveway. We have welcomed the NYFOA Central NY Chapter to participate in this woods walk with us. Hope to see a good turnout !

November 7 Meeting To Feature Program on Emerald Ash Borer, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, and Other Invasive Insects

Mark Whitmore, Extension Associate with the Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences will present an update on several invasive insects that threaten our forests. The Emerald Ash Borer is now just one county away from our Chapter's Western and Eastern borders and the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid has already been found in Broome and Delaware Counties. Mark will review the life cycle, current locations and management options for these and other insect pests. This meeting will be held in the auditorium at Cornell Cooperative Extension, 840 Upper Front Street, Binghamton. Doors open at 6:30 and the meeting will run from 7:00 until all your questions are answered. Attendance not limited to members; bring a neighbor!

Steering Committee Plans Future Programs

If you already have a 2013 calendar, you can note that our annual Pot Luck Dinner will be held on January 23rd, with a program on Early Succession Forests and Bird Habitat. We are also planning a program for March 13 on the New York Forest Tax Law 480a. Details on these events will be covered in our Winter 2012 Newsletter.

Good Turnout For Recent Chapter Events

Over thirty Chapter members enjoyed our April 25 tour of the Ames True Temper facility in Unadilla. We witnessed ash sawlogs being processed into long two inch dowels and kiln dried before being shipped around the world to become handles for hand tools. Our thanks to host Brian Williams for the tour, and for the miniature ash baseball bat presented to each of us as we departed.

Our May 17 Chapter meeting on “Restoring Our Forests” drew over twenty members, plus special guests from the Sierra Club and Finch Hollow Nature Center. The September/October issue of The NY Forest Owner magazine will include the first of a planned series of articles on forest health and NYFOA’s plans to address the problem.

Welcome To New Members:

Recent new members to our Southern Tier Chapter include: Joanna Ahern, Pam & Bill Brodsky, Robert Gillette, Karen Hibbard and Bruce Phetteplace. We look forward to seeing you at future Chapter events.

Chapter Chair’s Column, by Steve Kutney

The housing market for new homes appears to be making a bottom. New home sales topped expectations for the first quarter of the year. The number of people employed selling furniture has remained steady according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Both are indicators of positive information for sellers of wood. The bad news is that the numbers are less than half of a bullish real estate market. Those of us who would like to sell some trees must take a lower price or plan on waiting a few years until prices become more favorable. A few years ago, financial wizard Warren Buffet estimated that it would take at least five years before the housing market would get going again. Just because it’s bottoming doesn’t mean that we are in for a housing boom. It will take a few years at this level before the demand will catch up to the supply of available homes.

If you would like some insight on how stumpage prices change over time you may want to visit the NYS DEC website at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5259.html>. The site has reports going back to 2006. Remember that any bids that you get for your trees may vary from these reports.

Most years I plant at least a few trees. Frequently they are fruit trees. In the last few years I’ve been planting some nut trees. This last spring I planted six Chinese Chestnuts that I ordered through the mail. I’m hoping for the best with the dry summer that we are having. I have a Chinese chestnut growing in my yard that is probably 25 years old. At least two are needed for pollination. One new tree was planted in my yard and the other five I planted on my woodlot. I have three Chinese Chestnuts on my woodlot that were planted in prior years. Hopefully they will all get along.

These six new trees arrived in a shipping container which was different from what I’ve seen in the past. The trees were shipped bare root and in a dormant state. The package appeared to be a vacuum sealed container similar to what is found in a grocery store for storing salad greens. The trees look dead when I got them. I soaked the trees for 24 hours before planting per the instructions.

When planting, dig much more earth than the size of the tree. There is an old saying, “If you are planting a \$10 tree, dig a \$100 hole”. If you have had the foresight to have Cornell University do a soil test you should mix whatever is needed to balance your soil prior to filling the hole. Don’t just dump the lime or whatever in the bottom of the hole. If you have the time, energy and equipment, loosen and amend the soil out to the projected drip line (the farthest point to which the branches will extend). The tree roots will eventually extend to at least the drip line. Remove any rocks. Just adding some fertilizer that you got from Home Depot will not do the trick. Follow the Cornell recommendations. Soak the hole prior to covering the tree with dirt. Water the tree some more once it is planted. Press on the earth with your boot to make sure that no air pockets exist around the tree roots.

When I plant trees in my orchard I use tree tubes. These are five foot long plastic tubes which act like a greenhouse for the trees. I use a tube that is sold by a company called Treeessentials. Tubex and Tree Pro are other companies that make a similar product. The tube protects the trees from deer and rabbits. They force the tree to grow up and out of the tube above the deer browsing zone. I support the tubes using a metal fence post and remove the post once the tube disintegrates. Some people use wood, bamboo, PVC or rebar for stakes. I’ve never used anything but metal. I reuse the metal stake. Planting trees for me is an ongoing process. If you plan to use tree tubes, prune off any side branches from your tree before installing the tube.

I use landscaping fabric to eliminate competition from grass and weeds. I cut a hole in the center of the fabric after I plant the tree. I slip the fabric over the tree through the hole. Landscaping fabric can be purchased at garden stores. It’s designed to keep down the weeds while allowing water to soak into the ground. I use metal anchoring pins to keep the mat in place and cover it with wood chips to prevent degradation of the fabric from the sun and to retain moisture.

Drive your stake into the ground near the tree. Make sure it’s close to the tree so that the tube can fit over the tree and be attached to the stake. Secure the tube to the stake using the tie downs provided by the company. Winds have a way of ripping the tree tube from the stake. At some point in the future you will want to remove the tube from the tree so than you can spray the trunk of the tree with dormant oil and remove unwanted branches. Slice the entire length of the tube with a knife between the holes provided for the tie downs. The slice will allow you to remove the tube, attend to the tree, and then reattach the tube to the stake in a secure manner.

The tree will grow quickly but it’s likely that the diameter of the tree will not keep pace with the height of the tree. This is why you want to revisit the tree every so often to make sure that the wind did not tear the tube from the steel stake. Keep the tube on the tree until the diameter of the tree is strong enough to support the tree or until it disintegrates.

It’s a common practice to fence orchards for commercial purposes. The potential yield can be higher because fruit can be grown closer to the ground. My neighbor spent thousands of dollars on fencing for his home orchard. This may not be within your budget. In my view tree tubes are a more cost effective method of protecting trees.

I recently examined my Chinese Chestnuts. They seem to be growing just fine despite the warm weather.

The NYFOA Southern Tier Chapter (SOT) includes Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware and Otsego Counties. SOT sponsors several workshops and woodswalks each year, usually in cooperation with county CCE associations. SOT publishes a Fall, Winter and Spring Newsletter to announce programs and other educational information for members.

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