

The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

July/August 2003



Volume 41 Number 4



FOUNDED 1963

**THE NEW YORK
FOREST OWNERS
ASSOCIATION**

Volume 41, Number 4

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The New York
Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

The New York Forest Owner is a bi-monthly publication of The New York Forest Owners Association, P.O. Box 1055, Penfield, N.Y. 14526. Materials submitted for publication should be sent to: Mary Beth Malmsheimer, Editor, The New York Forest Owner, 134 Lincklaen Street, Cazenovia, New York 13035. Materials may also be e-mailed to mmalmshe@syr.edu. Articles, artwork and photos are invited and if requested, are returned after use. The deadline for submission for the September/October issue is August 1, 2003.

Please address all membership fees and change of address requests to P.O. Box 1055, Penfield, N.Y. 14526. 1-800-836-3566. Cost of family membership/subscription is \$30.

www.nyfoa.org

COVER: Jim Winter, logger, is building the first road into the landing on "The Kingdom" - the property he manages with owner Jon Schor in Canaan, NY - on a John Deere 450G. For complete article see page 10. Photograph courtesy of Douglas R. Allen.

From The President

Volunteers

Over a decade ago, then President George H.W. Bush gave an important address which highlighted much of what is right about America. He spent the majority of his speech describing "the thousand points of light" which was his descriptor for all the volunteer groups, organizations and people that do so much of the "good" and provide so much service in our great land. The value of all that volunteerism is incalculable and unending. Volunteer firefighters, Big brothers and sisters, Meals on Wheels, Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions clubs, tutors, blood donors, nursing home



entertainers, United Way campaigns, Habitat for Humanity builders.....the list could fill this entire magazine and then some.

We have many energetic and energized volunteers in our own NYFOA, Board members, standing committee members, chapter steering committee members and officers to name some, and Master Forest Owner/Coverts Volunteers (MFO's).

This group of almost 200 strong is a great asset to the future of private woodlands in New York State. Every year in the fall since 1991, twenty to forty MFO candidates have traveled to Cornell's Arnot Forest, where they spend four days in a certification training workshop. This training consists of classroom and outdoor experiences in many areas including tree identification, finding boundaries, forest ecology, wildlife management, communication ideas, timber management and a great opportunity to become familiar with the myriad resources available to private woodland owners.

Once the band of newly minted MFO's is trained, they begin the task of informing local resources (Cooperative Extension, DEC, NYFOA) of their availability and start outreach activities through newspaper and magazine articles, presentations and NYFOA meetings. The heart of what they do is in visits to private landowners who are

generally in the early stages of thinking about a more active management of their properties.

MFO's do not give professional advice or perform management activities but they do provide information, encouragement, and general direction toward managing forests in a manner that enhances owner satisfaction. My own MFO visits usually consist of a walk on the property, a discussion about the priority goals of the forest owner (saw timber? wildlife? biodiversity? recreation? hunting?), review of boundary markings and access, and finally leaving the landowner with a number of other potential resources to pursue (including information about NY-FOA).

These motivated men and women are of great benefit under any circumstances, but especially in these times when both state and federal resources are very tight. The impact that they have had since 1991 covers hundreds and hundreds of landowners and thousands upon thousands of acres. It is impossible to gauge the benefits to the forest and to the satisfaction of the landowners who have been visited by the MFO's, but it is certainly very significant and important.

This year's class of new candidates will gather at the Arnot from September 10-14. The training is free due to all of the "volunteers" who organize and speak at the event. The sponsors of the program are Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the Department of Natural Resources at Cornell, NYFOA, the Ruffed Grouse Society, the Wentorf Foundation, the National Wild Turkey Federation and DEC. Gary Goff from Cornell is the Program director who does a superb job of organizing this program and energizing past graduates with refresher courses each year in locations throughout the state.

Thanks to all who make this program work! As with most volunteer activities, the volunteers benefit as much as the recipients. If you are looking for a good place to volunteer, this is a good one! If this isn't the right time for you, consider contacting an MFO to help you with your woods! For more information contact Gary Goff at (607) 255-2824 or grg3@cornell.edu.

-Geff Yancey, President

Join!

NYFOA is a not-for-profit group of NY State landowners promoting stewardship of private forests for the benefit of current and future generations. Through local chapters and statewide activities, NYFOA helps woodland owners to become responsible stewards and interested publics to appreciate the importance of New York's forests.

Join NYFOA today and begin to receive its many benefits including: six issues of *The New York Forest Owner*, woodswalks, chapter meetings, and two statewide meetings. Complete and mail this form:

I/We would like to support good forestry and stewardship of New York's forest lands

I/We own _____ acres of woodland.

I/We do not own woodland but support the Association's objectives.

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The State's Toughest Tree Test

DAN ANDERSON

Here are the answers to the State's Toughest Tree Test. Thank you for your patience and waiting for the answers of these riddles to appear in this issue. We hope you had fun trying to figure these out.

1. This tree is always found in "twos." [Pear - pair]
2. Our local "sweetheart" tree. [Sugar Maple]
3. NYFOA members love this tree because it can go "veneer," that is in perfect condition. [Cherry]
4. You could "long for" this tree. [Pine]
5. Two of the "saddest" trees in our forests. [Weeping Willow & Blue Spruce]
6. Our favorite Halloween shrub. [Witch Hazel]
7. You might bonk an old person with this tree. [Box Elder]
8. When I glance your way I might see _____! [Yew]
9. This tree is angry because it is always "burned up." [Ash]
10. Three of four human taste bud tingling trees. [Bitternut, Sourgum & Sweetgum]
11. Too many of these in your woods could be considered a "Biblical Plague." [Locust]
12. This may have been your "initial" lovers tree. [Beech]
13. This Southern tree needs "Rogaine." [Bald Cypress]
14. This small tree could be litigation against "Old MacDonald." [Sumac - sue mac]
15. Something is "fishy" here. [Basswood]
16. You could be "barking up the wrong tree." [Dogwood]
17. The Dutchman's favorite tree. [Tulip Tree]
18. This Southern tree could be useful if you drank too much coffee on a fishing trip! [Pecan - pee can]
19. Planting this tree could "clean up" your yard. [Spruce]
20. Add a "J" to the front of this tree name and you might "get it." [J+Oak]
21. Could a seismograph detect the presence of this tree in your woodlot? [Quaking Aspen]
22. A Native American might "quiver" for this shrub. [Arrowhead]
23. The "key" to unlocking this riddle is on the bottom of the skirt! [Hemlock]
24. The "softest" wood in our forests. [Cottonwood]
25. This tree never produces any "leaners," as it is always perfectly vertical. [Plum - plumb] 

Dan Anderson is an MFO, and the Vice-Chairman of the Allegany Foothills chapter of NYFOA.



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The Knots of Timber Tax

LLOYD R. CASEY

The private forest landowners of this country generally sell timber from their land only once or twice in their lifetime. Most of them pay income tax on the gross sale receipts, which is foolish, and a few forget to pay any taxes due. A recent study in New York, by the IRS, found that 60% of those individuals forgot to pay their taxes.

Although no one likes to pay income tax, or any tax for that matter, you should know that the most you should ever have to pay is 20%. Any timber sale qualifies for capital gains which has a top tax rate of 20%. Many people will pay only 10% depending on how much they net on the sale. An individual can save in other ways too as the 15.3% unemployment tax is not due on capital gains and they do not affect Social Security Income for those who are retired.

The biggest deduction that many owners miss is the "basis" or the amount of investment that owners have in that asset. It is important that when purchasing forest land that the cost is separated between the land and the timber. A consultant forester can calculate this for you. Once the basis is established, on a per unit basis, this amount

can be deducted from the sales receipt at the time of the sale.

The basis has two parts, the amount that you paid for the timber and the volume of the timber. The amount that you paid never goes up, but the volume (board feet) goes up every year. Consequently the cost per unit goes down.

For example, the original cost basis was \$100 per one thousand board feet. After 10 years the timber volume has doubled and your amount invested stays the same so the basis become \$50 per thousand. This then (\$50/thousand board feet) would be the unit that is deducted from the gross receipts and tax would be paid on the net sales receipts.

It is very important that you know how many board feet you sold and the amount per unit that you received from the buyer. The only way that you could deduct your entire basis at one time would be if you cleared all of the timber off the land.

Many owners did not establish their basis at the time they purchased the woodland. A competent consultant forester can cruise the woods, establish the growth rate, and discount the volume back to the date of purchase. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation provides a stumpage price report periodically, that can be used as a source for historical prices.

As a general rule of thumb, if the land was purchased over 20 years ago, it will cost you more to establish the basis than the amount of tax savings you would receive. The bottom line is, know what you paid for the timber and deduct your investment from the gross timber sales receipts. ▲

Lloyd R. Casey works in the Forest Land Owner Assistance area of the USDA Forest Service Northeastern Area.

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NYS Legislature Enacts Timber Theft Bill

ROBERT MALMSHEIMER

On June 16 and 17, the New York State Senate and Assembly passed a bill that would significantly amend New York's timber theft laws and establish a mechanism for the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to review and advise local governments on proposed ordinances that may impact the practice of forestry. As of June 26, the bill was awaiting Governor Pataki's approval. If the Governor signs the bill, the new law would increase the rights of New York forestland owners that suffer a timber theft.

While the bill would have significant impact on public and private forest lands, this article focuses on the bill's impact on NYS's private forestland owners. I begin with a review of current efforts to address timber theft. The article then examines the bill's timber theft provisions and highlights some of its other provisions. I conclude with some comments on additional timber theft issues the legislature needs to address.

History

In 2000, the NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources and the Senate Agriculture Committee (LCRR & SAC), under the chairmanships of Senators Patricia McGee and Nancy Lorraine Hoffmann, held hearings throughout the state to assess the scope of the timber

theft problem and elicit various perspectives on the topic. The hearings revealed that current NYS law contained inadequate timber theft protections for private and state lands. The Senators then convened a Timber Theft Prevention Task Force (TTPTF) to assist in crafting legislation to address the problem. The TTPTF's recommendations resulted in the introduction of three bills this legislative session (see Malmshiemer, "Three Timber Theft Bills Introduced in NYS Legislature," *New York Forest Owner* 41(3):6-7).

While these efforts were underway, Senator Ronald Stafford introduced a bill in the 2001-2002 legislative session that contained timber theft and other provisions. That bill was passed by the Senate, but never voted on by the Assembly.

The current bill, which was passed by both houses includes provisions from the Stafford bill and some of the TTPTF's recommendations. The Senate approved the bill 44 to 17 on June 16 and the Assembly approved it 141 to 7 on June 17.

Timber Theft on Private Forestlands

The bill would repeal the current timber theft provisions in the Real Property Actions and Proceedings law, which authorizes *civil* lawsuits against timber thieves for monetary damages, and replace it with a new section that

clearly defines how courts should assess damages. Under the bill, if anyone, without the consent of the owner, cuts down or carries off (or causes to be cut down or carried off) any tree, or girdles or otherwise despoils a tree on the land of another, the landowner can sue the perpetrator for three times the stumpage value of the trees or \$250 per tree, or both. The bill would also allow the forest landowner to sue the timber thief for permanent and substantial damage caused to their land or its improvements. According to the bill, this compensation for injury to land or its improvements should be designed to restore the lands to their condition immediately before the violation. Judges can order defendants to physically restore the lands and/or assess monetary damages to allow the forest landowner to make restoration.

The bill provides for some protection for defendants that mistakenly, as opposed to deliberately, commit a timber theft. However, this provision still allows the forest landowner whose trees were illegally cut and land damaged to be compensated by the defendant. If the defendant can prove by clear and convincing evidence, that when he or she committed the theft that he or she had reason to believe the land was his or her own, or he or she had a legal right to harvest such land, then the court should award the forestland owner the stumpage value, or \$250, or both. Thus, defendants in these cases are only responsible for the stumpage value or \$250 per tree (or both), rather than three times the stumpage value or \$250 per tree (or both). Even if this section applies, the defendant is still liable for any permanent and substantial damage caused to the land or its improvements.

The bill defines "stumpage value" as the fair market value of a tree prior to its sale, cutting, or removal. It allows stumpage value to be determined by one or more of the following methods:

271 County Road #9
Chenango Forks, N.Y. 13746

(607) 648-5512
E-mail snowhawke@juno.com



Timber Appraisal
Timber Sales

Forest Stewardship Plans
Forestry 480-A Plans

Restore the American Chestnut

- 1) the sale price of the tree in an arm's-length sale,
- 2) a review of solicited bids for the tree,
- 3) the DEC's stumpage price reports,
- 4) comparison with other sales of trees on state or private lands, or
- 5) other appropriate means that establish fair market value within an acceptable range based on the geographic area.

Importantly, the bill also provides for judges in *criminal* timber theft cases to order a convicted defendant to pay the forest landowner restitution as part of the defendant's sentence. The bill allows judges to direct the defendant to pay the forest landowner three times the stumpage value of the trees stolen and for any permanent and substantial damage to the land and its improvements. This section should eliminate the need for some forest landowners to sue a timber thief in civil court for damages after the thief has been convicted by a criminal court. Since restitution is part of the defendant's sentence, rather than a civil court's judgment which the landowner must enforce, more effected landowners should be compensated for their injuries.

Another important aspect of the bill attempts to address courts', district attorneys', and law enforcement officials' lack of understanding of timber theft and its impacts on forest landowners and the state's forest resources. The bill authorizes the DEC Commissioner to work with the NYS Attorney General's Office and the Office of Court Administration to develop and provide educational training programs for municipal justice courts, district attorneys and law enforcement agencies on the control and prosecution of timber theft and trespass.

Other Provisions

The LCRR & SAC's hearings revealed that timber theft was also a problem on public lands. The bill makes timber theft a criminal offense and a Class A misdemeanor and increases civil penalties for timber theft on public lands to make them equivalent to the proposed penalties for private lands and requires reparations for permanent and substantial damage.

Research has shown that many NYS municipalities have enacted ordinances that impact forest practices and there is some evidence that these municipalities do not understand how these ordinances impact forest landowners or forest resources. This bill would establish a mechanism for the DEC Commissioner, on her own initiative or upon the written request of a municipality or a forest landowner within the municipality, to comment on proposed ordinances that may restrict the practice of forestry. The Commissioner could comment on impact of the proposed ordinance upon the long-term viability of the municipality's forests and suggest modifications to minimize the proposed ordinance's impacts on forest practices. The Commissioner has 45 days to make her comments, during which time the municipality must defer adopting the proposed ordinance. The bill would also require towns developing a master plan to "facilitate the practice of forestry" in ways similar to other agricultural uses.

Conclusion

This bill provides a real improvement in the mechanisms that NYS landowners can use to receive compensation for timber thefts. NYS legislators should be applauded for passing the bill. However, before the bill can provide these protections, the Governor must sign it.

Even if the bill becomes law, there are other timber theft issues that the LRRC & SAC's hearings exposed that the legislature needs to address. For example, while the bill contains provisions for the DEC Commissioner to educate municipal justice courts, district attorneys and law

Diverse Organizations Support Timber Theft Bill.

In addition to NYFOA, a diverse coalition of organizations support the timber theft bill. These organizations include:

Adirondack Council •
 Adirondack Landowners Association
 • Audubon New York • Catskill
 Forest Association • Empire State
 Forest Products Association • New
 York Farm Bureau • New York
 Timber Producers

enforcement agencies about the control and prosecution of timber theft and trespass, the legislature still needs to appropriate funding for the DEC to implement this education program. More importantly, this bill provides mechanisms for forest landowners who have already suffered a timber theft. It does not contain provisions to prevent timber theft from occurring. As the LRRC's hearings and the TTPTF agreed, NYS forest landowners need to be educated about how to prevent timber theft. After this bill becomes law, the legislature needs to authorize and provide funding for a timber theft education program for forest landowners so that fewer NYS forest landowners need to use this bill's timber theft compensation provisions. ▲

Robert Malmshemer is an Assistant Professor of Forest Law and Policy at SUNY ESF, a member of the NYFOA Board of Directors, and is a member of the NYS Legislative Commission's Timber Theft Advisory Committee.

NYS Legislative Sponsors

While the bill received overwhelming support in both the Senate and the Assembly – the Senate approved the bill 44 to 17, and the Assembly approved it 141 to 7 – the prime sponsors of the bill deserve recognition for their support of New York's forest land.

Senate:

Elizabeth Little, Nancy Lorraine Hoffmann, Patricia McGee, Raymond Meier, James Wright, James Alesi, John Bonacic, John DeFrancisco, Hugh Farley, George Maziarz, Olga Mendez, Michael Nozzolio, Mary Lou Rath

Assembly

William Parment, Darrel Aubertine, RoAnn Destito, Jacob Gunther, John Lavelle, John McEneny, Richard Smith

Why Are They Putting Goats In The Woods?

CHARLIE MOWATT

Under the guidance of State Extension Forester, Peter Smallidge, a research and demonstration project entitled "Goats In The Woods," has been under way at Cornell University's Arnot Teaching and Research Forest south of Ithaca, NY for the past five years. The purpose of the collaborative research is to assess and demonstrate: goat weight gain in woodland settings, how goats affect desired and undesired forest vegetation and the working relationship that might be developed between woodland owners and goat producers.

Much valuable knowledge and experience has been gained through the first four years at The Arnot Forest. The project, in fact, showed sufficient positive results that in 2002, satellite demonstration areas were set up in Sullivan County, Chemung County and Cattaraugus County. Having already demonstrated the potential usefulness of goats in the woods at The Arnot Forest, the purpose of the satellite farms was to bring the project to the direct attention of woodland owners and goat producers across the State. Personally, I believe that Pete Smallidge also had a hidden agenda in creating the satellite sites. He was becoming tired of all the goat jokes directed at him by woodland owners and foresters who visited The Arnot Forest and he wanted to spread the joy to others than himself!

Be that as it may, our Hog Hollow Tree Farm was selected as the 2002 Cattaraugus County satellite site. Here, we were particularly interested in how goats would handle our undesirable forest vegetation: honeysuckle and ironwood, as well as the beech sprouts. Such undesirable understory vegetation was created by the differential browsing of our resident white-tailed deer population. The high populations of deer consume the desirable hard maple, white ash and black cherry seedlings, leaving the undesirable beech, ironwood and honeysuckle to proliferate in the understory. If unattended, these species will block the ability of many of our native tree species, as well as other native plants, from regenerating. In order to reverse this trend, the undesirable understory must be substantially removed in order to give the desirables an equal chance to survive. In some similar forests, the undesirable understory trees and plants are eliminated by spraying with glyphosate (Roundup). Of course, there are some environmental and economic questions about employing chemical sprays, but more than that, much potential goat forage is lost.

Enter twenty project goats. They eat anything green that they can reach and the bark of small trees. Having been born in early 2002, these Boer-cross wether kids did not possess sufficiently mature teeth

with which to damage larger, more heavily-barked overstory trees. You can see in the accompanying "before" and "after" pictures, what effect the goats had on the understory vegetation in just a few days. The vegetation cleaned out by the goats consisted mainly of ironwood and honeysuckle. Remember, those are the species that the white-tailed deer passed up in favor of the maple, ash and black cherry.

Just removing the undesirable understory does not, by itself, result in regenerating desirable species. The white-tailed deer were the cause of the problem in the first place, so they must be effectively dealt with. At Hog Hollow, deer hunting is encouraged, with particular emphasis on the taking of female deer. We believe that legal hunting offers the best means of curbing the rapid rise in deer population and its negative effects on the regeneration of native hardwood trees in our woods. In fact, among the ironwood, beech and honeysuckle regeneration, there are very occasional hard maple and black cherry saplings. They may have survived because hunting in recent years has reduced deer populations sufficiently to allow at least some of the desirable species to regenerate. In fact, some of the desirable species were scattered inside one of the goat paddocks and were subject to the whims of the goats in the name of





The Goat Grazing Team at Charlie Mowatt's Hog Hollow farm.

research. *Yes, goats also feed on desirable species, just like the deer!* However, there are places where white ash and hard maple seedlings haven't been able to grow past knee high, due to intense and repeated deer browsing.

Each satellite's woodlot owner was teamed with a goat producer and assigned a herd of 20 goats to be kept in a woodlot through the Summer. In our case, the "goat producer" was Don Wild, a Pasture Specialist with the US Department of Agriculture. The project also attracted several young volunteers who helped weigh, move and treat goat ailments as needed throughout their stay at Hog Hollow. The team, or individuals of the team, were responsible for daily supplemental feeding, watering and health management of the herd, as well as fence set-up, inspection and maintenance. The Team moved the goats to new paddocks as appropriate. In all, eight paddocks were employed over the first two months of the project (July and August). During the last month, the goats were placed on better pasturage, including birdsfoot trefoil, in order to obtain optimum weight gain before being sold.

Paddocks are slightly larger than one-quarter of an acre in size. Past experience at The Arnot Forest has demonstrated that a goat herd of 20 animals will accomplish the designated task in 7 to 10 days. Such proved to be the case at Hog Hollow, as well. In two months, the goats went

through eight paddocks that ranged in size from .26 acre to .34 acre. In all, they cleared the understory of 2.4 acres in the two months they were in the woods.

During the Fall deer hunting season, Hog Hollow Tree Farm and its neighbor, Wright Farms, a dairy farm, again opened up their lands to deer hunting. Moreover, the Department of Environmental Conservation has recognized the problems caused by high deer populations. Such recognition has taken the form of more liberal deer hunting licensing. In addition, the DEC assigned Deer Management Permits (DMAPs) to the Wright Farms in order to help reduce crop damage caused by deer. All of the focus on deer hunting resulted in the harvest of at least 72 deer in our valley. That's at least 24 deer per square mile in our valley (about 2,000 acres or three square miles). We were very pleased that such hunting pressure could be brought to bear by hunters in a season that was not very favorable, weather wise. Our pleasure was short-lived when we went out to look at the Christmas tree plantation behind the house this Spring. The hunting pressure did not have much effect on reducing deer browse damage to our Christmas trees. Last Winter's heavy and persistent snow contributed to the damaged trees, because the deer were limited in their ability to move about and find adequate alternative browse.

On the brighter side, the Goat Grazing Team was recognized by the Natural

Resources Conservation Service at its annual Statewide Employee Recognition Day on December 11, 2002 at Vernon, New York. The Team was honored with one of the four *Flying "V" Awards* for "work accomplished in support of agency goals and objectives." The presentation took particular note of the collaborative nature of the volunteer work that went into the project, just as geese collaborate in flight. (And did you know why the "V" formation of geese usually has one side longer than the other?... there are more geese on one side!)

We anticipate another herd of goats to browse again at Hog Hollow Tree Farm this Summer. If you find the time, please drop by to see the activity first hand. An advance call would be appreciated, (716) 676-3617. Ask for a location map and one will be sent to you. Bring your kids to see our kids. 🐐

Charlie Mowatt is a member of the Allegheny Foothills chapter of NYFOA. He resides at Hog Hollow Tree Farm in Cattaraugus County, NY.

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Managing A Private Forest

Profile Of A Landowner/Logger Partnership

DOUGLAS R. ALLEN

Hold on to your teeth!" Burly, bearded Jon Schor shouted over the revving Kawasaki "Mule" engine and the chill wind whistling through the Taconic Mountains. It was November, late in the afternoon.

Two seconds later we were barreling down a steep ravine, heading west from Mercer Mountain, in the township of Canaan, New York, toward Jon's home at Quailwood Too Farm.

Winding snowmobile trails took us through the farmstead's 300 acres of woods. One hundred forty of these acres are a certified Tree Farm, and are also part of a land conservation easement.

We skirted the edge of a pond in a large clearing, and continued on a farm road to Jon's house, passing stacks of firewood logs and the wood splitting operation. At that point we caught a glimpse of the long horns and shaggy coats of Scotch Highland cattle grazing in a nearby pasture.

For several hours we had been touring "The Kingdom," Jon's second, recently acquired woodlot on the other side of Mercer Mountain. This is a heavily forested, 700-acre chunk of land with a northeastern exposure, its name inspired by the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. Having a working forest of this scale is the realization of one of Jon's lifelong dreams.

Just before our rapid descent, he and I had stopped to take in the view near the crest of the mountain, which reaches 1,808 feet in elevation. Higher ridges of the Taconics stretched out behind us, roughly on a north-south axis straddling the NY/MA border. We were situated a few miles north and west of Harvey Mountain, which, with its 2,065-foot summit on the state line, is the highest elevation in Columbia County. "This is why I live here," Jon said, reverently.

Some of the prettiest countryside on the planet surrounded us. Forested land spread in all directions. Our view to the

west was breathtaking, even in fading autumn colors. It was one of those vistas that inspire people to make art, or put down roots in the Hudson Valley. Cascading ridges of the wooded, glacially carved hills descended into the distance. The eye drifted easily over the invisible Hudson River to the Catskill Mountain peaks on the horizon. To the northwest, twenty-five miles as the crow flies, we had a clear look at the distinctive skyline of downtown Albany, the state capital.

Mike Mulligan, regional NYS Forester, estimates that 60-65% of the entire county is wooded. He adds an interesting statistic for comparison, which is that 10% or less of the same land was wooded at the beginning of the 20th century, making a strong case for managing these renewable resources wisely.

That November afternoon Jon had been showing off some of the logging being done by Jim Winter, his partner in managing the 1,000 acres of woods.

I hadn't met Jim yet, but his work spoke for itself. Felled trees not yet limbed and

topped showed his skills at reading a tree and using a chainsaw. Each mature red oak had been taken down with superb directional felling that left almost no visible damage to surrounding trees. Where he had done the limbing and removed the logs, he had cleanly sawed off the splintered hinges, leaving smooth wooden "tabletop" stumps a few inches off the ground.

On our way into this side of the mountain, we had passed Jim's Timberjack 230A forwarder loaded with oak sawlogs. This big green machine is a major reason why the logging roads were remarkably clean, even with a timber cut still in progress.

Jim uses a grapple skidder, a John Deere 548E, to create mini landings, or "decks," where he stacks the full-length logs after he has taken down selected trees. Putting sawlogs and firewood logs in separate decks begins the sorting process. He uses skid trails to avoid packing down any more soil than necessary, and spreads some of the slash and



Kawasaki Mule on the brand new woods road. Jon Schor, landowner, is behind wheel, Jim Winter, the logger and road builder is standing to the right, and Jason Falkner, a farm employee, on the left.

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Kawasaki Mule on the brand new woods road. Jon Schor, landowner, is behind wheel, Jim Winter, the logger and road builder is standing to the right, and Jason Falkner, a farm employee, on the left.

Managing a Private Forest (continued)

They're planning for a total of five access routes into the mountainside, but at this point have just two in working condition. Tucker and Bob, two of Jon's employees, were helping put the finishing touches on the first road on that day in August. They were bringing in dump truck loads of shale, dumping 5½ tons a trip where Jim had scraped off the thin layer of mountain dirt and removed interfering stones. Jim then spread the shale with the dozer, shaping it for drainage with a slight crown or slope here and there, and back-blading it smoothly.

Besides needing a solid road to the landing, keeping up appearances, in the sense of being a good neighbor, is a point of personal and professional pride on this job. The shale was first-rate material, and as I watched the road grow, curving into the trees, it took on the appearance of a fine driveway for a substantial country property like the estates on the other side of the mountain.

The road building itself was a terrific work of synergy. The source of the shale was a hillside right next to 200-plus cords of firewood logs, at Jim's homestead, in nearby Austerlitz. Tucker and Bob, using Jim's backhoe and loader, were clawing out the crumbly shale and loading up Jon's enormous farm dump truck, then hauling it several miles over the mountain to the access road. So, at the same time as the road was beginning to materialize, a level

building site was emerging on Jim's property — for a future equipment barn and workshop for Jim Winter, Timber Harvesting, Inc. A really neat enterprise, all round.

"I always like to leave things a little better than I found them," Jon remarked that day, watching Jim bulldozing the new road. At this point they're really just getting started on this whole venture, and judging from the quality of the access road, they're setting very high standards.

As partners, the two men are committed to intelligent silviculture. They're managing the woods for commercial products, but they're intent on keeping and enhancing the healthy diversity of the forest. They see themselves as responsible for leaving the land improved and accessible to future generations — for wildlife, esthetics, and recreation, as well as for sustainable harvesting.

One of their motivations is to save this side of the mountain from development. In dramatic contrast to the wildness of Jon's land, with its population of black bear, mink, fisher, whitetail deer, beaver, and occasional moose, the other side of Mercer Mountain is an array of expensive houses and mini-estates carved into the slopes.

The contrast points up tensions that exist nationwide. How do we preserve the beauties of the land and still live on it, and how do we use natural resources without

using them up? Jon is concerned with local development, to the degree that he's investigating the possibility of donating the larger woodlot to the state, to keep it a diverse, multiple use forest.

While the two partners share an overall vision, they have different perspectives, regarding money, for example. Jon's outlook is philosophical. "Managing a forest is really profitable only if you love the woods," he said to me. "I think you have to love the woods more than you want to make a lot of money. If you just break even financially but have an ingrained love of the woods, and can see the forest flourishing as you work, the fringe benefits are fabulous." But these benefits are not money in the bank.

On the other hand, timber harvesting is a tangible, everyday living for Jim Winter. He and Jen are raising three children, and establishing a homestead. They have the immediate pressures of paying the mortgage and paying off the equipment and keeping it maintained. While his working partnership with Jon is a primary focus, Jim's work includes contracting with other clients, and tending to these other logging jobs keeps him busier than he would like to be.

But actually enjoying what they do is among the highest priorities for both men. When Jon took me on the raucous woods ride on his "Mule" last fall, he was exclaiming with enthusiasm the whole time about different aspects of managing his woodlots. In a way, he's living a boyhood dream.

For Jim, who earns his living from them, the woods are also a great source of pleasure and recreation. He keeps his timber harvesting schedule flexible, and he'll even put it on hold, if necessary, to accommodate the bow, rifle, and black powder seasons for whitetail deer.

He cheerfully describes himself as "a deer-hunting fanatic" who has tracked trophy bucks for years in the Taconic Range, at times using motion-detecting cameras set up in likely browsing areas. He's also a devotee of hunting the wild turkey, and factors that into his work schedule. The woods are in his blood, and it's easy to sense a parallel between his deep respect for a trophy animal and his

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admiration for a majestic red oak.

Jim is turning forty this year, and has “been in the woods” for about twenty-eight of those years, hunting and timbering. His work with chainsaws has a nostalgic side to it because Jim has memories of his own father clearing a homestead in Connecticut by hand, using a bow saw.

Jim offers “good, old-fashioned service.” From his perspective, each woodlot he works in has a unique biology, topography, and geology, and every forest owner is different. Each owner has different esthetic and business interests. Every harvesting job is customized with these variables in mind.

“I see myself as a craftsman,” Jim told me. “If I were making furniture, each piece would be carefully planned and meticulously crafted. On a larger scale, every piece of work I take on is customized for special purposes and effects.”

A Husqvarna 372XP is his primary saw, for felling and bucking. “Years ago we used bigger saws,” Jim recalls, “but saws have gotten a lot better, and over time we’ve become more sophisticated in taking trees down. I can do most of the harvesting I need to, with a two-foot bar on this saw.” On the other hand, a Husqvarna 246 gives him lightweight power and speed for limbing.

Using tax maps and survey maps, Jon and Jim plan their sawlog harvest by geographic areas, so-many acres this year from this section, and so-many acres from that section, depending on the health and maturity of particular stands, and taking market conditions into account. Under consideration as a possible investment for next year is Geographic Information Systems (GIS) computer mapping software.

At this juncture, the other crucial aspect of their operation is the working partnership between Jim and Jennifer. When the children are in school, Jen does the timber cruising with Jim, to select and estimate the value of the standing trees. Making notes and doing the numbers in the woods speeds up the process, plus they enjoy being in the woods together. When possible, she helps Jim with grading and scaling. A real “power behind the forwarder,” Jen also manages the business connections by telephone, making

arrangements with buyers and truckers.

A lot of planning and preparation went into the first year of operations, and they’re really just getting underway in terms of actual harvesting. In 2001, they did a 40-acre cut on the tree farm. They took about 30% of the harvestable timber, and left crop trees, some of which were 24 inches in diameter, for future seeding. Jim’s estimate for this kind of cut is that they’ll be able to return in ten, possibly eight years, and take another harvest from the same tract.

In 2002 they did another 40-acre cut on the farm woodlot. The only cut in the Kingdom so far is the one I saw in November, which was 30 acres, in the vicinity of the now-completed access road. In the fall of 2002, Jim is finishing a timber harvesting job for another client on a woodlot that, amazingly, abuts Jon’s property at the second access road into their part of the mountain. Call it more synergy, or a combination of good planning and good karma, but they’re sustainably harvesting their way into the Kingdom!

In years past, when he was in his twenties and doing production logging, Jim single-handedly cut a million board feet a year. But recently he has been harvesting fewer trees, and delivering more fully rounded services to landowners. The trees are generally of higher quality, and he now harvests between 300,000 and 400,000 board feet a year.

Having used brokers in the past, Jim now deals directly with Canadian sawmills for most sales. They’ve established an agreement on scaling and grading standards, and after a sawmill truck has delivered a load of lumber to, say, Connecticut, it’s very convenient and cost effective for the driver to pick up a “back-haul” of logs from one of Jim’s landings in the Taconics and take it to the mill in Canada.

The current poor pulpwood market doesn’t affect their operations, because their roundwood harvest consists of firewood logs, their second major wood product. Jon was selling firewood a year ago by word-of-mouth, and this year he’s stepping up that part of the business by purchasing a firewood processor. He’s starting with a Palax 600 Combi that his men can take into the woods with a three-

point-hitch tractor. Jason, a young man who’s another of the farm employees, helps Tucker and Bob with the firewood splitting and delivery.

Jim Winter has his own rapidly growing supply of firewood, and envisions a warehouse operation someday, to keep the split hardwood dry. Another interesting idea is to bring in a portable sawmill this winter, and mill some of their own lumber. (While that might require more than twenty-four hours in a day, the three kids are growing fast.)

Because Jon owns the land, he and Jim have certain luxuries — for example, the choice to stop cutting a certain species until the market improves. This also buys them time for “extras,” that a commercial contracting operation couldn’t afford, like doing an esthetic cut for a view on “The Overlook,” a spot high in the farm woods with a spectacular view. This also gives them the latitude and incentive to do a premium quality job on the roads, the landings, the stumps, the tops, and the firewood harvest.

Like a long novel, this whole partnership is a “work in progress.” It’s all becoming more exciting for both landowner and logger as more work is accomplished. Jon is having the time of his life. And Jim and Jen and their lively “potential logging crew” of kids are embarking on a great adventure on this beautiful mountain that’s right next door — it might not be romantic poetry, exactly, but then again, maybe it is. 

Douglas R. Allen is a freelance writer from Chatham, NY, coauthor of Shaker Furniture Makers (University Press of New England, 1989). Exploring the world of timber harvesting in eastern New York has inspired him to begin searching for a woodlot of his own.

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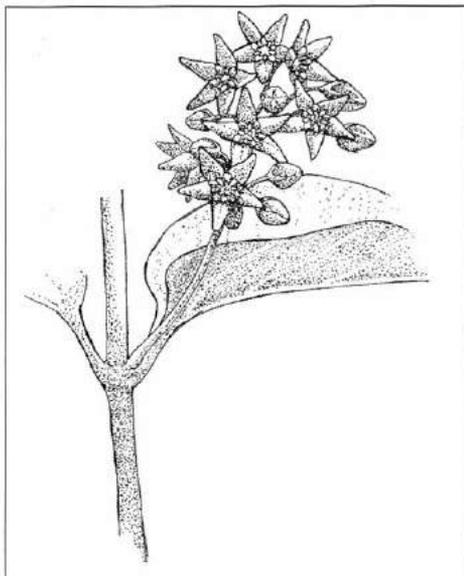
The Swallow-worts

European or pale swallow-wort and Black swallow-wort

FRAN LAWLOR

Swallow-worts, European and Black, are twining vines of the milkweed family. They are herbaceous, non-woody perennials that invade natural areas, forest lands and perennial crops such as Christmas trees. They have been attracting increasing attention in recent decades as aggressive invaders of these habitats. The swallow-worts tolerate a wide range of light and moisture conditions and they are capable of forming large, dense, tangled stands especially in drier soils. These two non native invasives are not as widely known as a number of other invasive plants such as purple loosestrife or buckthorn, but to those afflicted (see sidebar), swallow-worts are formidable management problems. Their North American ranges are steadily increasing.

Like other milkweeds, these species contain toxic substances, cardiac glycosides, that make them unsuitable for forage. Native herbivores such as deer do not browse them, preferring the native plants to which they are adapted. The lack



Small flowers in loose clusters along the stem at the leaf axils bloom from May through mid to late summer. © Kate Woodle

of herbivore controls and of diseases contributes to the ability of the swallow-worts to dominate areas they invade. The preferential grazing of native species compounded with aggressive reproduction and growth of the swallow-worts seriously compromises the ability of the native plant communities to compete and to regenerate. Once swallow-wort establishes in an area, the numerous wind-borne seeds readily spread the plant locally and over distances. This constant seed pressure helps both species dominate, even under a wooded canopy. Early research suggests that pale swallow-wort can manipulate native arbuscular micorrhizal fungus in the soil, changing the soil ecology. Also, monarch butterflies will lay eggs on swallow-wort, but the larvae do not survive.

Forest owners in susceptible areas of New York express concern that pale swallow-wort is affecting forest regeneration. The problem appears to be worst in shallow soils over limestone bedrock such as limestone quarries in Onondaga County or lime woods of Henderson Shores, Jefferson County, where hundreds of acres of forest floor are covered by pale swallow-wort which also climbs into young trees.

Pale swallow-wort, native to the Ukraine and southwestern Russia and first recorded in 1889 in Toronto Junction, Ontario, has spread throughout the lower Great Lakes basin, favoring lime derived soils (New York, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Indiana, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Michigan, Wisconsin, Missouri, Ontario and Quebec). Black swallow-wort is native in Europe in western parts of the Mediterranean. Black swallow-wort, first recorded in 1854 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has spread throughout lower New England and the lower Hudson Valley into New York, Michigan, Ohio, Rhode Island, Vermont, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Missouri, Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, New

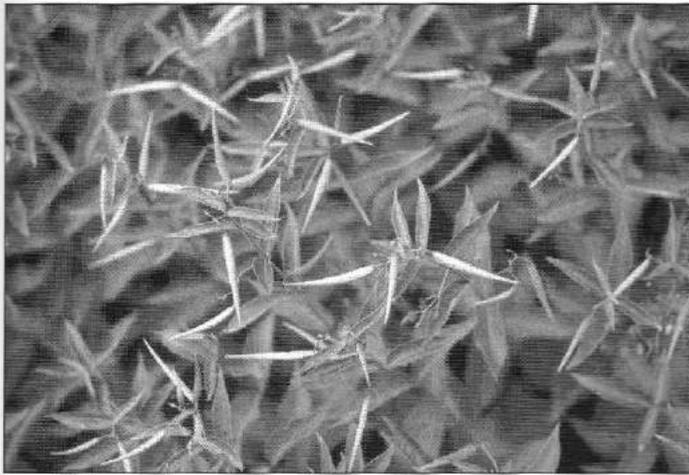


The milkweed-like seeds disperse in late summer through the fall.

Jersey, New Hampshire, Indiana, Wisconsin, Kansas, Kentucky, Nebraska, California, Minnesota, Ontario and Quebec. Black swallow-wort is associated with limestone soils but also in acidic, granite based situations. These are not weeds of turf or annual row crops, although pale swallow-wort has been found in no-till corn fields in central New York.

The Plant

Swallow-wort's twining vine growth habit is distinctive. The small slender pods (2-2.5 inches) are a useful, almost year round, identification characteristic. The smooth, glossy, opposite leaves (2 to 4 inches long by 2 to 2 3/4 inches wide) are ovate with pointed tips. The small, 5 lobed flowers are in loose clusters in the leaf axils. Pale swallow-wort has yellow-maroon to maroon flowers. Black swallow-wort has very dark, almost black flowers. In open areas, tangled growths of the plant grow two to three or more feet tall. With the support of shrubs and young trees, the vines may reach 6-8 or more feet, in thickets, young woods and forest edges, twining in ropes around each other and into branches of trees and shrubs (see picture). Vines and split pods



The fruits are a slender pod, a distinctive feature in mid to late summer.

persist throughout winter, sometimes for a few years. New growth emerges around early May, flower buds appear mid to late May. Once flowering begins, elongating vines begin twining around each other. In open areas the tangled mass of growth has earned pale swallow-wort the less flattering name dog-strangling vine in Canada. Flowering is through June into July. Pods of the swallow-worts are distinctive, often in pairs, and begin to form in late June to early July. Fruit production is directly related to light levels. Thick infestations in full sun can produce 2,000 seeds per square meter. These seeds are polyembryonic, 1 to 4 embryos per seed, greatly increasing each seed's establishment potential. Dispersal begins in late July to early August in open areas and continues throughout late summer and fall.

Control

Gardeners, farmers, wildlife managers, and conservationists attest to the aggressiveness of the plants and their resistance to control efforts. Prevention is the very best control (see *One Man's Battle with Invasives* – New York Forest Owner, March/April 2003). The tenacious root system resists pulling and must be dug out. Buds on the root crown readily resprout after mowing, grazing or early frost damage, with several buds in reserve for future top destruction events. That these species are not weeds of annual crop systems indicate the level of effort necessary for control. A herbicide comparison study shows good control using foliar applications of Garlon 4 (triclopyr) and somewhat less, but good

control using Round-up (glyphosate). Follow-up treatments will be necessary for several years to kill survivors and new seedlings. Where infestation history is short, recovery could be spontaneous. In old infestations a rehabilitation plan will be important.

What You Can Do To Help

Researchers in Canada and northeastern U.S. are studying why swallow-worts are so successful, as well as looking for biological control agents from Europe and Russia. Researchers need to know the extent of the infestation in North America to develop a base line to monitor spread and to measure control success.

Information from land owners and land managers is essential to understanding the scope of these invasions. If you know of an infestation, please help. Send informa-

tion about the specific location (Lat/long or GPS points would be nice) including road or other landmark, town, county and state. The surface area covered (acres), habitat type, soil type, history of infestation, if known, all help to understand the nature and scope of the infestations. In order to verify the identity of the plant, send plant material. At the very least a mature pod with the fruit stem is needed. If possible, an entire pressed plant including (roots and) flowers and/or fruits would be best. Include information about the date of collection and the specific information requested above. Information without some plant material cannot be used, so please take the time to put at least a pod in the envelope. Send the information to:

Toni DiTommaso
Dept. of Crop and Soil Sciences
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Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14853 ▲

Fran Lawlor is the Swallow-wort Management Coordinator for The Nature Conservancy, Central and Western New York Chapter.

Personal Experience with the Swallow-wort

My name is Andrew Fowler and I manage a Christmas tree farm and nursery to the southeast of Rochester, in Monroe County, NY. We have 62 acres, of which about half is in plantation, and the rest is in woods, pond, swamp and wooded pasture. I first noticed black swallow-wort about 7 years ago, but paid little attention to it at that time; it was just another weed. It was when I was mowing a trail through a wooded slope one fall that I realized that this was no ordinary weed. We have several trails through the woods that are maintained by annual mowing. This particular trail runs upslope from a field of Douglas fir through a wood of black locust and white spruce to the top of a hill. When the time came to mow this trail, I noticed that the entire trail and surrounding woods was a mass of swallow-wort 6 or 7 feet tall, clambering over the undergrowth and up the trees, forming a tangled monoculture, that quickly clogged the mower and sent clouds of seeds floating off into the surrounding woods. I was amazed at how fast this weed had become dominant.

I soon began to notice the plant in other areas. It was all over the Christmas tree plantation in the herbicide-controlled strips and in the grassy aisles between the trees. It was in the heavy grass along the edges of the plantation. It was forming dense stands in the shade of the woods, crowding out everything else. I began efforts at controlling it by spraying herbicides, but nothing seemed to kill it. In fact, I believe that the application of herbicides actually gave it a competitive edge by killing off competition, as I had noticed it growing in the cleared strips along the tree rows.

I don't know when the plant first arrived, but within 3 or 4 years of my noticing it, it has spread to every corner of the farm, in spite of my control efforts. It regularly shows up in my garden, where it is immediately dug out. While I have not been able to eradicate it, I have found that preventing flowering by mowing or herbicide treatment, will slow, but not stop, its spread. I now look for the plant whenever I visit parks and woods, and have found it thriving in every park and wood around Monroe County. I don't believe that any county efforts are underway to control it. In fact I don't think that many people are even aware of its existence. I believe that swallow-wort is a very serious threat to ecosystem, more so than the showy purple loosestrife, which gets the publicity, because swallow-wort can apparently thrive in just about any conditions.

The Pitted Ambrosia Beetle

DOUGLAS C. ALLEN

Historically, this insect has been of interest to forest owners and foresters in the northeast, because of the extensive mortality it occasionally causes to sugar maple seedlings. It was first reported from New York in 1882 when extensive damage to maple reproduction was noted in Lewis County. Since then significant seedling mortality has been reported periodically from infestations in Wisconsin, Ontario and Quebec.

The pitted ambrosia beetle certainly is not a serious overall threat to sugar maple, but the occurrence of seedling mortality can be alarming. This is especially so because, even though affected seedlings are easy to spot, pitted ambrosia beetle galleries are difficult to find; therefore, the cause of seedling death is not easily determined.

This beetle belongs to a small group within the bark beetle family that "cultivates" its own food on the walls of galleries it excavates in the host plant (see *Forest Owner* July/Aug. 1995). Most typical bark beetles feed both as adults and immatures on inner bark. The reddish-brown to black adults are approximately 1/8" long and cylindrical.

The two most common host plants are sugar maple and cultivated rhododendrons. It has been reared from a variety of other trees and small shrubs, however, including seedlings of dogwood, sassafras, hornbeam, and elm and stems of shrubs such as hazel, huckleberry, blueberry, and azaleas.

Beetle damage occurs to maple seedlings two to four feet tall and 1/8" to 1/2" in diameter at ground level. The beetle usually penetrates the base of a seedling in a zone between loose leaves on the surface of litter and the more compacted older litter that rests on mineral soil. The first evidence of an infestation is the appearance of

seedlings with wilted, discolored foliage. By the time the beetles have finished their work, usually in late August or early September, the shriveled leaves turn brown (Fig. 1).

Removing the loose litter at the base of an infested seedling usually reveals a small pile of wood chips (Fig. 2) (called "frass," a mixture of tiny wood particles and fecal matter) adjacent to a small hole in the seedling (Fig. 3), usually at ground line. Closer examination of this entrance hole discloses a dark stain and, when the bark is removed, a gallery that circles the base of the seedling and eventually spirals up or down the stem just beneath the bark (Fig. 4). The male beetle scoops out small niches or cradles along the sides of this spiral gallery. As it excavates the gallery it deposits spores of a fungus on the gallery wall and on the walls of each cradle. A few days later the female enters the main gallery



Figure 1. Sugar maple seedling killed by the pitted ambrosia beetle.

and embeds one egg in each cradle. She uses pieces of the developing fungus to close off the opening to the main gallery. By the time the larva hatches from the egg, it is encased in fungus. This serves as its sole source of food and is called "ambrosia."

The life cycle of the pitted ambrosia beetle is characterized by a single



Figure 2. The base of an infested sugar maple seedling (A). Note small pile of light colored frass just beneath the litter (B).

HOW TO: *Treat Reactions to Poison Ivy*



Figure 3. This infested maple seedling has been removed from the soil to expose the beetle's entrance hole at ground line (A).

generation each year. Adults overwinter in the gallery or beneath litter adjacent to the seedling from which they emerged. Eggs are deposited in July and August. ▲

This is the 69th in the series of articles contributed by Dr. Allen, Professor of Entomology at SUNY-ESF. It is possible to download this collection from the NYS DEC Web page at: <http://www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dlf/privland/forprot/health/nyfo/index.html>.

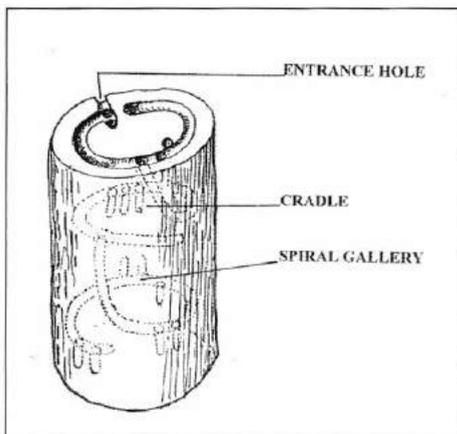


Figure 4. Diagram of the pitted ambrosia beetle's spiral gallery showing the entrance hole and a number of cradles. In this example, the gallery spirals downward.

For individuals who work out in the field, encounters with poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac are an unfortunate and often unavoidable part of the job.

To cope with the effects of these plants, some foresters and other outdoor workers often rely on a host of home remedies ranging from bleach to jewelweed juice to battle the rash, blisters, and infamous itch. However, the effectiveness of these folk therapies is open to debate.

A better course of action, say both medical researchers and experienced forestry and other outdoor workers, is to try to limit direct contact with these offending plants and following the appropriate course of action if you find you've been exposed.

Of course, as Victor L. Ford, CF, Forest Research Center Leader at MeadWestvaco's Appalachian Forest Research Center, acknowledges, "avoiding contact with poison ivy is easier said than done," but there are some preventative measures foresters and other outdoor workers can take.

The most obvious of these is learning to identify the plants. Each of the three has defining characteristics that it pays to commit to memory. Beyond that, experts recommend dressing properly when outside by wearing long sleeves and pants to cover exposed skin and, if burning any of these plants, avoid inhaling the burning oil and ash, which can cause severe reactions.

Ford also recommends that those working in the field wash skin and clothes with a combination of commercially available products.

"A product called Tecnu Oak 'n' Ivy Cleanser will wash the oils from your skin and clothes," says Ford. "Ivy Shield is a barrier that when applied to the skin works well in prevention, especially in conjunction with Tecnu. The key is to wash in cold water. The oils are less viscous and will not spread in cold water."

Experts agree that washing off clothes, as well as equipment, tools, and even pets, is important. If the urushiol—the chemical that causes the rash and itching—isn't washed off those objects or animals, just touching them could cause a reaction.

If it's too late for the above warnings, and you find you've already been exposed, time

is of the essence. According to FDA researchers, the earlier skin is cleansed, the greater the chance one has of removing urushiol before it gets attached to the skin.

When exposed, experts recommend that you stay outdoors until you complete the first two steps of the following guidelines:

- Cleanse exposed skin with generous amounts of isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol. (Don't return to the woods or yard the same day. Alcohol removes your skin's protection along with the urushiol, and any new contact will cause the urushiol to penetrate twice as fast.)
- Wash skin with water. (Water temperature does not matter; if you're outside, its likely only cold water will be available.)
- Take a regular shower with soap and warm water. Do not use soap before this point because it will tend to pick up some of the urushiol from the surface of the skin and move it around.

If skin isn't cleansed soon enough, or is so sensitive that cleansing doesn't help, then redness and swelling will typically appear in about 12—48 hours, and blisters and itching will soon follow.

There are a number of products to help dry up the oozing blisters, including baking soda, Aveeno (an oatmeal-based ointment), aluminum hydroxide gel, calamine, and zinc oxide. The FDA considers most over-the-counter treatments—commonly called "hydrocortisones"—to be safe and effective for temporary relief of itching associated with poison ivy, oak, and sumac. In addition, there are a host of products, such as Zanafel, Un-Itch Kit, Tecnu Oak 'n' Ivy Cleanser, CalaGel, and CortiCool, that are specifically designed to help relieve the itch.

For many, the old standbys like calamine lotion and cortisone work just fine. Ford and others also recommend that the application of salt water, either via a bath with added sea salt or a dip in the ocean, can also help soothe the itch.

Nevertheless, experts agree that the best way to avoid the effects of poison ivy, oak, and sumac is to avoid coming in contact with them in the first place. ▲

This article originally appeared in the July 2002 issue of "The Forestry Source" a publication of the Society of American Foresters. It is reprinted with their permission.



Spring Planting 2003

EDWARD AND WANDA PIESTRAK

Our annual spring planting took on a new twist this year with the purchase of a tree planter. Last spring we planted 2000 trees by hand so this year we were excited about the promised help of the planter.

This was my husband Ed's first winter of retirement. For a man who is constantly in motion the snow made it a LONG winter. But each time he was hampered and hemmed in with a snowfall, he would add to the order of trees to plant in the spring. And we had a LOT of snow this winter! By the time spring finally arrived, he had ordered over 8,000 trees.

We picked up our tree planter and our first 2,000 trees on Wednesday, March 26, 2003. It was cold and raining but our spirits were flying with excitement and anticipation. Thursday morning we headed to Lindley ready and eager! We put about 250 white pine and blue spruce in by hand that afternoon. We have a large parcel of "clear cut" (a more recent purchase; it borders land we already owned) and planting must be done by hand in there because the tractor and planter cannot maneuver around the tree stumps. The overabundant deer population has hampered natural rejuvenation in this area. (Yes, we are addressing that issue - but that is a different article).

Friday, after a few minor setbacks, we were up and ready to try out this new tree

planter. The field we worked in had a bit of a slope and since the ground was so wet (some of it still had snow cover!) we could only go "down hill" with the planter. Uphill had to be via the road. So at the bottom of the hill Ed would jump out of the planter and walk back up the rows, making sure each tree was securely in place. We were new to this process and acted a bit like doting parents. Saturday we finished planting the rest of the trees. We stood back and looked over the field with the pride that comes with accomplishment.

That was the easy part - 2,000 trees. Then came the marathon.

We went directly to the nursery at Saratoga Springs on Saturday, April 19, to pick up our order of 4,650 trees. While we were there, they allowed us to add 250 Australian pine. We left Saratoga Springs at 10 am, took the trees to Lindley, south of Corning, then drove home to Nanticoke, PA, south of Wilkes Barre, to prepare for Easter Sunday family gathering at our home.

Sunday by 4 pm we were back on the road headed for Lindley. We had trees to plant!

Monday was blustery and cold. In the first 25 rows we put in 2,270 +/- trees. Tuesday was even nastier - rain, wind and cold! We kept reminding ourselves and each other "the trees love it" even

though at times we could not sense any feeling in our fingertips. The next thirty rows held 2,860 +/- trees. These are white spruce and Norway spruce with about 250 each of white pine and Australian pine.

Wednesday it snowed. Actually, it was a sleety kind of snow with winds that chill your bones. We had two helpers that day so we planted white pine in the clear cut (by hand). Thursday we planted 57 red spruce plugs by hand in various locations. We put in many black cherry, which required being staked and tubed.

Friday morning we went to Steuben County Soil and Water Conservation District warehouse to pick up our ordered trees - we had only ordered 1,000 white pine and 100 red oak. But while we were there...we added 100 Norway spruce, 50 black cherry and 50 blue spruce.

All hardwoods must be tubed. Friday and Saturday we were blessed with the helping hands of Ed's son, Jeff. After planting the trees, we went back to tube. Jeff put in the stakes, Ed put on the tube and covered over the bottom with dirt (vole prevention measures) then I came along with the netting for the top and with

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a black permanent marker to date and mark the height of the tree.

Saturday morning I went back to Steuben County to see what they had left. I call my husband, "Bad news" I reported to him. "What?" he asked. "They have everything."

We ended up with a modest addition of about 300 trees consisting of blue spruce, sawtooth oak, Norway spruce and black cherry. There was a "mystery package" of 100 trees that no one could identify (bare root sticks). They are now tubed and we are waiting to see what they "grow up to be!" We found the Norway spruce to be vibrant, healthy, transplants and they stand tall and proud among the others.

It took us the better part of the following week to plant and tube these as they were all done by hand and spaced out in different areas of the clear cut. Wednesday, May 14 our 20 genetically enhanced black cherries arrived by UPS. We put them in various areas to see where they will do best. Our good neighbor, the Trautners, provided us with some sugar maple seedlings, which he retrieved from a sugar maple grove. They are now planted in the clear cut area.

We are now at the end of May and as the natural oaks peek out we are putting tubes on as many as we can to prevent deer browsing (did I mention that we ordered 550 four foot tubes?). Some

places it is hard, if not impossible to find one that has not been nibbled. Here and there we find one we think has just sprouted. We are amazed we found it "first."

Our official count is 9,360 trees planted. There were more, I'm sure, but you just can't count every single one when you're planting. And he's already talking about next spring! 🌲

Edward and Wanda Piestrak are members of the Western Finger Lakes chapter of NYFOA, New York Tree Farmer and MFO/COVERTS Volunteers.



Conifer and hardwood seedlings mixed in field area.

NYFOA Scholarship Fund

As of June 1, 2003, the NYFOA Endowed Scholarship Fund that is administered by the SUNY ESF College Foundation, Inc. has a fund balance of \$18,740.96

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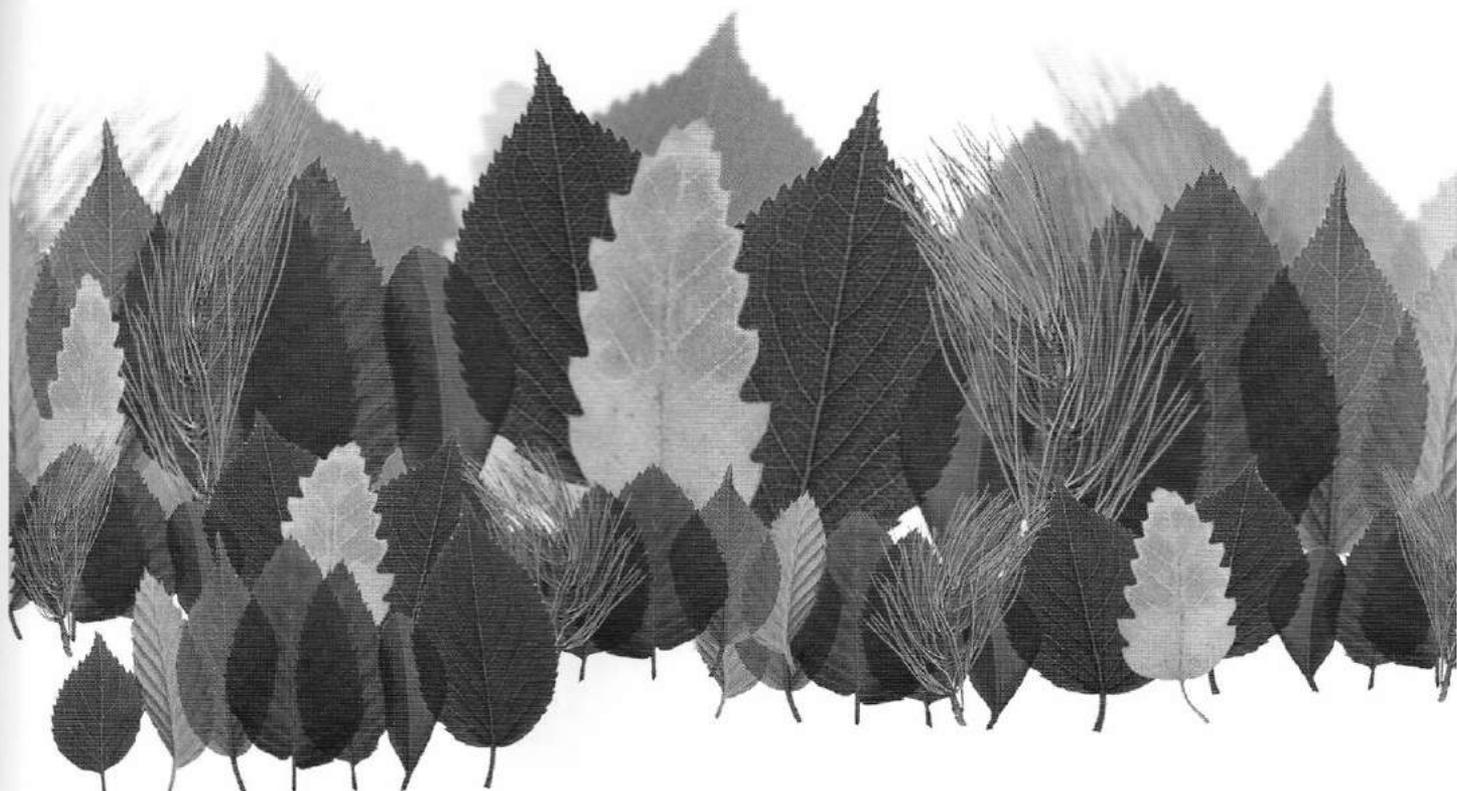
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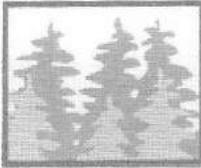
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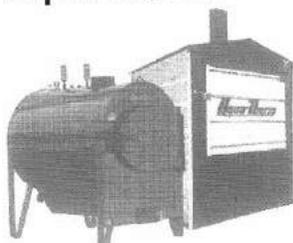
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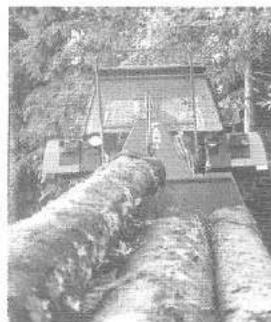
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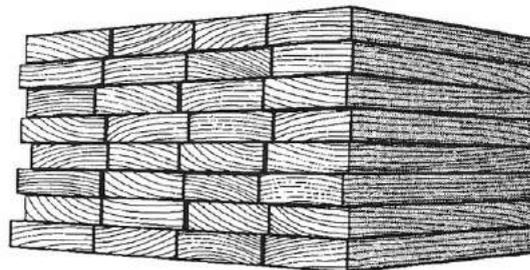
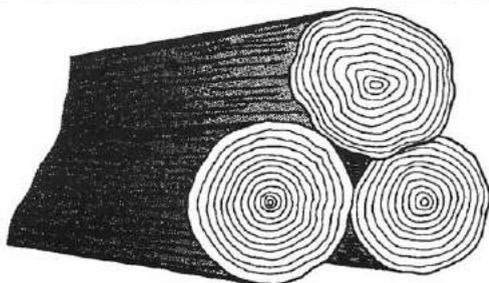
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