

# The Western Finger Lakes Forest Owner



Summer 2009

Volume 23, Number 2

## What I've Been Doing in My Woodlot

I am planning a timber harvest this year. Nobody has started cutting yet but it has already been an educational adventure.

I have done a lot of reading and have been to a number of seminars about how to conduct timber sales, and I have been working with a consulting forester for several years, so I thought I had a pretty good handle on how this would go. And while it has gone pretty smoothly all in all, there is certainly no substitute for the actual experience.

The first step, having agreed with my forester's suggestion that the woodlot would benefit from a commercial thinning, was to mark the trees to be thinned. Usually I like to be in the woods with the forester but that did not work out this time, so I told him to go ahead with the marking without me. I showed up the following weekend, and from 200 yards away it looked like there was a lot of blue paint

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## Sugar Bush Hollow

We sat on the porch at SBH April 25<sup>th</sup> and enjoyed 80 degree temps and a balmy breeze – much better than past ice storms and cold drizzles. Owner and former WFL chair Chuck Winship reported his best year to date with over 900 gallons of syrup from 2344 taps. Last year was more than 800 gallons and over 400 the year before that. The key to this yearly increase was a commercial thinning 7 years ago that allowed the remaining trees to grow larger crowns. You can get more from less. This year's weather was also cooperative.

Chuck has 26 miles of tubing on a vacuum system that doubles sap intake. He's aware of 4 bears in the area and many white tailed deer but it's mice that chew holes in the tubing and destroy the vacuum.

Did you know - Quebec produces 80% of the world's syrup followed by Vermont (5%) and NYS (4%). There are 1500 sugar houses in NYS with more than 100 taps. SBH is in the top 10% with over 2300 taps. One NYS producer has 17,000 taps. There's more calcium in a gallon of syrup than a gallon of milk. It takes .9 gallons of fuel oil to produce 1 gallon of syrup. Syrup production can yield \$1500/acre/year.

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page 3.*



*Dr. Lamboy speaking at the April 25<sup>th</sup> woods walk.*

## What I've Been Doing in My Woodlot

*Continued from cover.*

in the woods. When I got closer, it looked like even more. It is one thing to talk about removing 30% of the stand, and another to see what that means in terms of marked trees. I am sure it will be still another thing to see what it means in terms of stumps.

Then there was the boundary issue. Everything you read or hear about managing a woodlot says that the first order of business is to make sure your boundaries are clearly marked. I have tried to do that but I did not pay much attention to one line, where we have a neighbor we get along with well and who is good about keeping his lines marked.

It turns out the forester thought that neighbor's marks had drifted onto our side of the true line quite a bit. With a harvest in the near future, this is not something I could neglect any longer. We can move signs or paint blazes around, but we all need to agree on their location before the cutting starts as it is much harder to move stumps around. So after a few phone calls and an afternoon walking the line with the neighbor we got everything worked out amicably. As boundary issues go it was pretty simple, but it was one

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## ~ Upcoming Events ~

### Hunting, Fishing & Outdoors Days

**Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, 2009, 10:00AM to 4:00PM**

**NYSDEC Region 8, 6274 East Avon-Lima Road, Avon NY 14414**

In recognition of National Hunting and Fishing Day the Department of Environmental Conservation and Livingston County Sportsmen Federation will co-sponsor the 36<sup>th</sup> annual Hunting, Fishing and Outdoors Days at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Region 8 office in Avon, Livingston County.

Free public parking will be provided a mile north of the site off Oak Openings Road with a free shuttle service available.

This years' events and displays will include:

- Department of Environmental Conservation Displays and Information
- Exhibits and Demonstrations
- Art and Taxidermy Exhibits
- Outdoor and Environmental Displays
- Trap Shooting
- Archery and Shooting Ranges
- Canoe Demonstrations
- Fish and Wildlife Displays
- Food Tents
- Wildlife Artist, Painting and Carvings
- Over 75 Sportsmen Flea Market Dealers

In 1972, Congress established the National Hunting and Fishing Day to recognize the vital role that hunters and anglers play in wildlife conservation.

*Mark Gooding*

### Empire Farm Days

**August 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009**

**Rodman Lott & Sons Farm, 2973 Route 414, Seneca Falls NY 13148**

The Western Finger Lakes NYFOA will participate in New York State Empire Farm days. The Western Finger Lakes Chapter will have a booth with information about NYFOA and our chapter. It is an opportunity to educate regarding NYFOA and increase membership. Start time is 9AM each day. We will be located in the Cornell Cooperative Extension building. If any member is able to volunteer some time to assist in managing the booth please call Dale Schaefer at 585-367-2849 or Dick Starr at 585-377-4849, pockaa@aol.com.

For more information about Empire Farm Days call 585-526-5366, 877-697-7837 or [www.empirefarmdays.com](http://www.empirefarmdays.com).

*Anne Ross*

## ~ Upcoming Events ~

### WFL Fall Woodswalk at Highland Park

Saturday, October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009, 10AM to 1PM

Lamberton Conservatory, 171 Reservoir Ave, Rochester NY 14620

The group will start with a tour of the newly renovated Lamberton Conservatory which contains many rare and beautiful plants from around the world. We will then take a stroll through Highland Park to view portions of their plant and tree collections and see some trees from the NYS Big Tree Champion list. If time permits and the grounds are open, we will finish up at Warner Castle to view the Sunken Gardens.

Highland Park began in the 1880's as the dream of two civic-minded Rochester nurserymen, George Ellwanger and Patrick Barry. In 1888, the Rochester Park Commission dedicated Highland as the city's first public park. The commissioners chose Frederick Law Olmsted, landscape architect for Central Park in New York City, to design Highland Park. Olmsted shaped the land to create winding footpaths and carriage drives and planted the hillsides with hundreds of trees.

Attendees will gather at 10AM at the Lamberton Conservatory. There may be a small fee for entering the Lamberton Conservatory and the Sunken Gardens. You may also want to bring a snack and a drink as we will be on tour through the lunch hour. So please join us for a day in the park!

For more information contact Mark Gooding at 585-226-5466 or [mcgoodin@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:mcgoodin@gw.dec.state.ny.us)

Highland Park/Lamberton Conservatory website - [www.monroecounty.gov/parks-highland.php](http://www.monroecounty.gov/parks-highland.php)

Rochester Civic Garden Center website (links to Warner Castle site) - [www.rcgc.org](http://www.rcgc.org)

*Mark Gooding*

### WFL Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, July 29<sup>th</sup> at 7PM

A Frame Building, DEC Headquarters, 6274 Routes 5/20, Avon, N.Y.

All members are welcome.



Photo by Dick Starr

## Welcome New Members

Rich Aguirre  
*Conesus NY*

Brad Bliss  
*Canandaigua NY*

Keith Frum  
*Penn Yann NY*

Steve Hooek  
*West Henrietta NY*

Ron Merritt  
*Dresden NY*

## Sugar Bush Hollow

*Continued from cover.*

Then we heard about mycorrhizae fungi from Dr. Jana Lamboy, plant pathologist, from FLCC. These result from symbiosis between higher plants and fungi. The term means *Fungus Root* and 95% of all flowering plants form mycorrhizae. Many plants are dependent on mycorrhizal relationships and cannot live without them. The nitrogen fixing nodules on clover and pea roots are examples of this kind of relationship.

*Dick Starr*



## What I've Been Doing in My Woodlot

*Continued from cover.*

more thing to do that I had not expected to spend time on.

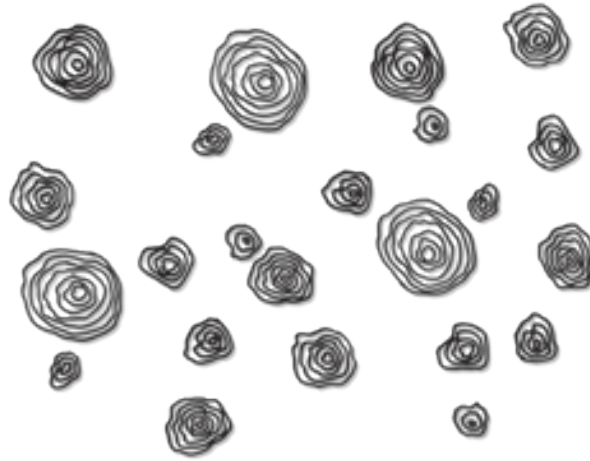
Then we came to the contract for the timber sale. Lots of books and web sites have sample contracts. All have a lot of elements in common but they differ in a variety of details. Once you put them side by side and start thinking about signing something, some of those details sound like they could be pretty important. For example, should there be a clause that roads and landings should be seeded after the job is finished? One sample contract had such a provision. My forester's standard contract does not – his claim is that most standard seed mixes won't grow well in the woods, areas will seed in naturally very quickly, and that erosion protection comes more from proper grading than from seeding.

He convinced me on that point, and on a number of similar concerns that I brought up. He has a lot more experience at this than I do, and I respect his judgment. The main lesson from all this is that your forester probably knows what is best, but he should be willing and able to explain everything to your satisfaction; after all, it is your woodlot, and you are

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## Basal Area

Trees that are dead, dying, forked, leaning or of low commercial value can probably be sent to the woodshed without consulting a forester. Leaving some standing dead trees can benefit the wildlife.



*Representation of a bird's eye view of basal area.*

Basal area (BA) is a measure of stand density or total cross sectional area of trees 4.5 feet above ground. It's generally given as square feet/acre. Visualize BA this way. Cordon off 1 acre of land and cut down all trees therein at 4.5 feet. The accompanying figure represents a bird's eye view of the remaining stumps. Calculate the exposed surface area of each stump and find their sum. This number is the BA for that acre.

Optimal BA can be affected by tree species, management goals and forest objectives but Mark Gooding, Senior DEC forester in Avon, says any BA value greater than 100 implies some kind of thinning is in order. If all the cull trees noted in paragraph 1 are removed and BA still exceeds 100, it may be time to get the opinion of a forester to determine the next step(s).

Luckily there are methods for estimating BA that don't involve clear cutting the trees. An angle gauge estimates BA by restricting one's vision while looking at trees. In the next issue I'll share how to construct an angle gauge that's simple to make, easy to use and will cost only a few minutes of your time.

*Dick Starr  
Mike Seager*



*"Make an Angle Gauge" in the next issue.*

# Tree Tags

For years I walked our 12 acres and visions of firewood and warm winter evenings danced before my eyes. Then I became a member of NYFOA. As I attended activities and met the talented people I gradually began

tree crop?

On a cool spring day in 2007 I opened a can of soup for lunch. As I rinsed off the lid it struck me, “Tree tag!” I had been struggling with how to “mark” a tree so I could monitor its growth



*A homemade tree tag.*

*Photo by Dick Starr.*

to realize the possibilities beyond firewood. Trees are a perennial garden not unlike my annual one of tomatoes, peppers and onions. If I don't tend and trim my vegetable garden the crop doesn't reach its potential and so it is with trees.

I now cruise our woods and see black cherry, sugar maple and 20 inch diameter at breast height (DBH) red oak and think, “There's value here beyond firewood.” We don't see a timber sale looming but what about the next owner? Some simple timber stand improvement not only gives me the coveted firewood but improves my tree crop as well. How does one monitor a

and here was the answer in my hand. Clearly the metal in contact with food products cannot rust and might be a way of tagging individual trees. Using a metal stamping kit I began imprinting numbers on lids (See the accompanying photo).

During the 2007 – 2008 dormant season I attached 130 numbered can lids to various trees using non rusting screws. I concentrated on ash, black cherry, maples and oaks having a 6 inch DBH and larger. So far I've learned:

1. The ash average 10.8” DBH and are 8.6% of tagged trees.
2. The cherry average 12.6” DBH

- and are 32.8% of tagged trees.
3. The maples average 11.3” DBH and are 38.3% of tagged trees.
4. The oaks average 16.0” DBH and are 20.3% of tagged trees.

My eventual goal is to tag every tree of potential timber value. This probably isn't practical for those with large holdings but it might be a way to monitor the potential timber trees or those of special interest.

My hope is to measure the diameter of each tagged tree once per year and back the screw out a bit during the visit.

*Dick Starr*

## What I've Been Doing in My Woodlot

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the one signing the contract.

The other big lesson regarding the contract came from my lawyer: it is better to have an adequate contract with somebody who wants to respect its terms than to have an ironclad contract with somebody who will try to take advantage of it, because there is no such thing as an ironclad contract. Here again I put my faith in my forester to know the loggers in the area and to do business only with those who have a track record of dealing in good faith and doing good work.

*Mike Seager*

## Suggested Reading

The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Penn State has just published its most recent addition to the *School of Forest Resources' Forest Finance Series*. "To Cut or Not to Cut: Tree Value and Deciding when to Harvest Timber" (Forest Finance #8) evaluates the various aspects of timber harvesting, including the manner in which timber value increases. Additionally, the publication reviews how to maximize financial returns when harvesting.



<http://rnnext.cas.psu.edu/PDFs/uh188.pdf>

More great publications are available for download at <http://rnnext.cas.psu.edu/publications.htm>

## Free Peaches

The inspiration for this piece came from an article by Lee Reich in the June/July 2008 issue of *Mother Earth News*.

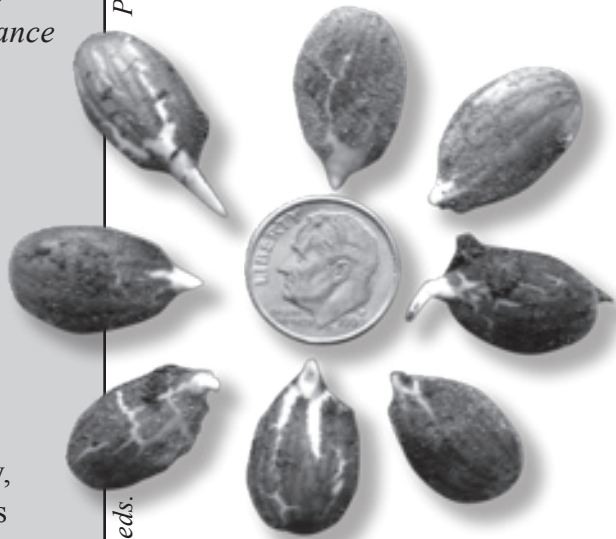


Photo by Dick Starr.

Peach seeds.

For many years I've known that seeds from a tasty apple will probably not produce a tree that gives more of the same tasty apples. I've assumed, in error it would seem, that the same was true of all fruit trees. Mr. Reich states that apricot, nectarine and peach seeds will produce a tree that gives fruit as yummy as the one that supplied the seeds. This chronicles my attempt at duplicating his technique with peaches.

It starts with eating lots of peaches and saving the pits from those that are palate pleasing. In my case, that was most of them. Selecting locally grown fruit will produce trees better acclimated to our climate.

Let the pits dry for a few weeks and then crack them open to extract the almond like seeds.

A bench vise works well for the cracking process. Place the seeds in a closed container and store them in the refrigerator in an area where they won't freeze. Germination takes 2-3 months so an eye to the calendar will have them ready for spring planting after frost danger.

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 I soaked 70 seeds overnight in room temperature water and then layered them with damp potting soil in a plastic container. This is called stratification. Place the container back in the refrigerator in an area where it won't freeze. This cooling in a damp environment apparently mimics what would happen in nature with no risk of critters eating the seeds.

I opened the container on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009 and found the seeds plump with white rootlets emerging from 44 of the seeds. I poked drainage holes in the bottom of 44 styrofoam cups and filled each with potting soil. Each rooted seed was then carefully placed in its own styrofoam cup of potting soil.

By May 1<sup>st</sup> all 44 had leaves showing. One actually emerged from its seed May 1<sup>st</sup> while others were as much as 4.5 inches tall. I assume this difference is explained by the different varieties of peaches I used. Mr. Reich says I can expect peaches from my trees in 3 to 5 years.

*Dick Starr*

## ~ Classified Ads ~

### Tree Tubes for Sale

*Proceeds benefit the WFL Chapter*

	Member Price	Non-Member Price
4 foot tube	\$3.80	\$4.30
4 foot tube with stake	4.25	4.75
5 foot tube	4.35	4.85
5 foot tube with stake	4.85	5.35

**Contact:**

Ron Reitz, *WFL Treasurer*  
6086 Canadice Hill Road, Springwater, NY 14560  
(585)367-2847 • rrrlpr@aol.com

### For Sale:

Heavy duty snatch block, side opening with swivel hook. \$45

Dale Schaefer 585-367-2849



*Classified ads are free to our members and available to non-members for by donation. Commercial advertising is also available. Both classified and commercial ads should pertain to forestry-related topics that are likely to be of interest to our members. For details of format and pricing contact our editor Steve Engard.*

## About Us

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*The Western Finger Lakes Forest Owner* is published for members of the Western Finger Lakes Chapter of the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) and is published 4 times per year. NYFOA was founded in 1963 and is organized to encourage the wise management of private woodland resources in New York State by promoting, protecting, representing and serving the interests of woodland owners. The Western Finger Lakes chapter was founded in 1988 and encompasses Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, and Yates counties.

Membership is open to anyone interested in understanding how to manage a woodlot. NYFOA membership can bring returns in the satisfaction of growing quality timber, stabilizing forest industries and markets, providing permanent jobs, increasing the value of your woods, enlarging areas of natural beauty across the state, and leaving behind a monument in living trees to bless the tomorrows for the boys and girls of today. For information on becoming an NYFOA member, contact Liana Gooding, NYFOA Secretary, NYFOA, P.O. Box 541, Lima, NY, 14485 or at 1-800-836-3566. Annual membership is \$30 for individuals and \$35 for families and includes: subscriptions to this newsletter; to the bimonthly NYFOA state-wide publication, *The New York Forest Owner*; attendance at chapter meetings; and at two statewide meetings. Membership at the Contributing level (\$50- \$100) and Supporting level (\$101 & up) are also offered. For more information visit [www.nyfoa.org](http://www.nyfoa.org).

Readers are encouraged to submit articles for publication in this newsletter. Articles should be mailed or e-mailed to: Richard Starr at the address to the left. Electronic submissions are preferred. Any letters should be sent to the Chair for consideration.



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*This panel is available for commercial advertising, for more info contact Steve Engard (contact info on page 11).*