

The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

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Just Say No to High-Grading –
See page 6 for full story.

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**THE NEW YORK
FOREST OWNERS
ASSOCIATION**

Volume 41, Number 6

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The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

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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: Trees in this stand are marked for a 12 inch diameter limit cut. Harvest will remove most of the sugar maple, cherry, oak and ash. The residual stand will be dominated by sweet birch and beech. For complete article on Forestry Practices to Avoid see page 6. Photograph courtesy of Peter Smallidge.

From The President

Happy Holidays!

With the wonderful Holiday season almost here, we all tend to look back over the past year at our successes and our unsuccesses and think about what we are going to do differently in 2004.

Well, as an organization of people who love the outdoors and especially the forests, we have lots to be thankful for. This year, as for the past 100 years, our state is covered by more forests. A century ago less than 25% of our state was forested and today that number is over 60% and headed higher. We have



new meaningful Timber Theft legislation ready to kick in next March, which will greatly discourage that awful crime and if it does occur, will

more fairly compensate the timber owners. We have resources available through the FLEP program to assist forest owners in the implementation of sustainable practices that assure the ongoing health and improvement of our forests for generations to come. The price of good hardwood timber remains strong and even the price of pulp has jumped in the past several months. Happy New Year!!

Earlier this fall one of my neighbors decided to harvest his 18 acres of woods which borders me in the far corner of my property. As I operated my log splitter on a sunny, chilly, late September day I heard the unmistakable whine of big chainsaws and the even growl of bigger skidders. I dropped my firewood in haste and made off for my West boundary. I found that the log buyer had marked the boundary with the customary three slashes in bright blue paint but virtually all of the markings were on trees on my side of the boundary. With greater haste I hiked up to where the loggers were cutting, where I fully expected to engage the ENEMY. (I believe in sustainable harvesting, but not by my neighbor's logger!!...in MY woods!)

What I encountered instead was a very decent pair of loggers and a friendly and businesslike timber buyer. When I mentioned my concern about the boundary marking they immediately stopped and walked down to the boundary with me. On the way down we talked about what they would cut, what the markets were, the new timber theft legislation, and their concern about doing the "right thing" as far as neighboring properties were concerned. We reviewed the boundaries and exchanged business cards in case further communication was required.

I believe in active management of my woodlands. I believe that a trained forester who represents my interests and assures sustainable cutting of my woodlots is very important to the woods and to my financial return, BUT in a not so perfect world it was a pleasure to meet three decent hardworking men in the woods, who despite not doing it by the book, shared with me a love of the woods and in "doing the right thing." From my amateur perspective they did a good job of harvesting, they stayed a good 50 feet from my boundary, the log roads have been touched up and the forest, though different, looks like it has big, beautiful, straight, valuable, hard maples, tulip poplars and hemlocks in its future.

I just obtained a simple but elegant small pine table that is estimated to be 193 years old. It is partially painted, it is light as a feather, and it has a look and a feel that only wood can. When was the last time you ran your hand softly across a beautiful piece of furniture or moulding? Oh, plastic is fine, but this NYFOAN is committed to buying as many wood presents this Christmas as I can for my family. They may or may not last for 193 years, but I have an idea that the adjective "treasured" is more likely to be used as a descriptor for wood than plastic. Have a great Holiday season and enjoy your woods this winter!!

—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*, woodwalks, chapter meetings, and two statewide meetings. Complete and mail this form:

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HOW TO: *Design a Windbreak*

MIKE KUHN

Windbreaks are often thought of as little more than a single row of trees or shrubs positioned to provide protection from the wind.

However, there is more to their design than immediately meets the eye.

The most important factors in wind-break design for wind protection are height, density, orientation, length, and species.

Height

Windbreaks reduce wind speeds up to 30 times their height downwind. In general, height increases with age and depends on tree species used. The effective height of a multirow windbreak is that of the tallest row. Large areas must have windbreaks spaced 10-20 feet apart for every foot of windbreak height in order to provide full protection (e.g., 30-foot tall windbreaks should be planted every 300 to 600 feet to effectively protect a large area).

Density

Windbreak density is the ratio of the solid proportion of the windbreak to the total area affected by the number of tree rows, branch and foliage density (determined by tree species), and tree spacing within rows.

All windbreaks (barring solid fences or walls) let some wind through. Dense windbreaks are likely to stop more wind; however, density is not always good. As wind is deflected up and over a windbreak, low pressure on the down-wind side draws wind back to the ground. This low pressure is stronger in dense windbreaks and reduces the amount of area protected.

Thus, letting some wind through reduces the low pressure and results in a larger protected area.

Windbreaks with 60-80 percent density give very good protection over a fairly small area like a farmstead, residential lot, or feedlot. A windbreak with a 40-60 percent density can protect a large area like a crop field. However, windbreak densities below 20 percent provide little wind reduction.

Orientation

Windbreaks should be oriented at right angles to the prevailing wind direction to protect the greatest land area. Remember that prevailing wind directions may vary between summer and winter. Use multiple-leg windbreaks in areas with variable-direction winds to give the most protection. In hilly areas, locate windbreaks just upwind of the hill crest for greatest benefit. Placing a windbreak on the crest will result in a small protected area because of extreme low pressure and turbulence created on the downwind and downhill side.

Length

Longer windbreaks protect more area. Wind tends to curve around the ends of a windbreak because of the low pressure effect mentioned above. Therefore, windbreaks should be long in relation to their height. A length of at least ten times the windbreak height is best.

Species


Trees and shrubs for windbreak planting

should be selected for hardiness, good form and foliage, fast growth, longevity, low maintenance needs, and pest resistance. Be sure to choose species that are suitable for your planting site and that fit your windbreak design.

Other Design Considerations

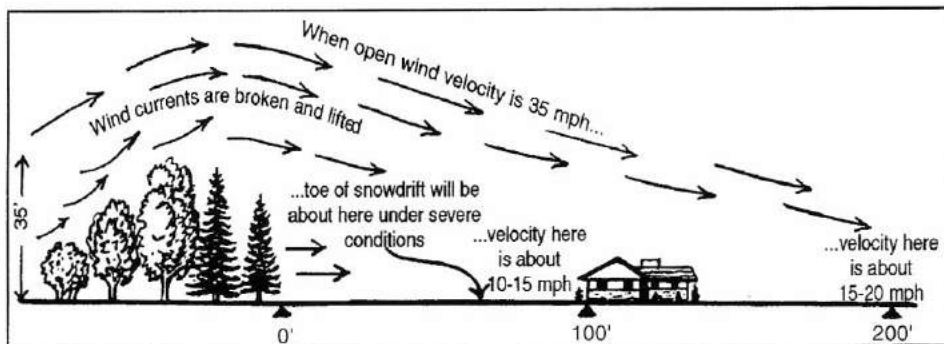
Windbreaks can be effective with few rows. Single-row windbreaks can be used where space is limited. These consist of an evergreen row for year-around protection, a single shrub row, or a densely branched deciduous tree row. Although deciduous trees lose their leaves in winter, they still can provide some wind and snow protection. Proper tree spacing and maintenance are very important in single-row windbreaks. Gaps cannot be allowed, because there are no trees in adjacent rows to fill them.

Another possibility for an area with limited space is a twin-row, high-density windbreak. This design uses two evergreen rows, for example: spruces (Norway, white, etc.), firs (balsam, fraser), Douglas-fir, or northern white cedar, planted close together, with a tree in one row filling a gap in the next row. This design fills in and becomes effective very quickly after planting and takes little space.

Using several different tree and shrub species in a windbreak decreases the likelihood of serious disease or insect problems. Wind protection can be improved by combining a row of low, dense shrubs; a row of medium-tall evergreens that retain foliage on their lower branches; and a row of tall deciduous or evergreen trees. 

Adapted from Windbreak Benefits and Design, by Mike Kuhns, a publication of the Utah State University Extension. For information, contact Mike Kuhns, Department of Forest Resources, College of Natural Resources, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322-5215; (435) 797-4056; fax (435) 797-4040; mikek@ext.usu.edu.

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



A dense windbreak provides good wind protection and snow drift control. Adapted from Montana State University Extension Bulletin 366.

Forestry Practices to Avoid:

Just Say NO To High-Grading

PETER J. SMALLIDGE & MICHAEL GREASON

Currently the prices paid for timber in New York woodlots are good and harvesting activity has increased during the last decade. However, what may surprise many forest and woodlot owners is that some forestry techniques can limit options for future benefits and enjoyment — both in the long run and short term. While well-planned timber harvesting can increase your benefits, “high-grading” and related practices should be avoided.

Cutting the best trees (those of highest value) and leaving the low value, often diseased or malformed trees, is too common. This type of forestry is called high-grading, where the highest grade (or value) trees are removed. By cutting only the largest and most valuable trees you remove those best suited to that site. The trees that are less well adapted remain as the

next forest and the seed source for future forests. The financial gain of high-grading exists only briefly, yet ownership objectives can be sacrificed for decades. A similar analogy from livestock is the farmer or stable manager who shoots the blue ribbon bull or winning race horse and uses the losers for breeding stock. The quality of the herd, just as the quality of the forest and woodlot, declines rapidly!

In addition to high-grading, similar practices exist with different names. High-grading is often disguised under the name of “diameter-limit cutting.” This is a practice that removes all trees above a certain minimum diameter. In some rare situations, diameter-limit cutting is appropriate — for example, if old pasture trees are shading the growth of young hardwood saplings. Often however, diameter-limit cutting re-

moves trees of commercial value (say above 12 or 14 inches in diameter) before these trees can attain a more valuable size and add seed and seedlings to the forest. Selective cutting is another technique where high-grading can occur. Selective cutting (generally not recommended) differs from the selection system of silviculture (a legitimate technique). Selective cutting, as commonly practiced, involves selecting the highest quality trees and cutting them. (Technical note: selective cutting by definition can include other activities such as improvement cuts.) The selection system involves someone professionally trained in silviculture to select trees from all age and size classes, both high and low quality to produce an uneven-aged forest. Diameter-limit cutting and selective cutting are often rationalized by arguing to remove the bigger trees so the smaller trees can grow. However, the smaller trees may be undesirable species, in poor form, or in poor health. By any name, high-grading degrades the value of the forest regardless of the “logic” used by foresters or loggers trying to make a quick buck.

Why does high-grading happen? A common cause for high-grading is greed to maximize immediate profits. Beginning in the early 1970s, demand for high-value timber increased and sawmills could pay more for certain species. Thus, markets for high-value trees grew stronger while markets for low value trees did not. Further, it costs about the same amount of money to cut and haul a \$10 tree as it does to cut and haul a \$300 tree of the same size. Another factor is that taxes on forest land not under the NYS 480-a Forest Tax Law can create financial



The tree on the left is marked for harvest, leaving the defective tree on the right. Both are sugar maple and of similar size, but the residual defective tree has a lower financial value, greater risk of mortality, and not the tree that most landowners would want to produce seed for the next forest.



High-grading typically results in bigger trees being removed and the smaller less fit trees being left behind.

hardships that encourage landowners to maximize immediate profits. The result is that more immediate profit is gained by cutting only the highest value trees, but left behind is a legacy of low quality trees and under-productive forests. This knowledge helps explain high-grading, but doesn't excuse it.

What are the consequences of high-grading – is it really that bad? One result is that the trees that are left behind won't grow as quickly as better quality trees, lengthening the time until the next harvest. In addition, the next harvest will remove the low quality trees previously left so the value at the next harvest will be reduced. If you magnify the practice of high-grading across a region, assuming the demand for wood products remains steady, then more acres must be harvested to meet the same demand. While timber

harvesting is not bad, accelerated harvesting is not in the best interest of our natural resources and conflicts with a growing demand by the public for accountability of natural resource management. As the value of the land for producing timber crops decreases, the incentive to subdivide and develop increases.

Although high-grading usually leaves a forest of tall trees behind, there are other hidden ecological costs. Because the healthiest trees with the fewest defects are removed, the overall health of the forest is reduced. The remaining trees may be more susceptible to the effects of insects, pathogens, strong winds or ice-storms and less able to recover after these disturbances occur. Often high-grading emphasizes cutting of a few species and leaves behind other species. This reduction in tree species diversity

can have negative consequences for wildlife that depended on the harvested species for food or shelter. Species such as red oak, sugar maple, and black cherry are economically valuable and produce seeds that are valued by wildlife. In any particular year, only one or a few species may produce an abundant crop of seeds. If those species were removed by high-grading, wildlife that used those seeds will need to find alternative food sources and that seed source may be permanently gone from the woodlot.

So what can you do to avoid high-grading? One step is to work with competent and professional loggers and foresters. When you select a new refrigerator or car you likely consider several features, including price, reputation, service after the sale, and other long-term benefits. You'll certainly go see what the refrigerator looks like. You should use at least these same criteria when you select your forester and logger. Ask for references, find out if the forester participates in continuing education programs and whether the logger has completed the "Trained Logger Certification" program, make a visit to forests or woodlots where they have worked, and know that the best price may not provide the best treatment for your land. The logger who out bids his competitors for a timber sale by a few percent may be more efficient or may not devote enough effort to ensure your property is left in good condition. Similarly the forester or logger who promises you maximum short-term profit likely doesn't have in mind the best interests for you and your land. The consequences of selecting an incompetent forester or logger will exist longer than a bad choice on a refrigerator.

Another step to avoid high-grading is to have a written management plan. Your management plan will state your objectives and help keep you on track. The harvesting schedule in your management plan will help you decide when harvesting is appropriate. Just because

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a forester or logger offers to cut your timber doesn't mean it's the best time for your interests. The value of trees increases greatly as trees get bigger, and it's probably a safe assumption that good markets will continue to exist for high quality trees (although markets fluctuate). You may be advised that the trees are "over-mature" or "need to be cut." Know that these labels are subjective and they are only accurate in the context of your ownership objectives.

Third, look for creative solutions to remove the low value trees at the same time the high value trees are harvested. A harvest that removes high-value and low-value trees provides financial benefits from the high- and low-value trees and improves the quality of the residual forest. One way is to have the forester mark and the logger skid the low value trees to the log landing. Then you can cut them yourself for firewood, or sell them to a firewood processor. This will require extra effort on the part of the logger and forester, which means you might not make as much money, but the benefits, including even greater profits, will exist a few years down the road.

Finally, get assistance from people focused on your interests to help you develop long-term objectives and management plans. Master Forest Owner Volunteers are forest owners trained through Cornell Cooperative Extension to provide nontechnical assistance to forest owners. They can help you think through your management objectives and provide sources of information. Also, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation public service foresters are available for free consultation and can provide technical expertise and guidance on forest management. Both of these groups of people can provide free, unbiased information and advice that will help you avoid some of the pitfalls of practicing short-sighted forestry. The New York Forest Owners Association and Catskill Forest Association are landowner groups dedicated to helping other landowners enjoy their forest land. Contact your county office




Damage to residual trees isn't unique to high-graded stands. Be sure your logger understands you interest in reducing or eliminating damage to trees that remain after logging.

of Cornell Cooperative Extension or the nearest DEC office for more information. The DEC and the Society of American Foresters maintain lists of foresters with certain credentials. These lists include people who have made certain investments in their professional development, but in no way do the lists assure competency. Links to the DEC forestry offices, the SAF Certified Forester program, and an article on how to select a forester are available on the Cornell University Forestry Extension web page (a copy of the article on selecting a forester also appears in the July/August issue of the *New York Forest Owner*, page 6).

What can you do if your woodlot was previously high-graded? In simple terms, you need to have a vision for what you want your forest to look like, and a planned set of actions to move you towards that goal. High-grading often happens incrementally, where the first entry removes the very best trees and months or a few years later the rest of the valuable trees are cut. Once you get started on correcting past exploitations, your actions, which should link directly to your ownership objectives, depend on what you have to work with in your forest. A lightly high-graded forest may need only some thinning around the best

trees and steps to ensure the forest can be effectively regenerated when the time comes. A heavily high-graded forest may no longer have the tree species you desire which will require you to create openings that you then plant to your desired species. The size of the openings and the species to plant will depend on the specifics of the site. A competent forester and your willingness to invest time and probably money are necessary to move a high-graded forest back to a sustainable forest.

For more articles on forest management, a virtual tour of sustainable forestry practices, and links to agencies and organizations to assist you, visit the Cornell University Forestry Extension web page at www.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/forestrypage. Have fun and enjoy your forest. 

Peter J. Smallidge is the New York State Extension Forester at Cornell University. He is also a NYFOA board member. Michael C. Greason is a Private Consulting Forester, Catskill, NY, a NYFOA member and retired as DEC Chief Bureau Private Land Services. This article is from the Series: "Looking Into Your Woodlot." More complete information is available from the authors, your county office of Cornell Cooperative Extension, or by contacting your local NYS Department of Environmental Conservation office for forestry assistance.

NYFOA SAC Recognizes NYS Tree Farmers

On July 12, 2003, more than 45 forest owners, Tree Farmers and friends attended a woods walk sponsored by the Southeast Adirondack Chapter (SAC) of NYFOA to recognize long-term tree farmers in the tri-county area of Saratoga, Warren, and Washington Counties. Also recognized at this event was this year's Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year, Jean Vetter of Chestertown.

Arthur and Kris Perryman hosted the event at their tree farm in Wevertown, in Warren County. The day began at 9:30 a.m. as John Hastings welcomed the group and then introduced Roy Esiason, the chairman of the SAC; Dennis Flynn of Fountain Forestry, who is the area chairman for the NYS Tree Farm System; and the hosts of the woods walk, Art and Kris Perryman. Art began by explaining his reasons for purchasing the property before leading the group through the procedures of a recent timber sale. During the woodswalk, Art stopped in several areas explaining to the group his philosophy on the timber harvest area. He said that prior to the timber sale he walked his

woods with both his forester and his logger while explaining to them his goals for his property. He felt it was important that they needed to "think as he did."

Later during the walk while standing at the base of a 24" white pine tree Art stated, "I am a tree hugger. I like to see big trees in my woodlot." However, he also stated the importance of a good forest management plan to grow good trees.


After the morning walk, Art led the group to his "look out" cabin, which overlooks Wevertown. While the group enjoyed the view, Dennis Flynn presented several Tree Farm awards.

Dennis first presented his predecessor Ron Cadieux, who recently retired as a service forester from the NYSDEC, with a plaque for being named Outstanding Tree Farm Inspector of the Year. Dennis then presented John Hastings and Steve Warne, also recent retirees as service foresters from the NYSDEC, each with a Tree Farm director's chair for their continued commitment to complete more than 10 reinspections a year. After presenting

the inspecting foresters with their awards, Dennis also awarded several Tree Farmers with a Certificate of Appreciation and a silver anniversary Tree Farm sign with a 25-year footer from the NYS Tree Farm System. This sign was to commemorate their participation in the Tree Farm program for 25 years or more.

Tree Farmers in attendance at the meeting were hosts Art and Kris Perryman of Wevertown with 27 years in the program, Alfred Najer Forest Trust of Chestertown with 44 years, John Rutledge of Queensbury with 46 years and Jean Vetter of Chestertown with 47 years. Tree Farmers who were unable to attend were John Allison of Corinth, who has 26 years in the program, Emma Albach Estates of Lake Luzerne with 26 years, Robert O'Connor of Saratoga with 26 years and Marie Heisler of Rock City Falls with 46 years.

Jean Vetter was also recognized for being named New York State Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year in 2003. Jean was presented with an engraved wooden plaque from the NYS Tree Farm System along with several gifts from the Stihl Cooperation. Kyle Cooper, the local Stihl dealer in Wevertown, was unable to attend, so Dennis presented Jean with a chain saw safety kit that contained a chain saw safety helmet, chaps, gloves, safety glasses, and a gear bag to hold the safety equipment. Jean was further surprised when Dennis pulled a new Stihl 290 chain saw from under a tarp and handed it to Jean's husband Fred.

For more information on the Tree Farm Program you can contact Dennis Flynn of Fountain Forestry and Area Tree Farm Chairman for Saratoga Warren and Washington counties at (518) 581-1055 or e-mail flynnstone@att.net, or Debbie Gill at the NY Forest Owners Association and NYS Tree Farm office 1-800-836-3566 or e-mail nytreefarm@hotmail.com. 



Dennis Flynn of Fountain Forestry and Area Tree Farm Chairman presents landowners Art and Kris Perryman with their Silver Anniversary sign.

Arranging a Timber Sale

BRIAN BULLARD

Introduction

Forest cover is the predominant type of natural vegetation in New York State. According to the 1993 USDA Forest Service inventory for New York, approximately 62% of the state is forested. The non-industrial private landowner owns about 85% of the forestland in New York. The industrial forestry sector owns about 8% of our forestlands. Obviously, if the mill owner is to provide a continued supply of raw material (logs) to his mill, he must aggressively pursue timber purchases from private landowners. Since most landowners purchase their property for a different purpose (recreation, permanent residence, farm, etc.) the idea of revenue from a timber sale seems very attractive.

Unfortunately, many landowners enter into a timber sale contract without fully understanding the value of the asset or the contractual controls needed for a landowner to be ultimately satisfied at the completion of the operation. The information provided herein can be used to guide a forest landowner toward the satisfaction that comes from the monetary, ecological and social rewards of performing good stewardship.

Demand

We have already established the fact that you hold the key to supply, so where does the demand come from?

Timber is most commonly purchased by procurement foresters that work for a sawmill, timber and veneer brokers working for themselves, and independent loggers. There is also another frontier of folks that have timber backgrounds and are primarily concerned with the purchase of forested property for harvest and resale as smaller acreage recreational property. In each case, these people have the interest of the mill or themselves at the heart of the timber purchase, not necessarily that

of the landowner. Purchasing timber or logs at the lowest possible price is their job. This is not to say that there aren't sawmills that can do a good job for you at a fair price. It's just important to know one's motivation before entering into a contract. It is your job to be knowledgeable about your resource.

Landownership Objectives

For some reason, many landowners don't consider their personal objectives for their property when someone is standing at their threshold with a check for \$10,000-\$20,000. Most people own their property for hunting, wildlife observation, hiking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, summer/winter retreat, full-time residence that offers all the above, and much more. Seldom, however, does the landowner consider how all of these uses are impacted by the sale of forest products. A management plan is the primary tool to express landownership goals and objectives. Timber harvests are specified at scheduled times in order to balance the owner's goals and objectives. A timber harvest should be a well planned event, not a hasty action in response to an offer to purchase timber.

Supply

If you are going to sell your house, you have it appraised. If you are going to sell your car or truck, you check book prices, car dealers or swap sheets for current market value. Many people spend countless hours and dollars to make sure that they get the best deal possible...except those people that sell timber. Only 10-15% of all timber sold statewide is handled by a forestry professional. Needless to say that many operations are conducted where the landowner probably didn't get the best deal possible.

A timber sale begins first by knowing your property boundaries. Whether by

survey or existing evidence (fencerows, etc.) you need to know what you own before you can sell it. A timber inventory is the next and most important step to a successful outcome. Knowing the number of trees by species, the volume they contain, and their current "fair-market" value per thousand boardfeet (MBF) is absolutely essential. When you pick-up the grocery ads you know what you are willing to pay for bread, milk, corn, etc. Likewise, the timber buyer knows his monetary limits for maple, ash, cherry and oak. The key is doing your research to know what timber values are currently and applying those values to the volume you possess. With this knowledge, you can make an informed decision based on the value of the offers at hand.

Timber values vary dramatically by species and are influenced by average tree size, quality, accessibility, and site conditions (wet, dry, steep, flat, etc.), to name a few. A telephone call to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation office, local consulting foresters, or Cooperative Extension, should result in answers to your questions about current timber prices. It is important to note that if you cannot get a straight answer as to the number of trees, species, volume and value/MBF from a would-be timber buyer, then you probably shouldn't make the deal.

Timber Sale Preparation

Now that you know what you own and how much it is worth, you can decide that a timber sale is in your best interest. The next step would be to mark the trees to be cut. For your protection, you should be certain that trees are marked at chest height *and* on the root collar. This provides additional evidence that a tree was to be harvested long after the tree is gone.

Each tree is tallied as marked so that you will have a 100% inventory of what

is being sold. The "fair-market" value can then be applied to derive value. It is our contention that competitive bidding brings the highest prices to a landowner for their timber. For sales with less than 10,000 boardfeet (bf), we recommend negotiating directly with one of several potential buyers, depending upon the species and dollar value. While 10,000 bf of black cherry would be relatively easy to sell, 10,000 bf of beech and hemlock would not.

When selling by bid, a bid prospectus is prepared which includes: a map showing where the property is located, the location of the timber on the property, access to the timber and log staging area(s), a timber volume estimate, a bid form, a letter which describes the terms and conditions of sale and the bid opening date. Upon opening of the bids, the high bidder is awarded the timber unless their bid does not meet or exceed the "fair-market" value. The landowner always reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

Upon selection of the buyer, a contract drawn from the seller's perspective is needed. The sale contract should describe the timber to be cut, the price and payment schedule, penalties for cutting unmarked trees, care and treatment of haul and skid roads during and after logging, erosion prevention measures, owner imposed conditions-no logging during hunting season, owner's right to suspend logging operations due to wet conditions or poor logging practices, amounts and proof of Liability and Worker's Compensation Insurance, and a cash bond to assure contract performance may be requested if held by an independent third party trusted by both buyer and seller.

Lastly, show a presence during logging. Inspect the woodlot at times when no logging is taking place or at safe distances from cutting and skidding operations. Meeting the loggers at the landing site is a good place to begin so that everyone knows you are there. This gives both of you the opportunity to review contract items that may have been forgotten if the timber is cut many months after contract signing.

The NYSDEC can assist with site inspections, general questions, and timber sale marking up to 25 acres per year per landowner. The landowner is then referred to the DEC's list of Cooperating Consulting Foresters to complete the sales process. Consulting Foresters, of course, can assist a landowner from start to finish. Most consultants do not charge a fee for an initial inspection and recommendations.

A timber sale which meets the landowner's objectives can be very rewarding as it aids in the growth and development of the woodlot, provides access for other activities, enhances wildlife habitat and provides an alternative income. All of these attributes (and many more) combined provide a landowner with a great sense of pride and accomplishment for having managed his or her woodlot in accordance with accepted forest stewardship guidelines and the knowledge that he or she knew the value of their timber at the time of sale. ▲

References

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New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Cooperating Consulting Forester Program.

Brian Bullard works for Forecon, Inc. which provides Forestry Consulting Services.

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A Better Logger?

COMPILED BY
MICHAEL J. BURNS AND BRENDAN KELLY

As many New York Forest Owners' Association, THRIFT (Tug Hill Resources Investment for Tomorrow) and, Catskill Forest Association members know, using a forester is a great way to help you plan for what you want from your forest. A forester can be your advocate as you assess options in a management plan. We often hear how a forester can help you get more for your timber if you decide to harvest and how they can ensure that the management plan focuses on what is left on the land, not just what is taken from it.

But, all the planning in the world and the highest bids can still not be a guarantee that the logger won't mess up the job. Of course, a good forester will keep tabs on your harvest and the logger, and so can you. Further, many reputable logger have references and even prior

job sites you can visit. Another tool that can help the landholder determine if the logger is acceptable is to see if the logger is registered with or has received a certificate from a logger certification program. In New York State, the program is the Trained Logger Certification (TLC) of New York Logger Training (NYLT), Incorporated.

New York Logger Training (NYLT) is a cooperative effort of timber harvesters, forest industry, government, educators, and foresters working together to deliver resources that will allow loggers to learn environmentally sound practices and improved skills, enabling a safer means to greater productivity, increased profitability, and a better quality of life.

NYLT was incorporated in 1994 as a non-profit organization, allowing it to function with a clear mission and focus, and making the program responsible for

its own financial viability. Public training grants have allowed them to subsidize the costs of several courses, and registration fees are designed to cover direct workshop expenses. Contributions from supporters and sponsors have allowed the program to continue for nearly 10 years.

The TLC program was developed to recognize loggers who complete a training schedule involving three core areas of knowledge and skills.

During the three-year validation period of TLC, these individuals make a commitment to continuing their education in order to improve themselves and maintain their TLC status. TLC is a voluntary program, allowing participants the opportunity to gain recognition for and satisfaction from their achievement.

The core areas are Chainsaw Operation, Safety, & Productivity; Environmental Concerns; and Adult First Aid & CPR. An individual completing these three workshops is eligible to receive initial TLC recognition. TLC is available by attending NYLT sponsored workshops, or by providing documentation of completion of approved workshops offered by other organizations. It is an individual's responsibility to provide proof of course completion to NYLT for any workshops not hosted by NYLT in order to receive proper credit.

Continuing education is the backbone of TLC. After initial certification is achieved, 3 Continuing Education credits over the next 3 years are required, in addition to maintaining current First Aid & CPR status, to prevent certification from expiring.

This program has been designed and

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crafted to take advantage of the wide variety of training already in place within the forest industry, and to make these resources more effective and efficient. The core requirements and continuing education topics incorporate training that has been available for the last several years. Every effort has been made to minimize the cost of participation and provide training opportunities throughout the state.

TLC applies to individual loggers, not the companies they work for. Any person is eligible to be certified upon completing TLC training, and is provided with a certificate and an ID card to demonstrate the accomplishment. Although this program is designed for loggers, any interested individuals may participate.

In fact, landholder participation is encouraged, as many of the programs are suitable for weekend warriors with chainsaws or those merely looking to enjoy their woods more. For instance, First Aid/CPR, Forest Ecology & Silviculture, and Game of Logging classes can all be very useful to the landholder looking to become safer, know more about their woods, and more productive with a chainsaw. If you have ever wondered what the best management practices (BMPs) really are, the Forest Ecology & Silviculture class will tell you. Attending these courses also enables landholders to become more familiar with loggers and what to expect on a job from a logger.

The TLC program was designed with the following objectives in mind:


- To improve skills, productivity, safety, and abilities of timber harvesters;
- To address public concerns about timber harvesting by encouraging the use of best harvesting techniques, and preclude unnecessary regulations;
- To help keep timber harvesters viable in New York;
- To increase the use of Best Management Practices for Timber Harvesting;
- To protect soil and water quality during and after forest management operations;
- To address OSHA logging standards and requirements for employers;

- To attain potential cost reduction in insurance (Workman's Compensation) premiums and/or increase the access to such insurance;

- To achieve increased public and government satisfaction with the quality of timber harvesting operations; and

- To increase environmental protection.

At the present time NYLT is looking to find out what course individuals are interested in taking next year. If you are a landholder, logger, or forester contact your local NYLT area chair and tell them what interests you. You can find out the contact information for your area chair at www.nyloggertraining.org/home/contactus.asp. A list of presently schedule courses can be found at www.nyloggertraining.org/search/workshops.asp.

This information was taken primarily from the New York Logger Training website at pages www.nyloggertraining.org/home/default.asp and www.nyloggertraining.org/home/getcert.asp. Additional information was gathered from the Society of American Forester brochure, *Foresters: Helping You Plan for the Future of Your Forest*. 

A NYFOA member, Mike Burns is the Program Manager of NYLT at ESFPA. He is a consulting forester and the state chair of the NYS Tree Farm program. Brendan Kelly is also a NYFOA member, a THRIFT member, and is a Senior Forester with the NYSDEC. He is assigned to forest products utilization and marketing concerns in NYSDEC Region 6.

NYS Maple Producers Conference Scheduled for January 9- 10, 2004

The NYS Maple Producers Winter Conference has been scheduled for January 9th and 10th, 2004, at the Vernon-Verona-Sherrill Central School, Verona, NY. The winter conference provides numerous workshops on a wide range of related maple topics and showcases maple equipment and supplies at its annual trade show. Last year, more than 400 maple enthusiasts from 8 states and Canada attended the workshops and 18 vendors were featured at the trade show.

Highlighting this year's conference will be a variety of topics addressing producer-oriented issues. In light of the poor maple sap season throughout areas of the Northeast, topics such as the use of micro-taps and vacuum techniques will be presented focusing on increased profits for maple producers. Other conference topics will include forestry management techniques, tubing installation and cleaning, vacuum systems for tubing, marketing strategies, value-added products, Maple Weekend tips, and the latest in maple research.

The V.V.S. High School is located between Utica and Syracuse, New York on State Route 31 just two minutes from NYS Thruway Exit 33. Overnight accommodations are within five minutes of conference site. More information on conference topics and presenters, contact V.V.S. FFA advisor Keith Schiebel at (315) 829-2520 ext. 262, email at kschiebel@vvs-csd-high.moric.org, or visit the school's website at: www.vvscentralschools.org.

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Keep Your Eyes Peeled for Emerald Ash Borer

DOUGLAS C. ALLEN

Forest owners throughout the northeastern United States are well aware that green, white or black ash are an important component of many northern hardwood forests. Ash (*Fraxinus* spp.) typically is subject to few major insect problems, except as a minor host for many generalist defoliators. The principle malady most of us associate with these trees is the disease known as ash decline.

A new invasive called the emerald ash borer (known to entomologists as *Agrilus planipennis* (ah-grii-liss plan-i-pen-iss), however, poses a potentially serious problem for New York's forest owners. First discovered in southeastern Michigan during the summer of 2002, it was found more recently in Ontario and northeastern Ohio. A native of Asia, it probably

arrived in North America as a hitchhiker in materials used to construct wooden crates. It is important for forest owners to be able to recognize emerald ash borer (EAB) and its damage in order to facilitate early detection should it move into our region.

Description

This inner bark borer belongs to a family of insects known as metallic wood-boring beetles or flatheaded borers. Though the beetle is larger and more brightly colored than our native species of *Agrilus*, it is a close cousin to familiar pests such as the bronze birch borer and two-lined chestnut borer (*Forest Owner* Sept./Oct. 1997), commonly associated with stressed birch and oak, respectively.

The adult (Figs. 1,2) is a beautiful bright green with a brassy to golden cast, slender and 0.4 to 0.7 of an inch long. The larva (Fig. 3) attains a length of 1.3 to 1.6 inches and is distinctly segmented and flattened with a pair of small, brownish, pincer-like appendages on the last segment. The three body segments nearest the posterior are more or less bell-shaped.

Biology

Adults emerge in mid- to late May through late June. Females deposit eggs on branches and tree trunks, either on the bark surface or in bark crevices. Soon after emerging from the egg, each larva chews through the bark and feeds underneath it on tissues essential for growth and transport of water and nutrients. In doing so they eventually girdle the tree or branch. When populations are high a tree can be killed very quickly. **Larval**

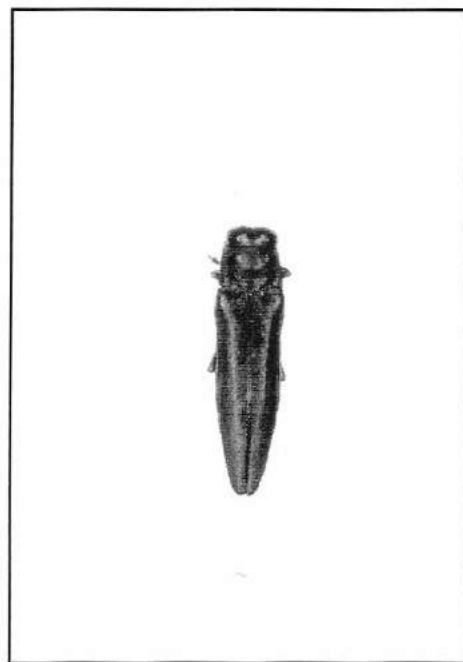


Figure 1. Top view of emerald ash borer adult.

galleries (Fig. 4) are tightly packed with frass (a mixture of wood particles and fecal material). A single larval gallery usually winds back and forth and may be as long as 15 inches. Full grown larvae overwinter beneath bark in shallow chambers excavated on the surface of the sapwood. Beetles

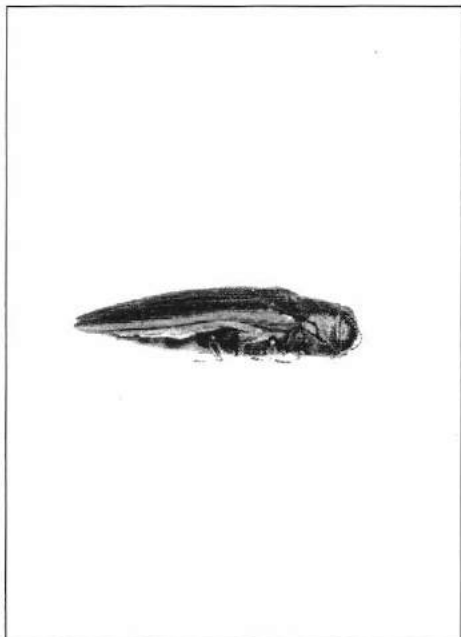


Figure 2. Side view of adult.

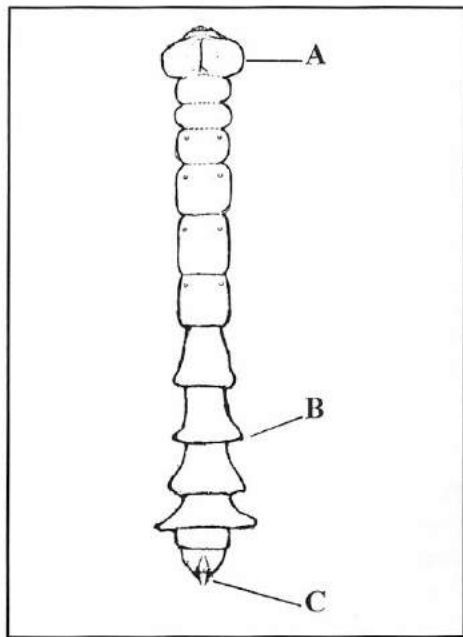


Figure 3. Sketch of an emerald ash borer larva (top view, A - "head", b - bell-shaped segments, C - posterior hooks).



Figure 4. Frass-packed larval galleries on underside of bark.

emerge in the spring through a D-shaped hole approximately 1/16th of an inch wide (Fig. 5).

Damage

A major difference between EAB and native species of *Agrilus* is the fact it attacks healthy hosts. Native species


in this group require a host that has been severely stressed by heavy defoliation, drought, age or some other event.

Larval feeding eventually destroys tissues under the bark that are essential for growth and sustenance. The end result, and first external evidence of an infestation, is discolored foliage and the appearance of dead branches in the outermost margins of the crown, characteristic of a symptom called crown dieback. After two to four years, the tree will die.

Management

An essential first step for restricting the spread of EAB is early detection of infested trees. Secondly, ash logs, firewood and nursery stock should not be imported from areas known to be infested with EAB. Finally, once an infestation is confirmed the tree should be felled and chipped as soon as possible, stumps ground up and any suckers that emerge from surviving roots treated with a herbicide.

Remember, however, EAB has not yet been reported from New York State. Also, crown dieback is symptomatic of ash decline, a very common problem in New York. Only

if an ash has emergence holes like that shown in Fig. 5 or evidence of long, winding galleries beneath the bark, should a forest owner contact The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation forester or bring it to the attention their County Extension Agent. 

This is the 71st 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/df/privland/forprot/health/nysfo/index.html>.

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As of October 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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Figure 5. D-shaped emergence hole. This image has been enlarged.

How To Make and Enjoy Your Own Blue Bird Trail

RICHARD WELLS

How many of us have seen a bluebird recently? The great majority of young people today have never seen a bluebird. Yet 70 years ago, bluebirds were among the most common songbirds in America.

Bluebirds are an asset to farmers and gardeners because their diet consists almost entirely of insects in the spring and summer. In the late fall and winter they live largely on wild berries.

The eastern bluebird population may have plummeted as much as 90% due to shortage of natural cavities for nesting, competition from house sparrows and starlings, and pesticides. What is needed is a widespread effort to help the bluebird in its struggles and an easy way to help is to provide nesting sites.

Bluebird trails are becoming increasingly popular and are a source of great pleasure and satisfaction to those who operate them. A bluebird trail consists of a number of nesting boxes spaced 100 yards or more apart and so located that they can be conveniently monitored by going from box to box by car, bicycle or on foot.

A bluebird trail may consist of only a few nesting boxes on one's own property or of hundreds of boxes spread over a distance of many miles. Bluebird population has increased dramatically along the routes of virtually all bluebird trails that have been operated successfully for a number of years. What is needed is a great increase in the number of bluebird trails, so that bluebirds can again raise their families in the vast areas where the natural nesting cavities have either been destroyed, or have been usurped by the alien starlings and house sparrows, against which the bluebird cannot successfully compete.

To operate a successful bluebird trail it is important to know the characteristics of the bluebird and the problems involved in maintaining a productive trail.

The Bluebird Nesting Season

Because of their early return to the northern parts of their range, the bluebird today remains a symbol of springtime. The lengthening days of late February and March bring with

them the arrival of bluebirds in search of suitable nesting sites. The male usually returns before the female and immediately starts searching for several unoccupied cavities or nesting boxes he considers suitable for nesting. Bluebirds are a cavity-nesting species and they nest and raise their young in holes of dead trees, fence posts, or in nest boxes.

Bluebirds are insectivores; they feed on a large number of insects that are harmful to crops (especially cutworms and grasshoppers). An exposed post, wire or branch is used as a perch for scanning the ground for insects.

Courtship

Through singing and tail and wing displays, the male urges the female, upon her return, to explore the cavity he has shown her. The male will show the female several sites, and hopefully, she will choose one of them. If she approves, the female accepts him as her mate and the pair will then stay close by until nest building begins.

Nest Building

Days and often weeks elapse between selection and actual start of nest building. In most areas nest building is generally underway in early May.

The female builds the nest almost entirely by herself. However, the male will accompany her while she collects the nesting material. The 3-4 inch wide nest is made of woven grasses and occasionally pine needles, where available. It usually takes 5-6 days for the nest to be completed.

Bluebirds time their activities so that the first egg is laid 4 to 5 days after the nest has been completed. One egg is laid each day until the clutch is complete. Three to six, commonly four or five, pale blue (occasionally white) eggs are laid. Incubation begins as

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soon as the last egg has been laid. The time of incubation is generally 14 days.

The Fledgling Period

On the day they are hatched, young bluebirds are virtually naked. They weigh roughly one-tenth of an ounce. They are fed small, assorted insects every few minutes from dawn to dusk. The male bird does most of the feeding at first since the female must spend a good part of her time brooding the babies to keep them warm. Within about 12 days, the weight of the young bird approaches that of the adult. The natal down has been shed and replaced by the beautiful soft gray and blue juvenile plumage.

Young bluebirds usually leave their nests at the age of 17 or 18 days. On the day of fledging, the parent birds seem to encourage their young to leave the nest by restricting their food and by calling to them repeatedly in an enticing manner from a short distance. Each young bird at the moment it leaves the nest makes a valiant and usually successful attempt to fly to a

nearby tree or bush. Most young bluebirds are capable of flying 50 to 100 feet on their first attempt. The newly fledged bluebirds soon work their way into the higher branches of nearby trees and remain high off the ground, flying from tree to tree to gain strength.

For the first 7-10 days out of the nest, the young are fed by their attentive parents. The bluebird fledglings start finding a small part of their own food when they have been out of the nest for about two weeks. Within another week or 10 days the young birds learn to obtain all of their own food. Bluebirds have strong family ties, so the young birds usually remain fairly close to their parents throughout the summer and early autumn. Often not more than 3 or 4 days elapse between the time the young of one brood are fledged and the nest for the next brood is started. Usually a second brood is raised by the same parents and sometimes also a third.

It is recommended that after the young have left the nest, the box should be cleaned as this increases the chances that a second brood will be raised in the same box.

Mounting the Box

Where you choose to place the box is as important as how the box is designed. Bluebirds are birds of open areas. They rarely nest in wooded areas, but will nest in clearings. Open areas with scattered trees are best. Open fields are suitable if there are posts or wires for perching. Look for any area where the vegetation is kept short by mowing, or grazing such as parks, campgrounds, pastures, large lawns, cemeteries, golf courses and abandoned orchards. Generally bluebirds nest only in rural areas and the very outer edges of suburban developments. Proper placement of your nesting box (boxes) can encourage bluebirds and discourage other competing birds and predators.

Bluebirds — We recommend that nesting boxes be mounted on 6 to 6-1/2 feet pipe. The boxes should be mounted

4 to 5 feet from the ground. It is recommended that they be placed 100 yards apart because bluebirds establish a territory during the nesting season and a nesting pair will not allow other bluebirds to enter their territory.

Tree Swallows are the birds most often found in bluebird boxes. To maximize your chances of attracting bluebirds amidst competition from swallows we recommend placing two boxes 5-8 feet apart. Swallows will exclude another pair of swallows from nesting this close. Swallows only defend their nest site itself. This leaves the adjacent box open to bluebirds.

House Wrens like more bushy areas. To avoid competition with the house wren place the bluebird nestbox in more open areas at least 50 feet or more away from brush and woods.

Face the box towards a tree, shrub or pole so the young can fly toward it. Your nesting box should be put up and ready for use by the end of March if possible. If they are put up later than this time, they still should be attractive to bluebirds who are raising their second or third broods. Be patient, it may take several seasons for bluebirds to find your box!

Bluebird Nestbox Construction Tips

Back 14 x 6½", *Sides* 10½" & 9½" x 5" *Top* 12" x 8" *Base* 5 x 5" *Front* 9¾" x 6½" *Entrance* exactly 1½" diameter located 1½" down from top. *Lower sides* ¼" from top for air vet. Nip off corners of base for drainage.

This plan can also be used for a side-opening box with a 4" x 4" floor simply by making all boards one inch narrower and the top and bottom boards one inch shorter. For those who can secure the construction materials and have the tools to work with, it is an enjoyable project to build nesting boxes. For others, it is more practical to purchase the nesting boxes.

For detailed nest box plans for a side-opening box or a Peterson box or for the purchase of a nest box, contact New York State Bluebird Society,

continued on page 18

Typical Bluebird Nesting Timetable for This Area

March 15	Bluebirds sighted in the area.
March 30	Female accepts box - bits of straw in box.
April 22	Female building nest.
April 29	Five blue eggs (usually one a day for 5 days).
May 18	Young hatching, female carries away shells and fecal sacs.
May 21	Female continues brooding the young - both adults feed young from dawn to dusk.
June 6	Young bluebirds have left the nest - clean out the box
June 20	Female begins building new nest and process is repeated.

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315-298-2277.

Predators and Competitors

Bluebirds have to deal with many predators. Several mammals, reptiles and even insects prey on adults, young and eggs of bluebirds. These animals include raccoons, red squirrels, domestic cats, and a parasitic insect called the blowfly. House (English) sparrows and starlings are vicious competitors.

House Sparrows and Starlings.

Competition between the bluebird and the starling and house sparrow for those few nesting places that remain has been a major factor leading to the decline of bluebirds. These two species, both brought here from Europe, are very aggressive and often force bluebirds always from nesting sites. Starlings, although larger than bluebirds, also compete for nesting cavities and food. During the winter, large flocks of starlings can strip plants of their berries leaving nothing for other birds.

Competition for nesting sites between bluebirds and starlings can be controlled by making entry holes exactly 1 inches in diameter. Unlike the natural cavities, which often have slightly larger openings, the starling cannot enter a box of this size. This opening still will leave bluebirds vulnerable to starling predation if the entry hole is less than six inches from the floor. Unfortunately, the house sparrow is not so readily excluded from a nesting box because they can easily enter an opening of 1½ inches.

When a house sparrow wants a cavity occupied by bluebirds, it will attempt to drive the native species away. The bluebird's small bill makes it a poor competitor in flights when facing the strong and heavy-billed sparrow. Frequently house sparrows will puncture and remove bluebird eggs, or kill the nestlings or brooding adults by pecking their heads. Placing nesting boxes away from human habitation, especially barns, will reduce the chance

of having this species usurp nesting boxes. Also, keep the nest box low (4-5 feet). Sparrows prefer to nest at a higher site. These precautions are only somewhat successful.

Starlings and house sparrows, unlike all native birds, are not protected by federal law. It is recommended that all house sparrow nests be removed from bluebird nesting boxes as soon as nesting is initiated. Repeated removal of nesting materials may discourage house sparrow use, leaving the box available for native species. This is *not* legal to do with any native birds such as tree swallows or house wrens while they are actively nesting.

Nest removal may help in some instances, but the most efficient means of controlling sparrows is to trap them. Sparrow traps have been designed for use both within nesting boxes and on the ground. Trapping sparrows throughout the year can lead to great increases in bluebird productivity and distribution. Removal of sparrows from an area is the most effective means of increasing bluebird numbers. And finally, any bluebird box, when house sparrows are allowed to successfully produce young, is worse for the bluebirds than no box at all.

Blowfly Larvae. Blowfly larvae parasitism has been severe in recent years. We have found many nests where blowflies have contributed to the death of nestling bluebirds or swallows. The female blowfly will lay 50-200 eggs in the bluebird's grass nest, usually when the fledglings are first hatched. More than one blowfly may lay eggs in the nest. The eggs hatch in 1 to 2 days into tiny tan colored larva that turn brown as they approach 3/8" long.

The larvae attach to the nestlings' feet, legs, underside of wings and beaks and draw out the blood and body fluids. The larvae attack the nestlings at night and hide in the nesting material during the daylight hours. Researchers have found as many as 250 larvae in one nest. During recent years, approxi-

mately 80% of the nests were infested. The larvae feed on the fledglings for approximately 8 days and then go into a dormant stage for 3 days where they become leathery and enter the pupa stage.

After 10-12 days the adult blowfly emerge from the puparia and fly away in search of fresh bird nests where they will be able to repeat the 3 to 4 week life cycle. Therefore, the incidence of blowfly infestation usually increases in the second and third nestings as the summer progresses. A heavy larvae infestation may kill the nestlings outright or seriously weaken them so they are unable to leave the nest.

Monitoring your nesting boxes for blowfly larvae is one of the most important things that you can do to increase the bluebird population. Once the nestlings are hatched, check the nesting box every 3 to 4 days (Do not disturb the nestlings after 12 days or they may fly from the nest prematurely.) Open the nesting box, lift the nest slightly and carefully scrape the chaff from the bottom of the nest into your hand. If blowfly larvae are evident, change the nest.

Remove the nest and nestlings and clean the box thoroughly. Next, build a new nest of dried lawn clippings similar to the shape of the original nest and pack it down tightly. Gently replace the nestlings. The parents don't object; songbirds have a very poor sense of smell. Be sure to destroy the fly larvae and the old nest.

Raccoons. Raccoons are a common predator of Eastern Bluebirds and other cavity-nesting birds using nestboxes. At the present time the raccoon population is excessively high and nestboxes are more susceptible to the ravages of the raccoon. Raccoons commonly will climb up to the nestboxes and remove eggs, nestlings, or even incubating adult birds. Even when raccoons cannot reach into the box they may harass incubating or brooding adult birds enough to cause nest abandonment.

When mounting a nextbox on a pipe,

applying a heavy grease on the pipe appears to be effective. You can put sheet metal guards on the pole below the box to keep predators from climbing up. Recent experiments have demonstrated that a 5" extended overhang of the roof acts as a deterrent and yet is acceptable to the bluebird.

The raccoon attacks from the top of the box and the 5" overhang deters the raccoon from reaching in the entrance. The longer overhang is also a help in keeping rain or hot sun from entering the box.

Monitoring Bluebird Nesting Boxes

Your box may contain any of the following nests:

1. Bluebird. Neatly constructed of grass, the 4-5 eggs are pale blue or occasionally white. If it has been over 15 days since eggs hatched and you find a well-flattened nest not disturbed, this indicates that the nestlings have fledged. Remove the old nest (only if there is no sign of a new nest being built) promptly because this will encourage bluebirds to nest again in that box.

2. House Wren. The nest is large and made of twigs. The 6-8 eggs are white, speckled with brown.

3. Tree Swallow. The nest is of woven grass, and lined with feathers. The 4-6 eggs are white.

4. House Sparrow. A mixture of coarse grass, feathers, and trash make up these very large woven nests. Usually there are 5-6 gray-white eggs, speckled with brown.

5. Chickadee. The nest is made of moss, plant down and lined with hair and animal fur. The 5-8 white eggs are speckled with reddish-brown.

It is important to the recovery of the bluebird that all nesting boxes be frequently monitored to detect blowfly and/or use by house sparrows. Uncontrolled, these species will continue to place the survival of the bluebird in jeopardy. Bluebird boxes that are placed in the field and not monitored may do more harm than good to bluebirds.

It's a good idea to inspect the nestbox after a heavy or prolonged rain. If you find the nest quite damp or wet change the nest. Remove the nest and nestlings and build a new nest of dried lawn clippings and replace the nestlings. You may lose the nestlings with respiratory problems in a wet nest if you don't follow this procedure.

Check in early spring to see if the

deer mouse or white-footed mouse has occupied the nestbox during the winter. If so, remove the contents. Then your box will be ready for the next bluebird occupants.

For further reading order *The Bluebird, Its Fight For Survival* by Lawrence Zeleny, *The Bluebird Book* by Lilian Stokes, each \$9.95 plus 10% handling, prepaid. Available from the North American Bluebird Society, Box 6295, Silver Springs, Maryland 20906.

The New York State Blue Bird Society was formed in 1982 in order to promote and develop an active bluebird conservation program that would help insure the continued growth of the bluebird population. For more information on the New York State Blue Bird Society, visit their web site at www.nysbs.com. The organization's goals include cooperation with the North American Bluebird Society, and membership in that group is encouraged. (NABS, Box 6295, Silver Springs, MD 20906.)

Rich Wells resides in East Concord, NY and is past president and lifetime director of the New York State Blue Bird Society

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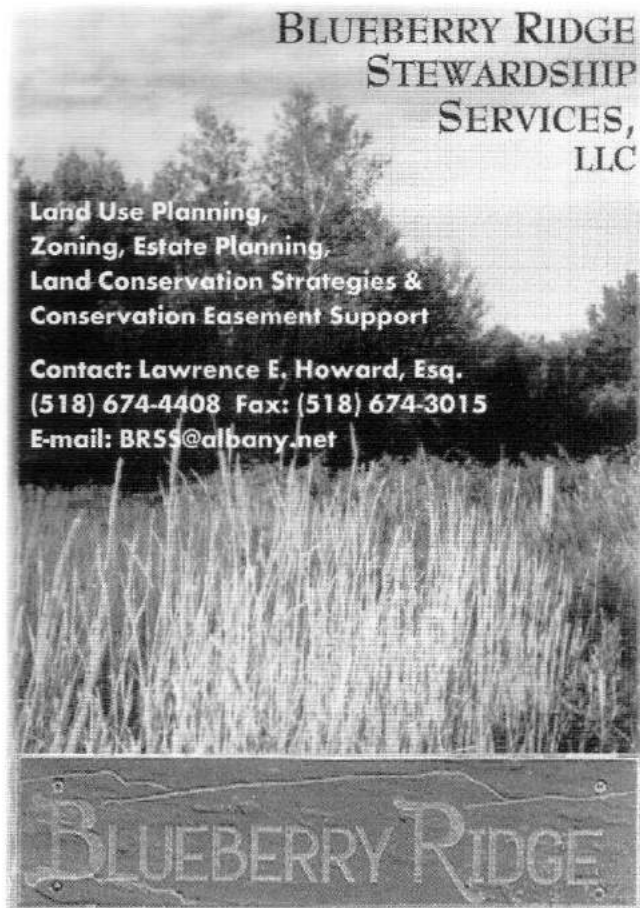
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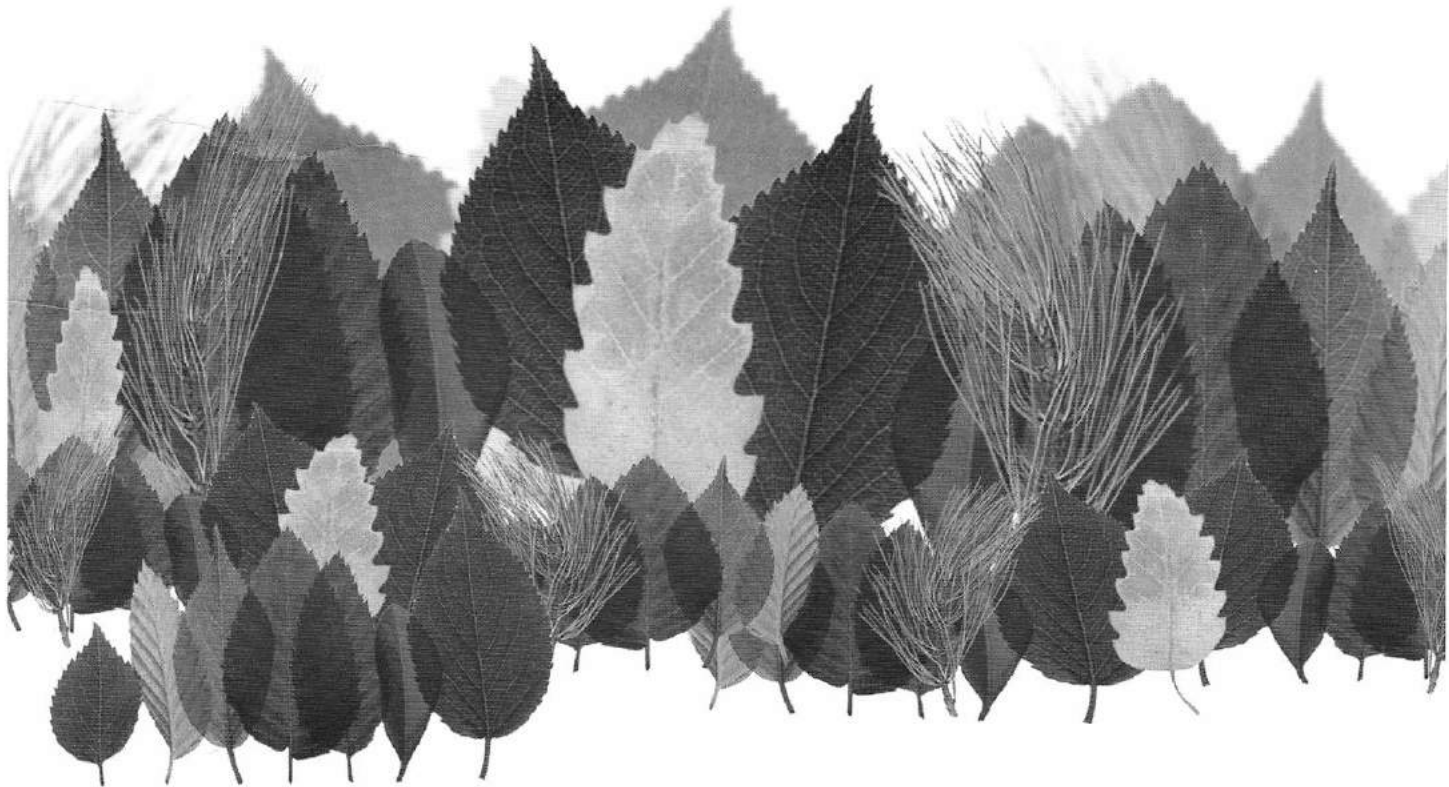
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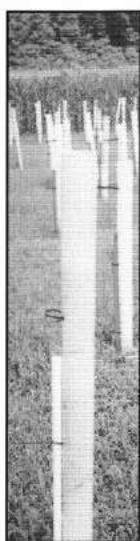
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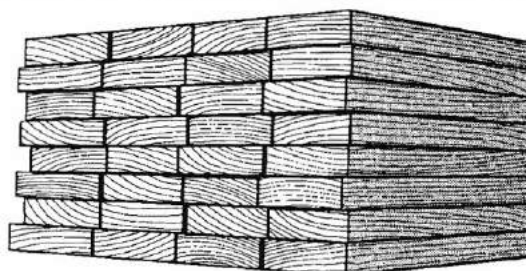
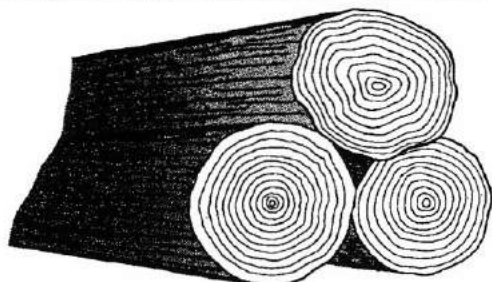
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