

The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

For people who care about New York's trees and forests

September/October 2010



Member Profile: Jeff Rupp

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THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

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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 PO Box 541, Lima, NY 14485. 1-800-836-3566. Cost of family membership/subscription is \$35.

This publication is printed on Finch Opaque, Smooth, 70 lb. text paper. Located in the beautiful Adirondacks, Finch has long understood that the viability of our business relies on the wise use—and reuse—of resources. Finch papers are made with renewable energy, post-consumer recycled fiber and elemental chlorine-free pulps. In addition, Finch Paper was the first integrated paper mill in the US to receive both the Forest Management and Chain of Custody certifications from the Forest Stewardship Council and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative.

www.nyfoa.org

COVER: Jeff and Diane Rupp shown on their "Tree Farm" property in New Albion, NY, Cattaraugus County. For member profile, turn to page 21. Photo courtesy of the Rupp's.

From The President

This is an exciting time to be involved with forests in New York. That is not entirely good. As I write this in mid-August, there have been several new confirmed infestations of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in the state. This is not terribly surprising, as few people that I talked to thought the previous incidence in Cattaraugus County would be the end of the story. The new sightings in the



western part of the state and in the Hudson Valley area reinforce the notion that the pest is being unwittingly transported by humans, which should serve as a reminder to everybody to be aware of and abide by

the regulations limiting the movement of forest products.

On a more positive note, there are several efforts under way to find uses and develop markets for woody biomass — tree tops and cull logs that would otherwise be left on the forest floor after a harvest since they currently have no commercial value. While there are questions about the sustainability of removing this material from the forest rather than leaving it to decompose, finding new markets for new forest products could be a financial benefit for landowners who do not have a large volume of high-quality timber.

The state Department of Environmental Conservation recently completed a Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy (FRAS). (You can view the report at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/60829.html>.) This comprehensive document spells out the state of New York's forests

and a strategy for managing them for the next five years or more. The next step is a meeting of people and organizations to review the strategy and determine how to implement it.

NYFOA is working to represent you — the landowners who ultimately control a large portion of New York's forests — in all of these efforts. We cooperate with DEC and other groups to monitor for EAB and spread the word about how to deal with it. We add the voice of landowners to those of industry in the discussion of woody biomass. And we will be present to help guide the implementation of the FRAS strategy.

Please share this magazine with a neighbor and urge them to join NYFOA. By gaining more members, NYFOA's voice will become stronger!

The core of NYFOA revolves around the woodwalks, seminars, meetings and other activities organized by our various chapters. There are a lot of other activities — the above is just a sample — that goes on to represent our members beyond the chapter level. Most of these activities are taken on by volunteers, in many cases by NYFOA members who also have professional expertise in a particular area. These efforts are another way NYFOA is working to protect our woodlands and promote sustainable management of them so that they will provide even more benefits for future generations. ♻️

—Mike Seager
NYFOA President

The mission of the New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) is to promote sustainable forestry practices and improved stewardship on privately owned woodlands in New York State. NYFOA is a not-for-profit group of people who care about NYS's trees and forests and are interested in the thoughtful management of private forests for the benefit of current and future generations.

Join! NYFOA is a not-for-profit group 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 statewide meetings.

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Obituary



Bill M. Miner

Bill M. Miner, 67, of Venice, FL, formerly of Elbridge, NY, died on August 22, 2010. Bill graduated from Syracuse University and later worked as the Assistant Dean at the College of Medicine at SUNY, retiring in 1998. Bill was the president of the Community Associations Institute in Sarasota County and was also president of New York Forest Owners Association; he was a member of the CNY chapter. Bill read the Scientific American from cover to cover, enjoyed making furniture; he was a true Renaissance Man. He loved life and made it enjoyable for everyone he met. Survivors include his wife, Clara of Venice, FL; daughter, April Leytem of Twin Falls, Idaho; son, Todd Miner of Lafayette, NY; granddaughter, Cassandra Miner; brothers, Tim Miner of Rochester, NY, Jim Miner of Rochester, NY, Jon Miner of Yorkshire, NY, and Ron Miner of Plantation, FL; a sister, Kathy Consler of Rochester, NY; stepbrother, Lynn Winters of Cumberland, MD; and many nieces and nephews. A memorial gathering was held on Friday, August 27, along with a celebration of his life. Memorial donations may be made to the Venice Art Center, 390 Nokomis Ave. S., Venice, FL 34285. To send condolences visit www.farleyfuneralhome.com

Would you like to receive an electronic version of future editions of *The Forest Owner*? If so, please send Liana an email (lgooding@nyfoa.org).

You will receive an email every two months that includes a PDF file of the publication. While being convenient for you – read *The Forest Owner* anytime, any place; this will also help to save the Association money as the cost of printing and postage continues to rise with each edition.

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A Dismal Day In The Woods

More On High Grading

MICHAEL C. GREASON

For years I've discouraged high grading and felt that it leads to parcelization and fragmentation of our forest resource. Once timber production is diminished, investing in ownership is a hard sell. I've felt that high property taxes are a significant contributor to woodland owners liquidating their timber resource prior to subdividing and selling off their forest holdings.

My daughter asked me to look at a tract she and her husband Jamie were considering buying in New Hampshire. The listing advertised a 1,100 acre timberland investment containing fully stocked stands of primarily northern hardwoods of medium age. Googling the area showed a vast rural landscape adjoining state and national forests with small openings. She and her husband arranged a meeting with the realtor who possesses a degree in forestry; he stated he was pleased that their forester would be joining them.

There had been some confusion about our meeting place. So, my son-in-law and I spent quite a while searching access to the wrong side of the property. The one named road that would have led into the property was blocked by two skidders, a chipper and ankle deep mud. For a couple of miles surrounding that access, heavy harvesting is covering several thousand acres and for sale signs abound; every log landing access point touts a sign advertising from 100 to several hundred acres of prime lots.

When we arrived at the right spot, the realtor noted my multi-colored boots and my son-in-law's shorts and sneakers. It was a somewhat rainy morning as we entered the property and drove gravel access roads into the interior of the property. I rolled

my window down and noticed some small and medium saw log sized trees in a fifty foot buffer along the roadways; but beyond them I could see an even-aged stand dominated by white birch saplings. As we proceeded into the property, the buffer gave way to a landscape of thick northern hardwood saplings overtopped by scattered pole and a few saw timber sized stems. We drove through a few small clearings (log landings and gravel pits) to a landing where the realtor said we'd find some of the most mature timber on the property.

We climbed out into a light drizzle. I noticed many of the larger crowns had minor dieback and asked if forest tent defoliation had occurred recently. The question did not invoke a detailed response and we started to walk up a fairly steep skid trail. The slope has quite a good population of boulders. Beech is the dominant species; yet there is some representation of hard maple and yellow birch. Some of the root flanges are being chewed by porcupines; so that may account for some of the dieback in the crowns if those critters are eating in the upper canopy as well. The remaining desirable species had a few 12" to 14" diameter stems of fair quality and at least an equal number of defective stems. The realtor was impressed by Jamie's toughness in dealing with mud and brambles. Then he extolled the virtues of beech wildlife values. The dense sapling understory was dominated by a beech thicket with a fair representation of striped maple with very few hard maple or yellow birch stems. Then we hurried back to the vehicle to go see the fabulous view from another log landing; I held

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Ask A Professional

PETER SMALLIDGE



Peter Smallidge

Landowner questions are addressed by foresters and other natural resources professionals. Landowners should be careful when interpreting answers and applying this general advice to their property because landowner objectives and property conditions will affect specific management options. When in doubt, check with your regional DEC office or other service providers. Landowners are also encouraged to be active participants in Cornell Cooperative Extension and NYFOA programs to gain additional, often site-specific, answers to questions. To submit a question, email to Peter Smallidge at pjs23@cornell.edu with an explicit mention of "Ask a Professional." Additional reading on various topics is available at www.forestconnect.info

Question:

We would like to cut our own firewood, but don't know what we should consider or how to get started. What can you suggest?

Answer:

Firewood cutting from your own woodlot is gratifying, great exercise, and can improve the health and productivity of the woods. Firewood cutting from your woodlot involves tree selection, tree felling, moving the tree in whole or parts, splitting and storing. This article won't cover all the details. You will need to review several other educational resources to build a full base of knowledge. Also, talk with other NYFOA members during woods walks, or talk with your DEC or private forester, to learn about their approach to firewood production. You can review and post firewood specific questions at www.ForestConnect.info/forum. As with all deliberate actions or inactions in your woods, make your decisions about firewood based on your ownership objectives and a written plan.

Use gardening as a basis for considering which trees to cut and which trees to leave. Gardens and woodlots have obvious differences, but are similar as land areas that grow plants we use for specific reasons. Those plants need

sunlight to produce many of the values we enjoy. In woodlots, as gardens, we thin and weed. The goal of thinning and weeding is to make more sunlight available to the residual trees to enhance their vigor, health, and productivity. Thinning can be thought of as removing trees of desirable species but which compete with trees that will more readily produce what we want. Weeding removes unde-

sired tree species (*note, these definitions differ slightly from the formal forestry definitions*). When selecting trees, first locate the most desirable trees to retain that support your objectives and then make sure the desired trees are free from shading in their upper crown by cutting adjacent undesired trees. Avoid the common but typically flawed logic to cut the big trees to let the little trees grow. A fact sheet on selecting trees for firewood is available in the publications section of www.ForestConnect.info. Other information on the internet is available by searching for "crop tree management."

Tree felling is potentially deadly and requires training and skill to be safe and effective. The Game of Logging for Landowners training is a practical, hands-on curriculum that teaches



Stack firewood for optimal air flow, with cover, and off the ground to improve the seasoning, or drying. Full seasoning often requires 12 more months, but well-seasoned wood burns more efficiently and produces less particulate matter.

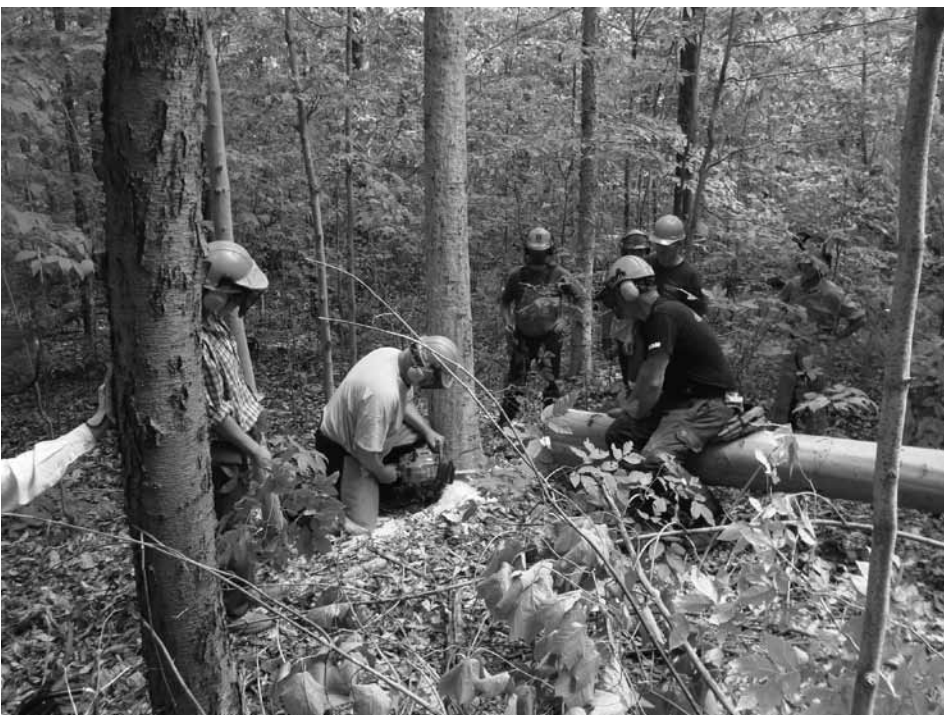


An ATV and arch can move firewood logs either suspended (as shown) or skidded. Careful planning and operation will control damage to residual trees, avoid rutting, and minimize effort in the woods.

directional felling and safe handling of chainsaws. Directional felling means you decide the direction the tree will fall. These courses are offered periodically through some NYFOA chapters, through some offices of Cornell Co-

operative Extension, and at Cornell's Arnot Forest. You can look for Game of Logging information at www.Forest-Connect.info and a schedule of trainings on the calendar at www.dnrce.com.

The Game of Logging stresses safety.



Game of Logging for Landowners is an essential training for anyone attempting to fell trees in their woods. The training improves productivity, minimizes dangerous conditions, and reduces damage to residual trees.

Safety begins with personal protective equipment (PPE) that includes: hardhat, ear and eye protection, cut resistant chaps or pants, and steel-toed boots. Your chainsaw should have the appropriate safety features and be in good working order.

There are three common ways to move trees that you have cut out of the woods. Some owners have topography that allows them to drive a pickup truck into the woods. In these situations, the logs typically are blocked into firewood stick length and split in the woods. Other owners use an ATV. ATVs should not be used to directly drag a firewood log because that log might snag on a root or stump and result in injury to the operator. ATV attachments that make firewood removal safer include a skid cone, a wagon, or an arch. Finally, some owners have a tractor. Most tractors have more power than ATVs and can directly drag a log more easily than an ATV. However, the same potential for injury exists if the log snags on a fixed object. Tractor attachments include draw or lift bars, winches, wagons, cribs and arches. For all these vehicles, considerable care is needed to avoid roll-over situations. Do not operate on a side-slope, adequately clear the trail for the limitations of the vehicle, and be alert to other people in the woods. Workshops on ATV low impact logging are offered in partnership with NYFOA chapters and Cornell Cooperative Extension. Look for scheduled events at www.dnrce.com.

Wood is split either by hand with a maul and wedges or using a hydraulic splitter. The maul is useful for people in good physical condition and who only need a couple cords of wood per year. Safety concerns for maul users include wood or metal fragments flying into your eye, so use protective eye wear. Also, the maul might ricochet or miss the wood and strike your leg. Use proper technique and correctly sized mauls to minimize the risk of leg or foot injury. Numerous commer-

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New York State Tree Farm News

ERIN O'NEILL



Happy Hunting Grounds!

Don't forget, you don't have to be a timber beast to enroll your property in the Tree Farm program. The best way to achieve that Nirvana of happy hunting grounds is through multi-use management. Strict attention to the aspects of healthy, sustainable forests that Tree Farm is known for; WOOD, WILDLIFE, WATER leads to enjoyable RECREATION. These are the familiar icons and the foundation of the Tree Farm program standing the test of time and launching us into the future of third party audited sustainable management.

Let me explain...well managed timber crops, whether it is firewood production, sawtimber or anything in between, provide light and seed for many species while maintaining forest structure and travel corridors for



others. Big game, especially deer, prefer to travel any long distances through the undisturbed strips along brooks in a managed stand. Well managed harvest operations guarantee proper silviculture specific to the landowner's objectives while ensuring the Best Management Practices as recommended by the state and recognized by certification bodies are followed to maintain water quality. Generally, fowl will nest along clear pools in large brooks and ponds to properly feed their young. Responsible recreation means that skid trails used as ATV paths are well cared for and can be shared by the very game species you're looking for!

So, if you're looking to improve your hunting experience on your own property, working with a knowledgeable forester will help you make decisions about how to manage for

wildlife by creating edges, openings and brush piles for habitat; preventing erosion and damage to water quality; and providing plenty of seed crop and forest structure for foraging.

As always, with this in mind, if you'd like to learn more about the NY Tree Farm certification program remember, a Tree Farm representative is only a phone call (1-800-836-3566) or e-mail (nytreefarm@hotmail.com) away. ▲

Erin O'Neill is the Chair of the NYS Tree Farm Committee.



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Kid's Corner

REBECCA HARGRAVE



Bill and Phyllis Peterson, of Hornell, NY submitted this photo of their four-year old grandson, Lars, watching salamanders and floating pine needles down the forest stream on their property, Honey Run Hill. The Petersons, MFO volunteers, say Lars loves "adventures" in the woods when he visits from his home in Connecticut. The family has owned the property for fifty years.

Do you have a photo of you and your kids or grandkids in your forest? If so, *The New York Forest Owner* would like to see it! Send an electronic or hard copy to *Forest Owner* editor, MaryBeth Malmsheimer, and it may end up on this page!

Life in a Tree, Part II- The Trunk

As we work our way down the tree we descend from the canopy to the trunk. It is here where the tree is set apart from other plants. Wood, or more specifically lignin, allows trees to tower to the sky, reaching heights over 300 feet, but also provides homes, food and fiber to many.

The basic functions of the trunk are to hold up the branches, store sugars, and allow water and nutrients drawn in by the roots to flow up and sugar produced in the leaves to flow down.



What's in a trunk? We start with the bark, the corky material that protects the growing layers underneath. Next is the phloem, which carries sugars down from the leaves. As a tree grows, new phloem is formed on the inside and the old is pushed to the outside forming the bark. Under the phloem is the xylem that carries water and nutrients up from the roots. New xylem grows on the outside of the old, and the old turns into wood. It is this annual layer of xylem that forms the tree's rings, which we count to find out how old it is. As we look through the trunk, remember the growing portion is right at the very edge under the bark.

So, how is the trunk used?

Many creatures live in the trunk. Raccoons and owls live in hollow areas in the wood, insects tunnel under the bark eating the phloem, while moss grows on top. We use lumber to build our houses and buildings.

Others eat the trunk (or what's living in the trunk). Woodpeckers go after those tunneling insects, carpenter ants burrow into decaying wood, deer strip the bark off in cold winters, and we collect maple sap to make syrup in the spring.

We also use the trunk to make things. Wood is processed into paper, chunked into firewood, or sawed into lumber. The inner bark of some kinds of trees

can be stripped and twisted to make rope. Chemicals are taken from the wood and used for everything from fuel to making leather.

Each trunk is unique. Every species has different bark, which allows us to identify one tree from another all year long. Some have smooth bark, some shaggy; some gray, some white, some black; some have scales, some have warts, and others have thorns. Trunks are used differently, as their wood is good for different things. Maple, cherry and walnut make good cabinets, aspen and pine can be used for paper, and oak and ash are wonderful as floors.

Trunk Challenge! This month you can enter to win a tree scale stick, which is used to measure diameter and height of trees. To enter the drawing, send a photograph of you and your favorite tree with a description of how you use its trunk, along with your name and address, to Rebecca Hargrave at jrh45@cornell.edu. Entries are due by November 15, 2010. Two scale sticks will be given away. Winners will be drawn at random, and everyone has the chance to have their picture appear in a future article. Thanks for reading! 🌲

Rebecca Hargrave is the Community Horticulture and Natural Resources Educator at Cornell University Cooperative Extension in Chenango County.

Improve Your Woodlot for Wildlife

RENEE JENSEN

When considering how to improve a woodlot, it's important to understand that each woodlot is unique in its own way whether it is in size, age or plant species. A woodlot may be a couple of acres large and dominated by young hardwood saplings like maple, or it may be decades old and consist of mature conifers like spruce and pine. Yet, another woodlot may be a couple hundred of acres large and consist of both hardwoods and conifers. Nonetheless, the type of forest you have and how you manage it influences the diversity of wildlife in your woodlot.

Wildlife survival depends on the availability of food, water, shelter and space. However, wildlife is also specific in their habitat needs. For example, the American Woodcock, a small woodland game bird, spends its spring and summer on a heavily leaf littered ground, in a moist young forest, that does not have much ground cover. In this environment, their food, earthworms, is plentiful, plus shelter and water are accessible. In addition to these essential needs, the woodcock also requires a "singing ground" for early spring mating. The singing ground is an area of bare ground (15-20 feet in diameter) and is surrounded by a few acres of open grassland or shrubs. If this type of habitat is not available, the American Woodcock will not thrive. With the woodcock as an example, the first step in wildlife management is to look at what your woodlot has to offer and what wildlife species it will be able to support.

Young or old forest:

A mixture of an old and young forest will yield the greatest variety and

diversity of wildlife. However, not all forests have layers of young and old trees, therefore, it is important to determine the age of your woodlot. A young forest has an abundance of berry producing shrubs, bushy cover and saplings for animals like ruffed grouse, cottontail rabbit, American woodcock, and white-tailed deer. Older or more mature forests provide little shelter for many wildlife species but are favored by white-tailed deer during the winter. Nuts are abundant in a mature forest and are a great food source for turkeys, gray fox, rabbits, bears and birds. Also, large tree cavities in mature trees create great nesting sites for animals like the squirrel and screech owl.

Tree Species:

Certain tree species attract wildlife because of the fruit they bear and the shelter they provide. It is important to remember that not all trees will survive in your woodlot's current environment, thus the focal point now becomes choosing the right tree for wildlife habitat for your woodlot. For example, planting a sun-loving sapling in your old growth forest, which probably has a full canopy, will not work. All trees need the right conditions to survive; in this case sun was crucial but was not available because of the forest canopy. Before you order any seedlings take into account whether your forest is young or old, the soil conditions (drainage & composition) as well as sun availability. Once you have discovered what your woodlot can support then you may focus on attracting wildlife. Here are some examples of wildlife that often associate with different types of trees.

Conifers:

- White Cedar: white-tailed deer, red squirrels, ruffed grouse, ring-necked pheasant, wild turkey and song birds.
- White Pine: white-tailed deer, gray and red squirrels, chipmunks, wood duck, turkey, mourning dove, woodpeckers and song birds.
- Balsam Fir: white-tailed deer, gray squirrel and song birds.

Hardwoods

- Aspen: beaver, white-tailed deer and ruffed grouse
- Black Cherry: black bear, raccoon, red squirrel, ruffed grouse and cedar wax-wing.
- Beech: black bear, blue jay, white-tailed deer, chipmunk, squirrel, ruffed grouse, wild turkey and tufted titmouse.
- Oak: black bear, white-tailed deer, raccoon, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, wood duck and blue jay.
- Red and Sugar Maple: beaver, chipmunk, white-tailed deer, rose-breasted grosbeak and wild turkey.

Shrubs:

- American Plum: great habitat for song birds, grouse and ring-necked pheasant.
- Serviceberry: white-tailed deer, red squirrel, bluebird, cardinal, cedar wax-wing and scarlet tanager.
- Silky dogwood: rabbit, ruffed grouse, wild turkey, bluebird, cardinal and cedar wax-wing.
- High bush blueberry: black bear, white-tailed deer, rabbit and gray cat bird.
- Elderberry: rabbit, bluebird, cardinal, indigo bunting and rose-breasted grosbeak.


NYFOA SAFETY TIP

Limbing a Fallen Tree

While limbing a fallen tree, make sure that it is stable before you start cutting. Stand on the uphill side of the tree so that any cut pieces will roll downhill away from you. Examine the situation at every limb to be removed. Start trimming the branches at the top side of the tree. Do not cut the limbs on the underside of the tree. Roll it to stabilize then begin cutting again. Cut on the opposite side of the tree trunk whenever possible. This keeps

the tree trunk between you and the saw. ***Never stand on the downhill side when removing limbs.***

Always keep in mind that the tree trunk may roll as limbs are removed. Watch for limbs that may be under tension and could spring back when cut. It may be difficult to read tension in limbs. Wood reacts as it is cut. If you cut fast, it will react fast. Cut slowly, if you expect tension. These limbs can cause injury.

Larger limbs may require more than one cut to be removed. Off set cuts can reduce pinching. Plan the cuts so there will be no binding. Always cut the pinch side first. Remember that stored energy can cause a cut to pinch the blade and immobilize your saw. Wedges can be used to hold the cut open. 

Safety tip provided by Ed Wright, President, W. J. Cox Associates, Inc.


- Blackberry: white-tailed deer, chipmunk, rabbit, ring-necked pheasant and robin.

Arrangement:

The arrangement of food, shelter and water will also determine the wildlife species present in your woodlot. For example, the ruffed grouse lives its entire life in a relatively small area and prefers a woodlot that has a high density of small slender trees. They also favor a forest with a large canopy and an open floor with little downed material. The canopy protects the ruffed grouse from raptors and an open forest floor allows them to use their keen eyesight to detect danger. Other species need a different arrangement of habitat features. The arrangement of your forest, the trees within it as well as its age or maturity play an important role in the abundance and diversity wildlife found in your woodlot.

If you are interested in attracting a wildlife species to your woodlot, then developing a forest stewardship plan with a professional will enable you to enhance and meet your wildlife habitat goals. A forest stewardship plan devel-

ops a workable management plan for your woodlot and identifies unique forest communities, and endangered species within. For more information on developing a forest stewardship plan, contact your local Cornell University Cooperative Extension office.

For additional information on forestland activities that will benefit your objectives, visit Cornell's forestry website at www.ForestConnect.info, contact your local office of Cornell University Cooperative Extension, or join the New York Forest Owners Association through their website at www.nyfoa.org 

This article is provided through a joint initiative of Cornell University Cooperative Extension and the New York Forest Owners Association as an educational service that helps the citizen of New York enjoy, use, and sustain private rural lands. For more information on these and other topics, please contact your local office of Cornell Cooperative Extension or visit www.ForestConnect.info

Renee Jensen is Program Educator-Environmental Issues for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County.

Do you want access to woodlot, wildlife, agroforestry, maple and other related information at your finger tips? Internet resources exist and help connect NY woodland owners to unbiased research-based information. Check out Cornell Cooperative Extension – Woodlots on the Internet

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Woodland Health

A column focusing on topics that might limit the health, vigor and productivity of our private or public woodlands

COORDINATED BY MARK WHITMORE

OAK WILT – A NEW THREAT TO FOREST AND LANDSCAPE TREES IN NEW YORK STATE

BY GEORGE W. HUDLER

Thanks to keen observations by several homeowners in Schenectady County, New York in 2008 and prompt action by Cornell Cooperative Extension educator Chris Logue, plant pathologists at Cornell quickly confirmed for the first time that oak wilt – a lethal disease of red oaks in the Upper Midwest and mid-Atlantic states and Texas – is now present in New York State. The infestation covered an area equal to about three city blocks in a residential neighborhood in Scotia. Here is a brief synopsis of what scientists have learned about oak wilt since the disease was first identified by forest pathologists in Wisconsin in 1944.

What is this disease?

Oak wilt is caused by a fungus – *Ceratocystis fagacearum*. Scientists don't know for sure where the fungus came

from; it may have been introduced to North America from some other part of the world or it may have evolved as a variant of some closely related endemic fungus growing on another plant. *C. fagacearum* grows in the water-conducting vessels of host trees and as it does, it causes the vessels to produce gummy plugs that prevent water transport, eventually causing tree death. The mode of action of the fungus in oaks is similar to that of the Dutch elm disease pathogen in elms, but there are few other similarities between the two organisms and their hosts.

What species of trees are likely to be affected?

All species of oaks native to New York State are susceptible to oak wilt to some degree, but those in the red oak

“group” (e.g. northern red oak, black oak, pin oak) are much more likely to die soon after they contract the disease. Movement of the pathogen in these trees is so rapid that it may kill large trees in as little as three weeks. White and bur oaks are more resistant to the disease (but they are not immune) and may survive for many years after infection, losing just a few branches each year. However, each individual tree reacts differently from others in the same species and it is difficult to predict how long an infected bur or white oak will live.

How does the fungus spread from a diseased tree to a healthy one?

Oak wilt can be spread between trees in two ways. First, it is well documented that most of the spread of the disease from tree to tree is by way of grafted roots. Roots of oaks growing in close proximity to each other (e.g. within 50 feet) often intermingle and eventually graft, forming functional unions that allow free flow of water, nutrients and (unfortunately) fungus spores from tree to tree. In some areas of the country where red oak is the predominant forest tree, the disease often occurs in clusters known to pathologists as “infection centers”. However, it has also been observed to spread from tree to tree along a city street lined with red oaks if the trees are close enough together for roots to graft.



Red Oak. Oaks in the red oak “group” have pointed lobes.



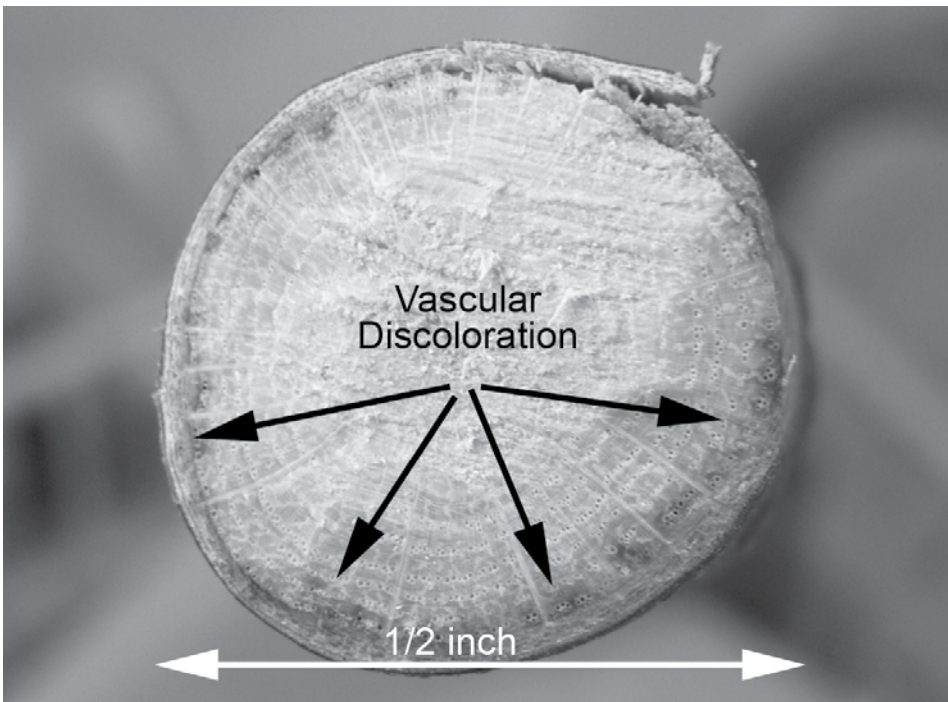
White Oak. Oaks in the white oak “group” have rounded lobes.



Image shows the cutting plan around one infested area.

Second, the oak wilt fungus produces spores for overland spread in an unusual way. As a diseased tree nears death and for up to a year after it has died, the fungus produces opposing pads of sterile tissue on the inner bark and outer wood of the tree. As these pads expand and press against each other, they cause enough pressure

to split the bark open, creating a 3-8 inch long fissure that is barely noticeable to untrained observers. At the same time that the pads are expanding, another type of fungus growth known as a “mycelial mat” forms around the pressure pads on both the bark and the wood. The mycelial mat produces spores that could be carried overland to



Vascular discoloration on oak branch infected with oak wilt.

infect a healthy oak and it also produces a sweet odor reminiscent of rotting fruit.

Fortunately, nitidulid or sap beetles — the insects that are most likely to be attracted to the odor from a split in the bark of an infected tree are relatively lazy. Thus, once they find a mat beneath the bark and begin to feed on the fungus therein, they are reluctant to leave. However, one chemical signal that will cause the beetles to move is the odor from of a freshly wounded, healthy oak tree.

And red oaks that have recently been pruned or suffered storm damage, especially in May and June when most oak wilt fungus spores are produced, are prime targets for new infections. The odor of fungus mats may also attract other insects and squirrels. We don't yet know whether these other visitors to infected trees actually pose a significant threat as vectors of the pathogen in New York, but this is one of several questions to be answered in coming months.

continued on page 14

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Oak Wilt (continued)

What can be done to prevent the disease from spreading to new areas or from intensifying in areas where it already occurs?

Arborists, plant health care professionals, and municipal foresters have had reasonably good success in keeping losses from oak wilt to a minimum with aggressive integrated pest management programs. Important steps include the following:

1. *If you live in New York's Capital District, examine oaks on your property regularly, paying special attention to red oaks with rapidly wilting leaves.* Diseased trees typically start to wilt in June or July and red oaks, in particular, may wilt completely in as little as three weeks. Leaves on infected trees typically show marginal "scorch" but other pathogens and environmental problems also cause scorch, so do not use this symptom alone as a diagnostic criterion. If you suspect that your trees

may have oak wilt, either collect samples yourself or enlist the aid of a trained arborist to collect them for you. Submit the samples to your county Cornell Cooperative Extension office for preliminary exam and possible forwarding on to Cornell's Plant Pathology Diagnostic Laboratory for further processing. *The best samples are from recently wilted branches with some leaves that are still partially green. Collect 4-6 branch pieces that are about 6 inches long and 1/4 - 1/2 inch diameter. Leave the bark on the branches. Sometimes, but not always, the most recent vascular tissue is prominently discolored, a symptom that enables laboratory staff to make the best judgments about where to take wood chips for additional processing. If you can't find discoloration in one or more twigs from a suspect tree, then at least be sure to collect twigs that have recently wilted leaves. Wood that is dry and/or completely brown is of no value to diagnosticians.*

2. *Remove diseased trees immediately and take steps to ensure that the wood dries quickly enough to minimize formation of sporulating mycelial mats.* One way to safely dispose of diseased wood is to cut and split it in the fall or winter, as you would for firewood. Then, completely wrap the cut wood in black plastic for a year. Afterwards, the plastic can be removed and the firewood can safely be left out until it is burned. Branches and stem pieces small enough to be chipped should be treated as such. Larger logs can be sawn into lumber as long as they are processed before the following spring.

Some landowners have actually been able to utilize proceeds from log sales to offset other oak wilt management costs.

3. *Use a backhoe, trencher, or vibratory plow to disrupt root grafts between diseased and healthy trees.* The locations of the trenches will vary depending on the species composition in any give site, but



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Sap beetles feed on the oak wilt fungus

in most residential sites with valuable oaks in jeopardy, two trenches may be dug. The first separates confirmed diseased trees from the nearest neighboring oaks; the second separates the nearest neighbors from the next closest population. Trenches should be 54-60 inches deep to assure that all potential grafts are broken and equipment operators must be mindful of underground utilities as they plan their work.

4. *Do not prune oaks in the spring (April 15 – July 15 in NY State) unless they pose an imminent danger to life or property!* Insects that spread the oak wilt fungus will visit new wounds on oak trees within 15 minutes, and they may very likely be carrying spores of the fungus if it is present in the vicinity.

5. *In sites with a history of oak wilt, cover all new wounds – including pruning wounds, lawnmower dings, weed wacker abrasions and any other injury that exposes fresh wood – with paint.* Pruning paint is preferable, but any kind of paint will discourage insects from visiting the wounds.

6. *Where treatment can be economically done (more likely in residential landscapes than forests) inject currently healthy red oaks in the vicinity of known diseased trees with propiconazole (Alamo®) per label instructions.* This product is registered in New York State for control of several tree diseases, including oak wilt, *but it must be applied by a commercial certified pesticide applicator.* Alamo® has a good track record for protecting healthy red oaks from root graft and beetle transmission of the

disease, but trees must be injected every 2-3 years for best results. The product offers no protection for red oaks that already have oak wilt but it may prolong the lives of more resistant bur and white oaks if they have become diseased.

Finally, even though oak wilt has found its way to New York, the future of the species is not as grim as one might think. Our colleagues in the Midwest, with many more acres of contiguous red oaks at stake, have had considerable success in keeping losses to a minimum by following the guidelines above. With our varied forest species composition in the Northeast, especially with many nonhosts scattered among our oaks, we ought to have a somewhat easier task before us. Nonetheless, success in any site will still require a sincere commitment.

Addendum. The foregoing article is edited from a similar one that was written soon after discovery of the disease in Scotia. Fortunately, the residents whose trees were infected then agreed to a wholesale removal of every possibly infected red oak within 100 feet of the known infected trees. Their once wooded neighborhood was laid bare by the operation but the “shock and awe” tactic seems to have worked inasmuch as meticulous surveys since then have shown no new cases. Nonetheless, our concern remains and we’ll depend on other “first detectors” like New York forest owners to help us find possible new introductions. 🌲

George W. Hudler is Chair and Professor of the Department of Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology at Cornell University.

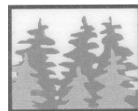
Mark Whitmore is a forest entomologist in the Cornell University Department of Natural Resources and the chair of the NY Forest Health Advisory Council.

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A dismal day in the woods (continued)

off telling Jamie the view would disappear as the saplings aged.

We learned the current owner, a builder, had bought the property eight years ago for a rural retreat shortly after the former owner had harvested some wood. Perhaps he thought he could build several recreational homes but then was discouraged by the economic downturn. He obtained a forest management plan and implemented one hardwood overstory thinning in the southern portion of the property where we had seen the skidders. We were told there was no point of looking at the thinned stand because it was now younger wood than the rest of the property; but it demonstrated the current owner's interest in managing.

It was probably obvious by this time that no property sale was going to happen that day; so we were

driven back to the rendezvous point. The realtor said he had more potential buyers to show the property to that day; so Jamie might want to sign a contract before the opportunity was lost. Jamie was disappointed we had not found more to walk to; that boy is a glutton for punishment. I pointed out it is hard to see much in beech thickets, especially on a wet day.

Yet, I did learn something on this trip. In New Hampshire, woodlots are taxed at about \$1/acre/year. When forests are harvested, the owner pays a 10% stumpage tax. This relates to our 6% stumpage tax under RPTL, Sections 480 and 480-a. It acts as a deferred tax where the woodlot owner is taxed when it can best be afforded at the time of income. What discouraged me is that even with very reasonable property taxes, there appears to be very little silviculture

being implemented in that area of New Hampshire. Timber harvests there seem to be done without much planning towards the future, just as they are here. Low property taxes do not seem to be leading to great forest stewardship. Bird species that prefer young forest conditions must be happy; but there does not seem to be much concern about establishing desirable regeneration or planning distribution of cutting to promote diversity of age classes or planning for periodic income opportunity. Rather, large tracts are being whacked and then busted up to make way for second homes. That, to me, seems pretty short-sighted. When is this nation going to realize the foundation to our wealth lies in our natural resources? ▲

Michael Greason is a certified forester and a member of the CDC of NYFOA



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Ask a Professional (continued)

cially available hydraulic splitters exist. Visit local dealers or county fairs to see displays and to learn about your options. Pick a splitter of the correct size based on the amount of wood you will split and the features it has to minimize operator fatigue. Be careful to avoid placing your hands on the ends of the block of wood; rather only grip the wood from the sides to avoid pinching fingers between the splitter head and wedge.

Proper wood storage is essential for clean and efficient burning. Seasoning the wood, or allowing the logs and split pieces to dry, is enhanced by providing air flow around and within the stacks of wood. Stack the split wood so the pile is stable, has air circulation, and is accessible for use in the winter. The time needed for adequate seasoning will vary

depending on initial moisture content, species, method of stacking, and air circulation. Most people who burn wood want a minimum of 8 to 12 months of seasoning, but ideally firewood is stored under cover for a year or two before burning. More information about the use and care of firewood is available at <http://cctompkins.org/energy/heating-wood>.

Producing your own firewood requires safe practices, the right tools, adequate physical conditioning, and dedication. The benefits include self-sufficiency, improved woodlot conditions, and potentially lower fuel costs. 

Peter J. Smallidge is the NYS Extension Forester and Director Cornell University Arnot Teaching and Research Forest. He can be reacted at email: pjs23@cornell.edu or visit his website at www.ForestConnect.info

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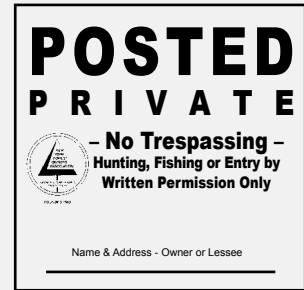


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Timber Theft and How to Prevent It

HUGH CANHAM AND RONALD PEDERSEN

Sometimes it is difficult not to leaves drop. Like when you are in a diner booth, one head plus two cushion thicknesses away from one voice, with the second voice only a couple feet beyond that, and each are speaking, well, earnestly.

It didn't take long for me to conclude that the speakers probably were consulting foresters and they were long-time friends, and yet had different perspectives on the way to charge landowners for their services in selling timber. I own a woodlot and have thought about exploring a timber sale. I found myself listening very intently.

Voice one, with his back to me and a deeper voice, was emphasizing that

he charges for marking the trees to be bid on an hourly basis because he wants to steer clear of any temptation to have the value of a particular tree impact his income. I wasn't sure what he meant and was prompted to pay closer attention to their conversation than to my coffee.

Voice two rebuts: Okay, I hear your point but you're implying that by working by commission, I might cheat, that I won't do my best for my client and the long term value of his woodlot. Besides, by working on a commission basis, the owner knows I'm not sitting in the woods in the shade racking up non-productive hours. And, he knows I'll find the

best logger with the best markets that I can.

Slight pause, but then deeper voice says: Sure, there are opportunities to shortchange a client no matter how one prices one's services — the same might hold true for the folks that service our trucks or sell us tree-marking paint. But, perception and opportunity are important in our profession. If marking on a commission, there will always be the temptation to mark a saleable but not mature black cherry or hard maple on the one hand, and to walk by the deformed tree which is taking space and nutrients from trees of much greater potential.

Voice two won't let go: Okay, but marking is only part of the service I provide and I need to account

for my time in the office, handling the bid, and monitoring the logger during the harvest. I provide all these services for the one simple-to-determine amount over which there is no argument.

Voice one stands pat: Come on, you know the point is not that office time needs to be compensated. Clients know there is more to our services than one walk around their woods. The point is whether charging based on a commission presents an opportunity to be unethical, unprofessional. We know that many trees that are not mature can still bring a good price. We also know that if left to grow, they put on value at an ever-increasing rate.

And, our clients are smart enough to know that if they ask their logger to cut down trees of little value, it takes the logger's time and indirectly must reduce the amount of the bid on the harvest. On the other hand, it's our job to explain that felling that poor tree represents an investment, which in the long run pays off.

In other words, if a forester is unethical, his commission goes up when he marks a saleable tree and if he skips the deformed tree, his income also goes up because the logger doesn't have to cut down a worthless tree.

Voice two: Okay, we've been through this before. Right now, I need to go to an appointment, and tonight I'll sleep soundly, as always, knowing I've done right by my clients.

With that they were gone and I sat wondering. I'd just learned that all foresters don't use the same approach in setting their fees. But, I was also reminded of the obvious — that in working with professionals, whether foresters or doctors, a mutual confidence and understanding of all aspects of the relationship is critical. ▲

Hugh Canham is a retired professor from SUNY ESF and a member of NYFOA's CNY chapter. Ron Pedersen is a past President of NYFOA and is a member of the Capital District chapter.

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NYFOA MEMBER PUBLICATIONS


Richard Levine

Richard Levine has been a member of NYFOA for two years. He looks forward to each issue of *The New York Forest Owner* to continue his education and appreciation of his land.

He has owned his woodland for six years and has begun to implement a Forest Steward Program. "Before that work began there were a few years of wonder and study," stated Levine. The wonder part has resulted in the publication of his second book of poems, *That Country's Soul* (Finishing Line Press, 2010), which is about life in a forest. Below is a sample of one of Mr. Levine's poems.

<http://finishinglinepress.com/NewReleasesandForthcomingTitles.htm>

THAT COUNTRY'S SOUL




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That Country's Soul
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"And if I hear my name/ringing out of these woods/I will rise through this loneliness/and be nourished by the call" writes Richard Levine in his austere beautiful new book THAT COUNTRY'S SOUL. I think of Chief Seattle's observation that, if all the animals were gone, humans would die of "a great loneliness of the spirit." For this is Levine's burden: to posit a relationship to nature when there may be no time "except for goodbyes." The forest he has created in these pages is mythic, but the poet enters it humbly, with "pine pegs and a spool of twine" and with a task that is profoundly urgent and transcendent. This is a lovely collection, and to me, in the subtlest of ways, a call to environmental action."

~D. Nurkse author of *Border Kingdom, Voices Over Water, Burnt Island, The Fall, The Rules of Paradise*

NOT THE THING

Walking in woods I saw across
a field a red bird, bearing all
the burden of a red that could
only exist amid the brittle
black and brown, and gray and white
of winter, and it made the world
quiet enough to hear the wooden
laments of bare, though not barren, trees,

where snow reached untrammelled
to the indistinguishable sky.
Two fluffed up chickadees, no larger
than puffs of my breath, held the cold
at feathers' length, and watched me
from a hundred different branches.
Perhaps they saw me as incongruous
as red in this chalk and charcoal sketch.

I held my breath to unfog the binocular
lenses, but the red bird was gone.
The stark woods seemed poorer as I
walked on, radiant with the idea
of color, and starved by a familiar
hunger; for as with so much we desire,
it is not the thing we long to hold
as much as the experience of it unfolding.
—Richard Levine

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Member Profile: *Jeff Rupp*

CARLY NEUMANN

Jeff Rupp is a retired New York State employee where he worked for the Department of Environmental Conservation as a police officer. The Rupp's have lived in New Albion, NY in Cattaraugus County since 1973. They lived in the village for 6 years before they purchased their first parcel of 62 acres and have since added 5 contiguous parcels for a current total of 157.8 acres. Their most recent purchase was 50 acres in 2005. The property is co-owned by Jeff and his wife Diane and they recently incorporated the property into an LLC, the Rupp Family Forest, after four years of planning.

Their management strategy reflects their goal to leave the land in better condition than when they received it

and to leave a light footprint. They follow a management plan developed by Bruce Robinson, a professional forester as well as gleaned advice from other sources such as the Master Forest Owners program and New York Forest Owners Association. "The forest changes every day" and they are always looking for ways to stay informed. They see the forest as a renewable resource where "we can use it in a way that benefits the forest, the wildlife, and everything else that uses it." Rupp has some concern about forest pests such as the emerald ash borer and Asian longhorn beetle and recently removed quite a few conifers, scotch pine and white spruce that were planted as part of a plantation 50-60 years ago. Overall



Their home is constructed of timber primarily from their own property.

though, Rupp believes that through positive management they have achieved a healthy forest and keeping it healthy will diminish all other negative issues.

The property spent 107 years and three generations as farmland with a variety of habitats. Now, it is largely forested with about 40 percent mature northern hardwood forest and 50 percent late to mid-succession forest. The last 5-10 percent is old meadow and pasture kept open by occasional mowing for the purpose of diversifying the habitat as well as providing a good edge for wildlife habitat. The property also features several vernal pools and a half-acre pond. The property is accessible both on foot and motorized vehicles by an excellent system of roads. A spring on the property is believed to have been the water source for a cheese factory and also supplies the water for their home. Their forest is predominantly sugar and red maple, although they keep their ash component to a minimum due to the emerald ash borer. Rupp cites diversity as key to a healthy forest.

The Rupp Family Forest is a hands-on operation where fam-



"A Hands-on Operation" Rupp completes much of the work in the forest himself or with the help of his family.

continued on page 22



Jeff and Diane Rupp have three children and five grandchildren.

ily members complete much of the work. Rupp has cut and skidded his own timber for sales. The house was built in 1979 largely out of lumber and logs from their property. The home is framed with hemlock and features hardwood tongue and groove paneling throughout on the walls and the ceilings. They also grow an organic garden.


Their woodlands provide them with a whole host of benefits, from timber sales and firewood to hunting, hiking, bird watching, cross country skiing, ice skating, and fishing. Rupp believes that all the things that they can do in the woods would surprise many. They welcome 4-H, school,

and scout groups, “People interested in forests or who want space in the woods to hike around.” They lead a couple of woods walks each year.

The Rupp’s find the most important reason for owning their property is the many benefits of a healthy forested landscape. Their work can pass on the benefits to others and sharing with those around them. Rupp cites the air quality as just one of these benefits, “the clean air benefits a lot of people.” He suggests that forest owners “Keep their eyes and ears open. Read and learn all you can and use all the help available.”



Access roads allow vehicle and foot traffic throughout the property.

They see themselves as stewards of the land and are constantly working to improve its quality. 

Carly Neumann is a Forest Resources Extension Program Assistant at Cornell University, Dept. of Natural Resources, Ithaca, NY 14853. Dr. Shorna Allred is the faculty advisor for the Member Profile Series.



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Some of the Rupp family members enjoy a swing on their property.

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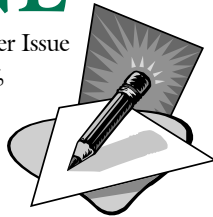
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MAGAZINE DEADLINE

Materials submitted for the November/December Issue should be sent to Mary Beth Malmsheimer, Editor, *The New York Forest Owner*, 134 Lincklaen Street, Cazenovia, NY 13035, (315) 655-4110 or via e-mail at mmalmshe@syr.edu. Articles, artwork and photos are invited and if requested, are returned after use.



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