

# The New York Forest Owner

A PUBLICATION OF THE NEW YORK FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION

*For people caring about New York's trees and forests*

May/June 2012



*Member Profile: Kurt and Kristie Edwards*

*Volume 50 Number 3*



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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.

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**COVER:** Kurt and Kristie Edwards on their property in Mayfield, NY. For member profile turn to page 21. Photo courtesy of the Edwards'.

# From The President

The main thrust of NYFOA in accomplishing its mission (see the box below) has been education, whether it is publications, meetings, woodwalks, or networking with knowledgeable professionals. However, another aspect of realizing this mission is through advocacy. Our participation in Forestry Awareness Day in Albany this past March is an example of this.

Recently we were asked to (re-) join the New York Invasive Species Advisory Committee, NYISAC,



a 25-member supporting body to the New York's Invasive Species Council, <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/6989.html>. Your Board of Directors enthusiastically supported our

being a member and board member **David Morabito, Sr.** (one of several to step forward) volunteered to be our representative. We've asked David to support aggressive/effective measures to manage invasive species while at the same time being respectful of the rights of landowners.

Another aspect of NYFOA's growing advocacy thrust is the promoting the concept of Legislative Liaisons at the chapter level. While the concept is still being developed it is expected that individuals in this position would develop relationships with state legislators from their chapters' region in order to help get NYFOA's message to Albany. Interested parties are encouraged to contact their Chapter Chairs (<http://www.nyfoa.org/chapters/index.php>) to become involved in this effort on the ground floor.

We believe we have completed the final set of deliverables for the last of our legacy

grants, the State Wildlife Grant, as administered by NY's Department of Environmental Conservation. The main thrust of this grant was "To identify... landowners of critical forested habitats for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN)... who would be willing to undertake forested habitat management and restoration activities on their land." and "To develop a comprehensive written implementation plan for management and restoration of critical habitats on NYS's private forest lands for SGCN." As part of this activity, with the able assistance of personnel from CCE-Chenango and Cornell University, 5 brochures were developed in a "Habitat Stewardship Series": *Grasslands; Marsh and Shrub Wetlands; Northern Hardwoods; Shrublands; and Vernal Pools*. PDF versions of these tri-folds can be found on our web site and the physical hardcopies are being sent to your chapters for distribution as they see fit.

For those of you who were unable to attend the NYFOA presentations at the NYS Farm Show, Bob Montgomery of Moose River Media recorded them and has made them available to us and we've now posted them on our website. Topics include: *Woodland and Wildlife Sources for Landowners; Sugarbush Thinning to Improve Trees and Sap Quality; Best Practices for Improving Timber Values; What You Need to Know About Emerald Ash Borer; Timber Market Values, Present and Future; Silvopasture Benefits to Land, Livestock & Farmers; and Plug into Woodlot Renewables: Earth Wind, Fire & Water*. Our thanks to the individual presenters and most especially to the CNY chapter's Jamie Christensen and Rich Taber for coordinating these seminars. 🌲

—Jim Minor  
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 helps the interested public 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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# The NYFOA Scholarship Fund

JIM MINOR, PRESIDENT, NYFOA

In 1996 the New York Forest Owners Association and the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) formally agreed to the establishment of a permanent endowment for forestry education and research purposes at the College. It is known as The NYFOA Endowment Fund. As stated in the agreement, "Grants and awards shall be assigned by the ESF Chair of the Faculty of Forestry, in consultation with the President of NYFOA."

This April I was privileged to attend this year's Scholarship Appreciation luncheon held at ESF's main campus in Syracuse, NY. Many of this year's 150 ESF scholarship winners were in attendance along with their sponsors. Each of the winners gave a brief overview of their background including class (ranging from Freshman to Graduate Student) and major(s). I sat next to this year's NYFOA scholarship winner, **Joseph Morse**. Mr. Morse, a native of Greenbelt, Maryland, is a Junior in Natural Resource Management at ESF who plans to pursue a career as a Park Law Enforcement Officer or as a Natural Resource Specialist with the

US Forest Service. His past summer jobs have been in trail maintenance for the Student Conservation Association in the Hoover Wilderness area near Yosemite and similar work with the US Forest Service on the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest near Ely, Nevada. He likes to kayak and backpack as well as play chess. He, like many of his compatriots in attendance, is looking for a summer job related to his chosen field prior to going on to graduate work.

The NYFOA Scholarship Fund is based on an endowment from which the interest is used to fund the individual scholarships, one per year. The amount is modest but could grow with additional monies supplied to the base endowment. Individual NYFOA members probably represent the greatest potential sources of support over the long run. Donations, in the form of memorials, honoraria and bequests, would be a very appropriate means of commemorating personal relationships through demonstrated support for the type of study vital to the needs of forest owners, present and future.

Individuals wishing to make such a contribution should make their checks payable to ESF College Foundation and mail them directly to the Development Office, SUNY-ESF, One Forestry Drive, Syracuse, New York 13210. Please note that they are to be directed to the NYFOA Scholarship Fund. Gifts are deductible to the extent provided by law. 🏔️



NYFOA Scholarship winner, Joseph Morse at the summit of Mt. Washington, NH.

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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](mailto:pjs23@cornell.edu) with an explicit mention of "Ask a Professional." Additional reading on various topics is available at [www.forestconnect.info](http://www.forestconnect.info)*

## Question:

I have heard about Emerald ash borer, and realize it occurs in some parts of the state. I have some trees in my woodlot that I think are ash, but I'm not sure which type of ash, or even if they are ash. What can I do to identify these trees?

## Answer:

The ability to manage invasive or interfering species depends on an accurate identification of the pest and the host. This identification is essential for us to manage undesirable insects such as the Emerald ash borer, but also interfering plants.

To help you in your tree identification efforts, there are several resources you can access. Most of these resources are online, which you may be able to access from home, your local library, or perhaps your local office of Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE). First, directly related to your question, there is an ash identification guide in the education section at [www.emeraldashborer.info](http://www.emeraldashborer.info) that describes different ash species and potential look-alike tree species. Second, you could contact a Cornell Master Forest Owner volunteer, via your CCE office, who can provide a free visit, non-technical advice, and connect you with relevant resources. Third, you can look at pictures of many

different tree species at [www.Forestry-Images.org](http://www.Forestry-Images.org); this site won't identify the plant, but you can search for a species and look at pictures. Fourth, you can see the CCE online tree identification guide at <http://bhort.bh.cornell.edu/tree/trees.htm> Finally, ForestConnect will be releasing an on-line tree identification course in early summer. Watch for details on the website.

A few terms need to be defined before we discuss the process of tree identification. First, all plants are named as a species, and each species belongs to a genus. Thus the formal name of a plant includes the genus and the species. One genus, such as *Fraxinus* the ash genus, might include several species. The ash genus in NY includes three common ash species that will be described below. In the convention for officially naming plants, the genus is capitalized, but the species is not; both genus and species names are either underlined or italicized indicating they are of Latin origin. Genera are clustered into families, and families are clustered through a hierarchy that encompasses the plant kingdom. The ash genus is in the Olive family based on characteristics of the flowers. Tree identification guides will include a more thorough glossary of botanical terms, but these terms are sufficient to get us started.

Trees are identified by features that include leaves, buds and twigs, bark and fruit. Habitat, or the soil and site conditions where the species is common, may also assist in the iden-



*The pinnately compound leaf of white ash has leaflets arranged like the pinnae of a feather. The leaflets are broad and taper abruptly to a short point. Green ash leaves are narrower, toothed along the full margin of the leaflet, and have a longer taper to the point.*

tification. Leaves are obvious in the summer, but also variable and often indistinct in their features. When leaves drop in the fall, the leaf scar is visible on the twig and remains visible for more than a year. Buds are the structures on the twigs that break open in the spring to produce leaves and new twigs. There is a bud at the base of each leaf. The bark is on the stem of the tree and its features change with age. The bark on the upper section of the tree is the youngest (because our trees grow from the top), and the bark lower on the stem is more mature. Immature bark is more difficult to identify than mature bark. The fruit is the result of the pollinated flower and includes the seed. Several steps will help determine if you have ash trees.

**Step 1** – The first identification feature is to determine if your tree has opposite buds, leaves, and branches. “Opposite” means that the buds and leaves are paired and directly opposing along the stem. The buds produce the leaves and twigs, if buds are opposite then the leaves and twigs are also opposite. In NY, the only woodlot trees with opposite leaves are the ashes, the maples, and the dogwoods. European buckthorn has “sub-opposite” buds and leaves, meaning they are paired but not directly opposing on the stem. Some



*The twig of white ash has opposite velvety buds (you can only see one bud of the pair). The leaf scar is notched on the upper edge and the bud nestles within the notch. For green ash, the leaf scar is flat on the upper edge, without a notch.*



*The samara or winged fruit of a white ash. Note the wing covers a small portion of the seed. See also the white ash leaflet.*

shrub species have opposite buds, leaves and branches.

**Step 2** – The ash species have compound leaves. Compound leaves have multiple leaflets attached to a single stem that attaches to the twig. Most of the other species with opposite buds have simple leaves, meaning there is one leaf blade attached to the leaf’s stalk. Remember each leaf has a bud at the base of its stalk. A leaflet does not have a bud. If the tree has opposite buds and leaves and the leaves are compound, then your tree is either an ash or a boxelder. Boxelder (*Acer negundo*) is a type of maple.

**Step 3** – Boxelder has several features which distinguish it from the ashes. Boxelder has 3 to 5 leaflets compared to 5 or more on the ashes. Boxelder buds are whitish in color as they are covered by whitish hairs. Ash buds are dark in color and appear to have a velvety surface. Boxelder twigs are shiny and purplish in color and may have a faint waxy coating or waxy sheen (called a “bloom”). Ash twigs are grayish or brownish and dull in color. Box elder fruits are a samara, like the ashes and maples, which is a

small seed attached to a papery wing. However, boxelder fruits have a wing that is thickest on one edge and tapers to a thin edge. Ash fruits have a wing that is uniformly thick and resembles a short-handled boat’s oar.

**Step 4** – All the ashes are susceptible to the Emerald ash borer, but you may wish to identify them as white, green or black ash. This separation is not easy for many people. White ash and green ash are quite similar, but rather distinct from black ash. Black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*) is the least common in NY, and is almost exclusively restricted to wet soils or stream banks. Black ash is more common in northern NY than in other areas of the state. Black ash has fruits that are broader than white or green ash and not as long. Black ash buds are blackish, and the first pair of buds are not close to the bud on the tip end of the twig. The leaflets of black ash attach almost directly to the leaf stem (the leaf stem or stalk of a compound leaf is called the rachis), compared to other ashes that have a short stalk that connects the leaflet to the rachis. White ash (*Fraxinus americana*)

*continued on page 17*

# New York State Tree Farm News

ERIN O'NEILL



## The Blurry Definitions of Management Planning

I always try to talk to you this time of year about the annual review of your management plan. Recently however, I have become aware that just because I want you to have a management plan, doesn't mean YOU want to have a management plan. Let me instead simply challenge you to think about what management planning means to you and encourage you to consider a few things. (Maybe write them down into a brief strategic outlook for your property!)

I want to give you a few definitions and when I put them all together in one place, I think you'll begin to see that it's another area where different land management professionals use various confusing terms to mean the same thing! I've used some textbooks and the internet and tried to summarize the terms in a generally understandable way. Sometimes I think we don't even understand each other, yet we expect you all to sort it out, make sense of it

and implement a coherent plan on your woodlot. If you can...give me a call, I need a consultation!!

### 1. *Standard forester talk and Tree Farm profession: Multiple-Use Management*

The idea of forest land management for two or more purposes such as; wood production, water quality, wildlife, recreation, aesthetics and clean air. By concept, this may involve management through timber stand manipulation.

### 2. *Biology jargon: Forest Ecosystem Management*


The management of forest ecosystem processes and disturbance regime to sustain the desired values and services across the landscape through management of human uses and interactions within the environment.

### 3. *Socioeconomic babble:*

#### *Management of Forest Services*

Manipulating optimum yields of products and services from a given area without impairing the productive capacity of the site for other products and services, often producing these goods and services simultaneously.

See what I mean, we're talking about the exact same thing! It's all just integrated natural resource management. Simply stated, each one of these ideas is just defined by managing your woodlot for several different uses at once to reap many different benefits concurrently. I've visited many of you, so I speak with authority when I say, you're already doing this! So my challenge to you: Take some time to think about who uses your property and why, and if there are things you could do to make it easier, better, safer, more profitable, prettier or anything else you can imagine.

If you need help, ask your neighbor, your friend, your local MFO or contact a Tree Farm representative (1-800-836-3566) or e-mail (nytreefarm@hotmail.com) 

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

Are you interested in a particular topic and would like to see an article about it?

Please send your suggestions to:  
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# Kid's Corner

REBECCA HARGRAVE



Nathalie (right) and Adelaide (left) Smallidge enjoying time in the woods where they hike, play and learn about trees and woods. Photo courtesy of Peter Smallidge.

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 rotting log

Once a tree falls to the ground you might think it is done growing—not so! Dozens of critters use those fallen logs and branches as homes. Some of those critters then become food for other forest dwellers, while others continue to break down the log into nutrients that can be used by other plants to grow, through decomposition. So, what might you find if you take a closer look?

The first to take advantage of the log are wood boring insects, like ambrosia beetles, and decay fungi, such as oyster mushrooms. They begin the decomposi-

tion process by directly feeding on the wood and allowing for moisture and air to enter the log and speed up decay. As insects and fungi flourish...

Chipmunks, bacteria, slugs, and other insects come in to feed on the mushrooms and more insects colonize the log. As they breakdown the wood they make the log suitable for...

Woodpeckers and skunks who begin to peck and tear apart that partially rotten log looking for a juicy morsel to eat. As they forage they create large cavities in the log which are perfect for...

Mice, bears and salamanders to live in (or under). Many mammals, amphibians and reptiles will take up residency in and under logs; some just for the winter, others year round. Meanwhile...

Bacteria, millipedes, sowbugs, and earthworms continue to feed on and breakdown the log. Eventually the log is so soft that plants can grow in it. Ferns, herbs, and even trees will take advantage of all the soft organic matter; creating new life from a rotten log.

### What do you see?

Talk a walk and look for rotting logs. Get down close, use a magnifying glass, and poke around a bit, but try not to break it apart and disturb all the critters inside. (Leave it as you found it.)

### Put an X next to the ones you find.

- Insects \_\_\_\_\_
- Evidence of insect feeding \_\_\_\_\_
- Mushrooms or other fungus \_\_\_\_\_
- Woodpecker foraging \_\_\_\_\_
- Animals living in or under the log \_\_\_\_\_
- Earthworms or millipedes \_\_\_\_\_
- Moss \_\_\_\_\_
- Ferns/Trees growing from the log \_\_\_\_\_
- What else? \_\_\_\_\_

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



# Wild Things in Your Woodlands

KRISTI SULLIVAN

## RING-NECKED SNAKE



*The ring-necked snake (Diadophis punctatus) is a slender, small to medium-sized snake that grows to an average length of 15 inches. Females are sometimes longer than the males, but not significantly so. The head of the ring-necked snake tends to be wider than its neck and flattened in appearance. Its sides and back are brownish-gray or bluish-black, with a yellow to orange ring just behind the head. Smooth scales give the ring-necked snake a slightly glossy appearance. Its belly is bright yellow or yellowish-orange, typically without spots, or with just a few small black spots down the center.*

As summer approaches and the weather warms the ring-necked snake, having emerged from hibernation in April, becomes quite active. Generally found in or near moist, shady woodlands, the ring-necked snake is common in New York State in locations where appropriate cover is available. Specific habitat sites are varied and include mature or second

growth forests, old fields, rocky hillsides, grassy fields, and the borders of streams and rivers. Forest edges, roadside cuts, and forest openings such as log landings and skid trails also provide attractive, sunny sites.

It takes about three years for these animals to reach maturity, and ring-necked snakes often will live longer than 10 years. Most adults mate in

May and June, and egg-laying occurs at the end of June or early July. Females usually lay two to 10 oblong eggs, each about 1-inch long, in nest sites inside logs, under rocks, or in old burrows. Because females often share their nest sites, it is common to see many eggs together in one location. Young snakes four to six inches long hatch out approximately six weeks after mating, and begin to feed and grow rapidly before the winter begins.

Ring-necked snakes seldom are seen moving about during the day. Even where abundant, they tend to be secretive, and can usually only be seen by lifting up rocks, logs, or other cover items during the day in the summer or early fall months. While searching for ring-necked snakes, it is common to find two or more ring-necked snakes under the same cover object. Once these snakes begin to use

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a cover object they often return to it, using their sense of smell to relocate the site.

Although docile, ring-necked snakes often exude a pungent, unpleasant-smelling musky substance when handled. This defense mechanism probably provides some protection from predators. Likely predators of this animal include animals that can enter burrows or dig such as the Eastern milk snake, black racers, shrews, weasels, and skunks. Other animals such as owls, hawks, foxes, and domestic cats may occasionally prey on ring-necked snakes when they venture out to feed. The snakes, in turn, may feed on a wide variety of items including salamanders, small snakes, frogs, slugs and worms. However, salamanders are often the most common food item eaten, followed by earthworms.

As the days grow colder in September and October, ring-necked snakes move into deep rock crevices, anthills, or burrows made by other animals. Ring-necked snakes have preferred locations where they retreat to hibernate during the winter. Individuals often use the same hibernation sites year after year. They often share winter den sites with other ring-necked snakes as well as other snake species.

To enhance habitat for ring-necked snakes on your land, maintain any open slopes with exposed rocks for cover and basking areas. If you have a timber harvest, ask your logger to push the butt ends of the logs (usually left behind) into piles at the edge of the landing. These piles provide excellent nesting and resting cover for ring-necked snakes and other woodland snakes as well. Leaving logs on the forest floor and along the woodland edge will provide habitat not only for the snakes but also for the salamanders they feed on. 🌲

*Kristi Sullivan coordinates the Conservation Education Program at Cornell's Arnot Forest. More information on managing habitat for wildlife, as well as upcoming educational programs at the Arnot Forest can be found by visiting the Arnot Conservation Education Program web site at [ArnotConservation.info](http://ArnotConservation.info)*

## 2011 NYFOA CHAPTER SERVICE AWARDS

*The following chapter awards were presented at the 2012 NYFOA Annual Meeting:*

**AFC:** Success of any organization is largely a function of how well it's connected with its membership. Outreach and interaction make the difference between a functional group as opposed to a skeletal framework. **Shari Lake's** relationship with the Allegheny Foothills Chapter (AFC) is like family—well it is family! Her Dad, Don Adams, is a long-time AFC member who has hosted two woodwalks on his property in recent years. In 2009 at one of those woodwalks, when the Adams family also hosted our Annual Picnic, we discussed a void we had in our organization. Shari was present that day and though she wasn't a member at that time, she volunteered to assume the role of Newsletter Editor. She was uneasy about that first fall newsletter she produced, but we were thrilled! She organized information and images in an appealing and inviting way. Shari has continued to develop attractive and informative newsletters for AFC ever since. Due in large part to her efforts, we have a strong line of communication with our membership, resulting in good attendance at many of our events. We are extremely appreciative of her ongoing commitment and work on behalf of the AFC. Accordingly, we are proud to present Shari with the AFC Chapter Service Award for 2011.

**CDC:** **Bob Sheedy** was awarded the 2011 Chapter Service Award for the Capital District Chapter of NYFOA. Bob is from Colonie in Albany County and has been a member of NYFOA for 15 years. He has been on the Steering Committee for five years, serving as Secretary for two years. Bob organizes the volunteers who man our NYFOA display at the Schaghticoke Fair, mans the display at the Northeastern Woodworkers Showcase in Saratoga Springs, and is a regular supporter of the Chapter events.

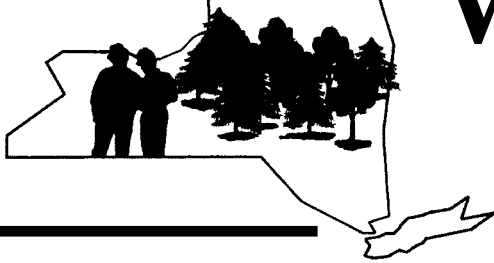
**CNY:** **Maria Babcock** became a MFO volunteer in 1997 and is a long-time NYFOA member. She has contributed many hours each year planning on our Steering Committee, hosting woodswalks and our Annual Christmas Party, and has treated all of us to the delicious offerings coming out of her kitchen. We sample her culinary skills at woodswalks, at our annual pot luck dinner, and the gourmet feast at our Christmas Party. We are presenting Maria our Annual Chapter Service Award for 2011.

**SAC:** **Robert Manning** has held numerous positions within SAC including vice-chair, chair, treasurer (currently), communications director (currently) and he typically volunteers for work on woods walks, county fairs (coordinator for two years - Saratoga County) and other ad hoc chapter activities. He is a quiet support person we can count on for almost every chapter need.

**WFL:** **Dean Faklis** was chosen as the WFL Chapter Service Award recipient for 2011. After having an MFO visit in July 2009, Dean jumped in with both feet becoming a NYFOA member and took the MFO course in the fall of 2009. Dean has since made several MFO visits with novice forestry owners. He also became a Board of Directors member of WFL as Meetings Coordinator. Most recently Dean spoke on "Woodland Trails & Structures; Creating Your Legacy" at the January 2012 WFL Chapter meeting providing us with great possibilities for our current or future woodlots. Dean also started the Springwater Wood Bank which provides free firewood on an emergency basis to people (mainly senior citizens) that have physical or financial difficulties.

A longtime passion of Dean's is being an amateur/ham radio operator. He first met his wife (and high school sweetheart) Julie over the radio. Their woodlots consist of approximately 130 acres with saw timber, wildlife and recreation as their property objectives. We congratulate Dean and thank him for everything he has contributed to our chapter. 🌲

## NY Master Forest Owner Program



# Volunteers making a difference

GARY GOFF

*The goal of the MFO/COVERTS Program is to provide private forest owners with the information and encouragement necessary to manage their forests to enhance ownership satisfaction.*

## NY Master Forest Owner Volunteer Program Testimonials

Nearly every year I submit a promotional and solicitation article to the *New York Forest Owner* in an effort to acquire new candidates for the NY Master Forest Owner Volunteer Program. The NYFOA membership is an ideal source of volunteers who are experienced and dedicated forest owners. And indeed, well over half of the 20 or so candidates accepted into the annual training are NYFOA members.

Without exception, the new trainees greatly appreciate the training workshop that is held mid-September at Cornell University's Arnot Forest and are very enthusiastic about their praise of the program, as stated on their evaluations completed the last day of the training. So this year, I have decided to use the words penned by recent

MFO alumni as the primary source of solicitation to NYFOA members!

Kristie and Kurt Edwards (who are also the NYFOA members featured in this issue's *Member Profile*) attended the 2011 training and also the Northern Refresher workshop this last October hosted by Ed and Donna Welch in Warren County. Jim Minor forwarded me their letter of thanks sent to NYFOA. I spoke with Mark Lewis at the 20th annual Rural Landowners Workshop held in Cattaraugus County this March, where he got me caught up on his activities since graduating from the MFO training in 2010. I asked him to contribute to this article which he graciously did!

These MFO volunteers are exemplary examples of forest owners I wish to have attend the 2012 training program.

If you would like to learn more about the MFO program and perhaps have a volunteer meet with you in your woodlot or wish to apply to become a volunteer, please go to the MFO website at [www.cornellmfo.info](http://www.cornellmfo.info)

I sincerely thank the Edwards and Mark for contributing to this article and all the rest of the MFO volunteers who donate their time, talents, and expertise to the goal of providing NY forest owners with the encouragement and information they need to fulfill their ownership objectives. And I wish to thank the administration of NYFOA over the years for promoting the MFO program within its membership and numerous other contributions toward the cause!



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Dear Jim,

We wanted to take a moment to express our gratitude for your support of the Master Forest Owner Volunteer Program. We attended the MFO program this fall at the Arnot Teaching & Research Forest. We weren't quite sure what to expect from the weekend, we were urged by other MFO's and the late Mike Greason to become MFO's ourselves. We are forest owners, active members of NYFOA and spent most of our life in the field of agriculture. After closing our dairy farm and turning to our own woods to fulfill our love for

nature, this program was just what we needed. The organization was superb; Gary Goff did an amazing job. The presenters were all top notch, passionate people with so much knowledge to impart. We learned so much, the topics were interesting, the program was challenging but most of all a great experience. We got to know so many other forest owners from all over the state with the same interest in sustainable forestry as ourselves. Each day brought different subjects, so much information and excitement to help connect other landowners with resource people to help them attain their forest owner goals.

We appreciate your support of the Master Forest Owner Program. We cannot imagine this program ending any time soon. We completed one MFO visit in October and are glad to have two more lined up next month. Programs cannot run without funding and in times like this we would not like to see this one on the chopping block, your support is so very important. We are sorry it took so long for us to send our thanks; time flies so fast. A thank you is always better late than never.

Thanks again,

Kurt & Kristie Edwards  
Mayfield, NY



*Kurt Edwards using his chainsaw to cut firewood.*



*Mark Lewis, MFO, putting the finishing touches on a forest road culvert.*

Dear Gary

I learned about the Master Forest Owner (MFO) Program in early 2010 and it sounded intriguing. I had owned forest land for a decade, and enjoyed working in the woods on occasion for over 40 years. I had worked with a NYS DEC forester and had a written management plan, but the more I learned about forest stewardship the more I wanted to learn.

The MFO program was a perfect fit. We spent four days at Cornell's Arnot Forest learning about all aspects of forest management for both sawtimber and wildlife. Fellow students were mostly NYFOA members and all shared a love for forests. We enjoyed the classes and field trips, and were well-fed every day. The instructors were knowledgeable, enthusiastic and interesting.

Our commitment to give back after the training was to make five visits to other forest owners by December of the following year. I was able to make six visits in 2011, and have made two 2012 visits as of March 6th. I met a variety of interesting people and walked with them in their forests, large and small. Each forest is different, and each owner's objectives are different, but everyone has

shared the desire to get more out of their forest ownership experience.

The MFOs are not foresters, just fellow landowners who want to share their enthusiasm and training about forest ownership / stewardship. If you would like to get independent inputs about your forest, contact a local MFO. If you are willing to spend some time visiting fellow forest owners and want to expand your knowledge of forests, I encourage you to apply for MFO training.

The training significantly broadened my understanding, and the opportunity to share time with others in their forests has been a real treat. What better way to spend a few hours a year than tramping around new woods?

Mark Lewis  
Wellsville, NY

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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

## A DECLINE OF SMOOTH BARK HICKORIES

BY DOUGLAS C. ALLEN, JOHN J. GRAHAM AND KIM B. ADAMS

*Problems with hickory decline continue in New York and I thought this excellent article would be timely as the bark beetle season gets underway. Please note this two-part article originally appeared in The New York Forest Owner in November/December 2008*

—Mark Whitmore

In recent years, both of my co-authors have examined mixed species woodlots where bitternut hickory

experienced substantial mortality or showed signs of a typical decline (Fig. 1). John, a state forester working out of the Cortland Office of the NYDEC, has noticed this disease in many central and western counties in New York State.

There are several frustrating aspects about such a problem; first, is the difficulty in identifying the agent or agents that predisposed these trees to the secondary organisms that lead to their death and, secondly, once the malady is understood it is a very frustrating exercise to develop reasonable tactics to manage the problem.

Many forest owners have woodlots that consist of mixed hardwoods, including various species of hickory. This is the first of two articles about hickory decline. Part I describes the symptoms, presents a brief history of the disease's occurrence and provides information about one of the principle agents associated with the problem. In Part II, we will discuss current research that is attempting to determine if micro-organisms are also involved. Additionally, we will briefly discuss other insects associated with the deterioration of diseased hickory.

Decline by definition results from a series of events that result in the slow (over a period of a few years) demise of a tree, beginning with the deterioration of the crown. Initially foliage discolors and wilts. This is followed by twig death and premature leaf drop, until eventually the crown begins to

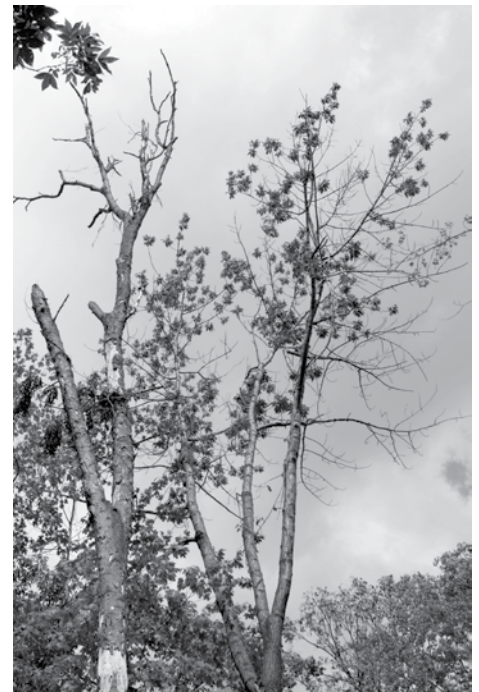


Figure 1. Typical appearance of hickories in decline.

die from the top down (crown dieback) (Fig. 1). The time frame and diverse sequence of agents involved separates the disease we call a decline from relatively fast acting mortality that occurs in a year or two.

Hickory bark beetle plays a key role in both the rapid mortality of hickory under some circumstances and the more slowly acting problem we call a decline. This insect, considered the most serious insect pest of hickory, is an aggressive "secondary" agent that flourishes in a host tree after the latter has been stressed by some other event. Healthy trees, except for scattered branches in the crown



Figure 2. Top view of a hickory bark beetle.

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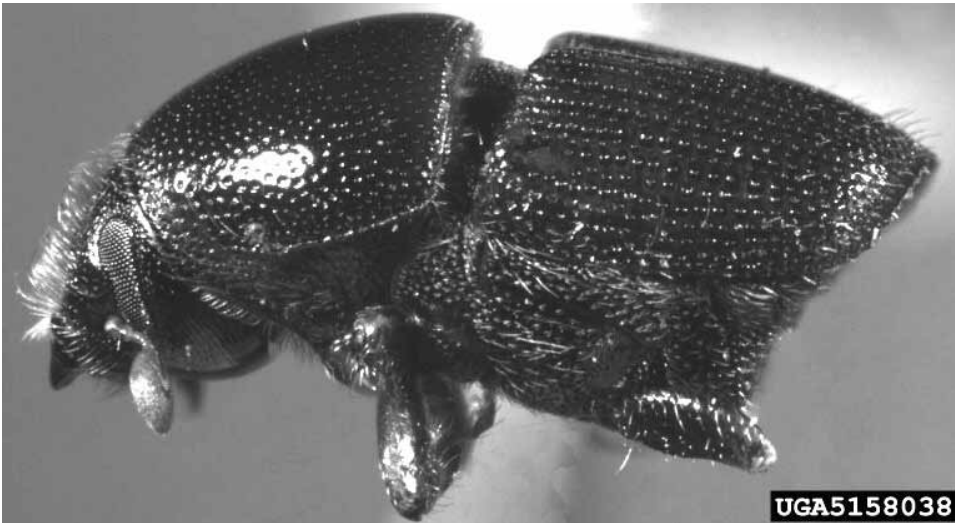


Figure 3. Side view of a male hickory bark beetle. Note one of the posterior spines projecting from the lower margin of the abdomen.

that are dying as a consequence of natural pruning, are generally resistant to the bark beetle. Stress from such things as drought, heavy defoliation, excessive stand density and other disturbances, however, often have been associated with infestations of hickory bark beetle and eventual death of the host.

Observations made by entomologists early in the last century repeatedly

refer to drought (or moisture stress associated with land form, thin soils or other site conditions) and excessive grazing in wood lots as two predisposing events that were thought to trigger a rapid build up of this bark beetle.

The occurrence of hickory decline is not new nor is its' distribution restricted to New York State. The disease has been noted throughout the eastern United States, generally most every-



Figure 4. Typical gallery pattern of hickory bark beetle. This is etched on the surface of the sapwood in smooth barked hickories. The short vertical gallery in the center is the egg or brood gallery; the fan-shaped collection of larval galleries radiate from both sides of this.

where within the range of smooth-barked hickories. The New York State Entomologist, Ephraim Porter Felt, in his annual report of 1910 noted the loss "of thousands of trees in central New York in recent years" associated with an outbreak of hickory bark beetle. In 1912, Hopkins, who at that time was in charge of forest insect investigations for the U.S.D.A. Bureau of Entomology and was an early leader in



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forest entomology, published one of the first papers on the biology of this bark beetle and its association with hickory mortality. Two professors at the College of Forestry in Syracuse reported on the occurrence of hickory decline, and established its association with the hickory bark beetle, in central NY as early as 1916.

The beetle is 0.1 to 0.2" long and dark reddish-brown to almost black (Figs. 2 and 3). Males are readily identified by the presence of four stout spines (Fig. 3) on the end of the abdomen (posterior end of the insect). The female lacks these spines, but it is about the same size and color as the male.

Adults emerge through small round holes in the bark (0.1" dia.) in early summer. They soon mate and eventually females penetrate the bark of the same or another weakened hickory. Once beneath the bark they excavate a

*continued on page 16*

## Smooth Bark Hickories (continued)

brood (egg) gallery (Fig. 4) approximately 1.0 to 2.5" long and parallel to the grain of the wood. In thick barked hickories like shagbark, the brood gallery may reside entirely in the bark, while the brood gallery in thin barked species, such as bitternut, is etched on the surface of the sapwood. Eggs are deposited on both sides of the brood gallery. Initially larvae feed across the grain away from and perpendicular to the brood gallery, but eventually they turn and feed parallel with the grain. The result is a very characteristic, fan-shaped gallery pattern (Fig. 4). Larvae over-winter in the bark and change to adults in the spring. There is one generation a year in New York State and two in the deep south.

The foliage of heavily infested trees or branches turns yellow by early summer, becomes reddish with time and quickly fades and dies. When the tree shows symptoms of crown dieback and discolored foliage, it becomes susceptible to another group of inner-bark-feeding insects called long-horned beetles.

Management of the bark beetle and/or the agent that predisposes a stand of hickory to attack is difficult. As with most bark beetle problems, keeping individuals or stands of the host vigorous is key. Infestations often appear

in a relatively short time. As soon as hickories exhibit discolored foliage and crown dieback, they should be salvaged if the forest owner is interested in recovering some economic value. When trees deteriorate to the point where wood-borers and fungi invade the wood, the latter may lose value very quickly. Also, removing trees early (i.e., prior to beetle emergence) will help to reduce the bark beetle population in an infested stand. Encouraging hickory on moist sites and removing it from stands that are likely to be moisture-stressed during dry periods may reduce the likelihood of this disease. Some of the older literature indicates that hickory decline often appeared in stands that were heavily grazed by cattle. Grazing damages root systems, compacts soil and removes vegetation that is thought to help keep soil moist and cool. This is not unlike a similar problem associated with heaving grazing in sugarbushes. ▲

*Dr. Douglas Allen is Distinguished Service Professor at SUNY-ESF, John Graham is a forester with the NYS DEC in Cortland, and Kim Adams is an Instructional Support and Extension Specialist at SUNY ESF.*

*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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## Ask a Professional (continued)




White and green ash bark is as corky and has rugged ridges and furrows. Ash bark would be sand colored if chipped away, compared to the ridged and furrowed bark of the walnuts which is dark when chipped or sliced.

fruits have approximately one-quarter to one-third of the seed covered by the wing; the wing on green ash (*Fraxi-*

*nus pennsylvanica*) fruits generally covers only the tip of the seed. The upper edge (distal) of the leaf scar of green ash is generally flat whereas it is notched or v-shaped on white ash. Green ash leaflets tend to be narrower and the margins (the margin is the edge of the leaf or leaflet) fully toothed in comparison to the leaflets of white ash. The margins of white ash leaflets are often toothed on the distal portions, whereas green ash leaflet margins are often fully toothed.

White ash trees generally have purplish fall foliage, and trees occur on a variety of soils. Green ash fall foliage is generally yellowish, and the

trees are most common on wet soils or near stream banks. White and green ash cannot be distinguished by their bark.

By looking at pictures and talking with people who have identified ash, you will learn the variation that is common to these species. Consider developing a twig, leaf, or photo collection of trees on your property. Track their changes through the seasons and through the years. This study of dendrology, the identification of trees, will connect owners across multiple generations. Additional pictures and links will be posted with this column on the blog entry "What's that ash?" at <http://CornellForestConnect.ning.com> 

*Peter J. Smallidge is the NYS Extension Forester and Director Cornell University Arnot Teaching and Research Forest. He can be reached at email: [pjs23@cornell.edu](mailto:pjs23@cornell.edu) or visit his website at [www.ForestConnect.info](http://www.ForestConnect.info)*



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# Timber Topics

## *Timber Harvester Issues: Insurance*

HUGH CANHAM AND RONALD PEDERSEN

As a forest owner possibly contemplating a timber harvest there are many things you need to know. One of these is to appreciate the needs and concerns of the firm who purchases and harvests your timber. As mentioned in the last *NY Forest Owner* column there are many aspects to a timber harvesting operation. In this issue we discuss insurance.

Think of all the things in your home and on your land and how you need to protect them from financial loss or a devastating law suit. Multiply that maybe a hundredfold and you see the daunting task faced by your logger.

Liability insurance to protect the logger and his operation from unintended accidents to other people (third parties) is one thing that often comes to mind. You as the landowner also need to be aware of this because if someone, other than the logging firm and its employees, gets injured in connection with the logging on your property, you as the landowner could also face a lawsuit if the logger is not covered. Related to that is workers compensation insurance for the employees of the timber harvesting firm. This is also another area of concern for the landowner since if the logger does not provide for insurance in the event of injury to one of its employees you as the landowner could also face a lawsuit by the injured person or his heirs. Recognize that many small firms do not hire employees but treat them as “independent contractors” who in turn contract with the timber harvesting firm who deals with you. A person felling the trees, or loading and hauling logs to the mill might be an independent firm. The main firm with whom you deal would know this. The main reason for this practice is the high costs of workers compensation insurance in the timber harvesting business.

Reputable logging firms with good safety records and training programs can get a lower rate but this insurance is still a huge cost for loggers.

Beyond those insurance issues that dually affect you and the logger are others that concern the logger directly. Anyone who has seen the scope and size of today’s logging equipment must appreciate the huge financial investment (financing is the subject of a future column). Maintaining comprehensive insurance on that investment is likewise a huge cost. Logging is a somewhat unique business in that the location of the operation changes from week to week. Insurance policies are written with this in mind but tend to cost more than your typical automobile comprehensive and collision insurance!

Any reputable logging firm, large or small, will have a good insurance advisor. The logger must stay up-to-date on the premiums and amount of coverage. Recognizing that timber harvesting firms are primarily concerned about getting logs to the mill at a profit and keeping equipment engaged, insurance concerns might take a back seat to other things such as maintenance, training, permits etc. But in the long run the “business” aspects are the most important parts of the business!

A recent lawsuit involved a person who wandered onto an active logging operation, attracted probably by the noise of the chain saw and skidder. The person felling a tree with a chain saw (an independent contractor hired by the logging firm) looked up as he completed his cuts; saw the intruder, tried to warn him but he kept coming and was killed under the falling tree. The logging firm had liability insurance (but the independent contractor feller did not) but the premium had not been paid and the policy lapsed for just a few

days. Subsequently the family of the deceased sued the logger, the independent contractor doing the felling, and the landowner (the deep pockets philosophy that says sue whoever might have money). At considerable expense to both the logger and the landowner the suit was dismissed after hiring a major law firm, obtaining depositions from all parties, and securing an expert witness. This witness showed that the logger had actually gone beyond the usual operations to inform surrounding landowners and neighbors that a logging operation was going to be conducted on the land and warning people to stay out. It was also shown that the logger and feller had attended some training sessions and that they had practiced safe logging procedures. (The independent contractor who was doing the felling simply declared bankruptcy).

The lesson for the logger — get and maintain your insurance, do all you can to document that you are following good practices, and have a good lawyer. The lesson for the landowner — have insurance and a good lawyer. 🏠

*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, current Vice President and a member of the Capital District chapter.*

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](mailto: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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# Member Profile: *Kurt and Kristie Edwards*

CARLY NEUMANN

The 193 acre parcel of forest land owned by Kurt Edwards has been in his family since 1887 when his great-great grandfather purchased the land. He inherited the land from his mother who, herself, had purchased 100 acres of the property from her grandfather and purchased the other 90 acres from another family member. Edwards lives on the property, located in Mayfield, NY, with his wife Kristie in a log home they built from hemlock trees harvested from their forest. Kurt and Kristie work together on many aspects of managing and caring for their property. Their son also lives on the property with his wife and two grandchildren. They have two other children and one grandchild. Edwards' brother lives on an additional 4-acre parcel and a cousin lived on a 3-acre parcel, which he recently sold, so the original

family property once totaled an even 200 acres.

The woodlands were logged several times over the course of the years. Edwards' uncle was a professional logger. Now his goal is to further improve the stewardship of the woodlands and improve them for when they are passed on to his children. Previously, the property was farmland but now consists of 10-12 acres of open field with the remaining land forested with hemlock, maple, oak and beech trees. The management plan for the property was developed by the late Mike Greason and follows the 480-A program. The Edwards are currently working on eradicating the beech consistent with their management plan, as well as thinning certain stands. They plan to replant with black cherry or maple purchased from NYS Tree



*Kurt splitting firewood.*

Farms. He has had great success with native oaks on the property.

The 480-A program has been very beneficial for the Edwards' especially when facing one of the greatest challenges, taxes. The Forest Tax Law provides a forest land tax exemption for enrolled owners.

The Edwards' enjoy "the privacy and luxury" of hunting and hiking on the property as well as just sitting in the woods and enjoying the wildlife like fisher, deer, foxes, bears and song

*continued on page 22*



*Kurt working in woods with an old International farm tractor*



*Kristie splitting firewood.*



Kurt and grandson Kolton (4 years) love to spend the afternoon playing in the woods.



Kurt splitting firewood.

birds. However he also states, “My recreation is cutting wood. I enjoy it even though most people think I’m crazy. My brother enjoys it too .We cut our own firewood and I also cut firewood for my son.” They also have large gardens on the property and this year they are looking into growing mushrooms and ginseng. Three streams run through the property, which allow for some fishing as well.

Kurt and Kristie are both Master Forest Owner Volunteers and also Chair NYFOA’s Southern Adirondack Chapter. As NYFOA members, Kurt and Kristie enjoy learning from other members and seeing others properties during woods walks. Kurt aims to promote forestry and sound management practices in any way he can. He also hopes to work through NYFOA to get better prices for timber products. He advises other forestland owners to join NYFOA in order to help each other learn about sound management and governmental policy. He is concerned with the development of forest and farmlands and looks into ways to slow this process down. 🌲

*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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Materials submitted for the July/August 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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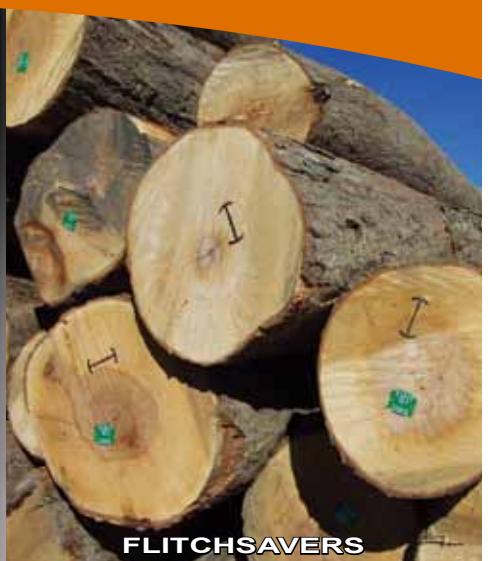
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