NYFOA
New York Forest Owners Association
SOUTHEASTERN ADIRONDACK

The Overstory

Volume 33 Issue 1
Spring 2022

INSIDE

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Gareth Price, Kingston, NY
Nancy Riding, Shepardstown, WV
Nikki Rosier, Salem, NY
David Steele, Batavia, NY

ADIRONDACK STUMPAGE PRICE REPORT

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5259.html

Trees and Threes

By: Paul Hetzler

Late winter is the optimal time to prune trees. During the weeks leading up to bud break, trees' chemical defense systems are waking up, even though the trees themselves are still dormant in terms of new growth. Pruning is both a skill and an art, and must be learned in that order. Proper equipment and a few guidelines are needed to master the skill; the art will come with experience.

If you had to shovel the driveway with a spatula, you'd soon despair. By the same token, pruning with cheap tools is agony. A high-quality hand saw and by-pass-type hand pruners are essential, and a good lopper is a welcome bonus. Good tools will last a lifetime, and you'll be amazed at the difference they make. Few retail stores carry professional-grade pruning tools, so you may have to search for arborist supply sites online.

Trees and threes often go together. You might say pruning starts in "3-D," because removing dead, damaged and diseased branches is the first order of business. When it comes to live healthy wood, no more than one-third of the branches should be removed during any pruning cycle, which (surprise) is typically three years for shade trees. Young trees can tolerate heavier pruning, while older ones need a light touch.

Prune carefully– not to cut the branch collar

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The Spotted Lanternfly is expected in the Capital Region this year and we want to prepare people for how to possibly manage this agricultural and forest health pest.

Spotted lanternfly (SLF) is a serious invasive pest that has recently been found in our region. SLF uses its piercing-sucking mouthparts to feed on sap from over 70 different plant species. It has a strong preference for economically important plants including grapevines, maple trees, and fruit trees. Spotted lanternflies do not bite or sting humans or pets.

THREAT

The feeding damage significantly stresses the plants which can lead to decreased health and potentially death. As SLF feeds, it excretes a sticky sap, called honeydew rain. This honeydew rain attracts black sooty molds, which can also impact the health of the host plants and attract other insects. This greatly threatens NYS grape and tree-fruit industries, as well as the forestry, nursery, and landscaping industries.

LIFE CYCLE

Females lay gray egg masses on host plants and just about any flat surface, including stone and metal. Spotted lanternflies go through five stages of growth after hatching. The first four stages are called nymphs, which are incapable of flight. The young nymphs are black with bright white spots. The fourth stage of growth, prior to adulthood, is vibrantly red with distinct patches of black and equally distinct bright white spots. The adult spotted lanternfly is about 1" long. Adults have grey wings with black spots. When the spotted lanternfly opens its wings, it reveals a bright red underwing.

YOU CAN HELP! SLF travels easily as a hitchiker, so gear, vehicles, and equipment should be checked for egg masses. Egg masses can be scraped off surfaces and destroyed by crushing and submersion in rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer. If you think you have found a spotted lanternfly in New York, note the location, take a picture and collect the insect (if possible) and contact spottedlanternfly@agriculture.ny.gov

If you see spotted lanternfly? Email a photo to: SpottedLanternfly@agriculture.ny.gov or contact the Capital Region PRISM capitalregionprism.org

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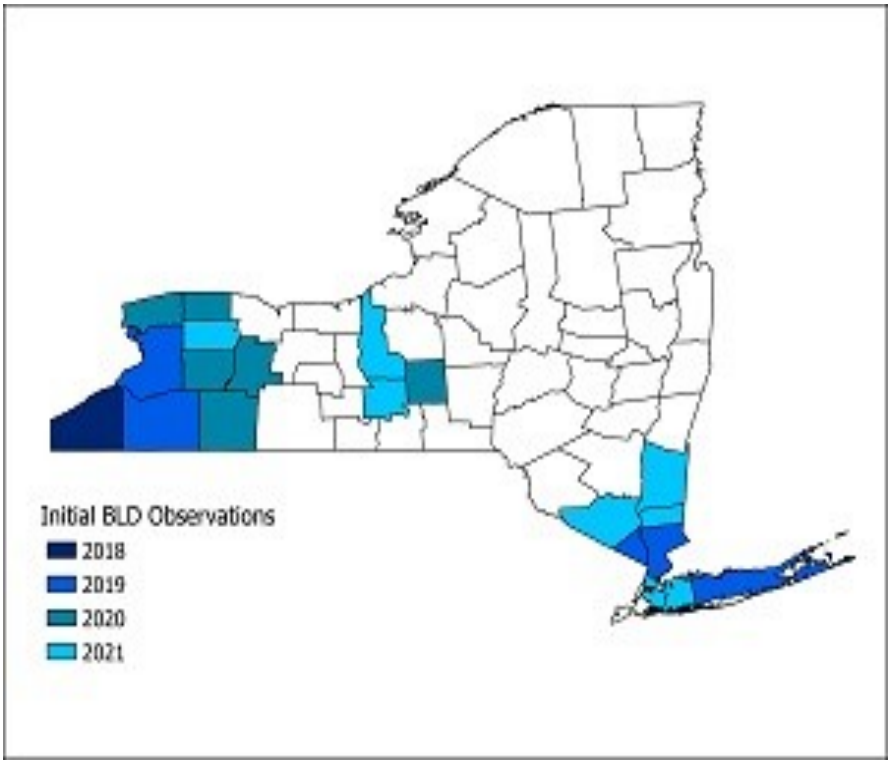
Beech Leaf Disease

Beech leaf disease (BLD) is the latest threat to beech trees. It can kill mature trees in 6 to 10 years and younger trees in just a few years.

There has been significant expansion across New York in the past few years. Newly detected counties this year include Bronx, Nassau, Queens, Putnam, Dutchess, Orange, Tompkins, Cayuga, and Genesee. (Figure 1) Existing infestations increased in severity. BLD has been spreading across Westchester and Suffolk counties, where we received the most public reports from.

For complete information follow this DEC link: https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/120589.html



The insect formerly known as Gypsy Moth

Gypsy moth caterpillars (Lymantria dispar dispar) feed on a large variety of host trees including oak, maple, crabapple, hickory, basswood, aspen, willow, birch, pine, spruce, hemlock and more. Oak is their preferred species. The insect is currently undergoing a name change and is between common names at this time.

Population rise and fall over the years from not noticeable to heavy defoliation. This past year was a large outbreak year, with elevated amounts of caterpillars causing noticeable leaf damage across the state. Populations were especially high in Clinton, Warren, Saratoga, Cattaraugus, Orleans, Monroe, Livingston, Ontario, Seneca, Yates, Steuben and Schuyler counties.

Spongy moth is the new common name of Lymantria dispar dispar, formerly know as the gypsy moth. The name was changed by The Entomological Society of America (ESA) as part of their Better Common Names Project. Learn more on ESA's website.

For complete information on Lymantria dispar dispar check the DEC website found at:

https://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/83118.html

REMEMBER WHEN

Wild Things in Your Woods

By: Kristi Sullivan (re-printed from the Jan/Feb 2006 F/O)

Bing Image

Northern (Glaucomys sabrinus) and southern (Glaucomys volans) flying squirrels are the smallest species of squirrels in New York State, weighing just a few ounces. Similar in appearance, the northern flying squirrel is larger (10 to 15 inches long) and reddish-brown in color, while its relative is smaller (8 to 10 inches in length) and mouse-like grey in color. Both species have soft, dense, silky fur, with white belly hair, and broad, flattened, furry tails that are about 5 inches long. Like most nocturnal animals, their gleaming black eyes are large and round. Prominent flaps of skin stretch from their wrists to their ankles giving them the ability to glide through the forest. In both species, males and females are similar in size. Mating takes place early in the spring, and the young are born in May or June. In the wild, flying squirrels typically live to be four or five years old.

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Coming Events….

NYFOA/SAC Annual Meeting

Saturday, April 30th, 2022

Cornell Cooperative Extension Office

50 West High Street, Ballston Spa

9:30 am — 10 am Arrival

10:00 Business Meeting (including election of officers)

11:30 - 1pm Pot luck lunch - Please bring a dish to share

(if COVID persists we may need to change lunch to a "bring your own" please check the NYFOA website for any updates prior to meeting

1pm—presentation begins

" Vision 2050 Fulfilling the Promise of the Adirondack Park"

Presented by:

Jackie Bowman, Acting Director for Conservation,
Adirondack Council

SAC Spring Woodswalk

Bruce Cushing (Washington County)

Saturday, May 21st

North Road, Clemons (Dresden) NY

9:30 am— Arrival (morning refreshments provided)

10:00 am — Woodswalk begins

12:00 pm — Lunch (bring a bag lunch and beverage)

Discussion will include TSI work, honeysuckle treatment, his management of a small sugarbush in conjunction with Audubon's Woods, Wildlife and Warblers program along with his use of different sized tree tubes.

Please bring a lawn chair for lunch, hiking boots/stick (trails are not groomed) and bug repellent.

*North Road is off route 22—directly across from the fire-house in Clemons. Watch for the NYFOA signs.

From page 1

Once the 3-Ds are out of the way it's easier to see what else needs attention. If you find crossing and rubbing branches, take the less desirable of the two. Whenever possible, favor wide branch-to-trunk attachments over narrow ones, which are more prone to breakage. In most cases, branches are pruned back to the trunk, although sometimes pruning back to a side branch is preferred for aesthetic reasons. When doing so, make sure that side branch is at least one-third the diameter of the branch you remove.

Another rule is that two-thirds of a tree's leaf area should be in the lower half of the crown. Lower branches are essential. It seems hard to believe, but on hot summer days the leaves in the upper the upper canopy actually get so hot they can no longer photosynthesize. But the shaded lower branches are able to still carry on essential tree business until things cool down for the leaves up top.

Obviously, maple sap will run from pruning wounds in late winter and early spring. While research indicates that the loss of sugars is not significant, you may want to prune maple, as well as butternut, birch and hickory, which "bleed" when cut in spring, in mid- to late July. This is actually the second-best time to prune trees, and compared with dormant pruning, fewer water sprouts or suckers are produced near the pruning wounds.

Put away the saw, though, during spring leaf-out and again during fall color. Pruning in these times can lead to serious long-term health problems. For trees, mostly.

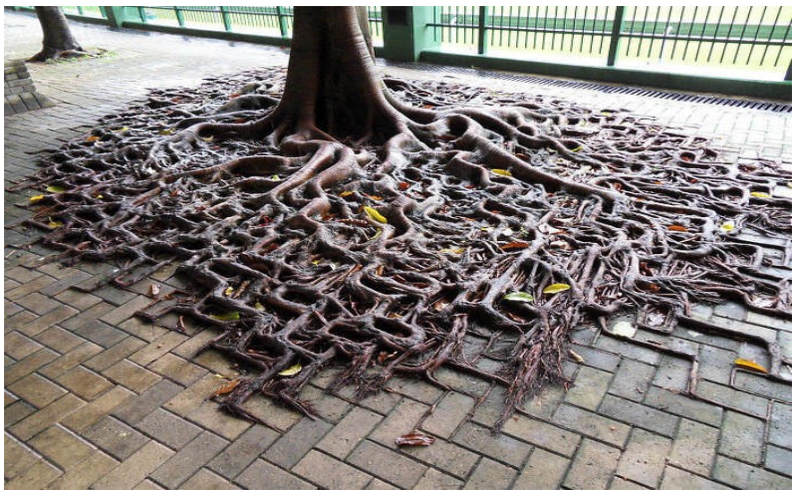
Prune the branch, not the trunk. This sounds ridiculous on its face, but it's important. At the base of most branches is a swollen area called a branch collar, which produces fungicidal and bactericidal chemicals. The branch collar is part of the trunk and should never be cut. In other words, flush cuts are bad.

In the past, pruning cuts were painted over with various compounds, but research has shown that coated wounds never fare better than uncoated ones. In fact, many times they actually decay faster and more extensively than untreated wounds.

To the best of my knowledge, though, people-cuts can still be treated with Band-Aids. Keep some of those on hand—good pruning tools are really sharp.

Paul Hetzler has been an ISA-Certified Arborist since 1996. And is a member of ISA-Ontario, the Canadian Institute of Forestry, and the Society of American Foresters. His book "Shady Characters; Plant Vampires, Caterpillar Soup, Leprechaun Trees and other Hilarities of the Natural Word" is available on amazon ca.

The Tenacity of Trees….



A Tree's Root Spill Over the Sidewalk

https://www.positivenewsus.org/the-tenacity-of-trees.html

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Because of their nocturnal habits, few people are fortunate enough to have seen a flying squirrel in the wild, and many are unaware that these nighttime creatures exist. Emerging at dusk, they glide from the forest canopy down to the forest floor to feed. Although they don't truly fly (bats are the only mammals that do), they have two large flaps of skin that extend from their wrists to their ankles and act as miniature parachutes. When leaving a tree, they initially drop straight down for about 3 feet or so before flattening out into a glide. Like a miniature hang glider, a flying squirrel can move its legs to change the position of its membranes and swerve around obstacles. The higher a squirrel is when it drops out of a tree, the greater the speed and distance it can travel. From heights of 100 feet, they can reach speeds of up to 20 mph, and glide as far as 50 yards (over half the length of a football field).

Two species of flying squirrels are common in New York State and their ranges overlap, though the northern flying squirrel is more common in the northern part of the state, and the southern flying squirrel is most prevalent south of the Mohawk River Valley. In regions where their ranges overlap, they usually separate by habitat. Both species require large areas of very mature, deciduous or mixed forest with large trees and cavities for nesting and escape cover. Flying squirrels usually occupy old woodpecker holes in the winter, but in warmer months often build or re-use existing leaf nests in the crotch of trees. They line their nests with shredded bark, lichens, grasses, and moss. Forest stands inhabited by these animals need to be relatively open beneath the tree canopy to provide unobstructed gliding areas for movement from tree to tree, and from tree to ground.

In addition to providing adequate nesting sites, older forests support the lichens and fungi that the northern flying squirrel relies on for food, including truffles, the fruiting bodies of underground fungi that live in association with tree roots. These fungi are important to forest health because they increase the ability of trees to absorb nutrients and water from the forest soil. By feeding on the fungi and depositing the spores in the soil through their droppings, squirrels spread the spores throughout the forest, maintaining ecological processes that are important to forest health. Other foods of the northern flying squirrel include seeds, buds, fruit, insects, and small animals. Similarly, the southern flying squirrel eats seeds, berries, fungi, bark, flowers, insects, and other animal matter. However, the southern flying squirrel prefers hickory nuts and acorns, and is found most often in oak/hickory forests.

During the cold winter months, the southern flying squirrel will forage less often and at times become inactive, while the northern flying squirrel remains active even at the coldest temperatures. Flying squirrels are sociable creatures, and will curl up together to conserve energy. Up to 50 animals have been found huddled up in one nest!

Bing Image

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In mature woodlands, landowners can enhance habitat for these wide-eyed creatures of the night by retaining live and dead trees that contain holes, or cavities. An ideal den is an old woodpecker hole about 8 to 20 feet from the ground with an entrance hole of about 1.5 to 2 inches in diameter. In New York, large beech trees often provide cavities for nesting wildlife, and produce seeds that serve as food. In forests without many cavity trees, landowners can install artificial nest boxes on trees to provide shelter for flying squirrels. Retaining or providing woody debris and rotten logs on the forest floor will provide additional sites for flying squirrels to take refuge from predators when foraging, and promote growth of fungi for food.

Landowners wishing to catch a glimpse of a flying squirrel can sometimes catch them feeding at bird feeders after dark. The best way to see a flying squirrel in the daylight is to tap or scratch on dead trees or hollow limbs containing abandoned woodpecker holes. If a squirrel is inside, it will often stick its head out to see what is amiss!

Editor's note

When I saw this article I had to share it. About 4 or 5 years ago we actually had flying squirrels invade our home. They managed to find their way into our attic one winter and turn our lives upside down. We ended up trapping 21 of the infuriating little critters with live traps one or two at a time. The whole process took about 6 weeks of very sleepless nights. Being nocturnal they awoke about midnight each night, of course they nested right above our bedroom. They seemed to party before venturing outside, chasing each other around the attic. When they re-entered about 5am they again caused a ruckus before settling down for there daytime sleep. It was a very stressful time, we were keenly aware that in a short time the mommas would be giving birth and that would be a whole new ballgame. Finally sometime in March we managed to catch the last flying squirrel in our attic, found their entry and sealed it up. They chewed their way in that year, we stopped feeding the birds since the bird seed draws them to your home. The article states *"few people are fortunate enough to have seen a flying squirrel ." I'm not sure that I would call myself fortunate!*

Kristie Edwards

Are you interested in hosting a woodswalk?

Do you have a suggestion for a chapter event?

If so please contact Kurt Edwards, event coordinator,

at 411 Beech Street, Mayfield, NY 12117, or at edwardsk922@gmail.com

New York Forest Owners Association

SOUTHEASTERN

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