



TREE Cookies Etc.

Spring 2010

Volume 5, Issue 1



Calendar

- April 17
[Montpelier Demo.
Forest Trail Opening](#)
Orange, VA
- May 1
[VA Invasive Species
Removal Day](#)
- [Backyard Woods
Workshops](#)
May through June in
Rappahannock,
Fauquier, & Culpeper
- May 14
[NoVa Urban
Forestry Roundtable](#)
Leesburg, VA
- June 9 Forest Mgmt.
& Cons. Workshop
for Landowners
North Garden, VA
- August 23 & 30:
[Focusing on Land
Transfer to
Generation NEXT](#)
Warrenton, VA
- September 4
Charcoal Making
Madison, VA
- September 16:
**Invasive Plant
Control for Habitat
Restoration**
Front Royal, VA

**Virginia
Cooperative
Extension**



VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

VirginiaTech
Invent the Future

www.ext.vt.edu

tree cookie (trē' kookē) n. a cross sectional slice of a trunk or branch. The concentric rings tell not only the age of that part of the tree, but also a story about the environmental conditions, history, and dynamics of that tree, in that place.

TREE Cookies Etc. n. 1. a free electronic newsletter dedicated to tell the story of forest stewardship, tree care, and natural resource management. 2. to help people make best decisions regarding the resources entrusted to them.

Dear Reader,

Spring has sprung... especially welcome after a winter for the record books! The wide variety of trees in the region are in various stages of preparation for the growing season. Some with a showy display of flowers, others with a more simple "get to work" emergence of green. This is a beautiful time of year to get outside. I urge you to go hunting for spring visuals like wildflowers and maybe even spring victuals like morel mushrooms and spring gobblers! I hope you'll find this issue of Tree Cookies Etc. useful, or at least full of interesting information. Please consider participating in one or more of the events listed on the calendar at left, for more information on any of these call or e-mail our office. Lastly, don't forget Arbor Day is April 30th... a great time to plant a tree!

-AKD

Forestry in Fairfax, not an oxymoron

By: Jim McGlone, Virginia Department of Forestry, Urban Forest Conservationist

I work in Fairfax County. For most people in the forestry trade that means concrete and congestion. There is plenty of that, but there is also 40,000 acres forest. There are also plenty of deer and invasive plants species. The deer and invasives are threats to the forest and to good forest management.

The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries has estimated deer densities in Fairfax county range between 100 per square mile in more developed areas to 400 per square mile in less developed areas. In a fall 2006 three day public hunt on 3,000 acres of Mason Neck State Park and the adjoining Fish and Wildlife Refuge 172 deer were taken. The county reports 4,000 to 5,000 deer vehicle collisions in 1998. Impressive statistics, but what do they mean?

Some time ago I visited an 80 acre property in the Potomac Palisades region of the county. Except for the home site the entire property was forested with beautiful stands of oak and poplar, some measuring over 30 inches. There is a nice riparian stand of mixed hardwoods including black walnut and ash. The forest floor was carpeted with new sprouts showing 2 or 3 leaves and identifying them as oaks or maple. But there were no shrubs other than paw-paw. Aside from the sprouts, there

Continued pg. 3...



Coming to a woods near you!

Virginia's Link to Education About Forestry (LEAF) is a new partnership based network of demonstration forests though. With forest management practices showcasing everything from Urban Stream Restoration and Urban Tree Canopy Management to Custom Silvicultural Applications and Strip Mine Reclamation, the LEAF project seeks to connect educational opportunities in new ways such as linking heritage tourism with a populus often unfamiliar with the importance of Virginia's forests as well as serving as a working laboratory for forest practitioners and researchers. Virginia's Northern Piedmont boasts two unique LEAF sites with a new one on the way.



1. James Madison's Montpelier– a working forest demonstration and interpretive trail adjacent to the famous Landmark Forest. [Grand opening April 16](#) with former Senator J. Warner.
2. Arlington's Urban Forests – a county-wide example of intensely managing a working urban forest for ecosystem and community benefits.
3. Manassas Forest Focus – a new site beginning development this summer linking the National Battlefield with the State's first State Forest, the Conway-Robinson to showcase forest management related to cultural history, deer issues and invasive plants.

www.cnr.vt.edu/vleaf

Update on the Green Menace



Adult Emerald Ash Borer
Photo Citation: David Cappaert,
Michigan State University,
<http://www.forestryimages.org/>

Officials are continuing to monitor movement of the exotic invasive Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), *Agilus planipennis*, in Virginia which reappeared in 2008 after an attempt to eradicate it following the initial 2003 infestation. There had been no documented spread outside of the quarantine since 2008.

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) will again be placing traps throughout the Northern Piedmont Region as far south as Madison County. The traps serve to monitor the presence vs. control.

You can help by educating your neighbors, friends and family about this issue and by making sure traps you know of are not tampered with.

What YOU can do to stop the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer:

- ✓ Don't move firewood! Bring your own wood to your fire site and take home what you don't burn or, better yet, use wood from the site. Go to www.DontMoveFirewood.org for more reasons not to move firewood.
- ✓ Monitor any ash trees you own or know of. Contact your local [VA Cooperative Extension](#) office or [VA Dept. of Forestry](#) if you notice "suspicious behavior."



VDACS Quarantine Details: Articles under quarantine are the emerald ash borer in *any* life state, firewood of all hardwood (non-coniferous) species, Ash (*Fraxinus* spp.) nursery stock, green (non-heat treated) ash lumber, and other living, dead, cut, or fallen material of the genus *Fraxinus*, including wood chips. Any of the articles above may be moved *within* the quarantined area without restrictions. Movement from a quarantined area to a non-quarantined area requires a special VDACS permit. For more information, please contact the VDACS office in Richmond at (804) 786-3515.

More information at: www.emeraldashborer.info



Fairfax Forestry - Continued

were no trees less than 10 inches DBH. The laurel and holly were completely browsed up to 4 feet and the only herbaceous plants were garlic mustard and stiltgrass. After 3 years, there was literally nothing growing in a wind throw gap from hurricane Isabel. I told the land owner she had a regeneration problem; she said “send me men with guns.”

This is the norm for Fairfax forests beautiful healthy mature trees with nothing growing underneath; forests that look like they have been mowed; unexploited gaps in the canopy; failing stands of Virginia pine and eastern red cedar with no hardwoods succeeding them. Where there are shrubs and herbs in the forest they are usually invasive plants that deer won't eat. Park managers have told me that paw-paw and spicebush (apparently two truly deer resistant species) are expanding within the parks where invasive plants have yet to become a significant problem.

Invasive plants have moved into the deer browsed forests and occupied the space they have left behind. While the invasive shrubs and herbs seem to out-compete native trees and other vegetation, the vines – kudzu, bittersweet and porcelain berry – attack and kill the mature trees. It is difficult to separate the effects of these two pressures. Do the invasives suppress native flora or do the deer eat the native flora and leave behind the invasives?

Ironically, the deer browse and invasives have awakened land managers in Fairfax to the need to actively manage the forest rather than let nature take its course. I have used this awakening to guide their thinking about forest management by explaining about succession and the silvics of tree species and how to use these concepts to achieve desired outcomes. I have also explained about tree time; if your management goal is a mature oak stand and you don't have an oak component, then it will take you 50 years to get there. When these discussions get to the need to cut trees as part of some management practices, I run into the problem of deer browse and invasive plants.

Many traditional forestry practices do not achieve the desired results under the deer browse and invasive species pressures here in Fairfax county. Opening up the canopy to allow more sunlight on the forest floor just produces more food for deer or encourages the growth of invasive species.

Web Watch

SOUTHERN REGIONAL EXTENSION FORESTRY

SREF is a partnership of each of the Southern Region's 13 Extension Forestry Land-grant Universities with support from the United States Forest Service and the Southern Group of State Foresters. The goal of the Southern Regional Extension Forestry Office is to identify, prescribe, and implement a mix of education and technical services that increase the efficiency of forestry programs in the southern United States.

This site is a portal to a variety of web-based and place-based learning opportunities such as:

- [Forestry Webinars](#): 1.5 hour mini-session on a wide variety of forest related topics
- [Forestry Encyclopedia](#): A scientific content management system for the forest sciences
- [Deer & Forests](#): A clearinghouse for resources about connections among people, deer, & forests

Explore: www.sref.info



Natural Hardwood Charcoal: *The Local Fuel Movement*

Real charcoal or lump charcoal is a product of very old technology but is regaining notoriety with backyard grill users for its superior qualities. For some it's the fact that charcoal is a totally natural product without the binders, borax and occasional petroleum additives that make briquettes burn. For others, the hotter cooking temperatures, better temperature regulation, less ash and faster lighting are selling points. Whatever the reason, natural hardwood charcoal is being "re-discovered".

Charcoal making used to be a huge industry. In the early 1800's the American iron production depended on charcoal firing. In certain regions of the Eastern United States, charcoal making was a full time job with acres of woodland being cleared each day to fire local iron furnaces. Historically, charcoal has had many uses including blacksmith work, water filtration, air deodorizer, art pigment, even for road surfaces! Charcoal is also well known for its poison detoxification qualities.

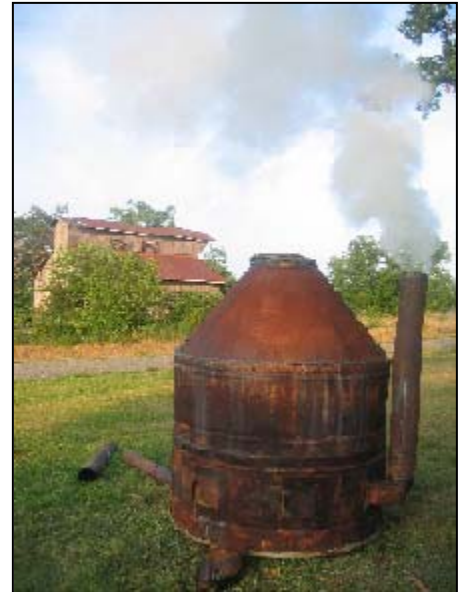
Something you can try at home, however, is making your own charcoal. There is renewed interest in the art and science of charcoal making. Enterprising individuals with access to waste wood, excess firewood or tree tops may find a business opportunity in making and selling locally produced charcoal. A charcoal kiln can be as simple as a dirt oven, a 50 gallon drum or a slightly more complex modified chicken feed hopper.

The function of a charcoal kiln, whatever the design and material used, is to moderate the combustion such that it distills the wood to its raw carbon form. This is accomplished through a low oxygen burn that not only drives all the moisture away but also ignites a chemical reaction exuding gasses and tar and resulting in nearly pure carbon. This "carbonization occurs at temperatures above 518 degrees Fahrenheit. The resulting pure carbon (lump charcoal) burns nearly odorless and roughly twice as hot as a wood fire.

A cooperative project of the Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Tech has been experimenting with the reality of a portable type of kiln. The goal is to realize value added opportunities for wood that might otherwise be wasted, from tree service work or logging residue.

Charcoal making has been around for centuries anywhere wood is or was plentiful. I first experienced it in Kenya as a Peace Corps Volunteer. It's great to cook over and it's a natural product. Locally made charcoal is even better in terms of environmental impact. Importantly, it also offers a higher-end use for what might otherwise be waste wood. If you are interested in learning how to make charcoal, lots of information is available on-line. A website at Virginia Tech describing how to build a portable kiln and related material can be accessed at:

<http://www.forestry.vt.edu/charcoal/>



Demonstration Charcoal Kiln (a modified chicken feed hopper) in operation

AKD



If there are no woods...

Most of us take for granted the many forests and woodlands in Virginia. Few people recognize the most significant threat to these woodlands is taxes. And this threat is growing larger each year with the aging of the very individuals who own the bulk of Virginia's forests. Forestland owners 65 years and older own 41% of Virginia's 10 million acres of private forestland. High land values and taxes force many heirs to sell land to meet financial obligations; a major force behind an annual loss of 27,000 forested acres. Virginia is on the cusp of the largest intergenerational transfer of family forests ever and landowners need to know how to protect their land. A common barrier to estate planning is using planning tools and having confidence in knowing where to start.

If you own land, do you know **exactly** what will happen to it? Will it pass to your heirs, or simply be sold to a new owner? Will a new owner value the land for the products it grows or will they value its potential for development? The implications of these decisions are personal, familial and financial. Few challenges facing Virginia's 373,000 family forest land owners are more important than the issue of passing the family forest on to the next owners. Many owners want to preserve their family lands but don't know how to involve family members in their ownership and management.

Even for those of us who don't own land, this is an important juncture in our well being as a society. The management decisions made by family forest owners play a crucial role in determining the health and conservation of the natural forest systems upon which we rely for the sustainable flow of natural goods, and environmental services. Virginia's private forestland is the largest contributors to wildlife habitat, clean water and renewable wood products to name a few. What happens to this land touches us all.

✍ AKD

Timber Rattlesnake Survey

From: Va Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries

<http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/video/timber-rattlesnake-survey/>

Living with Black Bears in Virginia

From: Va Dept. of Game & Inland Fisheries

<http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/video/living-with-black-bears/>

4 Minutes to a Better Backyard

From: University of Maryland Cooperative Extension

<http://www.naturalresources.umd.edu/EducationalWB.Y.html>



Crotalus horridus

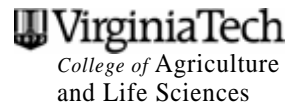
Photo from:

[Virginia Herpetological Society](#)



Virginia Cooperative Extension

A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University



Northern Region Natural Resources Program

P. O. Box 10

Madison, VA 22727

540/948-6881 Fax: 540/948-6883

E-mail: adowning@vt.edu

<http://offices.ext.vt.edu/madison>

Date: April 16, 2010

To: Citizens, Landowners, and Natural resource professionals

From: Adam K. Downing

Extension Agent, Forestry & Natural Resources
Northern Region



www.ext.vt.edu

Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments.

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

To receive this newsletter, you must join the "Tree_Cookies_Etc" Listserv by sending an e-mail to: LISTSERV@LISTSERV.VT.EDU with SUBSCRIBE Tree_Cookies_Etc in the body (and nothing else). Leave the subject line blank and be sure to turn off any automatic signatures. *The electronic distribution of this newsletter has been set up with the tightest possible controls. Only the list owner (Adam Downing) can send to this listserv and replies cannot be sent to the list.*

If you do not have ready, or suitable, access to E-mail, a hard copy mailing will be sent upon request. Call 540-948-6881 and ask to be put on the hard-copy mail list for *TREE Cookies Etc*.

