

SWPWO



November 2005

Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners

Next Meeting:

Our next meeting will be held on Wednesday, **November 9, 2005** at 7:00 PM in Washington. Did you ever wonder why oak trees generally grow along ridge tops and maple and walnut trees grow better in bottoms near streams? Dr. Harold Thistle and advisor Arlyn Perkey will present a very interesting slide show discussing how soil type and microclimatic factors in a forest affect what kind of trees grow where they do, and also how well they grow. This knowledge can be of great help to those of you who are trying to properly manage your woodlands for its greatest economic and wildlife benefits. A follow up field trip will be taken to Arlyn Perkey's tree farm in western Greene county on Saturday, Nov, 12 to see first hand the things learned at the meeting. Car pooling will be available from Building #10 at the Greene County Fairgrounds at 12 noon. The meeting and field trip are open and free to the public. For additional information, call Bill Wentzel at 724-627-6624. *by Bill Wentzel*

Directions: at the Courthouse Square Building, 100 W. Beau St, in Washington. This is directly behind the courthouse.

30 People, a Pig And a Potato Gun

The SWPWO annual picnic was a lot of fun, again, this year. Thanks go to founding member, John Burnham, for hosting the picnic at his "party pavilion/sawmill shed". The weather was perfect for a fall picnic. John showed us his new kiln and all the wood drying (watching wood drying is more fun than watching grass grow). Alas, there was no contest between potato guns as anticipated. The Thistle's gun broke during last minute upgrades. Burnham's potato gun worked like a charm though and entertained us all. The kids actually fired off walnuts instead of potatoes so that John got some unexpected late season planting done during the party. Thanks to all those who attended.

By Gay Thistle

2006 Membership Due Now

It is SWPWO membership renewal time once again. This November meeting is the last of the 2005 year. Meetings will resume again in March. The schedule for the 2006 year is forthcoming. We encourage you to pay your dues at the November meeting or soon after so that your notice of meetings is not delayed. Membership to the SPWO Association is \$10 per year for an individual and \$15 per year for a household. To join, please send name, address and phone number to: SWPWO, 195 E., High St, Waynesburg, PA 15370

On Becoming a Woodland Steward

Although there is a formal forest stewardship program in Pennsylvania that is not my focus in this article. Rather, I want to share some thoughts about the idea of being a woodland steward. My parents purchased wooded property back in the late 1950s. Because they owned a retail business, they never felt free to take a traditional one- or two-week family vacation. So the woodland property served as a place where my family could get away for a day to enjoy hiking, picnicking, and just relaxing. My sisters and I valued our time in the woods, but I never thought much about taking care of them. Even after our parents transferred ownership of the property to us, I believed that the best practice was to let nature take its course. I thought the less I did to disturb the forest, the better it would be. I can't pinpoint exactly when I learned that this benign neglect approach might not be in the best interest of the forest land entrusted to my care. I do know that joining SWPWO, attending the meetings, and going on the field trips has helped me to understand that there is much I can and should do to protect and improve this property. So, for me, the essence of stewardship is a commitment to protect and care for a natural resource that is becoming all too rare in an age of sprawling suburban developments and shopping malls.

I admit that at times the work that I could and should be doing seems overwhelming. But with the help of a consulting forester and all of the

knowledgeable people in SWPWO, I am learning that I can break the job into manageable chunks and get advice as I need it. In this way, I am working to become a woodland steward. Even though stewardship takes an investment of time, effort, and even some money, it is rewarding to think that I can pass on to my grandchildren and their children the joy of being in the woods that my parents gave to me. *By Maria Piantanida*

SWPWO Website

The SWPWO official website can be accessed at the following address www.cs.pitt.edu/~daley/swpwo. This website is available to us because of the talents and time of webmaster and officer, Bob Daley.

Our Purpose

Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners (SWPWO), a not for profit association, is an organization of individuals interested in sound woodland management practices which encourage the diverse use of forests for timber production, wildlife habitat, watershed protection and recreation and to promote this multiple-use philosophy through education and technical assistance for the benefit of the membership and general public.

Black Walnut Seed Collection and Planting

On October 17, John Burnham, forest steward volunteer, and myself embarked on a journey around Greene County in search of black walnuts. We didn't have to look hard since this being a bumper crop year. We found them everywhere in great numbers.

After about eight stops in four hours, we filled the back of my pickup truck to the brim with fifty bushels of little green balls. Of course we had lots of assistance from another one of our faithful members, Joe McNaney, who supplied fifteen of the bushels. Thanks Joe.

The next day we made the four hour trip to the Bureau of Forestry's nursery located east of State College where I unloaded my treasure of walnuts. At the nursery the nuts will be processed and planted in beds, germinated, and sold to landowners all over the state to reforest old fields for future timber and nut production. For many years Greene County has supplied over half of the black walnuts needed for the nursery.

Each year I receive quite a few requests on how to handle black walnuts for planting. Walnut fruits are collected from the ground in the fall (mid-October). It is not necessary to remove the outer husk before planting. The nuts can be sown in the fall, soon after collecting. Do not let them dry out too much before planting.

Seeds should be covered with about two inches of soil. Placing a screen over the planted nuts may be necessary to protect against squirrel and rodents, especially during the

fall planting season. Tree shelters can also be used for this purpose.

It is advisable to plant two to three nuts in the same location because some of them may not germinate. Generally, you can expect about half of the nuts to grow. If you do remove the husk before planting, you can get a general idea which nuts are viable by placing them in a bucket of water. The non-germinated seeds will float, the good ones will sink to the bottom. This, however is not a fool proof method. Crack a few nuts to be sure that the fruit is not dried up. Walnuts will usually begin to grow in about late April here in this area of the country.

If you are using tree shelters plant the nuts fifteen feet apart. This will yield about two hundred trees per acre. A good amount to start with. Plant the nuts in a ten by ten grid if using tree shelters or a twelve by twelve foot grid if not using tree shelters.

Selecting a wrong site to plant black walnuts is a common mistake. Trees survive on poor sites, however their quality suffers. Dry eroded fields, pastures, and ridgetops will not grow good quality walnut timber. Also avoid gravelly stream bottoms along with clay soils, claypan land and poorly drained flats.

For best growth the soil should be deep, fertile and well drained and have good water-holding capacity. There should be at least 24 inches of porous soil. Sandy loam or silt loam are the best soil textures, but good walnut can also be grown in silty clay loam.

Forest openings are good places in which to plant walnut. These should be at least 100 feet

wide, and the larger the better. Valleys, coves, north and east slopes, and well-drained uplands are good sites, if the soil is suitable. The trees already growing on the area show the kind of site it is. Red oak, white ash, basswood, yellow poplar, sugar maple, beech, red elm, and, of course black walnut are indicators that the site will grow walnut.

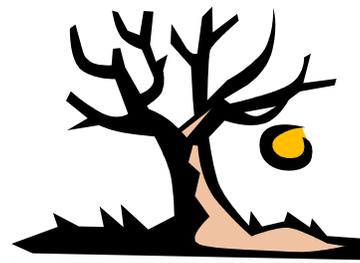
Land that has been cropped may grow good walnuts unless the soil has been compacted, eroded or depleted of fertility. Many walnut plantings on worn out cropland will not produce one good tree per acre. Land suitable to corn is probably fertile enough, but it must also have good drainage. Many farms have areas of productive cropland that are too small to fit into the overall farm operation. Such areas may be ideal for growing walnuts.

Site preparation and weed control are essential for seedling survival and fast growth. Fields covered with heavy sod or dense perennial weeds and grasses should be plowed and disked before planting. Where this is not possible, planting spots can be scalped by hand with a grub hoe or mattock. The scalp should be at least three feet wide and maintained for several years. On open areas, plow in the fall for spring planting. Herbicides that kill germinating weed seeds can be used in addition to plowing and disking. Certain of the herbicides are safe to use with walnut seedlings but not walnut seeds. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label of the product. When in doubt check with the dealer or manufacturer (all labels have a contact phone number).

When planting forest openings it is not necessary to remove the forest litter. But if the area has been grazed and is covered with dense sod, this sod should be scalped around each planting spot.

You can remove patches of dense underbrush from forest openings by cutting it and spraying the stumps with a brush killing herbicide or by spraying brush killing herbicide directly on the foliage. Foliage spray must be done in summer before walnut trees are planted. A hand sprayer can be used on brush up to ten feet tall; a backpack power mist blower is effective up to twenty feet. Use foliage herbicides only on calm, clear days. Do not use them near crops that are sensitive to the spray.

When making openings, be sure to fell or girdle any trees that may shade the planted walnuts. Black walnuts must be in full sunlight in order to grow well. Stumps of saplings and pole size trees should be treated with the proper herbicide in order to prevent sprouting. I hope the article has been informative and helpful. Please call me with any questions. *By Bill Wentzel, PA Service Forester.*



The Trees of New Orleans

The storm, Katrina, affected many lives and that, should be the main focus of the recovery efforts. However, it also affected the trees of New Orleans. Many of these urban trees died from the high winds and flooding and will be sorely missed by the surviving residents for many reasons.

Esplanade Avenue is a signature address in this city, a boulevard of lazy opulence that forms the northeastern boundary of the French Quarter and runs for about three miles from the Mississippi River to the steps of the New Orleans Museum of Art in City Park. It may be best known for the live oak trees that line its median strip, their leafy branches spread horizontally overhead to form an elaborately webbed green canopy, or so it was. When Hurricane Katrina tore through the city, its high winds ravaged the oaks of Esplanade, killing some, tearing off thick branches of others and defoliating the rest. Like a knife slashing through the canvas of a masterpiece, the storm that devastated New Orleans, destroying neighborhoods and infrastructure, ending hundreds of lives and upending thousands of others, also dealt a blow to the city's lush natural facade. "It's like a Weed Whacker went through here," said Joshua Mann Paillet, a photographer and gallery owner in the French Quarter. The situation has been made worse by utility crews that have cut away branches to free electrical wires. "They went a little overboard," said William Raymond Manning, a landscape architect who is co-chairman of the Bring Back New Orleans Committee on City Planning. "They left things in more disrepair than they needed to be." All told, enough overhead

cover from the trees has been stripped away that some residents worry that street life will not be the same, once the city revives.

There is too much sun now, they say - people are going to stay indoors. Ann E. Macdonald, director of the Department of Parks and Parkways, said 8,000 of the city's estimated half-million trees were uprooted by the hurricane or died in the ground. That number will grow considerably over the winter as other damaged trees fail to survive, she said. That loss will be in addition to 2,000 trees that were killed over the summer by Tropical Storm Cindy.

Magnolias, whose roots are unused to soaking, were especially hard hit, and they stand dead around the city, their leaves dried to crispness. Bradford pears, drake elms and water oaks also had a hard time,

Ms. Macdonald said. "Pine trees did terribly," she said. "Tallow trees did terribly. The crape myrtles did pretty well, though, and we're hopeful of their coming back and being able to spread out by next summer."

Some specialists think Ms. Macdonald's figures may be low. "We may have lost 40 percent to 50 percent of our tree canopy, maybe 20 percent of our trees," said Lake

Douglas, a professor of landscape architecture at Louisiana State University and the co-author, with Jeannette Hardy, of "Gardens of New Orleans: Exquisite

Excess." Mr. Douglas spoke as he was touring City Park, one of the nation's largest urban parks at 1,300 acres, where wind and flood damage were extensive. The park lost more than 1,000 trees, and according to its Web site, 1,000 more are endangered. All told, its grounds - including a golf course, botanical gardens, a football stadium and a children's amusement park - sustained more

than \$40 million in damage. Standing near the park's entrance, at the foot of the art museum steps, Mr. Douglas surveyed a view that included a stand of pines, where many have toppled over or snapped, and an entryway lined with red oaks that now look as though a team of antic lumberjacks had attacked them. In the rebuilding process let's all hope that they remember the trees.

Submitted by Gay Thistle from an article published in the New York Times

Executive Committee for the year 2005

Officers

Harold Thistle- President
Bob Daley - Vice Pres.
Nadine Obermiller- Secretary
Ed Hartman- Treasurer

Board of Directors

George Marichek
Max Loughman
Maria Piantanida

Advisors

Bill Wentzel' Arlyn Perkey

Fruit Farm Publication

For those of us who attended the summer tour of Krenzela's Fruit Farm, I have the information on the book that Carlos Krenzela had referred to. The book can be ordered by calling Penn State at 877-345-0691. "The Fruit Production Guide" has a publication number of AGRS-45 and costs \$13.00. There is another publication that I found called "Small Scale Fruit Production", whose publication number is AGRS-60 and cost \$9.00. There is a \$5.00 shipping fee also. *By Gay Thistle*

SWPWO Election Time Once Again

During the November meeting elections for the 2006 officers will be held. Term limits have been reached for Ed Hartman, our Treasurer for the last four years and George Marichek, who served on the Board of Directors for four years as well as published this newsletter for a few years. Thank you both for your service to our organization. Our President and Secretary positions are up for re-election this year. Harold Thistle and Nadine Obermiller both agreed to run again. We are looking for candidates for Treasurer and a Board of Director. If you are interested in any of these positions please contact Harold Thistle 724-499-5190.



This newsletter is produced about 5 times per year. It is published about two weeks prior to the meetings. Articles and/or ideas are welcome. Contact the editors John Burnham at 724-223-8781 or e-mail at burnhamjc@msn.com or Gay Thistle at 724-499-5190 thistle@greenepa.net