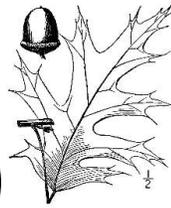


SWPWO



May 2009

Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 14 (note unusual day)

Ponds in Your Woodlands

Dana Rizzo, Extension Educator for Water Quality, Penn State Extension and Westmoreland County Conservation District will speak about the process of permitting, building and maintaining ponds on our woodlands. Time: 7:00 PM Place: Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

May 16 Field Trip Visit to Ponds

We will visit SWPWO Director Mike Irvin's property in western Greene County. Mike has constructed several ponds. He will talk about the process, site selections, establishing the ponds, and maintaining the ponds on the property.

Dress for the weather and for hiking around the hollows and dales of the western Greene County landscape. Time: 1:00 PM.

Directions will be given at the Thursday meeting or meet at 12:30 PM at Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA



Tree Tubes:

PRODUCT REVIEW AND AVAILABILITY

Anyone in western PA who has grown trees from seedlings has seen the damage done by deer. Deer chew off the buds and bucks rub against the trunks of young trees and sometimes girdle them. The most economically feasible solution to this problem is to place tree tubes around the seedling for protection. Tree tubes are cheaper and easier to work around than constructing a deer fence around tree plantations.

Over the ten years of SWPWO, the topic of tree tubes has come up at almost every gathering. We all agree that tree tubes are an inconvenient necessity to growing tree seedlings in our area. From the collective experience of many members, here are some of my observations about the different products available to tree farmers.

While net tree tubes provide adequate light and air circulation, they do not work well. Deer can easily pull them off. The year we used these, many bucks in our area were observed adorning these tree tubes in their antlers. Also the tree can grow through the net and it takes careful attention to safely remove it from the tube. The inside of the solid, unventilated, "O" shaped tubes can become very hot on

warm summer days. In hot temperatures humans perspire, trees transpire (same thing, different terms). The result is that if the tree does not have a ready supply of soil moisture than it can dry out. Experiments have shown that plants grow best under red wavelength of light, thus some of the tubes are blue. The idea is that the blue light is reflected and red, orange, and yellows are absorbed and will make the tree grow better. Studies show that the increased growth rate in blue tubes is not significantly better than other colors. "C" shaped tubes are available which tend to let in some air so that the temperatures do not get too hot inside. The tube is held together with 3 or 4 zip ties. The zip ties need to be maintained because if they break, there is an opening for the tree to climb out of and also it creates an opening for the wind to get in and push the tree tube like a sail. One thing that I do like about the "C" shaped ones is that two can be looped together to make a bigger tree tube for a wider tree. A newer type of tree tube is "O" shaped and has ventilation holes in it. In theory, this sounds like a good adaptation for this product however I have not seen it in use yet.

Many kinds of stakes are used to hold up the tree tubes. The stakes need to be durable, last in the soil for 3-4 years, and be long enough to support the tube. Choices for stakes vary in price and this may be the deciding factor for you. Most expensive, these days are the metal ones. I have seen conduit used. It is easy to sink in the soil, certainly durable, but the most expensive. Rebar is also used although it can be pricey. It is easy to insert and durable. Bamboo is an option. Bamboo is quite strong. It

takes a few years to break down in the soil and is fairly inexpensive and a renewable resource. Wooden stakes are also used. Wooden stakes require points at one end so that they can be driven into the soil. Oak stakes are the most durable hardwood that is readily available. Some of our members make their own stakes and pay to have them treated so that they do not rot. Wooden stakes are also a renewable resource. Having good stakes is an important part of maintaining your tree tubes and is an added cost to the overall project.

Servicing the tubes becomes part of the chores of tree farm maintenance. Make sure that the stakes are solid and straight. Wind and animals tend to knock the tubes askew. If left the tree seeding will be stressed and grow with a crook. The zip ties break down in the sun and will break open. Deer will browse in any opening in the tree tube. The tree may also grow out of the hole on the side instead of heading for the top hole. If netting is used to cover the hole on top of the tree tube, make sure that it is removed before the tree climbs through it. Removing the netting too late will damage your terminal bud.

Our President, Bob Daley has arranged a great deal on products from a company called Plantra. Plantra carries a variety of items used on tree farms, including vented tubes, "C" style tubes, and "O" style tubes. It is recommended to install tree tubes of 4' or taller on most hardwood seedlings. Plantra has bamboo stakes and mulch mats available also. The discount is as follows;

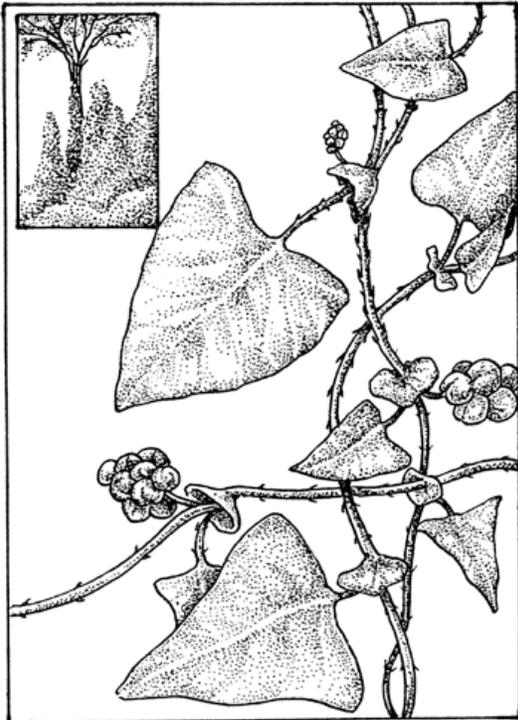
*SWPWO members 10% direct discount at time of order and an additional 25% rebate (about six weeks after)

*Nonmembers will receive a 10% immediate discount

To get the discount use the code "SWPENN29" when you checkout online. Information about the products from Plantra can be found at <http://plantra.com>.

Joe McNaney has a local resource for oak stakes at a good price -4' stakes at .65 cents and 5' stakes at .85 cents. Contact Bob Daley (daley@cs.pitt.edu) if you are interested in purchasing these stakes or have questions. *By Gay Thistle*

Mile-A-Minute weed



Invasives:

Mile-A- Minute Weed

An invasive plant is establishing itself in southwestern PA. It is called mile-a-minute weed (*Polygonum perfoliatum*). The plant was introduced into the United States in the 1930s at a plant nursery in York County,

Pennsylvania and an introduction garden in Prince Georges County, Maryland. Although mile-a-minute weed was eradicated from the introduction garden, it became established and eventually spread from the Pennsylvania site. During the last 55 years, the range for mile-a-minute weed has expanded in several directions for approximately 300 miles. It establishes itself in on recently forested sites or sunny sites with an abundance of plant litter, duff, or brush. A perfect spot is over blackberry or raspberry patches. The problem with mile-a-minute weed is that it densely covers an area with a thick growth that shades out seedling regeneration. It is an annual vine that produces many seeds which can be viable for up to seven years!

Mile-a-minute weed can be recognized by its viny stem and light green triangular leaves (1-2.5 inches across). It also has a saucer shaped sheath that encircles the spiny stem at the nodes. Its fruit is a cluster of small blue berries borne in mid-July to frost. See the illustration on this page. Seed germination begins in early mid-March and continues through April.

It is important to control the spread of this weed. Methods of control recommended by the U.S. Forest Service follow.

Mechanical Methods

Handpulling, weeding and cultivation are useful for small infestations. Hand pulling of seedlings should be done before the sharp recurved barbs harden. Plant removal can continue throughout the summer, but is more effective when done before seeds are produced. Repeated mowing and trimming will prevent flowering and reduce or eliminate seed production.

However, seeds that remain viable in the ground.

Cultural Methods

Maintain vegetation continuity and avoid creating gaps in existing vegetation. Maintain vegetative buffers along streams and forest edges to prevent establishment of and seed dispersal.

Herbicides

Glyphosate applied at a low rate will probably be effective in killing mile-a-minute weed. Prior approval and recommendations should be obtained from the department of agriculture in the state where the application will take place because this weed is not listed on the label.

By Gay Thistle with information from Penn State College of Ag Sciences Fact sheet and from FHTET publication "Invasive Plants Established in the United States from Asia..." March 2006

NOTE: In planning and purchasing for your landscape, please remember that some of the more popular, readily available, and cheap plants have invasive properties. Common culprits are barberry (all *Berberis*), burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*), butterfly

Good Book for Free!

USDA Forest Service has published a book called Tree Owner's Manual for Northeastern and Midwestern United States. It is available to look at and/or download and print at the following website: www.treeownersmanual.info

This book has good illustrations on how to purchase trees, the proper handling of trees, and how to place and plant trees. It has recommendations for pruning and long term care and much more. Take advantage of this resource while it is available.



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.

2009 SWPWO Schedule of Events

June 13 Tour

Ryerson State Park Bird Walk

Marjorie Howard, Pres. Ralph K. Bell Bird Club. Time: 1:00 PM Place: Ryerson Station State Park in western Greene County. Meet at 12:00 PM at Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

July 18 Summer Tour

Tour of The Homeplace: From Civil War-era Farm to 21st Century Tree "Plantation"

Come visit the scenic southwest corner of Green County. This will be a good review of SWPWO touchstones: battling invasives, crop tree ID and release, microclimate, reforestation, drainage, road and trail maintenance, wildlife habitat, and other assorted notions of place, time and change. Time: 1:00 PM. Meet at 12:30 PM at Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

August 14 Field Trip

Visit to a Sawmill

Note Unusual Day Friday
Time: 3:00 PM Place: Summit Forest Resources, Inc., Markleysburg, PA
Meet at 1:30 PM at Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

September 9 Meeting

Owls of SW PA

Rodney Burns, PA Wildlife Conservation Officer will speak to us about owls that are commonly found in our area . We will learn about their habits and habitats. Time: 7:00 PM Place: Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

September 12 Field Trip

Owl Spotting Tour

Note Unusual Time
Time: 6:30 PM. Place to be determined.

October 17 Picnic with Plant Identification Competition and Potato Gun Competition

(Members, Friends and Family)

Time: To be determined

Place: To be determined

November 18 Meeting

Managing Your Forests: Where to Begin

Arlyn Perkey, US Forest Service (Ret.), and John Burnham, Past President SWPWO .Do you have a Stewardship Plan, but still find yourself struggling with the questions of what should I do, where should I do it, and how should I do it? Maybe starting to manage a few acres with good access will help you build your confidence. Time: 7:00 PM. Place: First Floor Meeting Room, Courthouse Square Building, 100 W. Beau Street, Washington, PA. Free Parking: enter through the Beau Street B-Level entrance at the base of the Courthouse Square Building

November 21 Field Trip

Visit to a Recently Treated and Untreated Portion of John Burnham's Forest Land

This field trip will visit the woods discussed at the previous meeting. We will look at a similar untreated portion of the woods. We will discuss observations about the site and alternatives for landowners to consider. We will look at what John decided to do and talk about how he did it. You can decide how it looks to you. We will discuss how it is likely to change in the next 20 years. Time: 1:00 PM. Place: John Burnham's Woodlot in SW Washington County
Meet at 12:30 PM at Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA.

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Membership Information

For 2009

Membership dues for 2009 will be collected at the meetings or can be sent to:

**SWPWO
2506 Hollywood Dr
Pittsburgh, PA 15235**

If sending in dues, please include name, address, phone number and an e-mail address. Membership to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners Association is \$10 per year for an individual and \$15 per year for a household.

Our SWPWO Website

www.cs.pitt.edu/~daley/swpwo for the most up to date information about our organization and connections to other resources to help you manage your woodlot

Executive Committee for the year 2009

Officers

Bob Daley- President
Maria Piantanida-Vice Pres.
Gay Thistle- Secretary
Earl Novendstern- Treasurer

Board of Directors

Joe McNaney
Dave Cressey
C. Michael Irvin

Advisors

Bill Wentzel Arlyn Perkey
Ralph Campbell

Past Presidents

John Burnham
Harold Thistle

FARM BILL PROGRAMS

2009

Suzy Petry of the Greene County Conservation District spoke to us at the March meeting about incentive programs that are available to private forestland owners. Briefly, Suzy talked about three programs that are available to woodlot owners.

1. EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) which is targeting money to forest owners partnering with the Bureau of Forestry for timber stand improvement, mast tree release and/or tree planting.
2. The second program is called Emergency Watershed Protection which offers incentives to restore flood plains and remove old mill dams.
3. WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Incentive) where incentives will be offered for some forestry improvement practices.

Visit or call your local Conservation District office for more information and for an application soon as the money is allocated until it runs out.

By Gay Thistle from notes of the March meeting

Newsletter Info.

This newsletter is published about eight times each year. The editors are Gay Thistle and John Burnham. Articles written by our members are welcome. Please submit them to Gay at thistle@windstream.net. Next newsletter- around June 8,2009