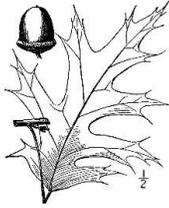


SWPWO



February 2010

Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Owners

February Field Trip Opportunity Producing Maple Syrup

We like to showcase alternative uses of our woodland to our members and friends. Maria Piantanida has arranged for us to get a tour of a maple sugaring operation. However, the sap has to be running and that event varies with the weather of the year. So the date of this field trip will be announced about a week before it will occur. It will be on a weekend. The announcement of this trip will have to be sent via email. So if you have not shared your email with us and you want to be notified of this event, please email Bob Daley at daley@cs.pitt.edu soon. See the calendar events below for more information.

The Winter Woods- Brief Notes for Winter Tree Identification

Winter is a good time to evaluate your woodlands because the greenery that blocks your full view of the state of your woodlot is gone. Tasks in your woodlot this time of year include measuring the growth rate of your selected trees, evaluating the morphology and health of butt logs in your plot and also marking trees for culling if you are implementing a crop tree program. In order to even start this evaluation in the winter months – you have to be able to tell a sugar maple from a boxelder. This issue of our newsletter contains the 2010 SWPWO calendar of events which includes another offering of the Winter Tree ID Course. I took this class in 2008 and found it to be quite valuable. However, I also found that if you don't use it – you lose it. So I thought it was a good time of year to review my notes from the class.

Note: the underlined text is the identifying feature.

Maples (*Acer*) Maples have opposite branching. There are three common species in our woods.

1. Sugar Maple: the bark of the main trunk is smooth, grey with a tan background when younger and becoming shaggier when older. The young stems are brownish to light tan, the terminal buds are small clusters of 3 with imbricate (overlapping, like a shingle) scales, the side buds are oppositely arranged and half the size of the terminal bud.

2. Red Maple: Bark is grey and smooth (no tan background) with darker lines (smile lines) around the branches. The young stems of the red maple become redder as winter progresses. The terminal buds are small, clustered and reddish in color.

3. Boxelder: Bark is grayish brown, smooth when young but getting shaggier when old. Young stems are green and leaf scars completely encircle the stem.

Oaks (*Quercus*) The oaks are plentiful in our SW Pennsylvania woodlots. Oaks have alternative branching.

4. Red Oak: The bark of a mature red oak is smoother than other oaks with distinctive vertical lines of lighter grey in color, it also has a mixture of flat grey areas mixed with ridged and furrowed areas. The inner bark is orange-brown. The young stems are stout with a reddish to greenish brown color. The buds are smooth and oval, 1/6-1/3 inches long, pointed, and imbricate. The crown tends to be round topped and symmetrical.

5. Black oak: The bark has a blocky texture at the base, is darker in color than other oaks. The inner bark is yellow orange. Black oaks have a tendency for epicormic branching. The stems are stout, reddish brown mottled with grey and taste bitter. Buds are 1/4- 1/2" in length, sharp and covered with a yellowish grey pubescence. The crown is irregular in shape

6. White Oak: The bark is splotchy, grey white in color. The rough bark is deeply fissured and shaggier further up the tree in older trees. Stems are stout, brown to purple in color and angled. The buds are smaller and more rounded than red and black oaks and reddish in color. White oaks are found on drier sites.

7. Scarlet Oak: It can be very difficult to distinguish this oak from red oaks. The base of scarlet oaks tends to buttress more than the others. The younger trees have descending lower branches, but the older trees tend to have a more open habit. Found on dry, well drained soils.

Hickories (*Carya*)- Hickories are also plentiful in our woods and have alternate branching. The bark can be tricky to distinguish among the hickories but the buds and fruit are very distinctive. Bring binoculars and look around on the ground for fallen nuts.

8. Mockernut hickory: The bark is grey with interlacing ridges that look like ski trails, the stems are stout and the bud scales are not persistent. The fruit is the largest with a very thick husk.

9. Shagbark hickory: This tree has a very distinctive shaggy bark where the plates of shags are attached from the top (not from the side like old sugar maples). It has large buds and the bud scales are persistent (looks like the bud is above petals of a flower).

10. Pignut hickory: Its bark is scaly, grey-brown. The bud is thinner than a mockernut with no bud scales. The nut has a thin hull.

11. Bitternut hickory: The bark is flakier than pignut, can be smooth near the top of the tree. The buds are valvate (spoon shaped) and yellow. The nut has a papery thin hull.

12. White Ash (*Fraxinus americana*): Bark is ash grey to grey brown, furrowed into close diamond shaped areas separated by narrow interlacing ridges. Branching is opposite on ashes. Buds are small and tend to be broader than long.

13. Yellow Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*): Bark is brownish with furrowed close interlacing ridges which are separated by grayish crevices. In some poplars there are white, vertical lines present. Bark appears smoother than most others in our forest. Branching is alternate. The buds are long, purplish and valvate. The seed pod “petals” are persistent on these trees in the winter. It looks like woody flowers are present way up in the crown.

Elms (*Ulmus*)- Two species are native to our woods. Buds are alternate.

14. Slippery elm: Its bark is scaly, light brown in color. A cross section of the bark is solid tan in color. The base of the trees tend to buttress with narrow feet. Slippery elm tend to have epicormic branching and the buds are rounder than American elm

15. American elm: Its bark is scaly and light brown. A cross section of the bark shows alternate light and dark bark. The buds have a crook or angle to them and are lighter in color than slippery elm

Of course this will not help you identify every tree in your woods. There are plenty more. But it is a good start and so with this information and your handy tree id book, it is a good time of year for all of us to get out in the woods and absorb that sunshine that now is able to penetrate our woods so that our Vitamin D levels rise and we stay healthy and happy for another year. By Gay Thistle

Soil Tests

It is recommended that you obtain a soil test before a planting to ensure that you have the correct nutrition for the crop. Soil test kits with directions are available at your local county Cooperative Extension Service offices. The cost is \$9.00 per kit and this includes, the kit itself, cost of mailing and the cost of the analysis. The soil test results will offer recommendations for lime, fertilizers, etc for the particular site. A separate soil sample kit should be purchased for each different site. You will have the opportunity at our March meeting to help with the replacement of the American chestnut back into our forests. To be chosen as a test site you will have to have soil test results for your sites. If you are interested in participating in this historic process, please plan to attend the meeting and get your soils tested.

Seedlings Available

Seedlings are available from the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Howard Nursery. Some of the advantages of ordering from Howard Nursery are that you will be getting native grown species for a reasonable cost. Hardwood trees, evergreens, and flowering trees and shrubs are for sale. Many of the plants attract wildlife. Log on to the <http://www.pgc.state.pa.us>. Click on “General Store” button, then “Howard Nursery”. Quantities are limited. Delivery will be sometime in March.



SWPWO 2010 Calendar of Events

SWPWO events are free and open to the public.

February Field Trip (Exact date TBD) Tapping Maple Trees & Making Syrup

Vince Gillen, and Wayne Fiola

Description: Many Pennsylvania woodland owners have sugar maples on their property. If you have ever wondered about the process for tapping your trees and making your own maple syrup, this field trip is for you. You will have a chance to see how the trees are tapped, visit a "sugar shack" where the sap is reduced to syrup, see the equipment used in the process. This is a small scale operation that others can adopt if they are interested in homemade maple syrup. There will be a bonfire with hot cider, cocoa, cookies, and marshmallows at the end of the tour. This is a perfect field trip for the whole family and a good opportunity to introduce the concept of forest stewardship to children and grand children. Sign up: Because tapping the trees and collecting the sap is determined by weather conditions, it is not possible to set a date for the field trip in advance. Those who plan to attend, should contact Maria Piantanida by phone (412-241-2747) or email (mariap@pitt.edu). Once the sap starts to flow, we will contact all those who have expressed an interest to give them the date, time, location, and directions. Vince and Wayne will try to arrange their schedule so that they are reducing the sap on a Saturday. They cannot guarantee this, however, because of uncertainties about when and how much sap starts to flow.

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: Fiola and Gillen Woodlands north of Burgettstown

March 31 Meeting American Chestnut Revival

Gary Micsky, Penn State University

Description: Basic chestnut culture: We will briefly discuss the history of American chestnut and how the chestnut blight nearly eliminated the species from our forests. We will talk about the efforts of The American Chestnut Foundation and other scientists to develop blight resistance, what is currently happening in PA, and ways local people can get involved. We will spend time explaining why we encourage people to begin by planting open pollinated American trees even though we know that they will eventually develop blight. We will introduce the following subjects in the classroom and follow-up with actual demonstration at the Saturday field day: Importance of Site Selection & Preparation, Soil Fertility Issues & Testing, Soil Amendments to Improve Seedling Establishment, Direct Seeding vs. Transplants, Proper Planting Depth, Seed/Seedling Protection Techniques, Tree Aftercare, Record Keeping & Follow-up Evaluations

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

April 3 Field Trip Chestnut Planting

Gary Micsky, Penn State University

Description: On Site Planting and aftercare will be demonstrated. If you are interested in planting Chestnuts on your farm, these meetings are the basic training and are essential.

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: John Burnham's Tree Farm

Meet at 12:30 PM at Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

May 12 Meeting

Sustainable Forestry: How do you know when you see it?

Dr. Jim Finley, Professor of Forest Resources, Penn State University

Description: How do you know if the timber harvesting decisions you make (or others make for you) are likely to lead to a sustainable outcome. Learn about the critical variables to consider as you plan a timber harvest to create a productive forest with future management options.

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

May 15 Field Trip Sustainability Assessment: Practical Application

Arlyn Perkey, US Forest Service (Ret.)

Description:

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: Arlyn Perkey's Tree Farm in Monongalia County, WV

Meet at 12:30 PM at Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

June 11 Tour Visit to Keystone Cooperage Barrel Manufacturing Plant

Brian and Mike Wilson

Description: Roll out the barrel. We're going to have some fun! Come see, from beginning to end, how white oak logs are cut into staves (narrow strips of wood) and then made into wine barrels. The Wilson Forest Products Company has been making barrel parts (the staves) in Greene County since 1931. But in 2001 the owners Brian and Mike Wilson, grandsons of the company's founder, decided to get into the actual barrel-making side of the business, which they named Keystone Cooperage. The white oak tree grows well in SW PA and it is the wood of choice for barrels, since its individual cells are impervious to liquids. Once cut, the staves go through a process of assembly, a hot water bath, application of steel bands, toasting of the inside of the barrel, and sanding the outside to an even surface. The company sells over 5,000 52-gallon barrels each year and hopes to increase this number in the near future. Note Unusual Day Friday

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: Keystone Cooperage Barrel Manufacturing Plant

Meet at 12:30 PM at Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

July 10 Summer Tour Other Agricultural uses for Property: Tour of Winery , Wine Tasting, and Social

Description: The Thistlethwaite family farm is in a beautiful setting. The land has been farmed for many years, in a traditional sense. Eight years ago the Thistlethwaite's started a new agricultural adventure- viticulture. From their own grapes, they now produce a nice variety of red, white and sparkling wines. We will be given a tour of the vineyards and the wine making facility. We will be offered a wine tasting in a tastefully remodeled barn that has a bar made from cherry that was harvested from their property. We will also share an assortment of hearty appetizers in the outdoor gazebo. There will be a cost associated with this tour and we will have to have reservation from those who want to attend. Directions can be given at the time of the reservation. More information will be available later in the year. Wear sturdy shoes for walking and appropriate clothing for the weather.

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: Thistlethwaite Winery, Jefferson, PA in Greene County

Meet at 12:30 PM at Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

August 7 Field Trip Tour of Maple Hills Tree Farm

The Fajerski Family tree farm has seen many changes as the family has worked to plant many trees on their Claysville Tree farm. These offer great informal learning opportunities to members and friends alike.

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: Home and woodlot of SWPWO member Mark and Debi Fajerski, outside of Claysville, Washington County

September 8 Meeting

Game Commission Update

Rodney Burns, PA Wildlife Conservation Officer

Emerald Ash Borer Update

Rick Turcotte, Ph.D., US Forest Service Entomologist

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

September 11 Field Trip Collecting Ash Seeds

Description: They say the emerald ash borer will eliminate ash trees from our forest populations. The thought is that the emerald ash borer will go through the ash trees and then be out of this source and die off. After this threat is gone, scientists would like to have a native seed source ready to be planted once again in our forests. There is a national effort to collect these seeds now. In this tour you will learn how to collect ash seeds, how to preserve them, and where we can donate our seeds.

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: To be determined

Meet at 12:30 PM at Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

October 23 Picnic with Plant Identification Competition and Potato Gun Competition (Members, Friends and Family)

Time: To be determined

Place: To be determined

**November 10 Meeting
Non-Timber Forest Products**

More information will be forthcoming

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 13 Field Trip Winter Tree Identification: the Basics
Arlyn Perkey, US Forest Service (Ret.)**

This field trip will cover the basics of tree identification in the winter. The discussion will focus on trees common in our woods of SW PA and that have a particular value for hardwood. Be prepared to take notes and wear appropriate clothing for the weather and proper shoes for the walking.

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: To be determined

Meet at 12:30 PM at Building #10, Greene Country Fairgrounds, Waynesburg, PA

Executive Committee for the year 2009

Officers

Bob Daley- President

Mike Irvin -Vice Pres.

Gay Thistle- Secretary

Maria Piantanida - Treasurer

Board of Directors

Dave Cressey

Mark Fajerski

Jessica Wise

Advisors

Bill Wentzel Arlyn Perkey

Ralph Campbell

Past Presidents

John Burnham

Harold Thistle

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.

**Make sure that you continue to receive your SWPWO Newsletter
Send in your 2010 dues today**

Membership Information

For 2010

Membership dues for 2010 will be collected at 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 first meeting of 2009 is scheduled for March 11. Keep your membership up to date to receive a calendar of the 2010 programs and to continue to receive the newsletter.

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

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 March 15, 2010.