

I Bought This Property, Now What?

The Maryland landscape has changed dramatically over the last few decades as people continue to move to rural areas. Statistics show that Maryland is 41 percent forested, but who owns that land, and for what purpose is changing. When asked, most people believe the forests are owned by the government, but most forests (76 percent) are owned by over 130,000 private landowners. Therefore, the future of the forest depends on the individual decisions of many landowners, not the government. Forest ownerships are getting smaller as larger properties are subdivided and often are purchased by people who have little or no understanding of natural resource management. In Maryland, the number of landowners who own less than 10 acres increased by 62 percent from 1977 to 1989 and this number represents about 75 percent of all forest landowners.

This continual increase in small ownerships by landowners who may not understand forest stewardship creates an educational and technical challenge for the state forestry agency, Cooperative Extension, and other organizations that have traditionally focused on larger forest properties.

County Cooperative Extension offices regularly receive phone calls from landowners who just purchased 5, 10, 15, maybe 20 acres of forestland and wonder what they can do with it. Many come with preconceptions: cutting any tree is bad; it should all be mowed and neat; just let nature take its course; and/or there will be perfect harmony with wildlife.

As an owner of forest land you are a forest steward by default and you should feel a sense of responsibility, know the opportunities, be aware of the consequences of your

actions or inaction, and be guided by objectives. How does a former urban or suburban landowner learn about natural resource management? Unfortunately, there is much misinformation in the public media placed by groups with an agenda, but no sound science. It's best to start with research-based education and information from university Extension services and state forestry agencies. Take advantage of educational opportunities such as workshops, newsletters, field tours, and relevant organizations.

Before you can make informed decisions regarding the management of your property, you need to educate yourself. You are charting the course for Maryland's forests on your few acres. Start by visiting www.naturalresources.umd.edu to read past newsletters, fact sheets and other resources.

Due to state budget shortfalls, the Maryland Cooperative Extension printshop that prints this newsletter has been shut down. We are currently researching new ways to continue educating forest landowners through this newsletter. We may resort to sending an "e-newsletter" over the Internet or posting it at www.naturalresources.umd.edu. If you would like to receive this newsletter online or have other comments regarding its value to you, please e-mail Lori Bittenbender at lb203@umail.umd.edu.

Correction

In the last issue of *Branching Out* we incorrectly cited the sponsor of the Inspector of the Year as well as the Tree Farmer of the Year. These titles are awarded by the Maryland Tree Farm System. The editors of *Branching Out* apologize for this error.

The Way of the Grapevine

Wild grapevines are common in many woodlots. The fruit produced in late summer to early fall feeds a variety of wildlife. Black bears, cardinal, fox sparrow, gray fox, mockingbird, ruffed grouse and wild turkey are among at least 53 different wildlife species that use the plant for food. Wild grapevines also provide cover and rest sites for many birds and small mammals. Grapes in your woodlot can enhance its value for wildlife but, grapevines left unchecked may also degrade the woodlot attractiveness to wildlife.

Grapevines have a very limited ability to grow "upward" by themselves as trees do. Their reaching and climbing skills, however, are exceptional. While wild grape can survive and grow in partial shade, their life goal is to be at the top, in full sunlight. How does a plant that can't support itself vertically grow tall and reach the top? Grapevines use trees and other plants to reach tall heights.

Foliage and vines of wild grape will completely cover tree crowns as they greedily grab as much sunlight as possible. If vine growth is left unmanaged, it's bad news for trees. Once a tree is overtopped with grapevines, unless someone or something intervenes, damage will occur. The most visible and common damage is mechanical. This is a result of two factors. First of all, a tree usually can't compete with grapevines for sunlight. Vine growth is usually very rapid. An overtopped tree is weakened by receiving less sunlight. The second factor is the sheer mass of vine entanglements. A weakened tree, with weight hanging from its crown, will eventually break, often resulting in permanent damage or death.

The nature of grapevine growth in a woodlot is often destructive, yet this plant provides certain benefits. You can have the best of both worlds. A landowner who values his or her property for attracting wildlife may want to allow wild grape to grow in a designated area. A 1/4 to 1/2 acre area is large enough to grow a healthy plot of grapes to yield many benefits for wildlife, yet small enough to manage.

Wild grapevines are fairly easily controlled. Minimum requirements are a sharp pruning saw, medium-sized squirt bottle, and a dose of perseverance. Grapevines needing control should be cut in two places. Sever the vines three to five feet from the ground. The first cut should be made just above the ground and sprayed with an appropriate herbicide. Greater control of resprout is achieved when spraying the cut stump. Coat the surface of the stump

with an approved herbicide as soon as possible after making the cut.

Timing is important when undertaking a grapevine job. If you are considering a timber harvest or thinning, and grapevines are prevalent in your woodlot, they should be controlled before any of these activities.

Time of year is also important. Mid-summer through early fall is the best time to control vines with or without herbicides. The worst time of year to control grapevines with the cut and spray method is early spring when the sap is flowing. A cut made this time of year will "bleed" so much that the herbicide will literally be flushed out and made unavailable for uptake by the plant.

Written by Adam Downing for "The Woodlander," March 2001.

Mid-Atlantic Forest Stewardship Seminar

Maryland Cooperative Extension and Frederick Community College invite you to attend the Mid-Atlantic Forest Stewardship Seminar on Saturday, Nov. 1, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. A tradition for over 17 years, this annual conference offers the opportunity to learn from experts and other forest landowners. The cost is \$30 which includes coffee, donuts, lunch and educational materials. After October 25, the registration cost will be \$35.

The theme to the keynote address is "Making Your Voice Heard in Forest Conservation." Workshop session titles include "Hands-on Forest Stewardship Planning," "Deer Management in the Suburban Landscape," "Incorporating Forest Stewardship into Conservation Easements" and "How to Watch and Photograph Wildlife."

For a registration form or more information, contact Wilma Holdway at 301-631-3576 or wh89@umail.umd.edu.

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2003 MFA Annual Meeting Focuses on Conservation Easements

The Maryland Forests Association invites you to attend their 2003 annual meeting on October 24 and 25 at the Clarion Resort Fountainbleau Hotel in Ocean City, MD. This year's theme is: *Conservation Easements: Key to the Future or Lock on the Land?*

Friday's events include a field trip on Wetlands Ecology, "Life in the Coastal Bays," which will be led by representatives of the Maryland Coastal Bays program. Saturday will provide a panel discussion offering five views of conservation easements. The session will offer easement perspectives from government, land trusts, hunt clubs and forest landowners.

For more information, contact MFA at 301-895-5369, mdforests@hereintown.net, or visit their website at www.mdforests.org/AM2003.htm.

For more information on conservation easements, check out the Extension publication titled, "**Working Forest Conservation Easements: A Primer for Forest Landowners.**" You can download a free copy from the "Publications" section at www.naturalresources.umd.edu.

Getting the Most Out of Your Woodland Property - Forestry Short Course

This six-week course is targeted for new and established forest landowners in and around Harford County. It takes place on Thursday evenings, October 2 - November 13, from 7 - 9 p.m. at the Harford County Cooperative Extension office. One field tour will take place on Saturday, October 25. Course dates and titles are:

- Oct. 2: *How Do I Become a Steward of My Woodland Property?*
- Oct. 9: *Identifying Trees on My Property and How They Grow.*
- Oct. 23: *How the Forest Works: Principle & Practice of Forest Ecology and Management.*
- Oct. 30: *Managing Wildlife in Your Woodlot: Principle and Practice of Wildlife Ecology and Management.*
- Nov. 6: *Forest Stewardship Plans and Practices from My Woodlands.*
- Nov. 13: *The Forest Enterprise: How to Earn Income and Rewards from My Woodland.*

The cost is \$60, which includes a course notebook and refreshments. For more information, contact Tammy Harward at 410-638-3255 or at tharward@umd.edu.

Forestry Cooperatives: What Today's Resources Professionals Need to Know

Maryland Cooperative Extension will host a satellite conference for natural resource, Extension, and development professionals. Consultants, service providers, and researchers will provide a framework for better understanding forestry cooperatives and their potential role in helping private forest landowners achieve their objectives.

The agenda will define cooperatives and their functions, provide success stories and will give guidelines in organizing a forestry cooperative. Registration is \$5 for the conference set for November 18 from 2:30 - 4:30 p.m., EST. The two satellite viewing locations are: 1) Western Maryland Research & Education Ctr, Keedysville, MD. Contact: Cindy Mason 301-432-2767, ext. 301; and 2) Wye Research & Education Center, Queenstown, MD. Contact: Nancy Stewart 410-827-8056. Please call your choice of viewing location by November 12 to register.

More information about the conference agenda is available at www.wisc.edu/uwcc/forestcoops/index.html.

Forest Regeneration Handbook

A Guide for Forest Owners, Harvesting Practitioners and Public Officials

The State of Connecticut has recently published a forest regeneration handbook that provides an appreciation of how Connecticut forests developed and fosters an understanding of forest regeneration concepts, including the importance of disturbance. The handbook provides readers with sufficient information to make decisions about forest regeneration options tailored to their management objectives. To obtain your copy, contact Steve Broderick at 860-774-9600 or stephen.broderick@uconn.edu.

Rural Enterprise Fact Sheets Available

Eight new facts sheets are available at the natural resources website. These fact sheets explore various forest income opportunities. They briefly describe the enterprise; provide lists of supplies needed; and discuss time requirements, marketing tips and legal requirements. Each fact sheet also features a handy sample budget detailing expenses and projected income. Fact sheet topics are basket making, holiday greenery, vacation cabins, aquaculture, hunting leases, sawmills, shiitake mushrooms and horse boarding. You can download your free copies from the "Publications" section at www.naturalresources.umd.edu.

Riparian Forest Buffer Series

Understanding the Science Behind Riparian Forest Buffers Series by Julia Klapproth (Maryland Cooperative Extension) and James Johnson (Virginia Cooperative Extension) is a set of six bulletins detailing the benefits and management of streamside (riparian) forests as buffers for land management activities and wildlife and fish habitat. To download your copies, log onto www.ext.vt.edu/resources.

Timber Sale Publication

Conducting a Successful Timber Sale: A Primer for Landowners, PUB-FR-254 2003, by Mark G. Rickenbach outlines both the timber sale process and identifies the key individuals in the process. It is available through the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension Publications by calling 877-947-7827 or on the Internet at <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/timbersale>.

Forest Stewardship Case Studies

The Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Program recently published *Stewardship in the Public Eye: How and Why Six Massachusetts Towns Actively Manage Their Forests*, by Susan Campbell. The case studies portray the experiences of several towns that are making connections in their woods and they also relay strategies for success and potential pitfalls and provide resources for getting started. Contact the MA Forest Stewardship Program for further information: 413-256-1201.

Invasive Plants Publications

Biological Control of Invasive Plants in Eastern US reviews the biology, impacts and biological control of 30 invasive species. To request a free copy, contact Richard Reardon of the U.S. Forest Service in Morgantown, WV at rreardon@fs.fed.us or call 570-945-8095.

The following fact sheets are available from the Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program: *Autumn*

Upcoming Stewardship Events

- **Oct. 2: Symposium on Managing Logging Risk and Liability** at University Park Campus at Penn State. Contact Ray Noll at 814-867-9299 or by e-mail at sfi@penn.com.
- **Oct. 2 - Nov. 13: Harford County Forestry Short Course.** See page 3 for details.
- **Oct. 4 & 5: West Virginia, Maryland and Virginia Native Plant Society Conference** at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV. Conference covers native plants these communities have in common; plus there will be workshops, field trips and exhibits. Price is \$45 for members and \$55 for nonmembers. Contact Lynn Wagner at 304-876-7027 or by e-mail at lwagner@intrepid.net.
- **Oct. 8: Biosolids, Tree Farming & Reclamation: Field Tour to Demonstrate Research on an Innovative Beneficial Reuse System** at the MD Cooperative Extension, Prince George's County office, 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. The event will provide an overview of deep row application using forest trees. Cost is \$10, which includes lunch, refreshments and materials. Deadline is Oct. 3. For more information, contact Cindy Mason at 301-432-2767, x301 or by e-mail at ct11@umail.umd.edu.
- **Nov. 1: Mid-Atlantic Forest Stewardship Seminar** - Frederick Community College, see page 2 for details.
- **Nov. 18: Forestry Cooperative Satellite Conference**, see page 3 for details.

Olive, Japanese Barberry, Tree-of Heaven, Japanese and Giant Knotweed, Bush Honeysuckles, Multiflora Rose, Oriental Bittersweet and Mile-a-Minute. To request a free copy of any of these publications, call 800-235-WISE or e-mail RNRExt@psu.edu. You can also download copies at <http://rnrext.cas.psu.edu/>.

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See page 2 for addresses and phone number.