

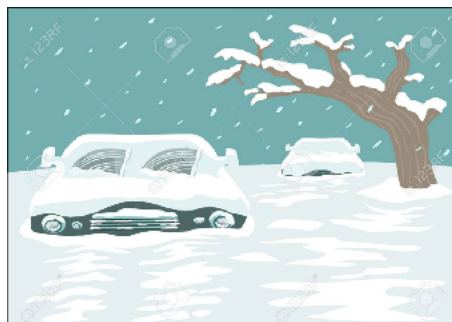
130 Austine Drive, Suite 300 Brattleboro, VT 05301 802-257-7967 windhamwoodlands.org windhamwoodlands@gmail.com

WOODLOT TIPS

FALL 2021



Preview of Coming Attractions



The President's Report

Short Takes

Firewood

I sit here, summoning up the courage to hang a new handle on my splitting hammer, in order to put the finishing touches on my wood pile. I would like to be able to say that I only have to do it every twenty years, but my swing is not that accurate, so that if I get five or six years out of it, I will be happy.

As is noted elsewhere, firewood is in short supply this fall. This is not because of trade embargoes or shipping bottlenecks, but because the weather has been so wet that loggers have been unable to get into the woods. The cut of my own timber has stretched out for almost nine months because of it.

The Annual Meeting

I was very pleased that we were able to hold our annual meeting in person. Sixteen or so brave souls turned out to sit six feet apart at The Scott Farm to do the business of the Association.

There was a tour of a newly cut woodlot owned by The Landmark Trust USA who also own The Scott Farm, Kiplings home in the United States, Naulakha, as well as the out buildings and a number of other properties. There was also a tour of The Stone Trust (located at The Scott Farm), by Certified Master Craftsman Brian Post who talked at length about dry stone masonry. It was fascinating.

During the meeting the annual budget was presented by Andy Snelling. Copies are available on our webpage at <http://windhamwoodlands.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/WRWA-Budget-21-22.pdf>

I want to thank Susan McMahon, Executive Director of The Landmark Trust USA for offering the use of The Scott Farm and to Simon Renault, General Manager for all their help in making a great day possible. The Scott Farm has been a WRWA member for many, many years.

The Search for a new Treasurer.

We are still looking for a person (or people) to take over the duties from Phyllis Weltz, our departing Treasurer of more than twenty years. Duties include bookkeeping, paying bills, sending out donation letter acknowledgements etc. If one person doesn't feel that can donate the expected ten hours a week, we can split up the chores among several people. We encourage people to step up to fill this important role.

Membership Renewals

As of now we have had 165 members renew their memberships in WRWA and 74 members have donated \$4435 to The Scholarship and Halsey Hicks Funds. **Please don't forget to renew and remember the funds in your holiday giving.**

Passings

With sadness we note the passing of two long time members of WRWA. **Mary Lou Schmidt**, wife of Bill Schmidt, a WRWA Trustee for many years. Mary Lou was a stalwart in the Southern Vermont conservation community and in the life of Dummerston.

Eric Barradale has also past away. Eric and his wife Joan were members of WRWA for many years. They lived in Guilford. Both Eric and Joan were avid skiers and tennis players, and along with John Caldwell, promoted x-country skiing in southern VT.

An Interesting Blog

While spending far too much time surfing the internet, I came across a very interesting blog by **Norma Manning** of Vernon. She and her husband walk the many trails in the Vernon woods exploring and reporting on what they find. There are great picture of the woods as well. Take a look.

<https://vernonvtnaturefinds.blogspot.com>

What happened to our foliage season??

By Bill Guenther, Windham County Forester (Retired)

This fall's foliage display was a real disappointment for many of us with very few areas of brilliant striking color. I have to say that I think it was the worst foliage season in over 25 years.

County Forester Sam Schneski's forest health update mentioned the anthracnose fungus that really hit the sugar maples hard. With many leaves falling or being shriveled up, there was not a strong contingent of decent maple leaves available to provide us with a vibrant landscape. We did see lots of yellows, but what was missing was the luminescent brilliance and wide range of color such as the fiery oranges of sugar maple the deep crimson on the red maples and the unique purple coloration in the ashes, which all make for a spectacular foliage season. What caused this? Well, we can blame it on the weather!

Leaves contain several pigments at the height of the growing season, with the most dominant being chlorophyll. As the days shorten, the tree is preparing for winter and the light-loving chlorophyll gradually flows out of the leaves. This process leads to another pigment, already in the leaves, called carotenoids, to assume dominance. Carotenoids give us the yellows and oranges that we saw this year, but do not show the luminescence that we all long for. I've often said that in a great foliage year when I see a hillside I rate as a ten, it looks so ablaze that I think I should grab my fire shovel and cut a fireline around the "blaze!".

The missing ingredient for great foliage is a very complex pigment called Anthocyanin. For Anthocyanins to form, certain weather patterns are imperative to produce a Monet-like landscape. The best foliage seasons are ones that have cool nights in the low to mid 40's (but NO frost-Jack Frost will create very dull conditions), days in the low to mid 60's and most importantly, brilliant sunshine producing cobalt blue skies.

September is the critical month for weather patterns to align with spectacular color. I reviewed the weather history for the month and found that there were only 12 days that dipped down to the 40's but seven of those nights were above 46 degrees. On the other end, the highs were all over 70 degrees for 26 days, including one day it reached 84 degrees! So in the temperature category, we did not have readings that were conducive for good anthocyanin formation.

Next I explored cloud cover and discovered that we had only 6 days in the month where conditions were either clear or mostly clear from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The lack of good sunlight was yet another attribute that spoiled our fall splendor.

Once I reviewed this weather data and then included the major impact of anthracnose on premature leaf fall, it all added up to a pretty dismal year for good fall color. With changes to our climate, we could see fewer great foliage years in the future. So next September, wish for lots of sunshine with cool nights and warm, but not hot, days!

Navigating Your Way Through EAB in Vermont

Pieter van Loon

These days if you are traveling from Point A to Point B, you enter the two locations into your favorite route planning app and, in an instant, algorithms offer you favored routes and the time it will take to traverse them. If you need to arrive at 10:00 AM and the app says it will take you two hours to get there, you know you need to leave by 8:00. But what if your journey has a destination and a way to get there, but no algorithm to help you figure out when to leave? Then what?

Emerald ash borer (EAB) was found in Vermont back in 2018. Since that time a lot of Vermont landowners and towns have been on a quest to figure out how and when to deal with their ash trees. They know where they are going to start their route, their “cut hazard trees” and “treat important shade trees” destinations are known, but they don’t know when they should take the first step. In the past couple of years, the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets, and University of Vermont Extension Urban and Community Forestry Program have used a matrix of purple sticky traps located strategically around the state to help refine the EAB treatment timing algorithm.

I work for the Vermont Land Trust and have long thought that there ought to be a stronger connection to the Windham Regional Woodlands Association. Both organizations care deeply for the working woods of Vermont and strive to provide people with both innovative and tried and true techniques for managing land. As a first step in strengthening the organizational bond, I signed myself up to hang traps in Vernon,

recruited Deb and Munson Hicks and Bob and Jenny Spencer to host purple traps on their land, and convinced Sam Schneski to help monitor them (it didn’t take much convincing).

Vernon has EAB across the Connecticut River in Hinsdale, NH and south of the border in Northfield, Mass. To date, there had been no EAB confirmed in Vernon. On an overcast early-August day with clouds the color of beech bark and a gentle mist falling, that all changed. Sam and I were at the Spencer property and dropped the trap from its spot about 25 feet up a dying ash on the edge of a field overlooking a pasture with a backdrop of the Hinsdale hills. Our eyes were drawn to a beetle newly stuck to the trap. Most bugs stuck on the trap turn black after a while, but this one was a nice shiny green. A quick look through a ten-power magnifier confirmed our suspicion that EAB is in Vernon. A little over a month later, we waded into a hearty poison ivy patch next to the road in front of Deb and Munson’s house and found another EAB in that trap. Two for two. A good statistic for a baseball player, but not so great for us tree huggers.

With EAB finds in Wilmington and Vernon this summer, the travel time algorithm has been honed. The time to leave on your ash tree management foray is now.

When EAB was found in Washington county 3 years ago, Vermont became the 31st state to get the disheartening news that it was host to this nasty invasive exotic insect. That was the bad news, but the good news was that those other 30 states had been dealing with it for a while and had lessons for us. Back in 2002 when EAB was first found in the US, the message was, “When you find EAB, it is time to cut all your ash.” Based on the experiences of other states and the wealth of research done in the meantime, we

EAB continued

now have a message of, “Don’t panic. There is hope for Vermont’s ash.”

I could go on for pages and pages on what you should do next, but let’s keep it simple. First, inform yourself on the subject. There are tons of webpages, but the two you want to visit first are <http://vtinvasives.org/land/emerald-ash-borer-vermont> and <https://vtcommunityforestry.org/community-planning/tree-pests>. Yes, the community forest site is aimed at municipalities, but the information is great and you just need to shift mindset and apply the same ideas to your own little municipality, your property or yard. If you have ash trees in your yard or in areas of your property that you spend a lot of time, assess the health of those trees. If they are showing signs of stress (a few dead branches, some missing bark and a little rot from repeated knocks with the lawn mower, little branches sprouting from the main stem), it is probably time to take those trees down. Emerald ash borer

homes in on stressed ash, so getting these trees out first is important. If you have a shade tree in the back yard that you consider to be another member of the family, contact local arborists and get estimates for treating the trees with an injectable insecticide.

If you own a bigger piece of land and are enrolled in current use, talk to your forester about the future of the ash in your woods. Again, there is no need to cut all the ash. White ash seems to have some resistance to EAB, so it is important to try to keep a regenerating population going. If you have questions, you can call or email Sam (802-257-7967, sam.schneski@vermont.gov) or me (802-246-1502, pieter@vlt.org). We can all work together to make our expedition through a world with EAB smooth and efficient so we arrive at our chosen destinations in time to save one of Vermont’s iconic hardwoods.

A guide to nature in winter

by Henry Homeyer

Reprinted with permission

This is a good time to be outdoors exploring the fields and woods. There is so much to see that will be buried in snow later on. But you may ask, what is there to see? Trees, winter weeds, animal footprints, signs of insects, shelf fungi on trees, evergreen woodland plants and more. If I had to choose one person to show me the outdoors in winter, it would be Donald W. Stokes who wrote “A Guide to Nature in Winter,” that covers all these topics and more.

I find that learning the names and characteristics of plants and animals makes them more interesting. Many people look at all evergreen conifers and call them “pine trees.” But if you know the difference between a white pine and a Canadian hemlock or a balsam fir, you can decide if you want to grow one or the other on your property.

Donald Stokes’ book explains that if you learn to identify the six most common deciduous trees and the six most common trees with needles or cones, you will know 80 percent of the trees in most northern forests. And you can do this in winter. Bud location, size and shape are good indicators for identifying trees.

- **Maples.** Like ash trees, the buds, branches (and later leaves) are arranged opposite each other, while most other trees alternate the location of them on stems. Maples have oval buds that are between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long.
- **Ash.** Buds on ash trees are larger than maple buds, and are dark and dome shaped. The twigs on ash trees are generally thicker than on maples.
- **Oak.** These have clusters of buds at the end of each branch, and the younger trees often hold onto their brown leaves through the winter. Buds and branches appear in an alternating pattern.
- **Beech.** The buds on beech are long and pointy. But the most distinguishing characteristic is its smooth, gray bark. There is a beech fungal disease which can mar the bark, making it look like a bad case of acne.
- **White Birch.** Most people can recognize white birch by its bright, white and peeling bark, but other birch species can have golden or greyish bark. The bark also has long horizontal lines marking it, and they often have catkins hanging from the tips of upper branches.
- **Poplar,** also called aspen. These trees tend to grow in clumps in places with poor soil. The upper bark has a greenish tinge, and their buds are variable in color, but always have sharp, pointy ends

Then there are the evergreens:

Pines. They have clumps of needles in groups of 2, 3 or 5. White pine, the most common, has groups of 5 long, soft needles.

Hemlock. These trees have short ($\frac{1}{2}$ -inch), soft needles with two white lines on the

underneath side. There is a short stem between needle and twig.

Balsam fir. One-inch needles, also with two white lines underneath but no stem between needle and twig.

Cedar. Small, scale-like needles arranged along the twigs.

Spruce. Four-sided needles that are uncomfortably sharp to the touch.

Larch. No needles in winter, but cones may be present. Stubby twigs on branches. After that basic list of characteristics, the Stokes book provides interesting details about the various species of trees, and differences within a genus. So, for example, he explains that most wooden sports equipment – and the handles of our garden tools – are made from ash because it is strong, relatively light, and flexible. And he notes that sycamores, known for beautiful variegated bark, are often hollow when large, and home to nesting mammals like raccoons and skunks.

I was fascinated to read that willow seeds, if washed away and deposited on a muddy bank (in spring), can germinate in two days and grow seven feet during the first year.

Poplars or aspen are often the first trees to grow after land has been burned or damaged by construction of roads. They often appear in clusters, as new trees pop up from the roots. They are not long-lived like maples or oaks which can live hundreds of years: poplars, Stokes noted, generally last no more than 80 years, and frequently less.

Did you know that the sounding boards of many musical instruments are made of spruce? Stokes points out that it is especially clear of knots and

imperfections, and resonates better than other woods.

If you pay attention to your trees, you will learn to identify them by shape and bark. Sugar maples, for instance, have nice rounded tops and older ones have craggy bark. I can identify a white pine from a fast-moving vehicle: branches on the lower part of the tree droop downward, upper branches reach for the sky.

So head outdoors and study the trees along a woodland path. And bring along “A Guide to Nature in Winter.” Almost anyone will learn something from it in no time.

Henry can be reached by e-mail at henry.homeyer@comcast.net or by snail mail at PO Box 364, Cornish Flat, NH 03746. He is the author of four gardening books.

Getting Paid to Grow Your Trees-Update

By Bob Zimmerman, Trustee, Secretary,
Clerk

Robert.rzimmer@gmail.com

In the Summer 2021 Woodlot Tips we had an article about how you could get paid to grow trees on your land. This article is a follow-up piece relating my experiences with two companies that purport to work with Vermonters to get paid to grow trees, thereby offsetting excess carbon in the atmosphere.

I applied to two companies that offered to provide cash payments to Vermonters that wanted to get paid for their forests: Forest Carbon Works [Earn Income From Your Growing Forest - Forest Carbon Works](#) and Silvia Terra, now known as [NCX - NCX](#).

Forest Carbon Works

Application is pretty easy. After a preliminary exchange of emails, I was convinced it was worth trying to get paid so I paid the \$75 fee to pursue the qualification process. After answering a bunch of questions about my property I was informed that I would qualify, subject to a visit by a Forest-Technician. I then answered a Pre-Cruise Questionnaire about hazards that exist on

my property and I now await confirmation of a visit date. This exchange on the internet took about 3-4 months in total. Forest Carbon Works are hoping to get our contract finished by the end of 2021.

NCX-National Capital Exchange (formerly known as Silvia Terra)

NCX gives the appearance of a much bigger outfit presumably conducting business in all of the lower 48 states. The application is similar to what I did for Forest Carbon Works, answering questions about the my property but there is no fee to apply, at least not yet. The process was started in Sept 2021 and we were supposed to learn in Oct 2021 if we were accepted. As of Nov 3, 2021 we have not heard. Participation was supposed to start in Jan 2021.

Summary

So, this business of getting carbon offsets credits to the small landowner is still very much in flux with these early programs struggling to get started and trying to implement verification methodology that will be valid not just for 1 to 2 years but for up to 125 years. It is certainly interesting to follow this new field of carbon offsets as it applies to the owners of small forests and maybe it will result in some cash someday.

Forest Update

Sam Schneski, Windham County Forester

Premature leaf drop -

This fall I received lots of inquiries as to why the foliage in much of our area was turning brown and falling down instead of changing into the beautiful colors we are used to seeing this time of year. The short answer is that above average rainfall set up perfect conditions for anthracnose. Anthracnose is a fungal disease that isn't likely to cause permanent damage. Its spores spread in damp conditions, something we have had no shortage of this summer (or fall for that matter). For yard trees one good way to prevent, or at least lessen the likelihood of, fungal diseases is to clean up the affected leaves and either compost or burn them. Good air flow is key too. Pruning lower branches that may contact the ground and thinning out branches in a tree can help. Avoiding planting trees near buildings or other structures can also ensure better airflow for the life of the tree.

Spotted Lantern Fly -

The following is borrowed information from the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's Forest health highlights.

The spotted lanternfly (SLF, *Lycorma delicatula*) is an invasive planthopper native to Asia that was first detected in the United States in Pennsylvania in 2014. Since then, this species has been reported as established with an infestation in 11 U.S. states and reported individually without infestation in three U.S. states including Vermont. Although this invasive planthopper is a poor flyer, it can travel long distances by humans, hitching rides on surfaces including but not limited to, vehicles, firewood, nursery stock, and stone shipments. This insect

has one generation per year. Eggs begin to be laid in September and will overwinter and hatch in April. This insect feeds in both the nymph and

adult stage, which extends the damage period from April through December. SLF has been reported on more than 70 plant species and can therefore drastically alter our forested and agricultural landscapes. SLF uses their piercing and sucking mouthparts to consume phloem in plant tissue. Heavy feeding can cause oozing, wilting, reduced growth, dieback, and mortality in infested hosts. Oozing/ weeping wounds on plants in conjunction with SLF honeydew secretions attract sooty mold to infested plants. This black-colored mold covers the plant and SLF secretions and can reduce photosynthesis as well as attract other nuisance insects, like wasps, with its strong odor. Due to its broad host range, this is a high species of concern. For more information, or to report a sighting, please visit [VTInvasives](#).

A New App

I've recently been introduced to a new app called "picture this plant identifier". It's super easy to use and impressively accurate. The key feature is that you can identify plants, flowers, and trees instantly. I tried it in a place I had no cell service and surprise surprise it didn't work. But, long after I got home to wifi service and had forgotten I had taken the picture, I was using the app for another plant and it automatically brought up the original plant I had taken a picture of and identified it. For those of you at the edge of your seats wondering what the plant was, it was Carolina horsenettle in a frequently used pasture. All parts of the plant are poisonous! My next step is to go to [Vtinvasives](#) to see if this is considered an invasive plant in Vermont.

Riding the Winds

Welcome again everyone to the time of rest and routine. With summer letting its warm hands go and the fall rains waiting no time to show up, our time of short days and long shadows are upon us. A few north winds lately have ushered out the last of the warblers and in the juncos and white throated sparrows. The sun is low, settling in short days and long nights.

Walking the woods now, look and listen for winter songbird flocks that have settled into their familiar routine of steady daytime feeding, storing up enough fat during the day that will keep them warm in the cold nights to come. Their loud call notes are a good give away of their location as they make their way through the forest canopies. The squirrels and chipmunks are still gathering what is left of the nut crop. This year has been a great mast year for oaks, hickories, and beeches in some areas, watch out for those acorns, they can be hazardous under foot. Along with a good mast year comes the blue jays, this year especially, they are being seen throughout the forests, coming going, storing those nuts wherever they feel is safe.

Early winter is always one of my favorite times in the forest, a sense of peace is felt as everything seems to be taking a break after the hustle and bustle of the summer. All but the hardy ones have left for warmer winds, the plants fallen asleep, retreating below ground or dropping their vegetation and shutting up shop for a while. The forest creatures have settled into their winter routines, visiting their feeding and resting areas efficiently to ration those fat reserves that will get them through the lean months.

For those who stay up late, the winter stars are slowly showing up, Orion, the hunter, is high overhead in the southern sky, welcoming the hunters to the cold times. The long nights also seem quieter, the cold and calm air falling longer on our world, ushering in the temperatures that make us put an extra big piece of wood on the fire. I am looking forward to another winter and hopefully some dry crisp weather to settle us all in for a nice rest.

So, as we now settle into our own routines for the winter and school year, let us not forget those that have their own familiar lives in the forests, marshes, and ponds. This time of year, is one especially to spend time with them when you venture out in the snowy and dark days. Though they may not have their showy colors and foliage of the warm times, they are there in all their glory. They are there, feeding, working, and waiting tight till the warmth of the sun returns and those yearly visitors from the south are seen yet again riding the ever present winds Northward.

Daniel Dubie, Trustee

Windham Regional Woodlands Association
130 Austine Drive, Suite 300
Brattleboro, VT 05301-7040

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
BRATTLEBORO VT
PERMIT NO. 78

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Happy Holidays!

Mission of Windham Regional Woodlands Association

WRWA is a non-profit association of woodland owners and managers, members of the wood products industry, and other interested parties in the Windham County Region who advocate both sustainable management practices and the enjoyment of forests and their ecosystems. In support of these ends, WRWA offers educational opportunities for all age groups. Areas of interest include: biodiversity; clean air and water; cultural and historic resources; fair and equitable taxation of woodland; forest products; recreation; scenic beauty; and wildlife habitat. We recognize that these concepts are continually evolving and therefore will strive to consider the most current thinking and values regarding them.