



Forest Tree Notes

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Firewise Communities

**Mike Reichenbach, University of Minnesota
Extension Service, Cloquet Forestry Center**

It has been traditional to view firefighters as the “protectors” and homeowners as the “victims” of wildland fire. This view is changing to one of partnership where the responsibility for management, preservation, restoration and mitigation rests with everyone in the community.

I recently attended a workshop on creating Firewise Communities. The presentations were hands-on and encouraged each participant to think through how existing and future structures could be made safer from wildfire. My own perspective on reducing fire risk causes me to focus on creating a defensible space by managing the vegetation around the homes. The Firewise concept takes a much broader and multi-disciplinary approach with a focus on fire safe planning and implementation. Firewise landscaping, home improvements, home building practices, better fire protection, and smarter community development are a few of the strategies that can be used to reduce risk of fire. The keys to success are landowners who are active partners with the local community in fire protection and community planning.

On Monday, January 29, 2001, a FIREWISE workshop will be held in Grand Marais. I hope you will plan to attend.

The goals of a Firewise community workshop are:

1. To improve safety in the wildland/urban interface by learning to share responsibility.

2. To create and nurture local partnerships for improved decisions in communities.
3. To encourage the integration of Firewise concepts into community and disaster mitigation planning.

If you have questions, please contact me at (218) 879-0850 or mreichen@cnr.umn.edu



Sustainable Forests Education Cooperative

**Louise Yount, University of Minnesota
Extension Service, Cloquet Forestry Center**

The next time you’re talking with your local forester or wildlife biologist, ask them if they’re aware of the Sustainable Forests Education Cooperative (SFEC). If so, what interesting, new things they’ve learned about!

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The Cooperative, a public-private partnership, fills an important niche designing and delivering educational programs in rapid response to emerging issues of the moment. Such rapid response educational programming is necessary because new research findings often languish for years in scientific journals and innovative management practices lack mechanisms that promote widespread adoption.

For the next few years SFEC programs will focus on productivity and management topics as well as innovations in technologies used in forest management activities. To give you a sense of what is offered, here are a few examples of workshops coming up in the next six months:

- **January 18.** History of Timber Use and Tribal Land Development in Northern Minnesota
- **January 31.** Managing Forests for Wildlife with Views on a Changing Climate
- **February 21-22.** Managing Northern Hardwoods
- **March 20, 21.** White Spruce Management

Twice yearly the Cooperative mails a calendar of upcoming continuing education events. This calendar can be accessed at <http://www.cnr.umn.edu/CCE/calendar.html>. If you have questions about the Cooperative, or would like to be on the mailing list for a paper copy of the calendar of events, please contact Louise Yount, project leader, at (218) 879-0850 ext. 117 or lyount@forestry.umn.edu 



Blackberries, Wild Plums and Other Wild Fruits

Mike Demchik, University of Minnesota Extension Service, Staples.

In the rural areas of the United States wildcrafting, the picking of wild fruit for home use or sale is a time-honored tradition. However, for many people, the mosquitoes, poison ivy and hours needed to pick a few buckets of fruit have relegated significant wildcrafting to a thing of the past. Managing these “wild” plants offers the potential of increased yield and reducing the time needed to harvest the fruit.


Most wild stands will benefit from management. Management can involve thinning, vegetation control, and fertilization. Thinning or the removal of a portion of the some fruit bearing plants can provide the remaining plants with more light, water and nutrients. Vegetation control is the removal of plants that interfere with the growth of the fruit bearing plant. Vegetation control can improve light conditions by removing some of the shading vegetation.

In order to improve a stand of fruit bearing plants, some knowledge of the biology of the plant is necessary. For example, many wild brambles including blackberries, raspberries and dewberries will only bear on second year growth. So when thinning the removal of one year old canes can result in reduced fruiting the next year. When thinning is needed removal of the older canes can make room for the development of new growth but enough canes older than one year must be left to allow for fruiting.

While experimentation is always fun, a little reading can make for greatly improved success of these experiments. Most wild fruit species have been domesticated. Information on growth habits and management is available for each of these fruits at most libraries and extension offices. This information can be used to develop a management plan for your wild fruit plants.

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Management not only has the potential for increasing yield but can greatly facilitate harvest. An example of this that is very common in Minnesota involves wild plums. Wild plums bear extremely heavy crops in some years. Hand harvest is feasible, but ripe fruits tend to fall from the branches at the slightest touch. Managing the stand by pruning of lower branches and removal of understory vegetation before the fruit ripens can take advantage of this characteristic. A tarp can be placed under the tree and the fruit gently shaken from the branches. Mowing paths through raspberry stands or pruning dead and overgrown wood out of pin or chokecherries are other examples of stand management that can benefit the harvester.

When I was a youngster, going to pick the wild blackberries was a thrill. In my memory, those were the biggest, sweetest blackberries ever. So next year when you are battling the mosquitoes and brush to get to your favorite patch of plums or chokecherries on granddad's old forty, consider managing the stand to produce a bountiful harvest. 

Book Review

Meg Hanisch, public affairs specialist, St. Paul, reprinted from the Minnesota Conservation Volunteer, Sept-Oct 2000

Finding the Forest

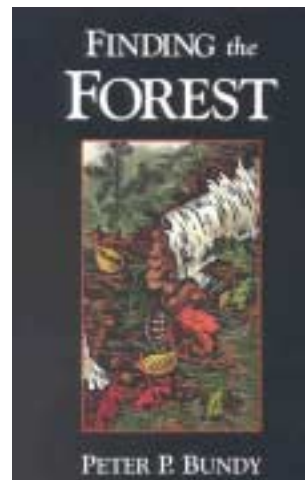
By Peter Bundy, Crosby, Minnesota, Masconomo Forestry 1999

This is a collection of a forester's personal glimpses into life in Minnesota's forests. An easy-to-read book, it shows how we can appreciate the forest for its beauty and spiritual values, while keeping in mind that we also need it for what it can produce.

The author tells of his experience building a home in a secluded area of the forest. To get to his homesite, a road must be built. But building

a road necessitates using a bulldozer to push trees down and aside. The author describes how harsh the developed road looks in the landscape, cut through the forest as it is, but how relieved and excited he feels as he reaches his homesite in his vehicle for the first time. How many of us want to live in the woods or an area with natural beauty and vistas, but forget that, to accomplish this, some of the natural world that attracted us to the site in the first place must be destroyed?


Just when it seems we humans are in control, making the forest do what we want it to do, the balance suddenly shifts and nature takes over. The author tells of living through storms and tornadoes that left stretches of trees lying in their wake. Natural forces changed the composition of the forest, determining what would grow and where.



Finding the Forest includes stories on how a water-witcher uses a wishbone-shaped willow twig to find water (it really worked!); how a beautiful forest becomes ominous at times when, for instance, hordes of mosquitoes and deerflies descend on unsuspecting creatures; and how planting one tree seedling is an exhilarating

experience but planting 1,500 is dirty, back-breaking, and often disappointing work, because not all seedlings survive.

This book speaks to the joy of giving to the forest to help it thrive, and, in turn, the satisfaction of taking from the forest to help us thrive.

Look for *Finding the Forest* in bookstores or call Adventure Publications, (800) 678-7006. 

Event Calendar:



Firewise Workshop

January 29, 2001
Grand Marais, Minnesota

This event is planned for realtors, builders, landowners and other interested in creating firewise communities.

For more information or to register, contact Mike Reichenbach at (218) 879-0850 ext. 123 or mreichen@cnr.umn.edu

Stewardship Forest: A Million Acres in Minnesota A Celebration and Conference for Woodland Owners and Users

March 2-3, 2001.
Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center,
Duluth, Minnesota

One hundred fifteen seminars, workshops and demonstrations will provide landowners with opportunities to learn about forest management, wildlife, policy, habitat restoration, home landscaping and fire protection, wetlands, non-timber forest products and more. This event will also include more than 40 exhibitors.

The keynote speaker, Nina Leopold Bradley, will present a slide show depicting change over time at the Leopold Family Farm. Nina is the daughter of Aldo Leopold, author of *A Sand County Almanac*. The target audience for this event are forest landowners. If you plan on attending consider inviting one or more neighbors to attend with you. Sponsors: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, University of Minnesota Extension Service, Minnesota Forestry Association, and USDA Forest Service.

Registration is required. Cost \$20 for Friday's Banquet exhibits and presentation and \$35 for Saturday's educational sessions, lunch and exhibits.

For more information contact: Mike Reichenbach, Extension Educator, Forest Economic Development at mreichen@cnr.umn.edu or (218) 879-0850 ext. 123; or Mimi Barzen, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources at (218) 327-4119.

Commercial Fruit Processing Workshop

6:30-9:30 p.m., March 8 and March 29, 2001
Wadena, Minnesota

Are you interested in commercial processing of fruit? Learn what is necessary to enter this market. Processing is a way of adding value to agricultural products. Highly perishable fruits must be marketed very soon after harvest, otherwise, the crop spoils. Processing the crop allows a producer the opportunity to use production beyond what can be sold fresh.

This program will discuss some of the requirements for entering commercial fruit processing. The first evening of the program will address business planning, financing and labeling. The second evening will address issues of food safety, legal requirements of a commercial kitchen and product packaging.

A packet of publications will be provided which will serve as a valuable resource. Representatives from the University of Minnesota, the Small Business Development Center, the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and a packaging consultant are scheduled to speak. For anyone interested in entering the value-added fruit processing industry, this is a valuable meeting.

For more information contact Mike Demchik at (218) 894-5167 or LaVonne Blackwell at (218) 894-5196. Registration is required by February 20, 2001.

Emerging Issues In Commercial Harvesting of Native Plants

March 24, 2001

School for Environmental Studies
12155 Johnny Cake Ridge Road
Apple Valley, Minnesota

Do you drink cranberry tea, pick blueberries, or collect wild rice? Do you buy a balsam fir wreath, evergreen garlands, or spruce tops to brighten up December? Or do you fashion your own decorations from pine cones or grapevines? Do you make willow baskets, carve native woods, or dry wildflowers for winter bouquets? Do you gather acorns and other tree seeds to sell to a nursery? Does your model railroad pass through a forest of dried Lycopodium? Do you take Echinacea when you have a cold or rub Arnica gel on your sore muscles after raking too many hours too early in the spring?

All of these things are “nontimber forest products” or “specialty forest products.” Commercial harvest and marketing of these products and many other native plants is a burgeoning worldwide industry. Across North America, gathering is moving from hobby or subsistence status to a business worth billions. The Minnesota Native Plant Society’s upcoming annual Symposium will address this timely topic.

Keynote speaker is Nan Vance, a nationally recognized authority who understands the nontimber forest product industry from biological, socioeconomic, and management perspectives. Additional speakers will address the history of market development for nontimber forest products in Minnesota; an herbalist’s perspective on Minnesota plants; efforts to use agroforestry to take the collection pressure off species at risk; and a series of talks on birch, balsam fir, Lycopodium, Echinacea and ginseng. Closing speaker will be Robyn Klein, chairperson of the Montana governor’s taskforce on nontimber forest products.

Pre-registration closes on March 10. Morning break refreshments and lunch are included in the cost of the Symposium, which is \$18 for pre-registering Native Plant Society members, \$20 for other pre-registrants and Society members at the door, and \$22 for non-members at the door.

For more information, contact MNPS Symposium Registration c/o David Johnson, 6437 Baker Avenue NE, Fridley, MN 55432-5163.

Your Response is Needed

This issue of this newsletter is being sent to all landowners along the Gunflint Trail and others who have expressed interest. With the next issue of the newsletter the readership list will be reduced to include only those who have requested it.

If you would like to continue to receive this newsletter, please contact Susan Seabury at the University of Minnesota, Cloquet Forestry Center, 175 University Road, Cloquet, MN 55720; (218) 879-0850 ext. 108; or sseabury@cnr.umn.edu.

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“Connecting Community Needs and University Resources”

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