



# Minnesota Woodlands

MFA: an organization of, by and for Minnesota's private woodland owners and friends.

[www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org)

Minnesota Forestry  
Association (MFA)

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MFA Board  
Meetings

Cambridge DNR  
Office, 10 am - 3 pm

- April 11, 2017
- July 11, 2017
- October 10, 2017

Conference Calls  
8 - 9 am

- May 9, 2017
- June 13, 2017
- August 8, 2017
- September 12, 2017

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## *Creature Feature*

### Changing Ash Habitats and the Wildlife Impact

*By Jodie Provost, MN DNR Private Land Habitat Specialist*

**Fraxinus Fuss** A little green bug has potential to cause quite a bother in Minnesota when it comes to our trees in the genus *Fraxinus*, or ash trees. This pest, the emerald ash borer (EAB), is an invasive insect from Asia. First discovered in Michigan in 2002, it has caused the deaths of millions of ash trees in the eastern U. S. and southeastern Canada. In our state, EAB was discovered in 2009 in St. Paul, a year later in Minneapolis and southeastern Minnesota, then in greater Duluth in 2016. Our state has nearly one billion green, black and white ash trees. The infestation of the EAB is expected to greatly affect the overall beauty and habitat of our woodlands and the products made from these trees.

**Changing Habitats, Changing Wildlife** Our three ash species are valuable to wildlife in a multitude of ways. They are used by an array of critters in the wetlands, floodplains, and moist uplands in which they primarily grow. Young trees provide browse for deer and moose. More mature trees offer feeding sites for woodpeckers, nuthatches, and chickadees, as well as nesting sites for great blue and green herons, and Cerulean warblers. Older and larger trees provide cavities for fisher and wood ducks, hooded mergansers, and goldeneyes when near wetlands. And downed decaying trees provide cover for salamanders.

The number of ash in the state's woodland will affect the habitat impact as they die. Some wildlife will win and others lose. Critters tied to a habitat type and structure versus specific tree or plant species, like many birds, will be less affected. They will remain if their needs are met, or move to nearby suitable woodland if not. Foraging wildlife will reap the benefits of dying and dead trees that offer added insects and fungi, and cavities nesters the greater opportunity for hollows. Salamanders will find extra downed trees for cover. Berry eaters will discover greater yields as small shrubs and trees like raspberries, highbush cranberries, junberries, and pin cherries are stirred by more sunlight. Migration stopover habitat for songbirds will decline when large contiguous stands of ash die. Wetland



*Black ash like these is one of three species threatened by emerald ash borer.*

*Photo credit: Steven Katovich, USDA Forest Service*

*Continued on page 6*

## Minnesota Forestry Association

### 2017 Board of Directors

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Away from home for a time? Please contact the MFA office if you'll be away from home for an extended time and let us know when you'll be back. We'll hold onto the newsletter until you return so you won't miss a single issue!

[Information@MinnesotaForestry.org](mailto:Information@MinnesotaForestry.org)  
or call 218-879-5100.

## Calling All Members!

By Dennis Thompson, MFA President

The firewood is cut, split, and stacked...the trails have been mowed...trees for spring planting have been ordered...now what? Ever find yourself just sitting around with nothing to do? Okay, so this is the exact opposite of most woodland owners. If you are like me, the number of 'projects' that I want to do outnumber the hours in a day. It seems there is always something that needs attention! Private landowners are certainly devoted and hard-working. And I know, different times of the year are busier than others depending on what your woodland hobbies and activities are. If you do find yourself with some free time, consider getting more involved with MFA.

Here are a few simple ways to get involved...

- Take pictures at committee events and share them with MFA
- Host or help organize a field day
- Speak at a committee event
- Contact members to renew

MFA Committees are always looking for volunteers like you!

- Finance & Investment
- Government Relations
- Land
- Membership
- Education
- Publications & Website

If you are interested in participating on one of the committees, contact MFA president Dennis Thompson at [President@MinnesotaForestry.org](mailto:President@MinnesotaForestry.org). To join a local chapter contact one of the following:

### Aitkin County Private Woodlands Committee

Dennis Thompson  
218-927-6565 ext.111  
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### Root River Woodland Council

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### Wabasha County Forestry Committee

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### Zumbro Valley Woodland Council

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# Horse Logging

*By John Saxbaug*

Last December, as I drove into my tree farm eight miles west of Hinckley, I was amazed at the peacefulness of the forest. I knew I was about to see, hear and smell logging in progress. My previous experience with logging had included the roar of powerful engines, the clanging of metal on metal, the splintering of wood and the acrid smell of fuel. What I observed here instead was the calm but firm commands of a teamster, the steady step of horses, the jangle of chain, the whoosh of the logs through snow, and the smell of fresh manure. This process is known as gentle logging.

I learned about this technique from an article I read in the Hinckley News in January 2016. I found the story and photos about local men who were logging with horses on a site owned by the Hinckley School District to be fascinating and appealing.

After talking with Corey Stafne, the owner of Iron Horse Farms, we arranged to meet at my tree farm. The site and logging job turned out to be ideal for his horse logging operation. I needed a small area cleared within a

40-year-old red pine plantation. It is a level site with little underbrush, uniform tree size and short skid distance.

Horses are ideal for the work because of their low site impact and ability to work in tight spaces. When Corey and his partner, BJ Dunagan, work, they fell and limb the trees by hand and then use their two-horse team to skid the trees to the landing where they are piled and readied for loading by a tractor with a front-end loader. In the woods, Corey directs the team with voice commands: forward (kiss sound or getup), back (hoe or woe), right (gee), left (haw). To reverse, he pulls back on the reins.

The horses have their own personality. They are competitive and seem to thrive on the physical challenge of the job and the opportunity to show their prowess. On level ground, they can pull up to 1,500 pounds individually and 4,000 pounds as a team. Every morning when preparations for the day are being made, they stand at the gate, ready to go.

Corey and BJ have full-time jobs, but enjoy working in the woods with their horses. It is my observation that the partners, like the horses, enjoy the work and the opportunity to demonstrate their capabilities. Corey can be reached at Iron Horse Farms, 320-241-5741, or on Facebook.



*Top left: The team consists of a 9-year-old Belgian gelding weighing in at 1,700 pounds and a 17-year-old Suffolk Punch gelding weighing 1,900 pounds.*

*Bottom left: BJ attaches the logs to the forecart while Corey steadies the horses.*

*Above: Corey Stafne.*



## Wabasha County Forestry Day



**MFA's**  
*Forester*  
*Phone Line*

A free service for  
MFA members only!

Call for an  
appointment with  
the forester:

**218-879-5100**



*Top left: Retired DNR Forester Terry Helbig, left, and current DNR Forester Mark Miller, right, present Bonnie and Jim Kurlish with the Wabasha County Woodland Managers of the Year Award.*

*Left: The annual Wabasha County Forestry Day was held at the American Legion in Milleville. (The county is bordered by the Mississippi River south of Red Wing.) The event was held on Friday, Feb. 10 and jointly sponsored by the Wabasha SWCD, Minnesota DNR, Wabasha Forestry Committee and MFA.*

## St. Louis County Landowners Get Ready to Plant Trees

*By Beth Peterson, District Forester, St. Louis County SWCD*

In January and February, I had the pleasure of hosting several gatherings for landowners who wanted to learn more about planting trees. The focus of the events, hosted by the North and South St. Louis Soil and Water Conservation Districts, was to provide resources to people buying SWCD trees this spring.

Our guests included DNR Forest Health Specialist Jessica Hartshorn, DNR Forest Habitat Specialist Jodie Provost, Fire Adapted Communities Coordinator Gloria Erickson, and University of Minnesota Urban and Community Forestry Department staff Gary Johnson and Ashley Reichard.

We had a great turnout. It was great for me as a professional to hear the types of questions people were asking, and the challenges they were facing. Wind storms hit large parts of St. Louis County last summer, so replacing lost and damaged trees was a concern that was expressed. Insects and diseases were also a major concern. In the arrowhead region, people are very familiar with the consequences of forest pests, especially whitetail that particularly enjoy freshly planted white pine and white cedar. I was very impressed with the attempts people have been making to plant in difficult spots, particularly the thin rocky soils found in many parts of the county.

Contact Beth Peterson at [Beth.Peterson@SouthStLouisSWCD.org](mailto:Beth.Peterson@SouthStLouisSWCD.org) or 218-730-8002.



*SWCD Forester Beth Peterson welcomes the crowd at Hartley Nature Center in Duluth.*

## Women's Chainsaw Safety Class

*By Barb Spears, Metro Area MN Women's Woodland Network*

The Metro Area and Northeast chapters of the Minnesota Women's Woodland Network co-sponsored a women's chainsaw safety class on March 18. The class was taught by chainsaw safety instructor and logger, Alex Bildeaux of Bildeaux Services.

The full-day class covered chainsaw basics such as proper personal protective equipment, how to purchase a saw, chainsaw handling and safety techniques, basic chainsaw maintenance and included a tree felling demonstration.

Through a pre-class questionnaire, women cited many reasons for taking this class including building confidence in using a chainsaw for cutting firewood, clearing brush/invasive species, storm cleanup, trail clearing, and chainsaw maintenance.

Twenty female woodland owners, including a few women who don't own land but are interested in woodland management, attended the class. Many others had to be turned away because the class was full! Women came from all over including as far as Waseca to the south and Cloquet to the north with the majority from the Metro Area. There were family members (grandmother/daughter/grandchild, sisters), co-workers, partners, old friends and now new friends.

The class was held in the brand new geodesic dome classroom at the Women's Environmental Institute (WEI) in North Branch. The WEI is an environmental research, renewal and retreat center that includes a house where the class enjoyed lunch and networking.

Funding support for this class was provided by the MN Women's Woodland Network through a grant from the MN Department of Natural Resources, and from the MFRC East Central Landscape Committee.

For more information on the MN Women's Woodland Network, go to their website, [MNWWN.org](http://MNWWN.org).



*The youngest participant.*



## UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

For MFA members, the two best online sources of woodland information are the MFA website at [www.minnesotaforestry.org](http://www.minnesotaforestry.org), and the University of Minnesota Extension Forestry website at [www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu](http://www.myminnesotawoods.umn.edu).



## Planting Choices

By Bill Cook

There are millions of plants that could be planted in woodlands and gardens. Nativity is one factor in selecting species, and exotic is not necessarily a bad choice.

The term “exotic species” simply means a plant (or animal) whose species or genetics are different and come from somewhere else.

That “somewhere else” might be another continent or region, or maybe something as local as another lake or pond. The term “invasive” refers to the ability of a species to reproduce and expand its range in a place where it previously did not exist.

Humans have been a major vector of plant transport for centuries. One might wonder who cultivated whom when thinking about species such as apples, wheat or corn.

Most exotic species are largely benign to the environment and are often helpful to humans. Many species, like dandelions, are so naturalized that many people assume that they’re native. However, there are a few species, like buckthorn, that have given the idea of “exotic” a bad name. These species should not be planted and existing occurrences should be prevented from spreading and eradicated, where possible.

In addition to the argument of where a species originated, there’s also the issue of how a plant species has been bred over time. Many garden flowers are far-removed from their original genetics through decades, or centuries, of breeding. Tulips, for example, an icon of the Netherlands, originated in Turkey.

Furthermore, an individual species can have different genetics across its range. Sugar maple, for instance, is not quite the same from southern Michigan to northern Minnesota where the climate is drier and colder. Plant species also have different degrees of genetic “plasticity.” For example, red pine is pretty much the same everywhere,

while green ash and red maple have a wide genetic alphabet which results in the creation of so many horticultural varieties.

For woodland owners, these questions should be considered when deciding what to plant, and where the selected species geographically originated. If you’re going to plant sugar maple, then try to find a local nursery that uses local seeds.

If you’re considering exotic species (or subspecies), then learn first about its potential to become aggressively invasive. Poor choices include species such as Japanese barberry, privet, frog-bit, or garlic mustard. Exotic species often do not fit well into the native food web.

However, non-invasive exotics can be good choices. Many plants have interesting characteristics that can enhance property values and make for more visually diverse ownerships. Sometimes, quite attractive genetic hybrids are sterile, resulting in less risk of spread.

The bottom line is to learn about what you plant and try to make informed choices.

*Bill Cook is an Extension Forester–Biologist with Michigan State University. Based in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, Cook has worked with private woodland owners since 1997.*



*Buy seedlings, such as sugar maple, from a local nursery using local seeds.*

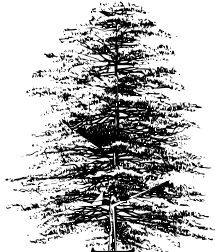
### *Creature Feature continued*

woodlands may experience “swamping,” changing over to grasses, sedges and cattail habitats used by waterfowl, muskrat, mink, bitterns, rails, turtles and more. For habitats that change greatly, we can “make lemonade from lemons” by enjoying the native wildlife that win.

**Get Your Ash in Gear** So what’s a family woodland owner with ash trees to do? First, burn firewood where you collect or buy it. Don’t be “that guy” that carelessly spreads EAB or other invasive insects. Second, be proactive in your woodland management. Closely monitor your woodland. Plan for its conversion if most trees are ash. If an ash market exists, harvest using best management practices. Reduce

the amount of ash, but don’t eliminate it. Leave a mixture of qualities, ages and species of ash trees for their varying habitat values, and genetic diversity and stock. Encourage a diversity of native tree species through planting (such as shade tolerant trees beneath the canopy) or natural regeneration, and of course don’t plant ash. As always, watch for and control invasives. Check out the DNR Forest Stewardship Program for technical advice and long-range planning. Finally, encourage your neighbors to do the same.

For information on EAB’s life cycle, how to identify Minnesota’s black, green and white ash trees and an infestation, and report EAB, see the DNR website and Ash Management Guidelines.



# Meet a Tree **White Spruce**



*Dennis Thompson*

*By Dennis J. Thompson*

Did you know? – The U.S. Capitol Christmas tree in 2014 was a white spruce cut off the Chippewa National Forest near Cass Lake.

White spruce (*Picea glauca*) can be considered an adventurous soul. It can grow under highly variable conditions, is adapted to a wide range of extreme climate conditions, and can tolerate a wide range of soil types. It can be found growing from Newfoundland west across Canada, north into Alaska and nearly reaches the Arctic Ocean in the Northwest Territories and within 60 miles of the Pacific Ocean in British Columbia. Although white spruce will survive on very diverse sites, it may not always thrive. Its nutrient and soil fertility requirements for optimum growth are comparable to other conifer species.

White spruce can be found in both pure and mixed stands. Common species it might be mixed within Minnesota include black spruce, paper birch, aspen and balsam fir. It is a shallow rooted tree that is considered mid-tolerant to shade. On good sites, white spruce can reach heights of 100 feet or more with some of the taller trees being over 180 feet tall. Tree diameters between 24 and 36 inches are common with some as big as 48 inches. The typical life span of white spruce is 100 to 250 years. Some of the oldest trees are found in the harshest conditions including one growing above the Arctic Circle that is close to 1000 years old.

In natural stands, good seed production usually begins when the trees are 30 years old. However, cones and seeds have been produced on trees as young as four years old. Cones ripen in August or September with good seed crops occurring every two to six years. Individual trees may produce as many as 8,000 to 12,000 cones with a total of 250,000 seeds. Seed are primarily dispersed by the wind and cones may remain on the tree for up to two years after the majority of seeds are dispersed.

The wood of white spruce is light, straight grained, and resilient. It is commonly used for making paper and as lumber for general construction. Less well-known uses include log cabins, musical instruments and paddles. Native Americans and early settlers had many uses for white spruce. The wood was used for fuel, the bark for coverings, the roots for rope, and the boughs for bedding. Spruce pitch and extracts from boiled needles were also used for medicinal purposes.



*Photo by: Keith Kanoti, Maine Forest Service*

Thinking of harvesting  
timber from your land?

*Call Before  
You Cut*

You will be sent a packet of  
information with no cost or  
obligation to you.

**218-879-5100**

## And the winner is ... Mike Beaufeaux, Hinckley.



Mike Beaufeaux

Mike's name was drawn from among those members who responded to our most recent member survey, the results of which were published in the last newsletter. Mike wins a Pickeroon, a tool used by loggers, mill workers, carpenters, rail workers and other trade workers to simplify moving logs and other large timbers by hand.

For information on Pickaroons and other woodland tools, contact Pat at 218-764-3315 or [PELanin@Brainerd.net](mailto:PELanin@Brainerd.net).



### Minnesota Forestry Association

1111 Cloquet Ave. Suite 7  
Cloquet, MN 55720

[www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org)

*Change Service Requested*

## Memorial Gifts

MFA has a policy recognizing donations made in memory of someone. The proceeds are deposited in MFA's endowment fund so that the gift can continue to grow and the income from that donation will provide support for the organization in perpetuity.

A donation was recently received from Gary Johnson in memory of Everett and Theresa Johnson and his uncle Henry Nelson. Thank you!

## Upcoming Events

Find more events, and more information on these events, at the MFA website, [www.MinnesotaForestry.org](http://www.MinnesotaForestry.org) or by calling MFA at 218-879-5100.

### WEED 'EM OUT! WORKSHOP

Learn how to identify invasive species early, when they are easiest to deal with.

**Tuesday, April 18, 9am - 3 pm**

(Morris MN) West Central Outreach Center  
46352 State Hwy 329

**Wednesday, May 3, 9am - 3 pm**

(Baxter MN) MN DOT Training Facility  
7694 Industrial Park Road

Advance registration is required.  
Contact Angie Gupta, 507-280-2869 or [AGupta@UMN.edu](mailto:AGupta@UMN.edu).

### MN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE SOCIETY SPRING FLING

**Saturday, April 29, 8am - 5pm**

St. Croix State Park. For information and registration to go [www.Sharptails.org](http://www.Sharptails.org).

### WEBINARS

#### EAB AND MINNESOTA'S ASH RESOURCE

**Tuesday, April 18, noon**

#### TIMBER HARVESTING AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

**Tuesday, June 20, noon**

For information on these and other webinars, and to register, google 2017 Forestry Webinar Series.



## The Ticks are Here!

Now is the time to treat your woods' pants for ticks. Beware: Not all repellents work for ticks. Those containing the active ingredient DEET work for mosquitoes but not for ticks while those containing *permethrin* work very well for ticks.

Directions on most products containing permethrin say to treat pant legs and let dry overnight. Once treated, the repellent is effective for several weeks, even after a half dozen washings. It is recommended that you treat your pants now for protection against wood ticks and treat them again in August for protection against deer ticks through the hunting season. These products can be hard to find. [Forestry-Suppliers.com](http://Forestry-Suppliers.com) has one, [BenMeadows.com](http://BenMeadows.com) does not. At Gander Mountain or other retailers, check the *active ingredients* on the label. If permethrin is not listed, do not buy it for ticks.