

eat so much vegetation that the habitat is significantly altered, resulting in forests with few young oak trees growing, for example. In some places you can see the effect by simply driving by a forest: a literal browse line at about 5 feet high, below which the deer have eaten almost everything in the understory. This is not what a natural or healthy forest looks like.

So whether you are concerned about hitting a deer with your car or the ecological integrity of our forests, the question is: what to do?

*A Good Answer*

The short answer is: go hunting. While other options, including birth control, have been researched, the solution that makes the most sense economically, ecologically, and socially, is hunting.

Science-driven hunting is a positive approach to manage deer populations. Limiting the number of does that survive until the next mating season will reduce populations. Fewer does result in fewer fawns, thus reducing the overall deer population, and potentially restoring ecosystems damaged by over-browsing. For more on the science, search for Virginia's Quality Deer Management Program within the Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries.

Socially, things get a bit murkier. According to the United States Census Bureau's 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, there were 432,000 hunters in Virginia in 2011, an increase from the 368,000 hunters in 1991. A major reason for this is that the number of female hunters has increased in recent years.



*Ethical hunters can pass down good practices to their children, thus creating the next generation of wildlife managers. Photo by: Jason Fisher, VCE.*

But, approximately 80% of the U.S. population does not hunt; an additional 10% are opposed to hunting; and the remaining 10% make up our hunting population. So, what about the 80%? Why don't they hunt? Are people too busy? Is it a lack of access to property open to hunting? Or does the redneck perception of hunting deter would-be-interested hunters? The answer is yes, it is a combination of all these things.

Some of these issues are beyond the ability of the hunting population to address. But the general perception of hunters and hunting is something the hunting community can affect positively by exhibiting ethical behaviors. Hunters must follow the law and take measures to be safe. This saves lives and improves image. Basic hunting etiquette also improves image. Hunters should thank the property owners and offer them some game if the hunt was successful. If possible, they should alert adjoining landowners to their presence. And, hunters should pick up litter...even if it isn't theirs.

If the hunting community shows respect for the land, landowners, and wildlife, then the future of our hunting heritage will continue to be bright. People interested in learning how or where to hunt should start by contacting the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' Hunter Education Program, or the local Conservation Police Officer.

Help Virginia's deer population to be healthy. Become an educated hunter and carry on a traditional pastime. A good hunter can also be called a wildlife manager. If you are unable or choose not to hunt, support it as the tool it is for habitat management. Learn more at [www.dgif.virginia.gov/hunting](http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/hunting).

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**eXtension Forest Farming**

Interested in learning more about earning supplemental income from non-timber forest products (NTFPs)? In particular, are you interested in growing shiitake mushrooms or ramps? If so, eXtension's Forest Farming Community of Practice has put together a series of YouTube videos on these two NTFPs. View the videos at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/exforestfarming>. You can find even more information on NTFPs here: [http://www.extension.org/forest\\_farming](http://www.extension.org/forest_farming).

**VIRGINIA FOREST LANDOWNER UPDATE**



Fall 2013

Virginia Cooperative Extension  
Department of Forest Resources &  
Environmental Conservation (0324)  
Virginia Tech  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

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**Useful Resources**

The **Forestry Webinar Portal** is a service of the Southern Regional Extension Forestry Office, North Carolina State University's Extension Forest Resources, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, other participating land-grant universities and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. This portal serves as a launching point for current and archived forestry, conservation, bioenergy and natural resource webinars. Many of the webinars featured on the site provide participants with continuing education credit, free of charge, from professional accrediting organizations such as SAF, ISA, CCA and others. They also host information on upcoming webinars and webinars from other organizations that are relevant and current for today's professionals, foresters and landowners. <http://forestrywebinar.net>.

**Like the Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program on Facebook.**

We have started a monthly trivia contest - on the first of each month, be the first to answer a forestry-related trivia question, and win a free VFLEP logo hat! See the Facebook page for complete rules: [www.facebook.com/VFLEP](http://www.facebook.com/VFLEP).

**CONTACT OUR SPONSORS AND STATE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCIES:**

					
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**VIRGINIA FOREST LANDOWNER UPDATE**

Events, news, and information promoting the stewardship of Virginia's forest resources.

<http://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu>

Fall 2013

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Sign up to receive the Virginia Forest Landowner Update at: <http://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu>

**It's That Hunting Time of Year**  
**By Jason Fisher and Adam Downing, Virginia Cooperative Extension**

Hunters and hunting are viewed by some as barbaric, while others live for opening day. Is hunting simply a pastime leftover from the time when our ability to hunt and gather was necessary to survive? Or is it a tool to manage our natural resources?

*Some History*  
Before answering this, let us consider the environment in which we live. Whether you live in town or in the most remote part of this beautiful commonwealth, humans have a great impact on the environment surrounding you. Humans have always modified our environment. In fact, well before Europeans arrived on these shores, Native Americans burned vast areas to facilitate travel and manage wildlife.

We are not the only creature to modify our surroundings. All animals, to one degree or another, have an impact on the environment. Beaver, for example, create ponds and wetlands. This brings about both opportunities and problems for other inhabitants.

White-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*, also known as the Virginia deer) can also significantly alter the environment. In high population numbers, they degrade habitat quality, negatively affecting many plant and animal communities essential to forest health.

*Some Facts*  
White-tailed deer is the most sought-after big game animal in North America. You may remember when it was rare to see this animal. I recall in the '70's and '80's a large fenced-in military property closed to hunting at the time that was the only place around where you could drive and see deer. These days, it's welcome news if you don't see a deer while driving at dusk. What happened?

Deer are what wildlife biologists call a generalist species. Generalist species thrive in a wide variety of habitats and, in general, can adapt to different habitats. Rabbits, foxes, squirrels, raccoons and mice are also generalist. Many generalists have learned to live close to humans...in habitats that we have modified with buildings, yards and exotic landscaping. Deer have done this so well that without any significant predators to keep population growth in check, some areas are considered over-populated. Coyotes are on the increase and will take advantage of an opportunity to kill deer, but most biologists feel coyotes will not have a significant impact on deer populations in Virginia.

In parts of Virginia, deer populations are estimated to exceed 200 per square mile. This may sound exciting, but not if you know what biologists know...the target density of deer in most areas is around 20 per square mile. A factor of ten separates current deer populations from what is best for the whole ecosystem. Deer are herbivores and prefer to browse certain plants, especially woody plants. With high populations, they



**A clear browse line at 5 feet is apparent on this National Forest land in Giles County. Notice the lack of understory vegetation. Photo by: Jennifer Gagnon, VT.**

*Hunting cont. on page 5*



EVENTS CALENDAR			For the most complete listing of natural resource education events, visit the on-line events calendar at <a href="http://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu">http://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu</a>		
Contact	Date	Location	Event	Time	Fee
DCR	Oct., Nov., & Dec.	Virginia's State Parks	<b>A variety of events and activities</b> For a complete list, visit: <a href="http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/parks">www.dcr.virginia.gov/parks</a> .	Varies	Varies
AC	Year-round	State-wide	<b>Virginia Master Naturalist Volunteer basic training</b> <a href="http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/chapters.html">www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/chapters.html</a>	Varies	Varies
NC	Oct. 3	Northampton County	<b>37th Annual Fall Forestry &amp; Wildlife Field Tour</b> Join fellow landowners and natural resource professionals on this forestry-themed tour of the Eastern Shore. Stops include a privately owned forest, the Brownsville Preserve, a firewood processing facility, and Chatham Vineyards (they have an actively managed forest!).	8 - 4:30	\$45*/person; \$80*/couple
JG	Oct. 11	Roanoke County	<b>37th Annual Fall Forestry &amp; Wildlife Field Tour</b> Join fellow landowners and natural resource professionals on a tour of the Roanoke Valley. Topics covered will include management planning, warm-season grasses, agroforestry practices, wildlife management, and the endangered piratebush.	8 - 4:30	\$45*/person; \$80*/couple
JF	Oct. 15	Patrick County	<b>37th Annual Fall Forestry &amp; Wildlife Field Tour</b> Spend the morning with fellow landowners and natural resource professionals learning about on-going applied research taking place on the historic Reynolds Homestead. In the afternoon, visit Hopkins Lumber to see how hardwoods are processed into pallets. The tour concludes with discussion of pine management on a privately owned property.	8 - 5	\$25*/person; \$40*/couple
AD	Oct. 18	Culpeper County	<b>37th Annual Fall Forestry &amp; Wildlife Field Tour</b> Explore a variety of management tools for woodland owners in scenic and historic Culpeper County. The tour will showcase a suite of practices meeting numerous goals, from income production, to attracting wildlife as we traverse blackjack soils, brush through grasslands, and navigate hardwood and pine lands.	8 - 4	\$45*/person; \$80*/couple
JC	Oct. 26	Loudoun County	<b>Birding at the Blue Ridge Center</b> On the fourth Saturday of each month (except December), Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy leads a bird walk at the Blue Ridge Center for Environmental Stewardship, a beautiful 900-acre preserve in northwestern Loudoun County.	8:00 a.m.	Free
AD	Oct. 27	Montpelier Station	<b>Working Woods Walk - Montpelier</b> This two-hour hike of the Montpelier Demonstration Forest will help visitors understand society's dependence on forests now and during the Madison's time, and how to care for our forests today.	2 - 4	\$5 with purchase of mansion tour; \$10 without.
If you are a real estate professional or Commissioner of the Revenue, please visit the Landowner Update website for a schedule of our continuing education classes, Real Forestry for Real Estate. ( <a href="http://www.forestupdate.frec.vt.edu">www.forestupdate.frec.vt.edu</a> ).					
*meals included					

EVENT CONTACTS			
Contact	Name/Affiliation	Phone	e-mail/website
DCR	Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation	804/786-1712	<a href="http://www.dcr.virginia.gov">www.dcr.virginia.gov</a>
AC	Alycia Crall	434/872-4580	<a href="http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org">www.virginiamasternaturalist.org</a>
NC	Neil Clark	757/653-2572	<a href="mailto:neclark@vt.edu">neclark@vt.edu</a>
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**You Ain't From Around Here! Exotic Invasive of the Quarter: Callery Pear (*Pyrus calleryana*)**  
**By: Adam Downing and Jennifer Gagnon, Virginia Cooperative Extension/Virginia Tech**

We don't hate all pear trees. Pears planted for fruit are great! They provide edible produce and look pretty while doing it. Ornamental pears, however, are a different story. These commonly planted trees have been favored by many for their consistent flowering, compact shape and fast growth. Callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*) is in the rose family and exhibits a surprising similarity to the invasive multiflora rose. But before we get to that, let's briefly explore the Callery pear story.

The species is native to China, Taiwan, Korea, Vietnam and Japan. It was brought to the United States in the early 1900's as a way to help fight fire blight – a disease which was having devastating impacts on the common pear (the one grown for fruit production) at that time. Callery pear exhibited resistance to the blight, and could be used as a rootstock for common pear – thus instilling resistance. So far so good.

By the 1950's, people began to notice that the Callery pear possessed some desirable aesthetic and growth qualities. With their abundant showy flowers, compact crowns, attractive fall foliage, thornless stems, fast growth rates, and ability to grow on harsh sites (such as compacted soils in housing developments) , this tree, and in particular, the cultivar Bradford, were widely planted in urban and suburban areas.



***Callery pear's aesthetic qualities, along with its ability to grow under harsh conditions, have led to many plantings in subdivisions and along roadways.***  
***Photo by: Adam Downing, VCE.***

are wont to do. And, perhaps fittingly, the most common Callery pear seed-diners are European starlings, an exotic invasive bird (although the American robin also feeds on them).

What is the result of all this? In conversations with other resource professionals, we are hearing stories of escaped Callery pear exhibiting classic invasive plant properties.

Invasive plants are like weeds on steroids: hard to control, fast to establish and quick to spread. Callery pear establishes easily in open areas such as along roadways and in hayfields that perhaps don't receive as much management as they should. In these areas, the pears form dense canopies, which exclude the growth of other, more desirable vegetation. In addition, as mentioned earlier, this particular invasive has another characteristic common to its relative, the multiflora rose. Callery pears often develop very aggressive thorns after the first few years of growth. These thorns are so destructive that a farmer in the Shenandoah Valley carries a tire repair kit with him to the hayfield.

You have all probably seen plenty of Callery pears, whether you know it or not. You may even have them in your neighborhood or on your property. Here are some identifying characteristics:

- Leaf:** Alternate, simple, heart-shaped to ovate with a finely serrated margin, 2 to 3 inches in length, shiny green above, paler and dull below.
- Flower:** Large (2 to 4 inches across) clusters of showy white flowers each 1/2 to 3/4 inch across, appearing before or with the leaves; often so densely flowering that the entire tree appears white.
- Fruit:** Small (1/2 inch diameter), round, brown pome, very bitter.
- Twig:** Glossy brown to reddish brown, medium in texture, spur shoots present; terminal buds are large (1/4 to 1/2 inch long), ovate, and covered in light brown woolly hairs.
- Form:** Typically quite upright and conical with very narrow branch angles. May reach 60 feet in height.

*Pear cont. from page 3*



***Some of Callery pear's less desirable characteristics include large aggressive thorns, and a tendency to take over natural areas.***  
***Photos by: Adam Downing, VCE.***

One thing to note: Callery pear looks a lot like the common pear. To tell them apart, take a close look at the buds – Callery pear buds are fuzzy, while the buds of the common pear are not. Or, wait until the fall when fruit develops. If it doesn't look like a pear you'd buy at the grocery store, it's probably a Callery.

We've been preaching against Callery pear for many years, even before we knew about the thorns. But now we know it is not only an environmental issue, but also a safety and potentially costly issue as well. So what can we do? We suggest the following two bold actions:

- Replace any ornamental pear trees you have with any number of excellent native flowering trees such as: common serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*), Allegheny serviceberry (*A. laevis*), cockspur hawthorne (*Crataegus crus-galli*), green hawthorne (*C. viridis*) and the native sweet crabapple (*Malus coronaria*).
- Refuse to purchase this tree! And if you see it at a garden store, educate them about its problems.

If you remove Callery pear, be aware that you will need to take action in addition to cutting down the tree. The stumps sprout prolifically, and must be treated with herbicide. And, like the invasive that it is, the roots will also develop sprouts. One of the authors cut down a Callery from her yard this spring. Even though full-strength Roundup was applied immediately to the stump, she has had to continually mow root suckers all summer long. Hopefully over the next couple of years, the sweet crabapple that replaced the pear will provide enough shade to suppress the root suckers.

For more information on this plant do an online search for “The Beginning of a New Invasive Plant: A History of the Ornamental Callery” and watch this short video: <http://www.whsv.com/home/headlines/Invasive-Pear-Tree-Worries-Local-Farmer-214064281.html>

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**From Fallow Fields to Forests**  
**By: Rhonda Prillaman, Virginia Department of Forestry**

The Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF), in conjunction with the United States Department of Agriculture, has launched its Open Lands Tree Planting Initiative in the commonwealth. The purposes of the initiative are to prevent the loss of forestland; promote healthier forests by addressing species concerns and increasing diversity; promote sustainable use of forest resources; and improve water quality.

VDOF Mapping and Outreach Specialists will conduct land-use analysis and field reconnaissance to identify lands suitable for tree planting. The focus areas will be open lands that may be under-utilized or considered marginal; too steep to effectively manage; overgrown with brush and briars; or eroded. Landowner outreach efforts will include contact via phone or letter, sharing information at organized community events, and conducting group presentations and landowner workshops.



***The Open Lands Tree Planting Initiative can help landowners pay to reforest open areas.***  
***Photo by: Rhonda Prillaman, VDOF.***

If you are a landowner interested in planting trees but are concerned about the expense, consider this: There are generous financial incentives available through various conservation programs that could significantly reduce out-of-pocket expenses by up to 75 percent. For more information about the Open Lands Tree Planting Initiative or available cost-share options, please call Rhonda Prillaman, Virginia Department of Forestry, at (540) 745-2616. You may also “like” us on Facebook: “From Fallow Fields to Forests: A Tree Planting Initiative.” Either way, we are eager to discuss planting options with you to find what best fits your objectives; not only those that may provide economic benefits but also natural benefits to you, your family and your community.

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