down on the urban heat island effect - the elevated temperatures that we experience when there is a build-up of heat-absorbing pavement and roof materials. When a community gets hot, we have to run conditioning which is not good for our pocketbook or our environment. Planting trees that they shade pavement and the west sides of buildings can make a big difference in helping the urban heat island. Of course, urban heat islands provide many benefits beyond what we’ve discussed here, but these are some of the most important ones.

All of this talk about planting trees around homes and offices might seem a bit daunting. Indeed, you have to make good choices about what to plant, where to plant, and how to plant them or you might end up with more problems than benefits. Fortunately, here in Virginia we have an organization whose mission is to help citizens in all localities plan, plant, and maintain their urban forests. Trees Virginia, also known as the Virginia Urban Forest Council, was formed as a non-profit in the early 1990s, bringing together folks from diverse backgrounds with passion and expertise about trees and urban forests. The 20 member council assists Virginia Department of Forestry’s Urban and Community Forestry program with its education and outreach efforts.

Trees Virginia is very excited about its recently redesigned website, http://treesvirginia.org. The website is an excellent resource to help people stay informed about Trees Virginia’s core program areas - community outreach and community education. Community outreach includes regional workshops that are periodically hosted by Trees Virginia along with their support for local civic groups such as the Tree Stewards. They also support a student intern for the Virginia Big Tree Program and use workshop proceeds to fund Trees Virginia internships for high school and college students. In the events section of the website, you can browse the upcoming educational events supported by Trees Virginia and even use their online registration system to sign up for an event in your area. Perhaps the best feature of the Trees Virginia website is their collection of educational resources. Here you will find instantly, practical information about planting and maintaining trees in your community.

The next time you drive down Main Street in your community take a moment to look around and appreciate the hard-working trees that line your streets and reside in your parks. If you see some places where trees could be put to work, get in touch with your community leaders, roll up your sleeves, and plant a tree. It’ll make your community a bit cleaner, greener, and leave a lasting impression for generations to come.

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Happy 100th Birthday! 2014 is the 100th anniversary of the Smith-Lever Act, which established the National Cooperative Extension System. Celebrations are being planned throughout Virginia. Find a celebration near you on the Virginia Cooperative Extension Calendar: http://www.ext.vt.edu/calendar. If you have a story about your own experiences with Extension, you can share it here: http://www.ext.vt.edu/news/annual-news.

Extension shares its anniversary with a close partner, the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF), which was also established in 1914. At that time, the main goals of the agency were to suppress forest fires and reduce bare lands. And, although these services are still priorities, the Department has greatly expanded the services it offers to the commonwealth. Learn more about the VDOF at their website: www.dgif.virginia.gov.

These are great excuses to have a piece of cake!
1. Wavyleaf Basketgrass

**Wavyleaf cont. from page 3**

WLBG is a low-lying, trailing, perennial grass that spreads along stolons (runners) or by seed. The leaf blades are deep green, 0.5 to 1 inch wide, and 1.5 to 4 inches long. The distinguishing characteristic, for which the species is named, is the undulating ripples across the blades. WLBG blooms from late August into November. The small purple flowers appear on spikelets (the flowering unit, consisting of two or more flowers) and have glumes (bracts – a specialized leaf at the base of an inflorescence) with very long awns (bristle-like appendages). (That sentence was for the vocabulary lovers out there.) There are 2-4 awns (bristles) along blade edge. The base of blades surround stem.

**Notes the discursive pointed waving leaf of Wavyleaf Basketgrass. By: Karle, B., Maryland Department of Natural Resources.**

If you don’t use a smart phone or tablet, or prefer to hike in the woods without being tempted to answer e-mails or post to Facebook, the Wild Edible Plant Walk is right up your alley. Using the power of your senses, you will learn to identify and recognize plant families & more. 

According to the Early Detection & Distribution Mapping System (EDDMapS, 2014), the species is found in WLBG in Virginia (Charlottesville, Charles City, Fauquier, Prince George, Madison, Shenandoah, Rockingham). Be on the lookout for signs of WLBG. You may see it first as it grows in disturbed areas, before spreading into adjacent vegetation. If you notice WLBG on your land, or in another area, please report it to your local natural resources agent or email the Virginia Plant Working Group at wlbg@vt.edu.

In an effort to eradicate this species before it becomes well-established throughout Virginia, a WLBG Task Force has been formed. And they are looking for help from the community. (For the first thing you can do to help is to report new sightings of WLBG. If you have a smart phone or tablet, there’s a free App available at wlbg@vt.edu.) According to EDDMapS, you can record the percent of an area occupied by a given species. It is important that you mark your sighting with the GPS function on your device to record the exact location of the infestation, and use the camera to submit photos. This reporting system allows the task force to target invasive infestations by species.

**SOURCE DWR**

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