



Virginia Forest Landowner e-Update

December 2016

Upcoming Events

13th Annual Woods & Wildlife Conference

- February 25, Culpeper Virginia Forestry Summit

- Roanoke, May 3-5

Beginning Landowner Weekend Retreats

- Appomattox, March 17-19
- Abingdon, August 18-20
- Providence Forge, September 22-24

On-line Woodland Options for Landowners

- Spring 2017

Visit the Events Calendar for details!

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Virginia Sustainable Forestry Initiative State Implementation Committee

Good afternoon Forest e-Update Subscribers,

I can hardly believe it's already December. Time is passing me by so quickly. I know it's a result of having a never-ending to-do list at work and at home, but honestly, it terrifies me. Seems like a good time to take a break and a [walk in the woods](#). I encourage you all to do the same. Of course, that will probably result in 10 more items being added to the to-do list. I'll share my list in the January e-newsletter. In the meantime, I have a non-timber forest product story to share with you.

A couple weeks ago, I gave a talk about the American chestnut to the [Master Gardeners](#) in South Boston. I decided to bring chestnuts for them to try. Never having prepared chestnuts of any sort, I looked to the mighty internet for instructions. And quite honestly, after reading people's accounts of how trying chestnuts were to prepare, I almost decided to abandon this idea. Yet I had already paid \$6.99 for a small bag of Italian chestnuts and I understand myself well-enough to know I'd never return them to Kroger. So I decided to proceed, with some assistance.

The first step in chestnut preparation is to cut x-shapes into the ends of the shells. Based on internet accounts, this step almost guarantees you'll lose a finger or at least go mad with frustration. So I asked my husband to take care of this. Surprisingly, he survived the process with all digits and his sanity intact. In fact, he said it was easy.

The second step is to roast the nuts. I boiled them for 20 minutes instead. After removing them from the water (which stained my aluminum pan), the x-s opened up, revealing perfectly cooked nuts. Then I roasted them for 5 minutes to give the illusion I followed instructions.

The American Tree Farm System

Virginia Forestry Association

Forest Stewardship Program

USDA Forest Service

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The final step is to peel off the shell and the fuzzy undercoating. Again, according to people on the internet, this is supposed to induce madness. While I found the shells came off quite easily, removing the fuzz was somewhat more difficult. Which led me to the discovery that the fuzz is perfectly edible – at least I didn't suffer any ill-effects.

Prior to this experience, I had only ever eaten a Chinese chestnut – which was dense, bland, and potato-like. But the Italian chestnuts were sweet and delicious! I can only imagine how good a fresh local American chestnut would be. I highly recommend trying some Italian chestnuts this holiday season - I think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

You can learn more about efforts to restore the American chestnut to the Appalachians here: <http://www.acf.org/>

And, as my story demonstrates, the internet is full of misleading information. If you are looking for science-based forest management information, check out [eXtension](#), a reputable source of information from Extension.

A few interesting natural resource items in the news of late:

1. [Tax Tips for Forest Landowners for the 2016 Tax Year](#) is now available from the USDA Forest Service. If you sold timber this year, this is a must read for you and your tax preparer.
2. A new study by [Dovetail Partners Inc.](#) quantifies the human health and social benefits of urban forests. [Read the report.](#)
3. Rachel Brooks, Ph.D student and [Interfaces for Global Change](#) fellow at Virginia Tech is currently "designing a regional experiment looking at how effective the two *Verticillium* wilt fungi are in managing *Ailanthus*". She is looking for landowners that are interested in participating in the experiment that have property with large, healthy, unmanaged populations of *Ailanthus* (aka, tree-of-Heaven).

[Criteria for *Ailanthus* stands:](#)

- Stands where *Ailanthus* makes up the majority of the overstory
- Stands that are at least 1/4 acre in size (roughly 100ft x 100ft)
- Stands without any symptoms of decline nearby. Typical symptoms include loss of foliage, numerous dead branches or dead trees, and vascular discoloration
- Stands that are relatively close together
- Stands both in the Virginia mountains and the piedmont as well as in PA and OH
- Stands that are not along right-of-ways or other locations where dead trees may cause a hazard

If you have stands of *Ailanthus* that meet the criteria listed and want to participate in the research, contact Rachel at rkbrooks@vt.edu to see if she would like to visit your property.

We are still busy working on landowner education programs for 2017.

Right now we have the following events scheduled:

13th Annual Woods & Wildlife Conference

- February 25, [Daniel Technology Center](#), Germanna Community College, Culpeper
- An event for new or experienced owners of woodlands small or large!

2017 Virginia Forestry Summit

- May 3-5, [Hotel Roanoke](#), Roanoke
- There will be a special landowner track Thursday morning and a 4-hour Friday morning workshop on how to keep your land intact, in forest, and in the family.

2017 Beginning Landowner Weekend Retreats

- March 17-19, Central Virginia, [Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center](#), Appomattox
- August 18-20, Southwest Virginia, [SW VA 4-H Educational Center](#), Abingdon
- September 22-24, Southeast Virginia, [New Kent Forestry Center](#), Providence Forge

On-line Woodland Options for Landowners

- Registration will open in early 2017
- Class will begin Spring 2017

More events will be posted when available on the **Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program's Events Calendar**.

Happy holidays to all of you!

Jennifer

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