



# Virginia Forest Landowner e-Update

Summer 2016

## Upcoming Events

- **July 17, Montpelier Station**  
**Working Woods Walk**
- **August 4-6, Staunton**  
**Virginia Christmas Tree Growers Association Annual Meeting**
- **August 5-7, Floyd**  
**Blue Ridge Woodland Growers Two-Day Medicinal Plant Forest Farming Training**
- **August 26-28, Wakefield**  
**SE Landowner Weekend Retreat**
- **August 26-28, Mountain City, TN**  
**Appalachian Sustainable Development Two-Day Medicinal Plant Forest Farming Training**
- **September 13 & 20, South Boston**  
**Preparing for Generation NEXT**
- **September 23-25, Abingdon**  
**SW Landowner Weekend Retreat**
- **October 5 & 12, Orange**

Good morning Forest e-Update Subscribers,

Last month, while my husband and I were walking around our backyard looking at our trees, we noticed the green ash in the backyard was looking rough. There was noticeable crown dieback and woodpecker damage on some of the branches – a good indication that some type of bugs were in the tree. We decided to go ahead and cut it down, making the assumption that the emerald ash borer had finally made its way to our part of the county.

Once the tree was down, we thought we had made a mistake. The main stem (about 20" in diameter) was very healthy and the rings indicated it was growing about 0.5" in diameter a year –indicative of a healthy tree. However, once we started looking at the branches, we found many telltale D-shaped exit holes. Alas, the EAB had indeed arrived in south central Montgomery County. What makes this news even worse, is that we have a much larger green ash (about 35" in diameter) in our front yard. This tree keeps the front yard shady and cool, keeps the grass from growing too fast, and most importantly, holds up one end of the hammock.

Right now, it's not showing any signs of damage. But we've decided to go ahead and have it removed. For one, it's most certainly infested – it's dead and just doesn't know it yet. Secondly, it hangs over our house, the road, and some power lines, so once it starts to decline, it will definitely be a hazard tree. And finally, at a recent forest health workshop, I learned that an EAB infestation alters the wood properties of the trees, making them much more hazardous to cut down. So we figured, the sooner the better. We've already hired an ISA Certified arborist to do the work – he will be at the house this afternoon. Today we will arrive home and

## **Preparing for Generation NEXT**

- **October, Statewide**
  - 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary - Fall Forestry & Wildlife Field Tours**
    - **Essex – Oct. 7**
    - **Lee – Oct. 11**
    - **Prince William – Oct. 14**
    - **Dinwiddie/Nottoway – Oct. 20**

Visit the Events Calendar for details!

## **VFLEP Sponsors**

### **Virginia Cooperative Extension**

*Puts university knowledge into the hands of people.*

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*Learn about cost-share programs, forest management options, buy seedlings, and find your local forester.*

### **Virginia Sustainable Forestry Initiative State Implementation Committee**

### **The American Tree Farm System**

### **Virginia Forestry Association**

### **Forest Stewardship Program**

### **USDA Forest Service**

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the tree will be gone. That makes for a sad day indeed. I'll post some before and after photos on the [VFLEP Facebook page](#).

If you are unfamiliar with the EAB, you can learn about this lethal [exotic invasive beetle here](#).

In other news, the Summer 2016 edition of the Virginia Forest Landowner Update is now available. Visit <http://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu> for the full newsletter, or read individual articles below.

- **An Introduction to Growing Christmas Trees in Virginia**

**By: Kyle Peer, Virginia Tech**

*Ed. note: Christmas trees in July? While not seasonal, I wanted to feature this article in time to promote the upcoming Virginia Christmas Tree Growers Association's Annual meeting in Staunton this August. See the Events Calendar for details!*

Virginia landowners may want to consider Christmas tree farming as an alternative enterprise for their unused open land. It is estimated that there are between 400 and 500 growers in Virginia. They range in size from choose-and-cut operations on a few acres of land to wholesale operations covering hundreds of acres, with the average farm having around 40 acres in production. Regardless of size, growing Christmas trees successfully takes expertise and an investment of time and capital. [Read more...](#)

- **You Ain't From Around Here! Exotic Invasive of the Quarter: Oriental Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)**

**By: Jennifer Gagnon, Virginia Tech**

When I was a kid in New England, my mother's decorating style was, well, let's call it late-century vegetative. As a gardener, I think the harsh winters really took a toll on her well-being. She couldn't wait to see green again, and when it was available, she brought as much vegetation into the house as she could. In early spring, she would bring in pussy willows, followed by boughs of dogwood blossoms. In the summer, she filled our home with gladiolas. In the fall, in addition to ironing colored leaves between sheets of wax paper, she would bring in boughs of what I now suspect was oriental bittersweet. It grew in abundance

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over the compost heap in my grandparents' yard next door. [Read more...](#)

- **Virginia's New Century Forest Program**

Since 1997, Virginia has had a Century Farm Program. This program honors Virginia families whose property has been in the same family for 100 years or more, lived on or actively farmed by a direct descendant of the original owners, and grosses more than \$2500 annually from the sale of farm products. In 2016 the General Assembly passed a bill to enact a Century Forest Program that honors Virginia families who have owned and managed forestland for more than 100 years. [Read more...](#)

Forest landowner learning opportunities abound this summer! See the sidebar for featured programs. Visit the [VFLEP Events Calendar](#) for a complete listing of upcoming events. I'm happy to announce the schedule for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary Fall Forestry & Wildlife Field Tours is now available. See the sidebar for dates and locations. Registration will open mid-July.

If you are a Tree Farmer, actively enrolled in the [American Tree Farm System/Virginia Tree Farm Program](#), or very interested in becoming one, check out our [series of dinner meetings](#) this fall.

#### **Real Estate Professionals**

Have you handed out all of your *Welcome to the Woods! A Guide for New Virginia Woodland Owners* books? If so, you can either [share this link to a digital version](#) with your land-buying clients or [request to have print copies](#) sent to you (please be sure to tell me how many copies and where to send them).

Follow the Virginia Forest Landowner Education Program on Twitter ([@VFLEP](#)) and Facebook ([www.facebook.com/VFLEP](http://www.facebook.com/VFLEP)).

All the best!

Jennifer

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