

News from the Virginia Tree Farm Foundation

By: John Matel, Virginia Tree Farm Foundation

New certification fees

I have been a certified Tree Farmer since I bought my first forest land in 2005. Being a certified Tree Farmer is important to me. In fact, it is so important that I have served as the President of the Virginia Tree Farm Foundation (VTFF) for the past 4 years. Until now, this program has been free in Virginia, even as many other states instituted various fees. However, now Virginia will be following suit.

Starting January 1, current Virginia Tree Farmers will be billed a certification fee of \$50 per year per Tree Farm. The VTFF recognizes that some people own multiple Tree Farms so there is a maximum fee. No Tree Farmer will pay more than \$250 per year, no matter how many individual Tree Farms they own. New Tree Farms will be assessed a one-time certification fee of \$150, which will cover initial costs plus their first year of Tree Farm certification. These fees will be used to cover administrative expenses associated with the VTFF, offer better service to Tree Farmers, and allow for more outreach and educational opportunities.

Something new: Landscape Management Plans

Virginia has been chosen to pilot a Landscape Management Plan (LMP). The LMP will cover all counties east of, and those including, Route 29. The LMP will allow for more planning at the landscape, rather than at the individual property, scale. Tree Farmers may opt to have their own management plan; however, they will also have the option of using the LMP. All Tree Farmers will still be required to have a list of ownership objectives, management activities, and maps specific to their property.

The VTFF is making sure that the LMP will be equivalent to Forest Stewardship and Conservation Activity Plans and will help Tree Farms qualify for cost share offered by state and federal governments, as well as for appropriate tax credit and conservation programs. The VTFF believes the LMP will become increasingly valuable in the coming years, as requirements for certified timber and land become more important. More information will be coming over the next couple of months. For frequently asked questions about the LMP, visit: https://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu/content/dam/forestupdate_frec_vt_edu/resources/publications/LandscapeManagementPlanFAQs.pdf.

Certification

Speaking of certification, it is important to make a distinction between certified wood and certified land. Strictly speaking, Tree Farm does not certify wood. Tree Farm certifies that the land where that wood is being grown is managed according to principles of sustainability, using best management practices in accordance with robust land ethics. Certified land produces certified wood. The distinction not trivial, since, as all Tree Farmers know, trees are more than wood and forests are more than trees. It means that the care for the land comes before and goes beyond harvests.

Putting it all together

To sum up, the VTFF will assess a \$50 annual fee for each Tree Farm starting in January 2020 and has already begun charging a \$150 one-time fee for each new Tree Farm. The VTFF is working on a program that will allow Virginia Tree Farmers to use an LMP, simplifying the planning and administration for Tree Farmers and making them eligible for government and private cost share and tax programs. The VTFF looks forward to continue working with Virginia's Tree Farmers and welcomes suggestions about how they can make the program work better. Thank you for your continued commitment to healthy and sustainable forests in Virginia.

John Matel is the President of the Virginia Tree Farm Foundation and a Tree Farmer, johnmatel@yahoo.com.

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BRPRISM	Blue Ridge PRISM	http://blueridgeprism.org/	
WWF	Winter Wildlife Festival	757-385-2990	VBGov.com/winterwildlife
VAFHP	Virginia Association of Forest Health Professionals	vafhp.org	
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VIRGINIA FOREST LANDOWNER EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Love the Environment? Become a Virginia Master Naturalist! By: Sallie Gilman, Virginia Master Naturalists

The Virginia Master Naturalist (VMN) Program is a statewide corps of volunteers contributing to natural resource education, citizen science, and stewardship. After program participants graduate from a basic training course, they join with others to work on projects and provide education related to helping the environment.

By definition: the VMN volunteers "inspire a love of nature by facilitating volunteer stewardship opportunities, offering environmental education programs, and hands on work on various environmental projects." VMN volunteers contribute to the environment by being citizen scientists. A citizen scientist is, by definition: "an individual who voluntarily contributes his or her time, effort, and resources toward scientific research in collaboration with professional scientists or alone. These individuals don't necessarily have a formal science background."

A 40-hour basic training course covers the background knowledge and skills that every naturalist needs to have. Each VMN chapter tailors their course to fit their local environment and community, so no two courses are exactly the same. For example, the course for the Historic Southside Chapter includes 27 hours of classroom instruction. This includes information on ecology, birds, mammals, insects, fish, reptiles, plants, wetlands, forestry, weather, and geology. The training course also includes 13 hours of field trips (Saturdays only). The field trips include places such as the Great Dismal Swamp, Chippokes Plantation, and Piney Grove Preserve, which is home to longleaf pine and the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker. There is also a tour of the Blackwater Ecological Preserve.

In addition to the basic training course, all VMN volunteers in training are required to complete 40 hours of volunteer service in citizen science, stewardship, environmental education, or chapter administration and 8 hours of continuing education in an area of their choosing within one year following completion of the basic training course. VMN volunteers maintain their certification by completing 40 hours of volunteer service and 8 hours of continuing education each year.

The Virginia Master Naturalists look forward to having you join them as they learn all about the natural world!! Find a chapter near you: <http://www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/chapters-a-map-and-contacts.html>

Sallie Gilman is the publicity coordinator for the Historic Southside Virginia Master Naturalist Chapter, which is currently accepting applications for their 2020 basic training course. For more information or an application, visit www.vmn.historicsouthside.org or call the Virginia Cooperative Extension Office at 757-365-6261 by January 21, 2020.



Darren Loomis, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, explains how to use fire to manage longleaf pine forests, to a group of Master Naturalist trainees at the Blackwater Ecological Preserve near Zuni, Virginia. Photo by: Stephen Anderson, VMN

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EVENTS CALENDAR			For the most complete listing of natural resource education events, visit the on-line events calendar at https://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu		
Contact	Date	Location	Event	Time	Fee
DCR	Jan., Feb., & March	Virginia's State Parks	A variety of events and activities For a complete list, visit: www.dcr.virginia.gov/parks	Varies	Varies
MP	Year-round	State-wide	Virginia Master Naturalist Volunteer Basic Training www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/chapters.html	Varies	Varies
EP	Nominations open in Jan. Camp: June 22 - 27	Appomattox	Camp Woods & Wildlife Do you know a young person who loves the outdoors? Nominations for Camp Woods & Wildlife are open. Our mission: to teach forestry and wildlife in a fun, hands-on way. Our hope: to inspire pursuit of natural resource careers. More information at www.dof.virginia.gov .	All week	\$85**
SH	Tuesdays Jan. 7 - March 3	Fredericksburg	Tree Steward Certification Training With classroom training and hands-on practice, Tree Stewards become equipped to identify trees, counsel on tree selection, demonstrate proper tree planting and follow-up care, and guide removal of invasive plants that threaten trees.	6:30 - 8	\$125
BRPRISM	Jan. 15	Charlottesville	Winter Activities for Weed Warriors A panel will discuss a practical "To Do" list for the cold winter months and answer your questions relating to plant- and season-specific challenges you may have on your land.	1 - 4:00	Free
WWF	Jan. 24-26	Virginia Beach	Winter Wildlife Festival Learn what it takes to properly observe and identify wildlife in their natural settings.	Varies	All weekend
VAFHP	Jan. 27-28	Glen Allen	Virginia Forest Health Professional's Conference Conference topics will include: Spotted Lanternfly, Invasive Plants, Oak Decline, Imported Fire Ants, Soil Health, Emerald Ash Borer, Longleaf Restoration, Science Communication, Prescribed Fire, Forest Health, and Pollinator Protection.	Jan. 27: 8 - 5; Jan. 28: 8 - 12	\$135 both days; \$80 one day
JG	Feb. 6 Feb. 13 Feb. 20 Feb. 27	Group viewing locations across Virginia - TBA	Woodland Stewards Webinar Series Growing the Future Forest Using the Economics of Forestry to Inform your Management Economic Opportunities of Non-timber Products Launching your Woodland Legacy: Intact, In Forest and In Family	7 - 9:00 p.m.	Varies by location
AW	Feb. 1	Montpelier Station	Nature Exploration Series: The Seasons and the Groundhog's Shadow at Montpelier Celebrate Groundhog Day with a family-friendly walking tour to explore the science behind the groundhog's shadow.	10 - 12	\$10
JG AD	Feb. 15 Feb. 29	Roanoke Culpeper	Woods & Wildlife Conferences This one-day conference will include topics suitable for owners of both large and small woodlands, and both new and experienced owners.	8:30 - 4:30	\$45*/person; \$80*/couple
JG	March 2 - May 23	On-line	On-line Woodland Options for Landowners This 12-week, on-line, self-paced class will teach you the basics of woodland management. Topics include: tree ID, woodland ecology, sustainability, soils, mapping, and silviculture. Registration includes a hands-on field trip and 3 books.	NA	\$45/family
AW	March 14	Montpelier Station	Nature Exploration Series: Magnificent Trees of Montpelier Montpelier is home to a wonderful collection of stately trees. This walking tour will take you around the property to visit these old giants. You will learn how to determine the height and width of these specimens.	10 - 12	\$10
JG	March 20-21	Appomattox	Central Virginia Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat This entry-level program covers the basics of keeping your woods and wildlife healthy and productive, while working towards meeting your ownership goals. A combination of classroom, field trip, and hands-on activities are used to explore these concepts of sustainability.	Feb. 20: 7:30 - 6 Feb. 21: 7:30 - 1	No Lodging Individual: \$40* Couple: \$70* Lodging Individual: \$90** Couple: \$170**

*meals included; **meals and lodging included

You Ain't from Around here! Exotic Invasive of the Quarter: Wine Raspberry (*Rubus phoenicolasius*) By: Jennifer Gagnon, Virginia Tech

Funny how sometimes the most obvious things get overlooked. One obvious exotic invasive that I have overlooked, at least in terms of education and outreach, is the wine raspberry. Perhaps I subconsciously avoided calling it out because I truly believe it is the most delicious of the exotic invasives. Nothing says summertime more loudly than a bowl full of freshly picked blackberries and wine raspberries. The brilliant red raspberries contrast beautifully with the dark blackberries. And baked into muffins - yum-o! They are also pleasant to pick - their canes are more flexible and have small slender prickles instead of the woodier more rose-like thorns found on other members in the *Rubus* genus. Unfortunately, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has this member of the rose family listed as a highly invasive species.



Map of counties in Virginia where wine raspberry has been reported. Map by EDDMaps.

at reproducing. They produce copious amounts of fruits annually - fruits that are then eaten and widely distributed by birds and mammals. New wine raspberries grow from these seeds. Additionally, if a cane bends over and touches the ground, it can create a new plant at the point of contact.

The root systems of wine raspberry are perennial; however, the individual canes only live for two years. The first year a cane emerges, it is called a primocane. The primocane grows straight, up to 9 feet tall, and has large compound leaves with three leaflets and white hairy undersides. The primocanes do not typically produce flowers. The second-year cane is called a florican. The florican does not grow taller, but produces several side shoots that bear smaller leaves. The flowers, and eventually fruits, are produced on these side shoots.

Wine raspberry grows well in disturbed areas, such as along roadsides, field edges, and in old fields. It prefers moist soil and grows near wooded areas. Native look-alikes include many species of blackberry and raspberry and occupy these same habitats.

How to identify wine raspberry:

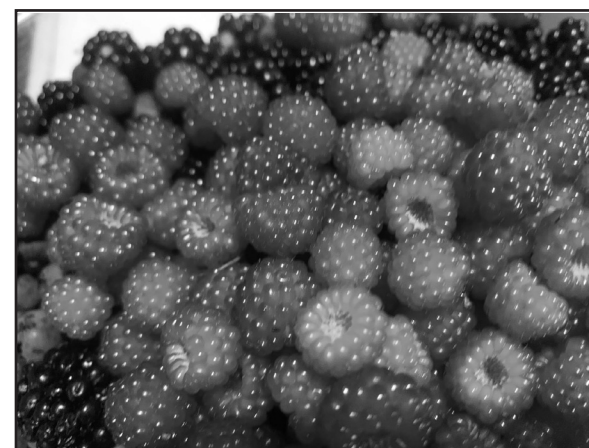
Form: Small, multi-stemmed shrub.

Canes: Up to 9 feet tall; covered in small slender prickles and tiny red hairs.

Leaves: Alternate, compound with three toothed leaflets. Undersides covered in dense, silvery-white hair. Approximately 4 inches long.

Flowers: Produced in the spring on short, very bristly racemes on the tips of the side shoots of the florican. Full bloom is in late May to early June. The white-petaled flowers are 0.2 - 0.4 inches in diameter with 5 purplish red to pink petals and a bristly calyx. Sepals, which surround and resemble petals, are hairy and longer than the petals.

Fruit: An aggregate of drupelets (not a true berry). Fruits are juicy (delicious!), bright shiny red, and 0.4 inches in diameter. They ripen in June to July (here in the New River Valley, they overlap with blackberries and last year blueberries as well). As the fruit develops, it is surrounded by a protective calyx covered in hairs that exude tiny drops of sticky fluid, reminiscent of a sundew and other carnivorous plants. However, wine raspberry is not a carnivorous plant. It does not get nutrients from insects caught in the sap, the sticky mucilage contains no digestive enzymes, and the surrounding tissues cannot absorb nutrients.



Wine raspberries are delicious freshly picked or in baked goods. Picking and eating these can help prevent wildlife from further distribution of this exotic invasive. Photo by: Jennifer Gagnon, Virginia Tech.

Native to China, Japan, and Korea, the wine raspberry was introduced to the United States in 1890 as an ornamental and as breeding stock for new raspberry cultivars. However, it escaped cultivation and can now be found from Vermont to Georgia, and west to Michigan and Arkansas. In Virginia, it is most commonly found along the Blue Ridge and into northern Virginia; however, it is also found on the Northern Neck and in a few counties in SE Virginia.

Wine raspberries grow vigorously and form extensive, dense thickets, displacing native species. They are also very good at reproducing. They produce copious amounts of fruits annually - fruits that are then eaten and widely distributed by birds and mammals. New wine raspberries grow from these seeds. Additionally, if a cane bends over and touches the ground, it can create a new plant at the point of contact.

Wine raspberry cont. on page 4

Wine raspberry cont. from page 3



Wine raspberry leaves are alternately arranged, compound, with three toothed leaflets (left). Unopened (center) and opened (right) wine raspberry flowers. The flower itself is comprised of 5 white petals. These are surrounded by five hairy sepals that help protect and support the flower. Photos (left to right) by: John M. Randall, The Nature Conservancy. Troy Evans, Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut.

How to control wine raspberry:

Manual: Hand pull plants or use a 4-prong spading fork if the soil is moist. Branches with berries should be bagged (or eaten) and the remaining plant material can be left to compost. Sites can be burned or mowed several years in a row. Mowing several times a year will reduce vigor.

Chemical: Wine raspberry can be controlled chemically using a systemic herbicide, such as glyphosate (a general herbicide that will kill all vegetation it contacts), or triclopyr or metsulfuron-methyl, both of which are broadleaf-specific. Concentrations mixed to the manufacturer's specifications can be applied to the leaves. Additionally, a cut stump application of glyphosate or triclopyr in the fall can be effective.

I have wine raspberry along a road on my property. My control efforts thus far have involved trying to consume as many berries as humanly possible. I fear I am losing the battle - but at least it is a delicious one.

Jennifer Gagnon is an Extension Associate in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation, 540-231-6391, jgagnon@vt.edu.

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Virginia State Riparian Buffer Tax Credit By: Jessica McGlyn, Catalynics LLC

Did you know you may qualify for a state tax credit if you leave a riparian buffer on your final harvest or thinning? Through the Virginia State Riparian Buffer Tax Credit Program (<http://www.dof.virginia.gov/tax/credit/riparianbuffer/index.htm>), if you leave a minimum 35-foot riparian buffer and have either a Stewardship Plan, Tree Farm Plan, or a Conservation Activity Plan (CAP 106), you can earn up to a \$17,500 tax credit. The buffer can be managed (at least 50% of basal area must be retained) but must be retained for 15 years. Through this program, you will not only earn a tax credit, but the streamside buffers you leave will protect water quality, stabilize soil, and may also create wildlife habitat. The program is good for your pocket and good for water and wildlife.

To apply to the program, you first need to obtain a management plan for the area of planned harvest. If using a Tree Farm or CAP 106 plan, you must also submit a Stewardship Plan application to Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) at no charge. You can acquire a Stewardship plan from your VDOF Area Forester at a cost of for \$1.50/acre (minimum charge of \$200).

After your property is harvested, submit your Stewardship Plan along with form 179 "Application for Riparian Forest Buffer Tax Credit" and supporting documentation (Location of Property, Legal description / Plat Reference, timber valuation, Harvest Identification Number) to your local VDOF Area Forester. If you have a consulting forester or supplier, they can help you put the correct information into your application. Note that there is a \$150 fee to apply for the tax credit. If for some reason VDOF does not approve your application, they will refund this fee.

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