

Virginia Forest Landowner e-Update

December 2023

Featured Events

Fifteen Minutes in the Forest

- 12:15 every other Friday
- New videos return on January 12
- Watch archived videos on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube Premier](#)

Woods & Wildlife Conferences

- February 10
 - Wytheville
- February 24
 - Culpeper

2024 Woodland Stewards Webinar Series

- January 30 – March 5
- Virtual

Generation NEXT Legacy Planning

- March 7
- Virtual

Landowner Retreats

- Beyond the Basics Advanced Retreat
 - March 22-23
 - Appomattox
- Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat
 - May 3-4
 - Abingdon
- Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat
 - September 20-21
 - Providence Forge

Gather to Grow: A Conference to Honor the Past and Shape the Future of Forest Farming

- March 22-24
- Roanoke

Good Morning Forest Update Subscribers,

On my drive home from work the day after Halloween, I noticed brightly lit Christmas trees in the windows of several homes. While I too enjoy the festive glow, November 1st is a bit early for me. But if two months of holiday splendor gives you joy, I say go for it!

If you are like me and celebrate Christmas, but have not yet set up your tree, I encourage you to support [Virginia's Christmas Tree Growers](#). On their website, you can find a Christmas tree farm near you. By purchasing a Virginia grown tree, you are supporting local businesses and landowners, and helping our economy. Live Christmas tree sales contribute over \$11 million a year to Virginia's economy. Our growers produce more than 4.3 million trees that are grown on over 10,000 acres. This makes the commonwealth 7th in the nation in total number of trees grown and 6th in total acreage in Christmas tree production.

In addition to economic benefits, live trees also provide numerous environmental benefits. First, during the 5-10 years it takes for a Christmas tree to become merchantable, they take up and store carbon, keep soil in place, and improve water quality. Second, since they are evergreen, they provide important winter shelter to wildlife. Third, real trees are 100% recyclable, renewable, and biodegradable. And, finally, you don't have to make room in your attic/creepy basement to store them 11 months of the year.

If you like hard work and are interested in starting your own Christmas tree farm, Virginia Cooperative Extension has resources for you:

- [An Introduction to Growing Christmas Trees in Virginia](#)
- [Species for Christmas Tree Planting in Virginia](#)
- Annual Beginning Christmas Tree Grower Workshop (2024 date and location TBA)

Personally, I'll be selecting one of our small backyard grown trees – sure to be a disappointment after last year's [beautiful \(but painful\) blue spruce](#). And I'm not going to lie – it will probably be on December 20th.

I hope everyone has a lovely holiday season with friends and family.

Visit the [Events Calendar](#) for details!

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In other news, we are happy to start advertising some of our 2024 landowner education programs. See below for featured events and find a full listing on our [Events Calendar](#).

Featured Events

[Fifteen Minutes in the Forest](#)

Fifteen Minutes in the Forest videos are shown every other Friday at 12:15 on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube Premier](#)

- January 12 – Why Family-Owned Woodlands Matter
- January 26 – I Love it When a Plan Comes Together
- February 9 – Boundary Lines Part 2
- February 16 – Cooking Wood
- March 8 – The Hardwood Initiative
- March 15 – Professional Forestry Assistance
- [Watch archived on our YouTube Channel](#)

[2024 Landowner Woods & Wildlife Conferences – REGISTRATION IS OPEN](#)

These long-running full-day conferences provide information, tools, and personal contacts to help private woodland owners keep their woods, and the wildlife that live in them, healthy and productive. A variety of topics are offered to appeal to owners of both small and large tracts, and both new and experienced owners.

- Wytheville
 - February 10
 - 8:30 – 4:30
 - [Wytheville Meeting Center](#)
 - [Agenda](#)
 - **Special early bird registration for Wytheville only – Register before 2024 (by midnight December 31th) and save \$10/person**
 - **Early bird – \$45/person; \$80/couple**
 - **Regular – \$55/person; \$90/couple**
 - Register [online](#)
 - Register by mail coming soon
- Culpeper
 - February 24
 - 8:30 – 4:30
 - [Daniel Technology Center](#)
 - \$55/person; \$90/couple
 - Register [online](#)
 - Register by mail coming soon

[2024 Woodland Steward Webinar Series: Focus on Silvopasture](#)

status, or any other basis protected by law.

This free webinar series will teach you how to establish, manage, and fund silvopasture systems. Established producers will share their experiences.

- Virtual
- 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. EST
- Free
- January 20 – Introduction to Silvopasture
- February 6 – Silvopasture Establishment in Woodlands
- February 13 – Silvopasture Establishment in Plantations
- February 20 – Managing the Animals in a Silvopasture System
- February 27 – How Do I Get Started
- March 5 – Producers Share Their Experiences

Generation NEXT Legacy Planning Workshop: Land Conservation Tools Deep Dive

Learn about the conservation tools available to help you pass your land and your legacy on to the next generation while keeping it intact, in forest, and in family ownership.

- Virtual
- March 7
- 6:30 – 8:30
- \$10/family – includes a copy of the award-winning book: *Legacy Planning: A Guide for Virginia Landowners*
- Registration opens late January

Landowner Retreats

Landowner Retreats are co-hosted by the Virginia Department of Forestry and Virginia Cooperative Extension. Retreats provide information on hardwood and pine forest management, legacy planning, management planning, and more. They combine classroom, field trip, and hands-on activities to teach concepts of sustainable woodland and wildlife management.

- Beyond the Basics Advanced Retreat
 - March 22-23
 - [Holiday Lake 4 H Educational Center](#), Appomattox
- Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat
 - May 3-4
 - [Southwest Virginia 4 H Educational Center](#), Abingdon
- Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat
 - September 20-21

- [New Kent Forestry Center](#), Providence Forge

Registration opens 8 weeks prior to event.

[Visit the Blue Ridge PRISM website for programs on nonnative invasives](#)

Wishing you the happiest of holidays and a wonderful start to your new year!

Jennifer

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