

Virginia Forest Landowner e-Update

April 2026

Good morning, Forest Update Subscribers,

I've had an over-abundance of house pets my entire life. Most of those years, the biggest problem with pets was fleas. During college, I gave many ungrateful cats flea baths and deployed flea bombs regularly in my apartments. Fortunately, the invention of long-lasting preventatives resolved the flea issue. But out in the country, with the arrival of warmer weather, and robust mice and deer populations, comes ticks. The long-lasting oral preventatives don't seem to do much in the way of repelling them.

Many evenings, after playing with the dogs, I find a tiny little visitor crawling down my arm, or leg, or back. And worse yet, the cat sleeps on the bed. There's no joy comparable to that of waking up in the middle of the night and picking a tick off my neck. I'm averaging about 10 tick bites a year.

As someone who works with people who spend a lot of time outdoors, I'm constantly hearing stories about tick borne illnesses, so I'm hyper-aware of potentially having one myself. Unfortunately, some of the symptoms of tick-borne illness are difficult to discern from those of simply aging (e.g., fatigue and general malaise, joint pain). My current strategy is two-fold – to remember to save ticks that have bitten me (for testing if I fall ill), and to insist on being checked for tick-borne illnesses if ever admitted to the emergency room for an unknown illness. Because I'm not downsizing my house pet collection or staying indoors.

If you want to learn more about ticks, our friends at Penn State Extension are offering a free webinar TODAY at 11:45 called Biting Pests: A Pet Owner's Guide ([register online](#).) Virginia Tech also has publications on tick borne illnesses:

[Tick-Borne Diseases in Virginia](#), and [Emerging Tick-Borne Arboviruses: Powassan Virus, Heartland Virus, and Bourbon Virus](#).

If you want to contribute to tick research or have a tick tested for pathogens, you can contact [Old Dominion University's Tick Team](#). And as always, check for ticks after being outside.

[The Spring 2026 Edition of the Virginia Forest Landowner Update newsletter](#) is now available. In this edition:

Witness Trees & Independence

by Adam Downing, Virginia Cooperative Extension

This year our nation celebrates 250 years of independence. And trees are an integral part of this celebration. Not only do we have trees that witnessed the fight for independence, but there is also a little-known story that was an early boiling point - before the Tea Party there was the Tree Party. [Read more](#)

Focus on Managing Virginia's Hardwood Forests

by Joe Rossetti, Virginia Department of Forestry

Almost 80% of Virginia's forests are classified as either hardwood or mixed hardwood and pine forests. In 2021, the Hardwood Initiative started in earnest to put greater emphasis on good hardwood management. The Hardwood Initiative has been growing ever since with the goal of improving Virginia's hardwood forests through intentional management. This goal has been the focus of many Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) and Virginia Cooperative Extension efforts. Five years in, it's a good time to pause and look at some of the activities that have taken place through the Initiative. [Read more](#)

Growing and Protecting Forests

by Joe Rossetti, Virginia Department of Forestry

New opportunities for landowners are available from the Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF). The DOF recently launched the Growing and Protecting Forests (GAP) and Diminished Species Establishment Cost Share Programs to assist landowners with managing their forests. With these additional opportunities, DOF is now able to cost share nearly all forest management practices. [Read more](#)

We have a full lineup of events for you this year! [Click here for our Events Calendar](#) and check out our featured events:

Fifteen Minutes in the Forest

- April 24 - Catalpa
- May 22 – Fungi
- June 26 – After the Storm 2: Cleanup safely

New videos premier at 12:15 on [YouTube](#) the 4th Friday of each month.

Watch 175+ videos on our [YouTube Channel](#).

Landowner Retreats

Beginning Retreats provide information on hardwood and pine forest management, legacy planning, management planning, and more. Beyond the Basics Retreats take a deep dive into a specific forest management topic. All Retreats combine classroom, field trip, and hands-on activities. Registration opens 10 weeks prior to events.

- Southwest Virginia Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat
 - May 8-9
 - [Southwest Virginia 4-H Educational Center](#), Abingdon
 - [Agenda](#)
 - Register [by mail](#)
 - Register [online](#)
- Beyond the Basics Woodland Owner Retreat: Managing Your Forest for Timber Income
 - August 7-8 – new dates!
 - [Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center](#), Appomattox
 - [Agenda](#)
 - Register [by mail](#)
 - Register [online](#)
- Southeast Virginia Beginning Woodland Owner Retreat
 - September 11-12
 - [New Kent Conference Center](#), Providence Forge

Virginia Forestry Summit

Join landowners and natural resource professionals for educational programs and networking. Plus, there will be an assortment of field trips in Norfolk.

- April 29 – May 1
- [Hilton Norfolk the Main](#), Norfolk
- [Learn more](#)

Spring Venture Outdoors Series

This half-day program includes both classroom and field trip sessions. Topics will include: a forest health update, tree identification, a wild game update, and cost share opportunities.

- May 7, [Halifax County Extension Office](#), Halifax
- May 14, [Prince Edward County Extension Office](#), Farmville
- May 21, [Bedford County Extension Office](#), Bedford
- 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
- Free ([registration is required](#))

Generation NEXT Legacy Planning Events

- Generation NEXT Webinar: Be Lawyer Ready
 - May 27
 - 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM
 - \$10/family – includes a printed copy of the award-winning book
Legacy Planning: A Guide for Virginia Landowners
 - Register [online](#)
- Generation NEXT Legacy Planning Workshop
 - July 24 & 25
 - Warrenton
 - Details and registration coming in May

Online Woodland Options for Landowners Short Course

This 10-week self-paced on-line course is offered annually. It teaches the fundamentals of forest management. Upon completion of the program, you can

have a draft forest management plan. Natural resource professionals serve as mentors and the class winds up with an optional end-of-the-semester hands-on field trip.

- June 1 – August 7
- \$55/family – includes 5 books and field trip
- [Syllabus](#)
- Register [by mail](#)
- Register [online](#)

Events at James Madison's Montpelier

- \$18/adults, \$12 youth 12-17, free 11 and under
- April 25, [Majestic Trees of Montpelier](#)
- May 9, [Spring Working Woods Walk](#)
- June 13, [Pollinators on Parade Walk](#)
- More [information and registration](#)

Fall Forestry & Wildlife Field Tours – 50th Anniversary!

This October, come help us celebrate the longest running program of this type in Virginia! To celebrate, we will explore sustainable forestry and wildlife management practices across 4 counties over 4 days. Tours visit private, public, and industry-owned lands and manufacturing facilities. Join us for 1, 2, 3, or all 4 days. Lodging will be available.

- October 20-23
- Details coming soon!

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

Hope to see you all out and about!

Jennifer

Visit us online



Partners & Sponsors

- [Virginia Cooperative Extension](#)
- [Virginia Department of Forestry](#)
- [Virginia Sustainable Forestry Initiative State Implementation Committee](#)
- [Virginia Tree Farm Foundation](#)
- [Virginia Forestry Association](#)
- [Forest Stewardship Program](#)
- [USDA Forest Service](#)

Jennifer Gagnon * 228 Cheatham Hall * Blacksburg, VA 24061

jgagnon@vt.edu * 540/231-6391

This e-newsletter is posted on-line at:

<https://forestupdate.frec.vt.edu/newsletter/archives/index.html>

You received this message because you are subscribed to the forestupdate-g@vt.edu Google Group.

To subscribe, please visit the [Virginia Forest Landowner Update website](#).

To unsubscribe from this group, email forestupdate-g+unsubscribe@vt.edu

Virginia Cooperative Extension is a partnership of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and local governments, and is an equal opportunity employer. For the full non-discrimination statement, please visit ext.vt.edu/accessibility.