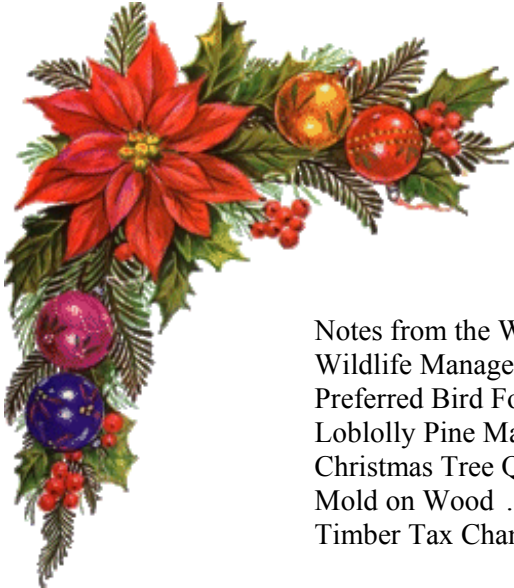




Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries Update Newsletter

Department of Forestry, Wildlife and Fisheries
George Hopper, Department Head

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Notes From the Web

Samuel Jackson, Web Coordinator

The National Training Teleconference on Sudden Oak Death (*Phytophthora ramorum*) conducted on October 26, 2004 is now available on-line at <http://www.ncipm.org/sod/> as a Quicktime movie. The PowerPoint presentation with audio overlay may be downloaded and used for future training. If you would like to receive the presentation on a CD, please send an email and provide a shipping address and phone number.

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Wildlife Management Calendar for December

Craig A. Harper, Associate Professor, Wildlife Management

Disc firebreaks around fields and woods (if it's not too wet) before the ground freezes

Plant trees/shrubs for wildlife

- use as a hedgerow to break up fields into sections
- use soft- and hard-mast producers (see PB 1633 for list of species)

Fertilize/prune trees/shrubs

Erect boxes for wood ducks and bluebirds

- 1 box per 100 yards of shoreline is adequate for wood ducks
- clean out old wood duck boxes and put in fresh wood shavings (about 4 – 6 inches)
- bluebird boxes should be no closer than 80 yards apart
- up to 9 or more bluebirds may roost in a single box during the winter

Continue Timber Stand Improvement activities

- select good mast producers and release their crowns by girdling and spraying competitors

Build brushpiles

- put large stems on bottom, small stems on top

Keep bird feeders full

- black-oil sunflowers are a favorite of many birds
- thistle seed is preferred by goldfinches
- suet provides energy for lots of birds during the winter

Strip-mow dove fields

- don't mow it all – leave some for January/February
- migrating doves appreciate your efforts and the late dove seasons can offer great shooting

Continue dormant-season planting native warm-season grasses, if not too wet

- don't plant too deep – no more than ¼ inch!

Fertilize winter forage plots containing oats, wheat, and/or rye

- 30 pounds of N per acre

Duck numbers should be rising – watch the weather!



Preferred Bird Foods*Craig A. Harper, Associate Professor, Wildlife Management*

It is time to fill up your bird feeders, if you have not done so already. Birds are particularly attracted to feeders during mid- to late winter as other foods can be tough to come by. By knowing the type of feeder and seed (or other food) that different birds prefer, you can cater to several different species.

Feeder design is less important, especially if you use a fly-through feeder, which will accommodate most bird species. More selective feeders include the tube-type or cylindrical feeders used to offer thistle seed to goldfinches and pine siskins. The table below lists different seeds and other types of food that may be offered to attract different birds.

SPECIES

mourning doves

woodpeckers, chickadees,
titmice, nuthatches

blue jay

mockingbirds, brown
thrashers, robins, thrushes,
catbirds

cardinals

Eastern towhees

evening grosbeak

goldfinches

house finch

purple finch

sparrows, juncos

grackles

PREFERRED FOOD

black oil-type sunflower seed, white proso millet

black-oil type sunflower seed, cracked nuts, shelled and
broken peanuts, bread crumbs, suetsunflower seed (all types), peanuts, cracked nuts,
shelled and cracked corn, suet

cut apples, oranges, raisins, bread crumbs

sunflower seed (all types), cracked corn, shelled and
broken peanutswhite proso millet, sunflower seed (all types), cracked
corn, shelled and broken peanutssunflower seed (all types), cracked corn, shelled and
broken peanutsniger thistle, hulled sunflower seed, black oil-type
sunflower seeds

black oil-type sunflower seeds, niger thistle

sunflower seed (all types)

white proso millet, black oil-type sunflower seed, wheat,
bread crumbs

hulled sunflower seed (all types)

Don't forget to try suet feeders, fruit halves nailed to a tree or post, peanut butter smeared into pine cones or onto the side of a tree, and old breads and cakes. Offering several types of foods will ensure a diversity of birds visiting your backyard. Remember to clean feeders periodically with hot, soapy water fortified with a capful of bleach. Bottoms of platform feeders (and others that might hold water) should have small holes drilled into the bottom to allow water to drain after a rain.

Finally, beware of cats. House cats are extremely efficient predators and can severely reduce the number of birds and small mammals visiting feeders, especially when only one or two feeders are used and birds are concentrated around them.

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Loblolly Pine Makes a Reasonable Yard Tree

David Mercker, Extension Assistant II, Forest Management

The trait of being particular about landscaping runs strong for many Tennesseans – for some a bit higher than others. The exterior appearance of our homes makes a statement about what can be expected on the inside. Consider that far more people see our trees, shrubs and flowers than will ever see our cabinets, sofas, and cutlery.

Establishing yard trees around our homes can be challenging, particularly where the previous land use was deleterious to the soil, for instance agricultural practices. Ag-soils-turned- yard-soils are normally heavily compacted and nutrient depleted. This makes rapid establishment of yard trees frustrating. Quite often, newly planted trees either don't survive or do so inadequately. This leads to a dilemma. Most homeowners desire fast growing trees, while concurrently wanting trees with great longevity. Unfortunately, many of our more vigorously growing trees are also the shortest lived. A reasonable solution to the problem is the Loblolly pine. Loblolly offers a pleasing contrast when mixed with deciduous trees. Loblolly is a southern yellow pine, and as a rule, is capable of tolerating more harsh conditions than many of the deciduous hardwoods. Foresters commonly call Loblolly a *plastic species* because it thrives on extremes of the site gradient, both hydric (wet) and xeric (dry) sites. Their fibrous root systems are efficient at seeking new sources of water and nutrients. Plus, because they retain needles year around, their growing (photosynthetic) period is long, yielding quicker initial growth. It is not unusual for Loblolly to have 2 to 3 new flushes of stem elongation per year. The needle drop that soon follows this rapid growth, allows for prompt amelioration of the soil too.

Arborists consider Loblolly a tree with medium longevity, living an average of 70 to 80 years. It is susceptible to both the Southern Pine and the Ips beetles, but attacks of these two are less severe if trees are healthy, have large uninhibited crowns, and are watered during periods of lower soil moisture. They should be planted at least 30 feet apart and at least 10 feet from patios and sidewalks. Further, it is best if they are planted about 30 feet from buildings because their needles and cones can clog gutters. Similarly, avoid planting them under power lines where future topping will spoil their form.



One negative with Loblolly is the susceptibility to ice damage. Ice accumulating on the needles leads to excess weight, bursting the branches. It is best to select saplings having branches that grow more perpendicular to the main trunk than branches with tendency to point upward. Upward pointing branches will snap more easily with ice accumulation.

A final consideration is that Loblolly can be purchased for less than most other species. Nursery growers find them simple to start, having low maintenance requirements, and quick to the market, all factors that keep consumer price reasonable. Loblolly for ornamental uses has merit in Tennessee. It will perform well in most locations, though it should be avoided in the Nashville basin and the higher elevations of the Appalachians.

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Christmas Tree Questions and Answers

*Wayne K. Clatterbuck, Associate Professor,
 Forest Management and Silviculture*

The internet is full of information about Christmas trees. Summaries of several Christmas tree sites are outlined below.

<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/nreos/forest/xmas/growing/>

This web address is for the publication entitled “Growing Christmas Trees in North Carolina” which is the most complete information for those interested in growing Christmas trees. North Carolina State University employs three Extension specialists dedicated to the production and marketing of Christmas trees. This publication is a reflection of that information.

<http://www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/pbfiles/PB1463.pdf>

The University of Tennessee Extension website has a publication on the financial considerations of growing Christmas trees.

<http://www.picktnproducts.org/xmastree/>

This Tennessee Dept. of Agriculture website lists Christmas tree growers by county in Tennessee that have choose and cut operations. Short guidelines for selecting and care of ball and burlap trees and selecting cut trees are also given.

<http://www.christmastree.org/home.cfm>

The National Christmas Tree Association website is a wonderful source of information. Choose their media center area and review short articles on the following subjects:

- a. 10 Quick Tips for Selecting a Tree at a Retail Lot
- b. Tips on Selecting a Real Tree at a Choose and Harvest Farm
- c. Care for a Living Christmas Tree
- d. Recommended Tree Care Tips
- e. Watering Christmas Trees



The site also has a teachers section and information on the different species of Christmas trees, folklore, safety and recycling. Of course, they also emphasize that real trees are a natural choice for the Christmas season.

If you are considering using a ball and burlap tree for a Christmas tree, then outplanting it this winter, make sure to select a species that is adapted to your local site and climatic conditions. Although Colorado blue spruce, Douglas-fir, white spruce, balsam fir and western firs (Noble, white, concolor, grand) are lovely Christmas trees, they are not adaptable to the precipitation patterns or the warm, humid climate in Tennessee. Although these trees may survive for a few years after outplanting, most decline and eventually die with time. Even the Fraser fir that is native to the higher elevations (greater than 2500 feet elevation) and cooler climates in east Tennessee is a poor choice at the lower elevations in the remainder of the state. Choose native trees that are more acclimated to your area such as eastern white pine, Virginia pine or eastern redcedar.

The Extension folks at the University of Tennessee Forestry, Wildlife & Fisheries wish you a happy and prosperous holiday season!

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Mold On Wood

Adam Taylor, Assistant Professor, Wood Products Management

Recently there has been increased concern about mold on wood. Reports of so-called “toxic” molds in particular have caused people to be more interested in preventing, detecting and eliminating mold on the wood in their homes.

Mold can be seen as a fuzzy or discolored layer on the surface of wood. Molds are a kind of fungus that can grow on wood, concrete, bread, oranges, or any surface that provides a suitable combination of temperature, moisture and food. Molds feed on nutrients on the surface of wood – they do not eat or weaken the wood itself.

Molds produce millions of microscopic spores that can be carried in the air. If these spores land on the surface of wood (or other materials), and conditions are right, then a new growth of mold will result. Mold spores are all around us and in the air that we breathe. High concentrations of mold spores may cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals.

The particular concern over the “toxic” molds is due to the fact that these molds can produce mycotoxins – special chemicals that may be poisonous. Despite the alarming name, the dangers of “toxic” molds are often over-emphasized. The musty smell of mold is not caused by mycotoxins. Most molds don’t produce mycotoxins, and even those molds that can produce mycotoxins don’t produce them all the time. In general, while moldy wood may be an unsightly nuisance, it is not usually a health hazard.

The best way to prevent or stop mold from growing on wood is to keep the surface of the wood dry. This means that bathrooms, kitchens and basements should be well ventilated. Existing mold can be removed by washing with water, and bleach or detergents can be used to eliminate discolorations. Unfortunately, if the conditions for mold growth remain, new spores will land on the wood and fresh mold will grow.

Chemical treatments exist that can kill mold and prevent future mold growth. However, the warm, wet conditions that lead to mold may also lead to wood rot, so preventing the conditions for mold growth is the best solution.

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Timber Tax Changes

Larry Tankersley, Extension Specialist, Forest Management



The American Jobs Creation Act of 2004 signed by President Bush made a few changes in the law affecting the taxation of timber and timberland. The actual IRS regulations are pending but in general the following summary should be useful.

Two changes are especially noteworthy and applicable to most timber owners/growers. The first allows capital gains treatment from a lump sum sale of timber held “primarily for sale to customers in the ordinary course of a trade or business”, or for use in a trade or business.

Prior to the change if you held timber as a business asset, you were expected to “retain an economic interest in timber” by selling the timber under a “pay-as-cut” contract to qualify for capital gains treatment of the proceeds. A lump sum sale is often preferred because the total amount received is fixed in advance, rather than depending on the volume actually harvested. This change becomes effective for sales after December 31, 2004.

The second change repeals the reforestation tax credit and replaces it with a deduction of up to \$10,000 the year that qualifying reforestation expenses are incurred. Amounts spent over \$10,000 qualify for the 84 month amortization currently available for amounts up to \$10,000. Currently amounts spent over \$10,000 become part of the timber’s basis.

Consider Jimmy, who spends \$14,000 on reforestation. Under the old law Jimmy got the tax credit and amortization on the first \$10,000 and placed the remaining \$4,000 in the timber’s basis account. The new law allows Jimmy to “write-off” the first \$10,000 and amortize the \$4,000. The new “reforestation” law is in effect for qualifying expenditures made after October 22, 2004.

Additional changes made relative to timber affect corporations and their 631(a) election to treat timber cutting as a sale. The other modifies the “safe harbor rules” for timber real estate investment trusts (REITs).

All in all the changes are considered positive by most timber concerns. Our ability to act as a business, i.e. writing of expenses associate growing timber and exercise the advantages of a “lump-sum” sale has long been a source of stress when determining whether the sale qualified for capital gains treatment.

The tax credit will be missed, but the ability to spend more than \$10,000 and take advantage of the 84 month amortization will be helpful to many spending money to reforest the country.

Keep in touch!

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