

BRANCHING OUT

Maryland's Woodland Stewardship Educator



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Summer 2022

As Summer Turns to Fall...

Andrew A. Kling, WSE Faculty Associate & *Branching Out* editor

The calendar may say August, but all across the region, fall is just around the corner. Trees are storing valuable carbohydrates to help them through the colder months, and deciduous species are preparing to shed their leaves to save energy. Birds that have been feasting on spring and summer berries, nuts, and more are getting ready to migrate to warmer climes. Animals are preparing caches of food for their winter dens, or are getting ready to change their diets with the change of seasons.

Humans are also preparing. Stores that were featuring swimsuits and outdoor furniture are touting back-to-school clothing and supplies, and youngsters are counting down the days remaining in their summer vacations. When I lived in the Washington, DC area, you could always tell which counties had started school before Labor Day by the increase in commuter traffic.



August and the days ahead are also a good time to get your woodland property ready for the fall. While you may not think about wildfires being a problem in cooler weather, they can start any time of year. Consider creating or updating a fire preparation plan that includes ensuring firefighters have access to your woodlands, either by trails or by roads. It's also a good time to look for signs of invasive insects or the presence of invasive plants. For

example, look for the egg masses of the spongy moth. [Read more about these topics in this issue's News and Notes.](#)

And it's also a good time to learn more about what you can do for your woodlands, or for your property in general. The Woodland Stewardship Education program offers two



online courses that run during the fall: "The Woods in Your Backyard" and "The General Forestry Course."

"The Woods in Your Backyard" is designed for those who own 1-10 acres and who want to learn about getting more from their land, instead of spending hours each week mowing acres of lawn. Learn

about how to turn the areas into beneficial natural areas such as woodlands or native meadows. The course features a variety of techniques and activities that help you understand your natural areas and your goals for managing them, which leads to the development of a tentative flexible timeline that will help you with future projects. [Learn more about the course on page 2 of this issue.](#)

The "General Forestry Course" is an in-depth look at "silviculture," the art and science of growing forest trees. The course itself is now more accessible than before, with upgraded graphics and revised content. The curriculum takes you through a wide variety of topics related to managing forests. These include how to inventory woodlands, how to manage them for better health, for timber, and for wildlife, and much more. You don't need to own woodlands to take the course; you just need to have access to one so you can complete the course's activities. [There's more information on page 2 of this issue also.](#)

So while you're outside enjoying the last days of summer, don't forget to look forward. Now's the time to prepare your woodlands and other natural areas for the seasons and years ahead.

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Registration is Now Open For the Fall Session of “The Woods in Your Backyard” Online Course

The Woods in Your Backyard Online Course

Registration is now open for the Fall 2022 session of “The Woods in Your Backyard” online course. Our course is designed primarily for small-acreage property owners who want to learn how to care for or how to expand existing woodlands, or how to convert lawn

space to woodlands.

The self-directed, non-credit online course runs for ten weeks, from September 6 to November 15. It is offered through the University of Maryland’s Electronic Learning Management System, and is accessible from any Internet connection and Web browser.

The course closely follows the published guide of the same name, but includes some important extras. Quizzes reinforce the important concepts of the text. Optional activities give participants the opportunity to share one or more of their stewardship journal entries, or photos or narratives of their woodland stewardship accomplishments. In addition, many of the course’s units are accompanied by short videos, created and produced by Woodland Stewardship Education staff. These 2- to 5-minute videos demonstrate essential skills and techniques (such as tree identification or chosen tree release) and share the experiences of other woodland owners.

The course costs \$95.00 and each session is limited to 25 participants. Each paid enrollment includes printed copies of “The Woods in Your Backyard” guide and workbook, plus a copy of *Common Native Trees of Virginia*. [Visit our website page about the course at this link for more information, including frequently asked questions, updated registration information, and a way to preview the course at no charge.](#)

Go to this [Eventbrite link](#) for participant comments, more information, and how to register.

If you are a Maryland Master Naturalist or a Maryland Master Gardener, participating in this course can contribute to your annual hours commitment. [See this web page for more details.](#)

You have a terrific program that makes us better stewards of nature. It is hard sometimes to feel like as an individual I can make an impact. ... Your course gives a little hope that acting individually can lead to systems-wide improvements.
- Betsy M., Maryland

Becoming a Steward of the Land: UME Forestry Program Offers Certification Course

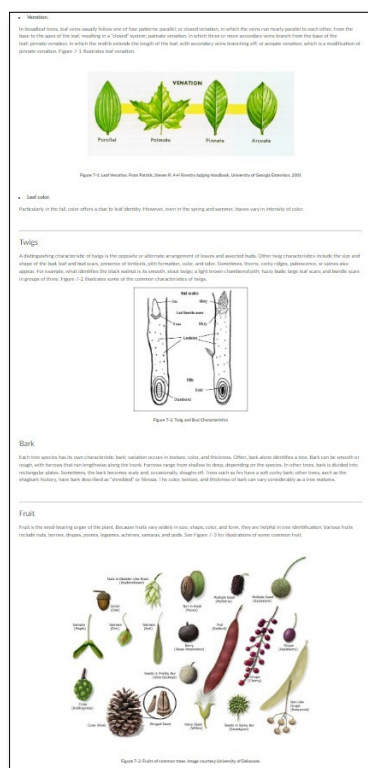
Learn to be a steward of the land this fall with the University of Maryland Extension’s General Forestry Course. The online course features revised content with updated with many new full-color photos and graphics, and will run from September 1 through December 15, 2022. Registration is now open, and interested participants can register online at extension.umd.edu/forestry-course.

This is a non-credit course with no formal classes – work from the comfort of your home using your own woodlot, a friend’s, or a public forest. The course covers how to protect your trees from insects, diseases, and fire; step-by-step procedures walk you through a forest inventory and stand analysis; and the details of the forestry business are presented, including tax nuances and the sale and harvest of forest products. Ultimately, the course exercises help you develop the framework for a stewardship plan for your forest.

The cost for this forestry course is \$150.00. Included in the cost are copies of the supplemental readings: *A Sand County Almanac*, *The Woodland Steward*, *American Forests: A History of Resiliency and Recovery*, a small pamphlet entitled “What Tree Is That?” and *Common Native Trees of Virginia Tree Identification Guide*. Users receive a flash drive of the paper version of the text and appendices. A certificate of completion is awarded when all assignments are completed.

To learn more about the course and what it entails, go to extension.umd.edu/forestry-course. There you can read lessons from the text, preview an exercise, read through detailed course information, and more.

For more information, contact Andrew Kling at the University of Maryland Extension Western Maryland Research & Education Center at 301-432-2767, ext. 307, or via email at akling1@umd.edu.



Sample course page

Woodland Wildlife Spotlight: Which Bat is That?

Bats have had centuries of bad publicity as, at best, oddball creatures, and at worst, connected to legends of vampires. Their reputations have been somewhat improved over the recent decades as science has discovered more of the species' value to the environment, and as publicity of their plight related to [White-nose Syndrome](#) has widened. Consequently, more people are interested in helping bats in general, and in learning more about individual species in particular.

Maryland is home to ten different species of bats, all of which are listed by the state as Species of Greatest Conservation Need. They are generally divided into two groups: "cave bats" and "tree bats." The six species of cave bats found in Maryland are generally year-round residents and will spend the colder months hibernating in colonies in natural caves or in man-made tunnels. Tree bats, on the other hand, are more solitary and may migrate or spend the winter in tree cavities, under bark, or even under tree litter. Those found in Maryland include the Eastern red bat, the hoary bat, the silver-haired bat, and the evening bat. As we mostly discuss woodland species in this spotlight, let's take a closer look at these four tree bats.

Eastern Red Bat

The most common bat in Maryland, the Eastern red bat generally roosts in south-facing deciduous trees 4-10 feet above the ground during the day, but may crawl beneath leaf litter on the coldest days. They often fly at dusk, hunting for moths, mosquitos, crickets, cicadas, and other insects. Some will migrate south for the winter, while others will seek out leaf litter or hollow trees for the colder months. Observers sometimes see them flying on warm winter days.



Eastern Red Bat roosting, Howard Co. MD, 2019. [Photo by Sue Muller, MD Biodiversity Project](#)

Hoary Bat

The hoary bat gets its name from the hoar frost appearance of the tips of its fur. The fur around its throat and forehead is yellow. Like the Eastern red bat, it has a fully furred tail. However, it is larger than the Eastern red bat; in fact, it's the largest Maryland bat, with a wingspan of up to 16



inches. They tend to roost higher up in coniferous trees (up to 20 feet above the ground), often near cleared areas.

Hoary Bat roosting beside a tree in Anne Arundel Co., MD, 2022.

[Photo by Kerry Wixted, MD Biodiversity Project](#)

Silver-haired Bat

Unlike other tree bats, the silver-haired bat occasionally hunts in groups, flying low over both still and running water, and in forest openings. They are rarely found in Maryland during the summer, but some will linger into the fall and winter. They will shelter in a variety of locations, such as under loose bark or in woodpecker holes, or in manmade structures such as open sheds or outbuildings.



A Silver-haired Bat rescued by the Lights Out Baltimore team in Baltimore City, MD, 2016. Rehabilitated and released by the Phoenix Wildlife Center. [Photo by Aaron Heinsman, MD Biodiversity Project](#)

Evening Bat



Evening Bat in Calvert Co. MD, 2017.

[Photo by Ben Springer, MD Biodiversity Project](#)

The evening bat may be confused with the larger big brown bat (one of the cave bats), because of similar coloration and because they may roost in colonies in buildings or in smaller numbers within hollow trees or under loose bark. Little is

known about the evening bat's winter habits; it may migrate south, but some may hibernate in Maryland.

Learn more about Maryland's bats from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' [Guide to Maryland's Bats](#).

Invasives in Your Woodland: Plumeless Thistle

The third in our series of invasive thistles in Maryland is “Plumeless Thistle,” which sometimes is called “Spiny Plumeless Thistle.” Like the other thistles in this series, it is native to Europe and Asia, with a range stretching from the Nordic countries in the north to Egypt in the south, and from Ireland in the west all the way to China. It was first observed in the United States in 1878 in New Jersey, so it is possible that it had been growing for a number of years before it was identified. Today, it is found in the Northeast and Midwest (it is particularly widespread in Minnesota), and in many western states. As with other thistles, its distribution in Maryland is not consistently reported, but unlike the others we’ve highlighted, the University of Georgia-based EDDMapS.org reports a greater presence for plumeless thistle than the Maryland Biodiversity Project. The former documents the species in 12 Maryland counties; the latter, just five. See the map at right.

What is it?

Plumeless thistle (*Carduus acanthoides*) can be confused with and found with other thistles, as several species tend to colonize similar areas. The plumeless thistle can be found in former agricultural land, roadway rights-of-way, pastures, and edge habitats at the margins of woodlands. It prefers open locations with full sun.

How does it spread?

This invasive spreads primarily via seed production and by the wind. The number of seedheads per plant will vary by location. A single stalk will usually have a single flower, but sometimes will have two or more under the best growing conditions. Each flowering plant can distribute up to 10,000 seeds per season that will be distributed by the wind. Additionally, seeds may be viable in the soil for over ten years.

How can I identify it?

Musk thistle is an invasive biennial plant that grows to maturity over the course of two years. In the first year, it grows as a basal rosette, with leaves spreading up to two feet in



Plumeless Thistle. Photo by Steven Katovich, Bugwood.org

diameter. In the second year, a vertical spike grows from the center of the rosette, branching into one or more heavily-spined stalks that can reach 6 feet in height by mid-summer. Leaves are long and narrow with deeply -incised sinuses that reach close to the midrib. Each lobe has spikes on the end, but the top of the leaf is smooth and waxy. Flowers begin to emerge in June and will continue into August or September. The plant and the flowers resemble those of musk thistle, but those of the plumeless thistle are smaller and are a darker shade of purple. Plants that produce more than one stem will have flowers that go to seed at different times

during the growing season, such as in the photo above. The flowers last about a month with seed production and dissemination following. Individual plants die at the end of the second year. See the photo gallery on the next page.

How can I control it?

The key to controlling plumeless thistle is the same as most other thistles: keep the plant from going to seed. If the rosette stage is prevented from producing a stalk during the second year, the individual plant will die. Vigilance and repeated mowing during the growing season can prevent the stalk from emerging. Young rosettes can also be removed by hand; be sure to remove the entire taproot whenever possible. Chemical applications of herbicides in the fall of

the rosette stage has also been effective. It is important to remember that plumeless thistle seeds can be viable in the soil for up to ten years, so surveying an area that previously had these plants as well as adjacent areas is recommended to prevent further spread.

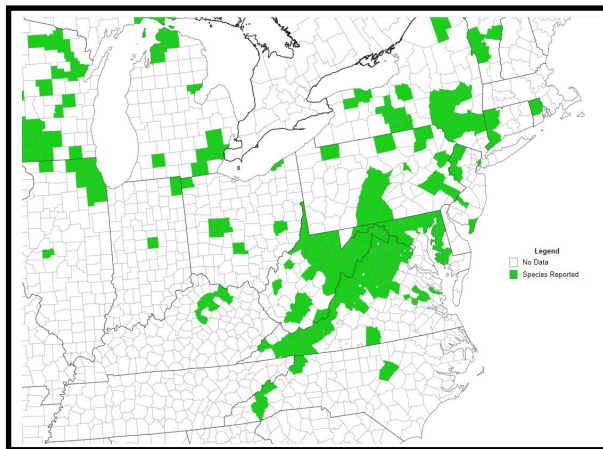
For more information:

Learn more about plumeless thistle:

[Exotic Species: Spiny Plumeless Thistle](#) (National Park Service)

[Invasive Species of Concern in Maryland - Plumeless Thistle](#) (Maryland Invasive Species Council)

[Plumeless Thistle](#) (Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources)



Regional Distribution of Plumeless Thistle.

Courtesy EDDMapS.com.

Image Gallery: Plumeless Thistle

Plumeless thistle rosettes. Photo by Loke T. Kok, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Bugwood.org



Plumeless thistle stems. Photo by Steven Katovich, Bugwood.org



Plumeless thistle blooming in Washington Co., Maryland, 2013. Photo by Jim Stasz, Maryland Biodiversity Project



Plumeless thistle flowers. Photo by Gary L. Piper, Washington State University, Bugwood.org

New Name, Same Results: Spongy Moth

Last year, the Entomological Society of America chose a new name for an old pest of North American woodlands. *Lymantria dispar* should now be referred to as the “spongy moth.” According to Bill Davidson, forest health specialist with the New Hampshire Division of Forests and Lands, “The reason it’s called spongy moth is because of the appearance of the egg masses. They’re just kind of spongy, hairy masses that cover everything.” At this time of year, the caterpillars have finished their defoliating and are pupating into moths. Females lay their distinctive egg masses in June and July in our area, so prepare to survey your woodlands (as well as other structures) for them. Learn how to ensure the eggs don’t hatch next year from our colleagues at the [Home and Garden Information Center](#) and from [Penn State Extension](#).



Photo courtesy Penn State Extension

Learn how to ensure the eggs don’t hatch next year from our colleagues at the [Home and Garden Information Center](#) and from [Penn State Extension](#).

Land Care Management Should Include a Wildfire Plan

While wildfires in the Western US receive a great deal of media attention, wildfires can and do occur in the mid-Atlantic region. If your property includes woodlands, you should ensure that your home and woods are prepared for such events.



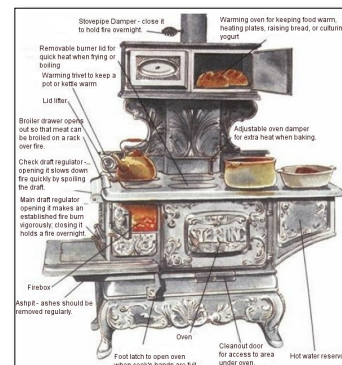
Photo courtesy VDOF

A program called “FireWise” can help landowners recognize potential problem areas on their property. This includes trees and household items that may pose a threat to the home if they were to catch fire. FireWise also recommends ensuring that firefighters have adequate access to your property via roads or trails.

Learn more about [FireWise in Maryland from the DNR Forest Service at this website](#). Virginia residents can learn more about [FireWise through the Virginia Dept. of Forestry’s website here](#).

“A Visual, Schematic History of Wood Heating Technology”

If you have ever wondered when the first chimneys were created, or who invented the first metal wood-fired cook stove, then check out this timeline (and its longer, more detailed partner) from our friends at [Alliance for Green Heat](#).



The short version is available at [this link](#).
The longer, more in-depth timeline is available [here](#).

List Your Land Care Services Business on Our Website



Following the publication of the [Woodland Health Practices Handbook and Assessment Checklist](#) in 2020, and the [Natural Area Management Services webinar series](#) from Fall 2020 through Spring 2022, the Woodland Stewardship Education program now provides businesses an opportunity to become listed on our website. Our [“Natural Area Management Services Providers Directory”](#) is for businesses in Maryland and the neighboring states that provide land care services such as controlling invasive plant species, planting and/or maintaining riparian buffers, small woodlot tree harvesting, and much more.

The online directory enables customers to search for providers based on a dozen different land care practices. To have your business listed, please visit <https://go.umd.edu/GSP-directory> and complete the form found at the “Submission Form” button. Each submission will be reviewed before being included in the directory.

MD-DE Master Logger of the Year: Billy Singleton

Agnes Kedmencz, and Beth Hill (Maryland Forests Association)

Billy Singleton, a self-driven young logger based out of Wicomico County, Maryland, is most deserving of the Logger of the Year award. He started his career as a Maryland Licensed Tree Expert, saw an opportunity in logging, and fell in love with the profession. He has been working in the woods as a logger since 2014 and has been an MD-DE Master Logger since 2018.



As the leader of two logging crews, improving himself and his employees is Singleton's most important role. It doesn't take long when talking to him to figure out that having the support of his family is one of the things that he values the most. His brother works alongside him in the woods, and his wife assists with the bookkeeping.

The safety of Singleton's crew is vital. He never lets his men work alone, and when issues arise, he makes sure to point out proper procedures to the entire team. He regularly talks with his crew about safety specifics for new sites. As for PPE, it is essential to him as he sees how much his family cares about his safety. He receives a new hard hat every Father's Day, signed and personalized by his biggest fans, his kids. As he says, not wearing hard hats is just "unprofessional and foolish." That professionalism is also apparent on the ground. Last year, I had the opportunity to visit an active Singleton logging job on Delaware Wildlands. Their goal was to improve wildlife habitat and generate income for the organization. It was apparent how well he worked with Ron Haas, the land manager, to meet his objectives using sustainable forestry practices. Singleton states, "Meeting the landowner's objectives is my top priority, not harvesting a certain amount of timber."

Singleton is familiar with many forest management techniques such as clear-cutting for wildlife habitat improvement, 1st and 2nd thinnings, and select harvests. As a logger on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, one of the biggest challenges is working on wet ground. He has become skilled at creating patterns that minimize ditch crossings. When it comes to tops and slash, he finds these good to run on, so it protects the land and minimizes rutting. You know you are on a Singleton job because of the tidy deck. As he says, "A tidy deck equals a safer crew!" Deck and road placement are important to Singleton; he tries to place them where there will be the least disturbance and

considers visibility from the road. He likes to minimize road debris on county roads and utilizes log truck signs when needed. He follows BMPs by using straw on loose sand roads and mats or stone on wet roads. Finally, he stabilizes his bridge mats with a log on the sides to keep them tight. In the woods, he runs a fully mechanized operation. Chainsaws are needed from time to time, and he uses a modified Stihl saw that he says "provides for safer operation by cutting faster and keeping it from kicking the wrong way." His fleet of equipment, including numerous feller-bunchers, skidders, and knuckleboom loaders, is meticulously maintained in-house. Local shops handle tough welding jobs and engine repairs. Trucking for the operation is all contracted out to MZM. Singleton has strong relationships with fellow loggers, landowners, foresters, and other forest industry professionals. He feels that open lines of communication are critical, noting that he has reached out and received excellent advice from his peers many times.

With the recent closures of mills in the area, finding new markets for his wood has been Singleton's top concern. He had a vision for the future of his business, and knowing that he needed a steady, reliable home for his wood to be sustainable, he began exploring possibilities several years ago. He has partnered with other colleagues to fill that gap. Singleton was a driving force behind Southern Coastal Forest Products, a new post and piling mill that he and his partners recently opened.

Billy Singleton's apparent love for the industry and tenacity have helped him create his own way. We are proud to have him as a Maryland- Delaware Master Logger. He is truly an example of professionalism worthy of recognition.

This Issue's Brain Tickler...

Last issue we challenged you to tell us about this invasive insect. Jason Wojcik correctly identified it as the nymph stage of the Spotted Lanternfly. Congratulations!



For this issue, identify this biennial woodland invasive. Email Andrew Kling at akling1@umd.edu with your answer.



Photo by Steven Katovich, USFS, Bugwood.org

Events Calendar

For more events and information, go to <http://extension.umd.edu/woodland/events>

August 18, 2022, 12 pm - 1 pm

Ask the Alliance - Identify Trees in the Watershed Online

Join Ryan Davis from the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay for this informative webinar as he demonstrates how to identify numerous tree species in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. [To register, visit this link.](#)

August 21 & 28; September 24, 2022

Weed Warrior Workdays Times and locations vary

Join Montgomery County (MD)'s Weed Warriors to help remove and manage invasive plant species in the woodlands of the county's parks. Participation numbers vary and pre-registration is required. Click on the date(s) for more information. [August 21](#): Manor Park Neighborhood Conservation Area; [August 28](#): Glen Hills Local Park; and [September 24](#): Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park.

September 7, 2022, 8:15 am - 1 pm

Urban Tree Summit Online

The eleventh annual Urban Tree Summit kicks off with virtual sessions on September 7, followed by field trip opportunities on September 8, 14, and 15. Arborists, environmental/green industry professionals, designers, housing developers, and interested citizens are invited to learn new techniques and concepts to ensure the survival of trees in our built environment. [Click here for more information.](#)

September 29, 2022, 10 am -12 pm

2022 Wood Heater Slam Online

The fifth Wood Heater Design Challenge from the Alliance for Green Heat will be held via Zoom on September 29th. The 2022 Wood Heater Slam is an opportunity for teams to pitch innovative wood stove ideas to retailers, the public and panels of experts, who will assess whose stove is the most innovative and has the most market potential. Teams who get the most points are eligible for funding to move forward to the competition stage of the 5th Wood Heater Design Challenge. The application form is due August 15. [Click here for more information.](#)

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18330 Keedysville Road
Keedysville, MD 21756-1104
301-432-2767

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Editor Emeritus: Jonathan Kays

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