



Community Forest News

City of Bath, Maine

The Newsletter of the Bath Community Forestry Committee ♦ 1 Oak Grove Ave. ♦ Bath, Maine 04530 ♦ 1-(207)-443-8345 ♦

Autumn- 2012

Forestry Committee Book Review

"When is the best time to plant a tree? Twenty years ago. The second best time? Today" --

Chinese Proverb

Twenty years ago, David Milarch, a northern Michigan nurseryman, had a vision that trees were dying, and without them, human life was in jeopardy. His solution was to clone the champion trees of the world - the largest, the headiest, the ones that had survived millennia and were most resilient to climate change - and create a kind of Noah's ark of tree genetics. Without knowing if his solution had any basis in science, Milarch began his mission of cloning the world's great trees. Many scientists and tree experts told him it couldn't be done, but 20 years later, his team had successfully cloned some of the world's oldest trees-among them giant redwoods and sequoias. They also grew seedlings from the oldest tree in the world, the bristlecone pine known as "Methuselah".

When New York Times journalist Jim Robbins came upon Milarch's story, he was fascinated, but had doubts. Yet over several years, listening to Milarch and talking to scientists, he came to realize that there is so much we do not yet know about trees: how they die, how they communicate, the myriad crucial ways they filter water and air and otherwise support life on

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Bath - A City That Respects Trees

Tree Vandalism on the Rise in U.S.

The two famous oak trees at Auburn University's Toomer's Corner in Alabama were poisoned in 2010 by a disgruntled University of Alabama football fan. A white oak, believed to be the oldest oak in Massachusetts, was burned by vandals in the small town of New Braintree this year. Eight Pennsylvania teenagers destroyed four trees in the Veterans Memorial Park after an underage drinking party to celebrate returning to college. Three students spent three hours chopping down a 40-year old, 70-foot high pine tree at Canyon Country High School near Los Angeles last June. The tree was planted when the school was built in 1972.

What may seem like a prank to start, many tree vandals are now facing counts of felony, arson, and destruction of property. Harvey Updyke, who publicly acknowledged he poisoned the two, 130-year old Auburn oaks, is due to go on trial this month. The charge is first-degree criminal mischief and desecration of a venerated object and unlawful damage of a crop facility," according to an Auburn University spokesman. Updyke poisoned the trees with an herbicide known as Spike 80DF because Auburn beat the Alabama Crimson in the Iron Bowl in 2010, the year the trees were poisoned. Updyke is pleading not guilty due to mental disease.

Ted Hendrick has a passion for history and old trees. He is now 89 years old and the tree he loved so passionately was burned in August, 2012. The white oak, which is believed to be the oldest white oak in the state of Massachusetts, survived years of lightning strikes, gypsy moth invasions, and, recently, old age. According to the Associated Press, the tree had a 20-foot circumference in 2000, was 100 feet tall and had a 100-foot canopy, which collapsed with the fire. There is a \$5,000 reward leading to the prosecution of the perpetrators.

In the small Pennsylvania town of Marple, the town's tree commission had spent the last three years planting saplings throughout the community, nurturing them, and watering. In a few short hours, eight teenage boys destroyed four trees and smashed a memorial bench, removed many U.S. flags, and 43 posts of the fence that lines the Veterans Memorial Park in Marple. The teenagers were cited with disorderly conduct and will owe upwards of \$15,000 in damages and hours of community service.

Police are calling the cutting down of a sentimental tree a case of felony vandalism. When students and faculty arrived at the Canyon Country H.S. they

found their beloved 40-year old pine tree dropped to the ground. Video cameras on the school campus show three hooded figures spending hours cutting down the tree. People were stunned and called it a "heinous" crime. One elderly man was heard to say, "What is impossible to measure is what matters most: the magnificence of that tree."

With all the negative news, also comes good news. Public awareness has skyrocketed and citizens are responding to the senseless killing of trees. Seattle, WA implemented a three-fold program to lessen tree vandalism in their city: 1) use physical countermeasures (tree barriers); 2) develop maximum public sup-



New Braintree centuries old white oak before arsonists destroyed tree in 2012. *Photo from Archives of MA Oldest Trees*



One of the famous Toomer's Corner oak trees poisoned in 2010 after pruning in August, 2012. *Photo courtesy of Auburn Alumni Association*

JOIN US AT OUR NEXT MEETING!

The Bath Community Forestry Committee meets the second Wednesday of the month, September-June from 7:00 - 9:00 P.M. in the Bath City Hall. The public is welcome. We meet in the second floor conference room. For more information, call 443-8345. See us at www.bathforestry.com

TREES AROUND BATH—American chestnut

Pre-1900, the American chestnut tree was the most important food and timber tree in the Eastern hardwood forest. It numbered in the billions on the East Coast, and its sweet nuts were consumed avidly by animals and humans alike. The light, durable, rot-resistant wood was highly prized by builders and craftsmen for interiors, fences, furniture, and caskets. Chestnut blight (a fungus bark disease), imported from Japan, destroyed virtually all mature trees throughout the eastern U.S. by 1930. In the 1950's, James Carpenter of Salem, Ohio and Dr. Robert T. Dunstan of Greensboro, NC collaborated on developing a blight resistant chestnut. Carpenter inoculated a healthy chestnut on his property with the blight spores over the years. The tree stood strong and failed to induce infection. Dunstan grafted the scions (cuttings) onto chestnut rootstock and the trees grew well. He cross-pollinated the American grafts with three Chinese chestnuts—*Nanking*, *Meiling*, and *Kuling*. Another experiment, which splices the American chestnut with a Chinese version, also seems to be gaining ground in the reclamation efforts. The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) has planted 100,000 trees across 19 states since 2006 with the first nut crops expected this year.

The American chestnut is a rapidly growing tree with a trunk that divides into 3-4 large limbs. While some chestnuts reached 140 feet in height years ago, the average height today is 60-70 feet. Leaves are long and narrow with sharp teeth and smooth surfaces. In July, pale, male flowers in slender spikes develop near twig tips. In September, large, bright green, spiny capsules form where the spikes once resided. When the fruit ripens, the seed pod falls to the ground sometime in October producing a dark brown nut between 3/4—1 inch in diameter. The bark on a young tree is brown and turns gray as it ages and develops deep furrows. This diverse tree provides a gala of changing events.

The 2012 Maine TACF annual restoration event was held in West Bath at Larry Totten's homestead where he has a large American chestnut breeding orchard. Further information about the American chestnut can be found at chestnut@acf.org which is the headquarters of TACF in Asheville, NC. An American chestnut tree resides behind the Cemetery Office at 1 Oak Grove Avenue (pictured at the right in full bloom). All the chestnuts had fallen by October 12.



American chestnut—*Castanea dentata* (Marsh.) Borkh.



Scientific classification

Kingdom:	Plantae
Order:	Fagales
Family:	Fagaceae
Genus:	<i>Castanea</i>
Species:	<i>Castanea dentata</i>
Common name:	American chestnut

Maine Forest Service's Summary of Pests & Diseases for 2012

In their fifth edition report on insects and disease conditions in Maine this summer, the Maine Forest Service (MFS) sees rising numbers of insects moving into Maine and a higher rate of certain diseases. To curb some imports, the MFS has diligently quarantined incoming firewood faced with the reality of the emerald ash borer, brown spruce longhorned beetles, and oak wilt.

ELONGATED HEMLOCK SCALE (*Fiorinia externa*)-The EHS has been reported in Hancock and Scarborough Counties. The **HEMLOCK WOOLLY ADELGID** (*Adelges tsugae*) was also found in close proximity to the scale. It has been documented that these two insects combine to cause an even more rapid decline of the hemlock trees. The hemlock scale is not only damaging to hemlock, but also to other conifers such as spruce and fir.

EMERALD ASH BORER-The emerald ash borer has already spread through Connecticut. The MFS monitored 955 large, purple traps located in ash trees throughout Maine and by mid-September, when the traps were removed, the EAB had not been detected. However, the alarming statistic in September was that the insect had

reached Dalton in the Berkshires in Western Massachusetts, showing that it is only a matter of time before it reaches Maine. The Maine Forest Service does not see much hope in stopping this invasion. The destruction will be rampant.

DUTCH ELM DISEASE (*Ophiostoma ulmi*)-DED has been in Maine for over 50 years, but 2012 has been more devastating than recent years. Much of the mortality has occurred on trees smaller than 12 inches in diameter, which are now the majority of the elm population in Maine.

PITCH PINE SHOOT TIP DAMAGE (*Diplodia pinea*; *Rhyacionia buoliana*)-Pitch pines in Phippsburg continue to be damaged by the European pine tip moth and *Diplodia* tip blight. Both pests, along with other needle diseases, have been at high levels for several consecutive years. The *Diplodia* blight pathogen infects needles early in the season when new needles begin to break from their protective sheaths. Since many heavily damaged trees occur in the shoreland zone, it is difficult to make chemical applications. Pruning can help slow or mitigate the damage and chemical treatment can be done in appropriate situations away from waterways.

Hardwood defoliators have shown significant increase including the **FALL WEBWORM** (*Hyphantria cunea*), the **HICKORY TUSsock Moth** (*Lophocampa caryae*), and the **SADDLED PROMINENT** complex of defoliating native caterpillars. While most of these insects cause mild damage because they feed or hatch late in the season, they can cause irritating rashes on humans and make trees aesthetically unappealing. The Fall Webworm is commonly found on ash, apple, cherry and birch trees. The Hickory Tussock Moth ravages leaves on birches, basswood, and black locust. The Saddled Prominent caterpillars devour maple and oak leaves and most Maine hardwoods. If you find any of the above mentioned insects or diseases contact www.maineforests.gov/conditionsreportindex.htm.



Geraldine Coombs Makes Way for a "Younger Generation"

Geraldine Coombs has been a champion of Bath's trees for 20 years as a member of the BCFC. "Her knowledge of Bath's trees is that of a learned professor in any classroom across the state," said Beth Haskell, a member of the Committee. "She is a true caretaker of our trees and the urban forest we are so fortunate to have here in Bath."

Ms. Coombs gives much of the credit for the Committee's formation and success to Denis Hebert, the former director of Cemeteries and Parks. Bath residents, as well as many visitors, recognize that second to being a City of Ships, Bath is also a City of Trees. Bath has earned the National Arbor Day Foundation's Tree City USA award for 15 straight years.

Gerry, as she is known around town, is quick to recognize the value of having a city arborist oversee the health and welfare of trees in a community. Without Tom Hoerth and the BCFC, we wouldn't be where we are today, she said. And it is because of Gerry's diligent handling of the Tree City USA application each year, that Bath is continually recognized for its forestry achievements, said Haskell.

"If we didn't have a forestry committee, I'm not sure who would tend to this. We probably wouldn't be planting trees," Ms. Coombs told the Times Record recently. "You guided the Committee through its initial years establishing the high standards under which it would operate. You continued with introduction and implementation of significant projects including the Butler Head Project in conjunction with the schools, and the revival and continuing care of Druid Park. Your experience as a teacher has been put to good use in disseminating the importance of the urban forest to school children and the general public," said Tom Barrington in a statement upon Ms. Coombs' retirement from the BCFC.

She has been and will always be one of my greatest mentors, Tom Hoerth told members of the International Society of Arboriculture conference in Bath last October. "The one saving grace, is that Gerry will never be far away when we need advice," said Haskell lamenting her departure.



Geraldine Coombs has been associated with the Bath Community Forestry Committee for 20 years and is highly respected for her knowledge of Bath's trees and topography. Ms. Coombs is retiring from the BCFC to make way for the "younger generation", but will continue maintaining Druid Park. "Gerry" is seen here with Tom Hoerth, City Arborist, at this year's Citizen Involvement Day in Waterfront Park.

Invasive Bittersweet Chokes Forests & Ocean Hedgerows

Threat to Native Habitats

Asiatic bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculata*) is causing serious problems in many Maine coastal and island communities, including Bath. The choking vine is found on lower Washington St. as well as in and around Bath's neighborhood parks and trails. The most important factor in controlling invasive bittersweet is to find it early before it establishes a foothold. Asiatic bittersweet is aggressive and twines around trees and low-lying shrubs for support. It is a deciduous vine with round, hairless, light to dark brown branches. Leaves vary in shape, but are usually oval, with a pointed tip and alternate along the branches. Yellow-greenish flower clusters form between the leaves and the stem at the joint and pea-sized capsules contain the fruits. When the fruit is ripe, the capsule splits revealing a bright orange-red berry. Asiatic bittersweet closely resembles American bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*), but the cluster of flowers on the American variety will be found at the end of the stems and not in the joints.

Control

Controlling the spread of bittersweet is possible, especially early in its growth. Small patches can be hand-pulled, but every root must

be pulled leaving nothing behind to regrow. Low patches have been successfully removed by cutting the vine and treating the regrowth with a triclopyr or glyphosate. The plant has a substantial seedbank, and complete eradication may depend on repeating control methods for many years. The primary spreaders of the bittersweet seeds are birds and the disposal of the ornamental vine by humans in landfills and compost piles. The commercial value of the vine is seen during the harvest when stores, nurseries, and florists sell the colorful vine in wreaths and festive arrangements. Complete information and directions for treatment can be found at the University of Maine's Cooperative Extension website at www.extension.umaine.edu or call the Dept. of Conservation at 287-8044 in Augusta.



Coombs Named Bath's Citizen of the Year for 2012

Every year at Citizen Involvement Day, Bath recognizes and showcases those volunteers who have gone above and beyond in making Bath a better place to live and work.

With a quick blush and a "I don't deserve this" exclamation, Geraldine Coombs received the coveted 2012 Citizen of the Year award in Waterfront Park on October 6. Ms. Coombs accepted the award from David Sinclair, City Council chairman, who acknowledged her 20 years of service to the Bath Community Forestry Committee, not only as a volunteer, but also as one of the founders and past chairpersons.

Citizen Involvement Day was the brainchild of Al Smith, longtime Community Development Director for Bath. Smith felt it was highly important for citizens to recognize the value of non-profit organizations and the people who make them work. "It's an event for all non-profit's to be in one place at one time," said Jennifer Geiger, the director of Maine Street Bath.

"Gerry" epitomizes the character of a great volunteer who devotes time, money, and energy to making Bath an exceptional community, said Al Smith. She reminds me of a "miniature" Eleanor Roosevelt, he added with a smile. They both exude wisdom and knowledge.

Vandalism-cont'd from page 1

borhood situations; and 3) reinforce a sense of ownership that will become a dramatic deterrent to vandalism.

Bath already prides itself for the many beautiful trees within its borders and for the work of its City Arborist, Tom Hoerth, who oversees the health and well-being of those trees. Because of Hoerth's involvement in the education of the City's youth through various programs, like the Butler Head maple syrup project, the Central Maine Power tree planting program with middle school children, and the compiling of a tree inventory list with high school students, Bath is fortunate to have little tree vandalism. The Bath Community Forestry Committee, the City Arborist, and the Parks and Recreation Department spend many hours involving citizens, students, and businesses in the protection and care of Bath's trees.

New Maine Resource Agency

The departments of Agriculture and Conservation merged last August to form the new **Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry**. The new department, effective in 2012, will have 732 full-time and seasonal employees with a budget of \$96.5 million. The department will be divided into seven divisions: Agriculture Resource Development; Forestry; Parks & Public Lands; Quality Assurance and Regulations; Animal and Plant Health; Geology and Natural Areas; and Land Use Planning, Permitting and Compliance.

The agency's primary goal will be to focus on the best use and development of the state's extensive land-based natural resources according to the new legislation outlined earlier this year with input from large business stakeholders, agricultural, conservation, recreational constituents and the public.

Book -cont'd from page 1

Earth. It became clear that as the planet changes, trees and forests are essential to the Earth's survival.

"*The Man Who Planted Trees*" is both a fascinating investigation into the world of trees and the inspiring story of one man's quest to help save the planet. This book's hopeful message of what one man can accomplish against all odds is also a lesson about how each of us has the ability to make a difference.

Mary Earl Rogers

The Man Who Planted Trees: Lost Groves, Champion Trees, and an Urgent Plan to Save the Planet
by Jim Robbins

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!****Autumn 2012 Workshops & Upcoming Events**

October 23, 2012 7:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

GrowSmart Maine Summit-2012 at Augusta Civic Center

Keynote speaker will be Bruce Katz of the Brookings Institute to discuss "Charting Maine's Future", both educationally and economically. For full details go to <http://growsmartmaine.org/summit>.

October 27, 2012 4:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Viles Arboretum, 153 Hospital St., Augusta, ME

Halloween Party with the Headless Horseman, pumpkin carving, and music w/"Twisted Strings". Call 636-7989 for more information. \$3 admission fee.

October 25, 2012 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. Lecture

October 28, 2012 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Field Trip

Kennebec Estuary Land Trust (KELT) - Working Landscapes: Forests. Kevin Doran, Maine Forest Service, will discuss ecosystem benefits of forests and forest lands. Field trip will be in Woolwich. Lecture will be at Maine Maritime Museum in Bath.

Register at info@kennebecestuary.org.

November 3, 2012 1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.

Maine Audubon Society, Falmouth, ME

Fall Tree I.D. Workshop - Join Steve Sader of the University of Maine for an identification lesson of hardwoods, conifers, and shrubs at Fields Pond. Advance registration is necessary. For more information go to fieldspond@maineaudubon.org or call Holly Twining at 989-2591.

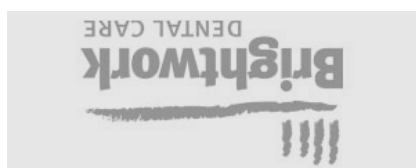
November 2-9, 2012

Bath Community Forestry Committee Photography Contest

Deadline is Nov. 2-All entries must be received at 1 Oak Grove Ave. in Bath or e-mailed to thoerth@cityofbath.com.

Judging is Nov. 9 at 4:00 p.m. Award ceremony at Patten Free Library. Grand prize adult winner will receive a 2-inch caliper tree from Skillins Greenhouse. Grand prize student winner will receive a rhododendron from York's Rhododendrons. Second, third, and fourth prizes are also awarded. Digital photos MOST welcome!

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