

CFA NEWS



The Newsletter of the Catskill Forest Association, Inc.
Volumes 29 & 30, Numbers 3 & 4 - Summer-Fall 2010



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Volumes 29 & 30, Numbers 3 & 4
Summer & Fall 2010

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Subscriptions: *CFA News* is mailed quarterly to members of the Catskill Forest Association. If you are interested in joining CFA, give us a call, visit our office or fill out and mail in the form on the back cover of this publication. Contact information is located above. Please submit address changes to Michele at the address above.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!

For a CURRENT listing of CFA's
EVENTS you must visit CFA's
Website!

www.catskillforest.org

Cover Photo: A Black Bear climbing to the top of a tree to reach wild grapes. Broken branches from past year's attempts? (photo taken by Jim Waters)

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Welcome New Members!!!

April 2010

Evan Elkin & Mia Kim – DeLancey
Charles & Agnes Freas – Margaretville
Bruce Ledda – Denver

June

Ellen Wong – Roxbury
Dungkar Gonpa Society – Lew Beach
Wagner Millwork – Owego
Lyme Adirondack Forest Company – Hanover NH

July

Jonathan Jackson – Livingston Manor
John Shrader – Shandaken
Richard Andreassen - Saugerties
Kathleen & Ted Hayek - Walton
Tunis Lake Property Owners' Assoc. – Andes
Robert Terry – Margaretville
Eduardo Peralta – Fleischmanns
Pierre Levesque & Michele Rittenhouse – Big Indian

August

Michael Kane – Bloomville
Robert Keller – Margaretville
Christopher Kent – ?
Jim & Leslie Botz – Andes
Kevin Tingley – ?
Liz Kemble – Halcottsville
Brendan Weiden – Narrowsburg
Gary Silver – Westkill

September

Andrew Ebenstein – Bovina
Jo Irwin – Delhi
Len Amberger – Margaretville
Chauncey Upson – Chichester
Janice Robinson – Highmount
Scott & Dale Morrison – Phoenicia
Bernard Gallagher – ?

October

Charles Benda -?
G. Foster Mills – Fleischmanns

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Well, it's fall again. Seems like summer goes by way too quickly. CFA has been extremely busy, which may have something to do with the time flying by for Ryan, Michele and me. We saw lots of you at the many workshops we've had and CFA's first annual Catskill Forest Festival. (Mark your calendars for the second one, July 30th, 2011!)

Fall is when many of you are thinking about heating with wood. We have had a workshop and a radio show on the subject. One thing we hope everyone took away from those is: Whether you are ordering your firewood or cutting it yourself, you should be doing it for the 2011-12 heating season....not this 2010-11 one. Burning dry wood is probably the most important aspect of heating with wood.

Also, some of you have existing wood boilers or are thinking of installing one. See page 7 for a summary of the DEC's proposed regulations. The proposed requirements would be difficult & expensive to adhere to. With the limited operating seasons being proposed many rural home owners would have to buy new equipment to heat their hot water. There was one public round of comments and the DEC's Environmental Review Board has decided to table them and hold a new round of public comment before enacting new regulations. Meanwhile, the NY State Senate voted unanimously in favor of legislation that would leave wood boiler regulation to local zoning boards, not the DEC. When the lawmakers return in January many groups will pursue this legislative relief.

I have been involved in many groups looking out for private landowners' rights: Empire State Forest Products Association, NY Council of Forest Resource Owners (Forestry Awareness Day), NY State Biomass Energy Alliance, NY State's Forest Resource Assessment Strategy Stakeholders, New York's Forest Stewardship Committee and Governor's Appointee to the NY Wood Products Development Council. I will continue to work hard for you to protect your rights and make it more economically possible to hang on to and manage your forests. (Sounds like I'm running for office.....without the negative campaign though.)

I certainly hope that you researched the candidate's position on private landowner issues such as taxation; and whether they support your efforts to affordably manage your forest to enable and even help you achieve your goals.

Enjoy the rest of the fall and don't hesitate to call Ryan or me for any advice you may want or information you're lacking.

Naturally,

Jim Waters



Listen to "From the Forest", Wednesday evenings from 6 pm to 7 pm with Jim & Ryan. WIOX FM, Roxbury....Community Radio.



WHAT A DEAL!

Gifts For A New Member:

Package 1 -- Any of the Membership Levels at a 20% discount for the first year.

Package 2 -- Package 1 together with an on-site visit for \$80 (\$20 off the normal rate of \$100) plus the normal mileage fee of \$.50 per mile.

Package 3 -- Packages 1 and 2 together with tree marking at \$40 per acre (\$5 off the normal rate of \$45 per acre) for a maximum of 10 acres.

Gifts For Current Members:

Package 4 -- An on-site visit for \$80 (\$20 off the normal rate of \$100) plus the normal mileage fee of \$.50 per mile.

Package 5 -- Package 4 together with tree marking at \$40 per acre (\$5 off the normal rate of \$45 per acre) for a maximum of 15 acres.

This offer expires on the 1st of August, 2010. All visits and marking appointments need to be scheduled by the 1st of September, 2010, but may be scheduled after that date. Call Michele at (845) 586-3054 to arrange the gift timing. CFA will give you a gift letter or mail it directly to the recipient with a message from you. All gifts must be pre-paid to CFA.





CATSKILL FOREST FESTIVAL!

WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS

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HOSTED BY THE CATSKILL FOREST ASSOCIATION

Thanks to hard work, many sponsors and vendors, the first Annual Catskill Forest Festival was considered a great success! Planning for this event started during the summer of 2009. The weather was perfect, lots of people turned out and we think that everyone had fun.

CFA has begun the planning for next year's Catskill Forest Festival to be held in the same location of Margaretville, on the village grounds and pavilion behind the Fresh Town Supermarket. It will take place on Saturday July 30th in 2011. There are even more activities being planned for next year, including a logging competition, and there will be more vendors.

We hope to see all of you there!



“Pickin’ Berries”

Blueberry season has come and gone once again. This year was *easy pickins* since the fire occurred in the spring of 2008 on the Shawangunk Ridge. Before encountering burned over areas, I used to believe that high-bush blueberry picking was the only way to pick blueberries. High-bush blueberries are known for their abundance, size and ease of picking. Low-bush blueberries are harder to pick since one has to kneel down to get at them. High-bush blueberries are larger since they can tolerate sites that are too wet for other shrubs and trees to compete against them for growing space. As a result, high-bush has plenty of sunlight and can allocate plenty of carbohydrates towards developing large and delicious berries.

On sites where low-bush blueberries grow, a wide variety of shrubs, ferns, herbs and trees can also grow and compete for growing space as conditions change. If disturbance does not occur, species that are disturbance-intolerant such as sugar maple and red maple can invade the site over time. Because of its short stature, low bush blueberry needs plenty of disturbances that eliminate overtopping trees, shrubs, and herbaceous growth. Think forest fire! After the 3,000 acre fire during the spring of 2008, blueberries have been able to usurp much of the growing space. With plenty of sunlight, low-bush can produce abundantly large berries that rival high-bush. In this healthy blueberry environment, low-bush can produce large clusters of berries I refer to as *blueberry heads*. Until I saw these heads, I half-believed the *old-timers* of the area who have picked berries on the mountain. Now I can believe it! I have heard of some berry pickers harvesting over 80 quarts in a single day. These blueberry heads make it easy pickins as one can dunk the heads into the bucket, remove the entire head with one tug and move on.

Blueberry heads do not last forever without human intervention. Just as farmers in the valleys move back succession to bare mineral soil for planting annuals, blueberries too need disturbance frequently. Already seen are competing sweet fern, scrub oak, birch and mountain laurel that will overtop and out-compete the blueberries if not killed off by fire. The berries can bide their time between disturbances by their deep roots and seed storage capabilities. I firmly believe that the encroachment of mountain laurel in the Shawangunks and other fire ecosystems has been a way these ecosystems have enticed humans throughout time to burn

these areas, since walking through them can create claustrophobia for some and high amounts of anxiety for many. Picture a sea of mountain laurel that you have to walk 4 miles through and tell me afterwards on the other side that you too would not dream of burning it. Maybe a better name for mountain laurel should be *fire-starter*, or *burn-me-now*. So, I guess I would rather have blueberries. I can step over them, fill my bucket with berries and chance seeing a deer or bear nearby doing the same.

The disturbance conditions conducive to harvesting 80 quarts per day are long gone, but maybe not impossible to realize in the future. People in this region and throughout the Catskills used to burn mountain sides in order to manage for a dependable source of the delicious blue gold. The fresh flush of vegetation enhanced wildlife habitat by the provision



of food and cover for a variety of species namely those that are dependent on early-successional forest (whip-poor-will; ruffed grouse; woodcock; rabbit etc). Hunting opportunities were also enhanced in return. Today, our passive management practices have helped to promote a forest that is shifting towards a predominantly mature northern hardwood forest consisting of mainly beech, birch and maple. Though this is not bad or good in itself, the mountain is not a good site for these species. The depth to bedrock is shallow, soil is poor and acidic and conditions are harsh. These trees will grow there, but never realize their full potential. On the other hand, it is dynamite blueberry habitat. Not to mention that many early successional species that thrive in areas where blueberries also thrive are drastically disappearing as the forest shifts in maturity and species composition.

Other cultural challenges are present in the landscape as well. The legacy of these human-induced fires over thousands of years has created some very nice view-sheds that have not only attracted some artistic looking pitch pines and blueberries, but also second-homes, vacation spots and housing developments. Burning in these locations will become more difficult in the future as homeowners are less familiar with and tolerant of the practice. In the mean time, go and enjoy this legacy passed on to us to enjoy from many generations of humans who have done the same.

www.catskillforest.org



"DEER MANAGEMENT: MEASURING SUCCESS"

In past articles in *CFA News*, we have covered the impacts from deer on our forests. Deer can have severe impacts on the forest structure and diversity of our forests. Areas that are browsed heavily by deer can result in the elimination and suppression of plant species in the lower canopy stratum of the forest. Herbaceous growth is most severely impacted since these plants reproduce mostly by vegetative means rather than by seed. Shrub layers are usually limited, while regeneration of *deer-palatable* species are also suppressed or eliminated. As a result, our forests end up consisting of one upper canopy stratum that is out of the reach of these herbivores and consisting of only those species that are unpalatable. Species that rely upon a diversity of canopy strata for cover such as most birds are greatly affected, while those that compete with deer for mast crops such as mice for acorns are also affected. Rabbit and grouse that seek cover in these lower canopy strata are more susceptible to predation where cover no longer exists. According to the *Audubon Society*, "these indirect and direct impacts from deer can have ripple effects throughout food chains." Reduction in snails, frogs and salamanders are indirectly affected from deer since light intensity and soil moisture regimes are impacted when a lower canopy stratum is eliminated. Changes in leaf litter towards slower decaying species also is affected by deer over-browsing.

Many people find it hard to believe that deer could have so much impact on our forests. It becomes more believable when one finds out how much the average deer consumes in a year. One deer eats approximately 1 ton or 2,000 pounds of vegetation. This is about 5 pounds per day. However, most of the browse damage occurs in the colder months of the year when other food sources are not available. Winter months from December through March are when most of the impacts occur depending on how severe the weather is. Therefore, if we were to limit this browse to 3 months and 20 does were harvested, 6,000 pounds of forage would be saved. This would in turn help to provide food and cover for many types of wildlife and biodiversity may be able to rebound.

Simply reducing deer density to some value should result in more biodiversity, right? Not necessarily, and as usual, *it depends*. Managers should strive to achieve a healthy carrying capacity. In other words, the population or density of the deer herd should be well supported by the local food source availability. If the local food source availability is higher, then more deer can be supported. Areas that contain good soils located near viable farmland (corn fields, apple orchards etc) should have less impact on adjacent forest land since the deer have a variety of food sources to choose



Deer browse line.

from. Other areas may have widespread thinning operations occurring that allow sunlight to penetrate into the understory which allow abundant regeneration to occur. Regeneration that occurs rapidly may overwhelm the appetites of the deer and provide a lower canopy stratum. Other areas may be fortunate enough to have experienced a forest fire that usually results in a plethora of regeneration offering far more food than the local deer herd requires. On the opposite side of the spectrum would be an area where no disturbance occur allowing little sunlight penetration into the understory for vegetation in the lower stratum to survive. Nearby farms and orchards are missing and further intensify and focus browsing on forest regeneration. Adding to this limited food source condition is the lack of predators, namely humans who seldom harvest does. In this state, deer density continues to hover at carrying capacity. More and more of our forests are experiencing this condition. In this condition, an exceeded carrying capacity is easily recognized. Walking through the forest is an easy chore since vegetation is almost entirely lacking except those unpalatable by deer. Suburban areas and some large preserves are great examples of this. Harri-man State Park is a great example. Again, we are measuring the impacts on abundance and diversity of plant species in the lower strata of the forest. If they are missing or suppressed, carrying capacity has been exceeded.

Whether you are a wildlife enthusiast from Audubon Society, preserve manager working for the State of New York or privately, a manager for timber, or even a berry picker, all parties should be concerned. Forest health and biodiversity are being impacted. Forest managers must balance 3 main components: (1) Deer density; (2) Disturbance regimes; & (3) Competing vegetation.

On Cornell University's Arnot Forest, researchers have had success in balancing these 3 factors. Pre-management conditions included a high population of does on the forest with a high doe to buck ratio. There were no farms near the Arnot Forest so much of the browse pressure would have to be reduced by intense silviculture. Silviculture is applied forest ecology where disturbances are made in the forest in order to meet a variety of forest management goals and objectives. In this case, areas would be cut in order to provide regeneration of tree seedlings, shrubs and herbaceous growth for provision of food and cover. Competing vegetation that might limit diversity would be eliminated. Species



Winter deer pressure.



Deer exclosure demonstrating effect of deer browsing.

such as American beech and New York fern are typical examples of competing vegetation. Lastly, the doe population would be targeted in order to reduce the population to a healthier level where browse level could meet food source availability and plant species abundance and diversity.

In order to reduce the population, Cornell implemented an *Earn-A-Buck* program. Before hunters could harvest a buck, they were first required to harvest a doe. As you can imagine, implementing such a program would demand a full staff to manage not only the deer population, but the human-hunter population as well. Funding for such a program is less of a problem for Cornell, but would serve as a hurdle for most Non-Industrial Private Forest Landowners which New York State's forests mostly include. In any case, the program did successfully reduce the deer herd. Coupled with intense silvicultural practices, species richness and abundance in the understory is rebounding. Species that are highly palatable by deer are becoming more numerous such as sugar maple.

Other areas of the country that are experiencing similar challenges have also successfully reduced the deer herd, while controlling competing vegetation and applying proper silviculture. The USDA Forest Service in northwestern Pennsylvania on the Allegheny National Forest has been intensively managing their forests. Deer populations have been reduced. Before removing the overstory (mature trees) and to release the understory for regeneration, the unpalatable plants that have thrived in an over-browsed condition are first killed with herbicides (New York fern, hay-scented fern, striped



Ryan doing his part. (Most of the deer he harvests are does.)

maple, American beech). Removal of these species prevents them from outcompeting palatable species that have not already had the chance to establish themselves once the overstory is no longer present. The program has seen a considerable rebound in biodiversity with herbs now present in the understory such as red and painted trillium. Ruffed grouse populations and overall bird diversity have also drastically increased among others.

The bottom line is that each area is different. Forests that have experienced long and severe durations of overbrowsing will have to undergo increasingly intense forest management to achieve a wider variety of forest management goals and objectives underlining biodiversity. Forest managers that are successful must balance (1) Deer herd density with (2) When, where and how appropriate silviculture is applied & (3) Competing invasives (deer-unpalatable species). Lastly, (4) Cultural challenges may be the most difficult challenge in achieving forest management goals and objectives and overall biodiversity. How adverse are people to hunting? Is prescribe fire feasible? Is farming viable in the area? How large are parcel sizes and are they accessible and feasible to manage? Are local town and planning boards adverse to tree cutting? Most of these challenges are components of forestry awareness that CFA and its members, forest landowners and private and state natural resource agents must confront in order to be successful.

DEC's Proposed Residential Outdoor Wood Boiler Regulations:

Approved Fuels: seasoned clean wood, wood pellets made from clean wood, heating oil, gas or natural gas as starter fuels for dual fired boilers & non-glossy, non-colored papers only to start the fire.

New OWB —

1. Meet emissions guidelines & have permanent label affixed by manufacturer. (Too technical to talk about here, but it basically means meeting the EPA's Phase II voluntary guidelines.)
2. Min. 100 ft. setback from nearest property line.
3. Min. 18 ft. above ground stack height or DEC may require 2ft. Above any roof structure within 150 ft. of the OWB.

Existing OWB —

1. Effective Oct. 1, 2011 — Min. 18 ft. above ground stack height or DEC may require 2ft. Above any roof structure within 150 ft. of the OWB.
2. No operating of OWB (unless it meets emissions guidelines & is more than 100 ft. from nearest property line; or on contiguous agricultural lands larger than 5 acres and sited 500 ft. or more from the nearest residence not served by that OWB; or 500 ft. or more from a property line that is not on agricultural land & 1,000 ft. or more from a school):

Northern Heating Zone (Delaware, Greene, Otsego & Schoharie) — between June 1st & Aug. 31st.
Southern Heating Zone (Sullivan & Ulster) — between May 15th & Sept. 30th.

CFA TREE SALE!

CFA is again offering RPM (Root Production Method) restoration/conservation grade native hardwood trees. These native hardwoods and shrubs are well known for their extraordinary fast growth, high survivability and earlier seed production. Read more about the advantages of RPM trees and how they are grown at www.rpmecosystems.com



1 yr. old
RPM
grown root-
mass

1 yr. old
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root mass

Fall is a great time to plant!

You can plant trees right up to the time when you can't dig a hole any more. Water them once when you plant them and the fall and spring rains will keep them moist naturally. Their roots will be ready to start putting on growth as soon as the soil thaws out!

**Black Walnut, *Juglans nigra*
Hazelnut, *Corylus Americana*
Apple, *Malus***

We have limited numbers available so call right away. \$35.00 gets you the tree, a 5 ft. tree tube and a nice wooden stake to hold things up.

(Pre-paid orders can be picked up any time. Just place the order and we'll set them somewhere you can get them.)

CALL BETWEEN 9AM AND 4PM
TO ORDER: (No credit cards)
(845) 586-3054



11" diameter potted trees - ready to plant.



CFA went to Stamford's Scare Crow Festival. Pictured is CFA's President, Doug Murphy on right and volunteer member, John Murdock on left. (Thanks to both for helping!)

A CFA On-Site Visit: “From Barren Understories to Rich Habitats”

“Three years ago CFA’s Forester visited my forest and gave me advice. One section of the forest was in bad shape: an old upland field re-grown in all red maple and hay-scented fern. I had received advice from other foresters in previous years. They all hemmed and hawed about that area, as though there was something that they were too uncomfortable to say. In contrast, he explained that the deer had likely eaten all the understory and, if wildlife habitat was my goal, a patch cut was required. I went ahead and made a 1.5 acre patch cut in the month following his visit. The next year I saw one ruffed grouse using the brush piles as cover. Now it’s been two years, and last week I walked into the patch cut and up flew eight (8) ruffed grouse from their dust bath. That’s more grouse that I have seen on the property since I bought it six years ago. The next day I scared up a group of four grouse from the bramble bushes that are now crowding out the ferns with thousands of ripe blackberries. Thanks to this advice I have a thriving little habitat instead of the former fern desert.”

--Barry Gragg, CFA Member



The advantage of working as an *Education Forester* for a private non-profit organization like the Catskill Forest Association is that one can be truly impartial in disseminating and sharing information with landowners. As an *Education Forester*, I have no economic interest in the amount of board feet in timber that is taken off one’s property. Also, since I do not work for the government (as I have in the past), I am more at liberty to speak for my opinions instead of for those that conform to the policies of a larger organization or corporation. CFA’s only interest is in creating healthier forests in the 6 counties of the Catskill Region. This is not to say that Foresters who work privately or for the government are not doing a great job, only that CFA offers another viewpoint, which in similarity to diverse forest management, adds diversity to discussion creating healthier outcomes.

With that being said, most natural resource professionals (Foresters, wildlife biologists, deer managers, ecologists etc.) are in agreement that our forests need to be managed better. More specifically, *managed better* means diversity on the landscape level. But since 85% of the land is owned privately in New York State and the average parcel size in the Catskill Region (smaller in the Hudson Valley Region) is sixteen acres or less in places, active management must start small on private lands to achieve many of the key-phrases we hear about in the media that occur in and around a forest. These include *biodiversity, sustainability, local wood products, rich wildlife habitat, self-sufficiency, species richness & abundance, green energy, local biomass etc.* None of these things are really possible if

not achieved at the local level on acreages as little as 5 acres of forested land. It is important that those who do own 3, 5, or 20 acres of forest land make a difference. I commonly hear from a landowner that they only own 5 or so acres. When the survey lines are ignored, these 5-acre forest owners include a significant amount of our forest.

The challenge in managing forest under small parcel sizes is that there are so many, as each parcel is under different ownership. Challenges in accessing each piece of forest becomes more difficult in managing since implementation may (or may not) encompass one single forest stand, but several forest owners. An example of a specific challenge is apparent when one forest owner desires to harvest a stand of mature red oak for income and to regenerate the stand for future red oak seedlings and food & cover for wildlife habitat when the only access for a forest road is through a neighboring property. The challenges can become more difficult under intense local town ordinances dealing with logging operations. Often times the inevitable result of these challenges is a forest that is never actively managed. Although unmanaged forest will still support wildlife and a forest, the diversity in flora & fauna is put in jeopardy since only shade-tolerant plant life is favored.

Larger parcels including ten or more acres are in a better position for active forest management since access is usually better. The example mentioned at the beginning of this article occurred on a parcel of twelve acres in Delaware County. The owner had a typical Catskill forest including a mature stand of red maple, white ash and sugar maple (all shade-tolerant species). The understory included only species unpalatable to deer such as hay-scented and New York fern, striped maple, barberry, and American beech. Using patch clear-cuts and intense thinning enhanced light penetration into the understory where forbs, herbaceous plants and seedlings were able to germinate and overwhelm the hungry deer creating a healthy understory of diverse food & cover. Soon the ruffed grouse returned and the berry picker too with pale-in-hand as blackberries filled in the gaps.

So, whether you have 5, 10 or 15 acres a lot can be done with a small amount of forest. Sometimes cutting is necessary and sometimes an older, mature forest is desired instead. It is more about how your forest fits into the general landscape, adds to its diversity and ultimately creates a more fruitful, diverse and healthier forest. For more information about CFA’s *On-Site Visit Program*, visit www.catskillforest.org. To inquire about CFA’s tree marking program to learn which trees to cut and which to leave, see page 13 in this newsletter.





"Taste From The Forest"

Recipes by Nicole Day

Email: nicole@ediblecatskills.com

Coconut Wild Mushroom Sautée with Ground Venison or Local Grass-Fed Beef

Forage your favorite wild mushroom. For this recipe I prefer **Chicken of the Woods** found locally in Delaware County.

INGREDIENTS:

3 cups of Chicken of the Woods Mushrooms – sliced *
(Remove the tender parts of the mushroom from the base for this recipe and slice in strips. Reserve the base of the mushroom and make into a pureed mushroom broth for soup – can for winter use – delicious! Contact me for further instructions at nicole@ediblecatskills.com.)

2 medium Onions – sliced
2 cloves of Garlic - minced
2 tbsp Olive Oil
¼ cup Dry White Wine
2 tsp Chili Powder – optional/to taste
1/3 cup Coconut Milk
2 tbsp – Maple Syrup
1 tsp Paprika
Salt & Pepper
1-2 cups of Prepared Basmati or Wild Rice
Crushed Red Pepper – to taste
Fresh Italian Parsley – minced

*If you do not have wild mushrooms available button mushrooms taste great with this recipe as well.

METHOD:

Cook your ground venison/beef and rice ahead of time. Mix together, set aside and keep warm. Making sure to add just a little water, coconut milk or olive oil to keep moist.

Heat olive oil in large skillet and add onions and garlic – cook to lightly brown. Add mushrooms and stir, gently add white wine to mixture while stirring – making sure to pick up any of the flavor pieces stuck to the skillet. Cook mushrooms down for about 3-5 minutes depending on thickness, once mushrooms are tender add coconut milk, maple syrup and spices. Cook down to desired consistency.

PLATING:

Place meat and rice mixture on the plate and top with the coconut wild mushroom sauté. Then top it all with fresh minced parsley from your garden & crushed red pepper. Enjoy! I like to have slices of garden fresh tomatoes on the side!

For cooking instructions, edible forest garden design, small catering events, fruit tree pruning - please contact Nicole Day at (845) 586-1154 or email her at nicole@ediblecatskills.com.



Immature yellow variety



Mature yellow variety



Fantastic growth on decaying oak tree

My Acre Was A Seep

by Dr. Michael Kudish, a forest historian



I've been thinking about what my acre, in a valley of the central Catskills, might have looked like two hundred or more years ago before farmers of European descent cleared the forest for crop and pastureland. I wonder how many other CFA members have likewise given thought to what their forested and open lands may have looked like prior to settlement.

My acre is now half-open, half-wooded. The lower half is open: partly a lawn, mowed regularly, and partly a pasture which had been left on its own by previous owners for about a half-century. The pasture is dominated by three species of goldenrod which are doing their job of keeping out most of the potential tree reproduction.

The upper half is young forest, about a half-century in age, dominated by shade intolerants such as white ash, red maple, and black cherry. There are a few sugar maple. Chokecherry is scattered in the understory. Goldenrods apparently had not moved in fast enough upon abandonment of the pasture to prevent tree seedlings from moving in here.

The ground cover that has made itself at home under the young trees has given me some insight into what the forest might have looked like before the valley was settled and cleared in the first few decades of

the 19th century. The seed source for these plants is not very far away. One needs to climb upslope only a few hundred yards to find them growing on sites which were never cleared for pasture and thus still remain in forest. It is the COMBINATION of sixteen particular plant species that has sparked my imagination into landscapes past.

Following is a list of the sixteen species found under the young forest. They are not in any particular sequence, except that the first two are the most abundant. There are additional ground cover species of course, both native (like hay-scented and intermediate wood ferns) and some European invasives.

1. White snakeroot, *Eupatorium rugosum* (sometimes called *Eupatorium urticaefolium*).
2. Virginia waterleaf, *Hydrophyllum virginianum*
3. Spotted touch-me-not or jewelweed, *Impatiens capensis*.
4. Foamflower, *Tiarella cordifolia*.
5. Kidneyleaf buttercup, *Ranunculus abortivus*.
6. Wild leek, *Allium tricoccum*.
7. Red baneberry, *Actaea rubra* (sometimes called *Actaea spicata*).
8. Jack-in-the-pulpit, *Arisaema triphyllum*.

9. Fringed loosestrife, *Steironema ciliatum* (sometimes called *Lysimachia ciliata*, and not the same as the invasive purple loosestrife of an entirely different family).
10. Fragrant or sweet-scented bedstraw, *Galium triflorum*.
11. Fowl manna, or fowl meadow, grass, *Glyceria striata*.
12. Clearweed, *Pilea pumila*.
13. Flat-topped white aster, *Aster umbellatus*.
14. Just outside my acre, under a neighbor's forest, is blue cohosh, *Caulophyllum thalictroides*.
15. A little further upslope is a small population of nettle, *Laportea canadensis*.
16. New this year I found a young plant of virgin's bower, *Clematis virginiana*.

Can I find other places in the Catskills where this combination of ground cover plants exists; on sites that have never been cleared for agricultural purposes? In other words, on sites which have been only selectively logged or are still in first-growth? Of course, and **commonly** so. And what do these sites look like? They look like seeps!

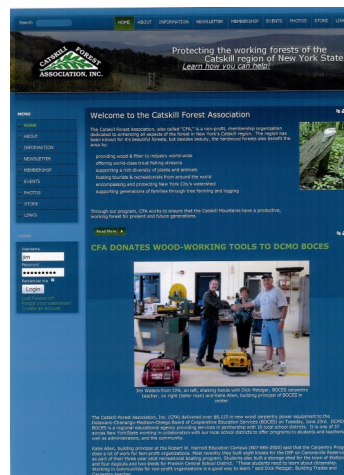
A seep is a site where the water table frequently intersects the surface of the ground. It is wet for at least a portion of the year, usually in the spring, drying out somewhat later in the summer or whenever there is a lengthy drought. The water flows slowly. It does not pond. The soil is thus saturated, but is not impoverished in oxygen over the entire year as is the soil of a bog or fen where the water is nearly stagnant. A seep differs from a spring in that the latter is a point-source for a rill or little brook; the water emerges from underground in a spot a foot or so wide. A seep, in contrast, is where a sheet of water, often tens or even hundreds of feet wide, emerges from underground and flows slowly down the surface.

Fortunately, my seep is not the wettest of them, but is only moderately so. My cellar receives water only after a storm brings precipitation approaching three inches, or two inches along with a heavy snowmelt.

I do not think that the sixteen ground cover species growing together on the half-acre are here just by coincidence. I can never be certain because I was not here two hundred years ago, but I think that the probability that I am living on a seep is high. (I would like to point out that some of these 16 species, on occasion, grow on sites that are not seeps).

Seeps in the Catskills most often provide maximum site indices (i.e., the best growing conditions) for trees. Exceptions are seeps just under the ridgelines above elevations of about 3,000 feet where climatic conditions prevent the best growth. This soil, with its abundant moisture content and still being well-oxygenated, permits a forest of sugar maple to dominate, along with white ash and basswood. If the young forest on your acreage has these ground cover plants, it is an indication of one of the best sites for tree growth.

**NEW CFA WEBSITE: www.catskillforest.org
CHECK IT OUT!**



If you have not received an email with your user ID and password or if you have lost it please send an email to: cfa@catskill.net with the following information:

1. Name
2. e-mail address
3. Home Address
4. Telephone Number

Without this information you will not be able to access the areas open to members only or purchase from the store with the member discount.

Soon we will be posting the Newsletters there and adding more items to the store. We need to crawl a little before we can run.



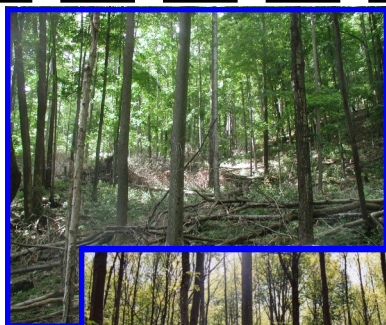
CFA Tree Marking Program!

This is a great way to get an area marked that will provide you and others with firewood as well as improve the health of your forest. You are welcome to join us during the marking to learn how to do it yourself. This could save you money down the road as it will sharpen your understanding of forest management and you will be developing your own tree selection skills. Thinning out the forest will make it more resistant to insects and disease, a better water filter, better wildlife habitat and increase the value of the timber.

WE MARK ALL YEAR-ROUND!!!

DETAILS:

1. You must be a CFA member.
2. An "on-site-visit" fee of \$100 plus mileage will be charged for selecting, designating on the ground the area to be marked, and determining the acreage to be included.
3. After reviewing the forest management plan (if there is one) and taking into account the landowner(s)' objectives, a prescription for that stand will be recommended by the representative and the marking guidelines agreed upon by both the representative, the landowner(s)' forester (if there is one) and the landowner.
4. A maximum of 10 acres will be marked for each landowner in any one calendar year.
5. A fee of \$45 per acre will be charged for the marking.
6. \$15 of this \$45 can be claimed as a tax deductible contribution to CFA, a 501-c-3 not-for-profit organization.
7. The trees marked will be the trees that are considered "crop" trees (These are the trees that are the "keepers".) They will be marked by tree-marking paint at or just below eye height, most of the way around the bole of the tree, and on the stump.
8. It will then be up to the landowner to remove or kill all of the trees without paint. In most cases these trees will not be useful for anything but firewood. There may be an occasional saw-log tree, but unless there are a sufficient number of them, it will not be worth-while to have them delivered to a mill. The goal with this program is to improve the forest by removing the "weed trees". In some cases the trees can be left as fertilizer and wildlife habitat.
9. In the case that the landowner does not want to do the work themselves, a list of professionals will be given to them by CFA to contact in order to have the work done.
10. There is a limited amount of this we can get to, so sign up soon! Fill out the application below and mail it in. We will call to schedule.



A thinning typically removes about 4 to 5 cords per acre. If you had 10 acres marked, that would be about 45 cords of firewood being made available to you! That means that for an on-site fee and somewhere around \$10/cord you would get a rare and valuable educational experience along with the wood marked by a professional forester from CFA.

CFA is holding several special programs in chainsaw safety and use for landowners. (See the Calendar of Events on CFA's web site.)



CFA TREE MARKING APPLICATION

Name _____

Address of Property _____

Email address _____ Date _____

Phone Number and best time to call, where you can be reached during the weekday _____



PO Box 336
Arkville, NY 12406

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I believe in enhancing the quality of the forest land in the Catskill Region through proper forest management.
To that end, I am interested in joining the Catskill Forest Association and supporting its efforts.

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone #: _____ E-mail: _____

Membership Categories (Select the level & if you'd like, make an additional donation):

Membership	\$50 + \$ _____
Contributing	\$75 + \$ _____
Business / Supporting	\$100 + \$ _____
Supporting	\$150 + \$ _____
Sustaining	\$250 + \$ _____
Benefactor	\$750 + \$ _____

Do you own land in the Catskill Region? Yes _____ No _____

Property address: _____

Telephone #: _____ County: _____

Total acres: _____ Forested acres: _____ Pond Y / N Stream Y / N River Y / N

Would you like a CFA forester to come to your property and spend 3 hours walking your forest, making suggestions and giving you impartial and confidential advice? (It just costs \$100 plus our mileage to do so.) Y / N
(If so we will call you to schedule an appointment.)

Amount enclosed \$ _____

All membership dues and donations are fully tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. A copy of the most recent financial statement filed with the New York Department of State is available upon request.