The spring is a great time to stroll along wooded paths and take in the fresh sights and sounds newly released from winter’s grasp. It’s also a great time to look for ways to improve the health of your trees and prevent problems that could appear in the summer. The emerald ash borer and gypsy moth are two potential problems you should learn to identify and manage.

**Emerald Ash Borer**

The emerald ash borer (EAB) was brought to the US in the 1990’s, but wasn’t a problem until 2002 when they were found to be killing ash trees in the Detroit area. The pest has now killed more than 20 million ash trees in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. The EAB was introduced into Maryland when infected ash trees were shipped to a nursery in Prince George’s County. Currently, there is a quarantine of firewood for Prince George’s County, and infected trees have only been reported inside the quarantine area. There is an eradication zone of 13,700 acres in which ash trees are being harvested and ground into pieces less than 1 inch.

The EAB is a metallic green beetle one-third to one-half inch long. Adult beetles can fly and will feed on foliage, but it is the larvae that seriously harm trees. It is only ash trees that are affected. Larvae hatch from eggs laid on the bark and tunnel into the cambium, which is between the tree’s bark and wood. When the larvae make their S-shaped tunnels in the cambium, water and nutrient transport is disrupted. Thus, the tree cannot transport life-sustaining materials to the branches. The canopy begins dying back, and in 1-4 years, the whole tree may be dead.

Although the EAB is only known to be in Prince George’s County, it is good to be familiar with how to identify the EAB and know what to do if you find it. Signs of infestation include:

- D-shaped adult beetle exit holes in bark
- Curvy tunnels under the bark
- Canopy dieback

Infected trees should be removed and ground into pieces less than one inch in diameter. Stumps should be killed to prevent suckers from growing and becoming infested. Should you find evidence of EAB, call the Maryland Department of Agriculture at 410-841-5920. To read the latest news on EAB, go to www.emeraldashborer.info or www.mda.state.md.us/plants-pests/eab/current.php.

**Is there a future for ash trees?**

The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has a plan for storing ash seeds for future planting in case the infestation of the emerald ash borer expands and decimates more of the ash population in the US. They are asking volunteers to collect batches of about 500 healthy seeds from ash trees. Seeds should be collected directly from the tree in late summer when they can easily be removed. If you are interested in helping collect seed, go to www.ashseed.org.

**Gypsy Moth**

The gypsy moth has been called Maryland’s most destructive forest pest. Since 1987, these pests have infested forests throughout the northeast United States. In the

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eastern US, there were over 732,000 acres of defoliation from gypsy moth recorded in 2005. Gypsy moth caterpillars damage trees by feeding on leaves, sometimes leading to extensive defoliation. They usually attack oaks, but will also feed on other deciduous hardwoods mixed with oaks. Infested trees are weakened by the loss of so many leaves, resulting in slower growth and susceptibility to disease. Preventive silvicultural treatments can be used to make trees less susceptible to infestation. This usually involves timber harvesting to remove percentage of the oak trees in the forest area, making it less inviting to the moth. Around homesites, stress can be reduced by watering trees during droughts and fertilizing.

Beginning mid-June, look for large caterpillars on trees and buildings, under decks, and among leaf litter. New egg masses will begin appearing mid-June, but you may be able to spot last year’s masses before then. The egg masses are light brown to off-white, about one to two inches long, and have a fuzzy appearance. Caterpillars molt into moths near the end of June. The female moth does not fly and will remain in areas where caterpillars were found. In August, egg masses will start appearing on wood piles, man-made objects, and where caterpillars were seen. A good source for information about gypsy moth is www.fs.fed.us/ne/morgantown/4557/gmoth.

Controlling gypsy moth

When egg masses are spotted, they should be removed and burned or disposed of in the trash, not just left on the ground where they can still hatch. For larger infestations or where egg mass removal is not practical, approved insecticides such as "Dimilin" and "Gypchek" can be applied to leaves in early May for caterpillar control. This can be done using ground spray equipment around homes, but aerial sprays are used for larger areas. Many counties with large egg mass counts that are bracing for a bad defoliation are considering county spray programs that landowners may be able to participate in, reducing aerial spray costs. Contact the Home and Garden Information Center at 800-342-2507 or www.hgie.umd.edu for control recommendations.


Introducing Nevin Dawson

We are happy to welcome Nevin Dawson as the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension’s new forest stewardship educator. His office is located at the Wye Research and Education Center at Queenstown, Maryland on the Eastern Shore.

After earning a bachelor’s in forestry from Penn State, Nevin went on to earn a master’s degree in forestry from NC State. Nevin’s experience in extension includes working for the USDA Forest Service, as well as the Peace Corps in Senegal, West Africa.

Low-literacy audiences are of special interest to Nevin. He wants to provide materials and services for this “important but often underserved audience,” and help other extension professionals to do the same. Another interest of Nevin’s is the promotion of agroforestry for small farmers. Nevin is currently working to improve the management of community forests created by the Maryland Forest Conservation Act.

If you would like to contact Nevin, email him at ndawson@umd.edu or call 410-827-8056 ext. 125.

MALPF Buys Ag & Forest Land Easements

The Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Foundation (MALPF) was created in 1977 to preserve...
farmland. Since 1980, they have been purchasing easements on agricultural land, preserving over 250,000 acres. Their mission is “to preserve productive agricultural land and woodland in Maryland to provide for the continuing production of food and fiber for the citizens of Maryland.”

Putting an easement on your land means selling the rights to develop the land, although you can still work the land as farm and harvest forest products. Property eligibility is based on the land’s location, size, and soil productivity. The property must be outside of a 10-year water and sewer service area, at least 50 acres (or adjacent to preserved land), and have at least 50% Class I, II, or III soils and/or Woodland Group 1 or 2.

The funding for the purchasing of easements comes from real estate and agricultural transfer taxes, the federal farm and ranch land preservation program, and MALPF’s matching funds program.

In June 2006, 15,530 acres were approved for easement statewide with 32% being wooded acres. Part of the reason for the lower percentage of land with wooded acres is that many forest owners incorrectly assume the MALPF program focuses mainly on agricultural land. In fact, MALPF is very interested in receiving applications from forest landowners, as well as owners of agricultural land. Last year, 70% of applications were funded last year, so if you are interested in selling an easement for your forested land, go ahead and apply! This is a great opportunity for forest landowners. You may receive more money than you expect – easements usually sell for about 70% of the land’s fair market value.

Each county has an Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board. To contact the program administrator in your county and learn more, go to www.malpf.info/PAcontact.html. For more information, you can also visit www.malpf.info or email info@malpf.info.

2007 MFA Logger/Forestry Field Days

Featuring Something for Everyone!
The Maryland Forests Association's 2007 Western Maryland Loggers/Forestry Field Days and Equipment Show will be held on Friday and Saturday, June 8 & 9, at the Garrett County Fairgrounds in McHenry. Among this year's exhibitors will be band saw mills, wood splitters, engines, log trucks, skidders, loaders, chainsaws, feller bunchers and more.

Back by popular demand will be the only SKIDDER PULL COMPETITION in the Mid-Atlantic Region scheduled for Saturday afternoon, June 9th. Professional skidder operators will compete for prize money in four classes to pull a weighted sled. A Game of Logging® Regional Final will be held Saturday morning to pit professional loggers against each other in events that measure skill, accuracy, efficiency and safety.

The two-day event also features educational displays, programs, and demonstrations on many different aspects of forests, forestry and the forest products industry, plus old-fashioned craft exhibits. Family events include presentations of Birds of Prey, Scales and Tales, Allegany College Woodsmen’s Team, Chainsaw Carver Shelly Upole, and Smokey Bear.

Tickets are $5 at the gate with children under 12 admitted free. Exhibitor booths are available. For more information contact the MFA office in Grantsville at 301-895-5369 or e-mail mdforests@hereintown.net. Further details are at mdforests.org/fieldays.htm.

Protecting Your Home from Wildfire

In recent years, forest fires in the western U.S. have received much attention in the media. These fires are awesome spectacles of nature’s raw power. But destructive wildfires can occur throughout the US, including in our state. In fact, over 650 wildfires are ignited in Maryland in an average year, burning over 3,000 acres.

There have been an increasing number of homes built in or near the forest, creating what is known as the “Wildland/Urban Interface.” Homeowners in these areas can implement the following precautions to minimize the chance that their home will be damaged or destroyed by wildfire.

- Remove accumulations of flammable debris and leaves from your roof, gutters, yard, and under or around decks and patios.
- Maintain a fuel break at least 30 feet wide around all structures by removing combustibles such as firewood, picnic tables, easily ignited vegetation, etc.
- Clearly label all roads and intersections leading to your home and have your house number posted with clearly visible 4-inch reflective numerals.
- Space landscape shrubs at least 15 feet apart and remove highly flammable evergreen plants next to the house.
- Dispose of woodstove ashes properly in a metal container, soak with water, and wait three days before dumping.
- Burn debris safely, especially during spring and fall. Follow all open air burning regulations.

For more information contact David Robbins, Maryland DNR Forest Service at 301-791-4010, or email drobbins@dnr.state.md.us.
Changes to Tree Expert Law
If you perform tree care or tree removal as part of your job (except commercial loggers), or are hiring someone for tree care, you should be aware of a recent change.

Senate Bill 123 was signed into Maryland law in April 2006. The law requires that persons performing tree care or removal for hire have a Tree Expert license. To obtain a license, one must qualify under experience requirements or pass an exam. The license must be renewed annually on the first of the year. To register for the exam or for more information, go to www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/programapps/tel.html or call Romcesa Estep at 410-260-8531.

Use Paint along with No Trespassing Signs
Posting conventional no trespassing signs can be an expensive and time-consuming project. A law passed in 1989 makes posting much easier and cheaper by allowing the use of vertical strips of oil-based blue paint as an alternative to signs.

Paint marks must be at least 2 inches wide, 8 inches long, and centered from 3 to 6 feet from the ground or water surface. Make marks close enough that a person standing in front of one mark would be able to see the paint marks to their right and left.

Low-Interest Loans for Rural Projects
The Maryland Agricultural and Resource Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) is now offering low-interest (2% fixed APR) loans to rural entrepreneurs. These loans are to be used for working capital or purchasing equipment, or to finance environment or water-quality enhancement projects. For more information and application forms, please visit www.marbidco.org.

The Woods in Your Backyard
Several workshops are being held for those interested in learning more about the publication, The Woods in Your Backyard. The workshops are held from 7-9 pm and cost $15, which includes the publication and CD. Pre-registration is required
3/28 Salisbury. Contact Hermetta Hudson (410) 651-6206 hohudson@umes.edu.
4/17 La Plata. Contact Pam King (301) 934-5403 pking@umd.edu.
4/19 Boonsboro. Contact Jeff Semler (301) 791-1304 jsemler@umd.edu.
4/26 Grantsville. Contact Willie Lantz (301) 334-6966 wlantz@umd.edu.

Visit our Newly Revised Website!
Have you seen www.naturalresources.umd.edu lately? We’ve redesigned the website to make it easier to find the information you’re looking for. Find information about rural enterprises, upcoming educational courses, managing deer, and more. Check it out!

Publications
Developing a Custom Portable Sawmill Enterprise (NRAES-134) will soon be released. This publication is for rural entrepreneurs seeking information on business planning, financial analysis, etc. $12. www.nraes.org.

The USDA National Agroforestry Center’s Inside Agroforestry newsletter has the latest agroforestry information. The current issue covers biomass potential of perennial woody crops and reducing costs through energy efficient improvements in your farm and home. Find it at www.unl.edu/nac/insideagroforestry.htm.

Upcoming Stewardship Events
March 28 The Woods in Your Backyard workshop, Salisbury. See article on pg. 4.
April 21 Forestry 101: Reforestation, Riparian Forest Buffers and Their Influence on the Health of our Waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. Stronghold Property 8:45am-noon. Contact Terry Poole at tepoole@umd.edu or call 301-631-3577.
April 27, 28, 29 GPS Training for Beginners. Keedysville, MD. Contact Cindy Mason at cmason@umd.edu or 301-432-2767x301 to register.
May 3, 10, 12 Advanced GPS Training. Keedysville, MD. Contact cmason@umd.edu or 301-432-2767x301.
May 5 Forestry 101: Invasive Weed Species Control. Stronghold Property 8:45am-noon. tepoole@umd.edu.
May 17 Forestry 101: The Role of Fire in Forest Management. Frederick County MCE office 6:45-9:00pm. tepoole@umd.edu.

For more details on these and other events, click on the calendar of events link on www.naturalresources.umd.edu