

Missouri Chapter News

Walnut Council: Growing Walnut and Other Fine Hardwoods



A Word from the President:

Bob Ball



Folks ask me “Why should I join Walnut Council?” I respond our membership is a terrific value for those serious about learning how to manage hardwoods. We are fortunate in having so many members who are professional foresters or natural resource specialists, those with careers in

the forest products industry, educators, and landowners with many years of knowledge working in their woods, grasslands, prairies, and wildlife lands. Whether your questions focus on what species to plant and where to purchase planting stock, how to conduct a successful timber harvest or how can we improve the recreational aspects of your woodland, we have members either in Missouri or elsewhere in Walnut Council who can offer their expertise “free” to our members! And, we really enjoy helping others in managing their lands. It’s what we love doing!

However, our Executive Council is confused about why

more members are not taking advantage of our field days, workshops, conferences, newsletters, and technical articles. We believe we are designing interesting and effective learning sessions or articles, but maybe we are missing the mark. The number of members who do not open our emails, read our newsletters, respond to surveys, or attend field days is a little disheartening, but I also know there are so many demands on your time. Your input and suggestions to help make us a more effective organization are always welcome. We want to hear from you!

Earlier this year we began our “**Member Mentors**” initiative. So far, I have a growing list of **mentors**, but only one request for assistance from members. Harlan Palm and myself walked the walnut plantation managed by Bill Allen, Walnut Council life member in Columbia, at the request of his widow, Kathryn. We provided her family with our management recommendations. Landowners needing advice from those maybe more experienced in woodland management really should be taking advantage of this free advice! Members...we can always use more **Mentors** so please volunteer!

Possibly one role of our organization, that we may be understating, is our desire to inform, educate and train our

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RSVP for Fall Field Days!

Friday & Saturday, September 29-30, 2017

Includes trips to the George O. White State Forest Nursery and two privately managed tree farms. Please RSVP to Aaron by September 25th via e-mail (mowalnutcouncil@gmail.com) or phone (913-704-5210). Please include what days you will attend and if you will attend the Friday dinner. Cost is \$10 for members or \$15 for non-members and can be paid at the event. The registration fee includes soft drinks and water both days, doughnuts and lunch prepared on-site Saturday. Note: Friday evening appetizers and dinner are compliments of the Seagren family served at their farm!

Click [here](#) for full details or call 913-704-5210.

Advocacy Committee Formed

By Jim Ball, Chairman

Is it time for Walnut Council to increase its advocacy role? Several members and leaders, past and current at the chapter and council level, believe the answer is a resounding "YES"! With approval by our Executive Committee, an Advocacy Committee was formed and our leadership requested that I serve as Chairman.

The Advocacy Committee of the Missouri Chapter – Walnut Council is a permanent committee made up of volunteer members of the Chapter. The Committee monitors and reviews, develops informed opinions, and educates the membership on key state and federal policies and programs. The committee offers advice and makes formal recommendations to the Executive Committee that may result in official action on behalf of the Chapter.

We all see invasive plant species such as bush honeysuckle, multiflora rose, *Sericea lespedeza*, and autumn olive invading our pastures, road banks and woodlands. Not to be overlooked are the insects, or insect vector diseases, like Thousand Cankers Disease (TCD) or Oak Mortality. We all need to do our part to control this onslaught, but we need more help from both our government (federal, state and local) and the public. The current level of action is going to end in **failure**.

We also see a decrease nationally in general CRP funding and acreage eligibility. Even within this declining scenario, we find that trees appear to be losing their stature. Evidently, trees are less appreciated by our government agencies for their ecological and general environmental benefits than was the case just a few years ago. As one example, in the 2017 CRP signup period, although no general signup was available, prairie practices in Missouri received an allocation of 20,000 acres for Quail Habitat due to the acceptance of this practice as being highly desirable. Trees had "zero" acreage allotted.



Just a couple of years ago trees shared the highest level of bonus points for CRP signup. What happened? Apparently, other interest groups took advantage of the opportunity to advocate their position, while the folks representing trees were silent. These two examples are a sample of a more widespread need for action.

So, what can our chapter do? I believe our role is to identify and prioritize issues, select the appropriate target audiences,

and to determine the best means of delivering our messages. The committee will formulate policy and present recommendations to the Executive Committee for their approval on behalf of the Chapter. Our current members are: Barry Bingham, Dave Boyt, Lori Deimeke, John Kay, Clayton Lee, Glen Riekhof, Aaron Twombly, and Jim Ball. If you are interested in serving or if you have suggestions, please contact Jim Ball at: jrballinvest@yahoo.com or call (816) 225-7486.

More Upcoming Events

September 14, 2017. Forrest Keeling Nursery Fall Field Day, Elsberry, MO, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Focus is on Soil Health with a keynote by Dr. Andrew Neal, Rothamsted Research, U.K. 800-356-2401 or https://www.fknursery.com/index.cfm/fuseaction/calendar.detail/event_id/104/index.htm

September 30, 2017. Missouri Nutgrowers MNGA Pre-harvest meeting at Kevin McGraw property near St. Charles, Mo. <https://www.missourinutgrowers.org/meetings>

October 7, 2017. 11th Annual Missouri Chestnut Roast, Horticulture and Agroforestry Research Center, New Franklin, MO. 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. For more information call Caroline Todd 573-884-2874 or visit: http://www.centerforagroforestry.org/events/ChestnutRoast_2017.pdf

July 28 - August 1, 2018, The Iowa and Wisconsin chapters of the Walnut Council are co-hosting the annual National Walnut Council meeting in Dubuque.

Ten Commandments of Good Forestry

Long time member and past president of Missouri Chapter Walnut Council, Ellen Lebold provided the Chapter with this list of "Charlie's and Ellen's 10 Commandments for good forestry" that are used on their Jen-De-le tree farm at Lawson.

*Sincerely,
Ellen Lebold*

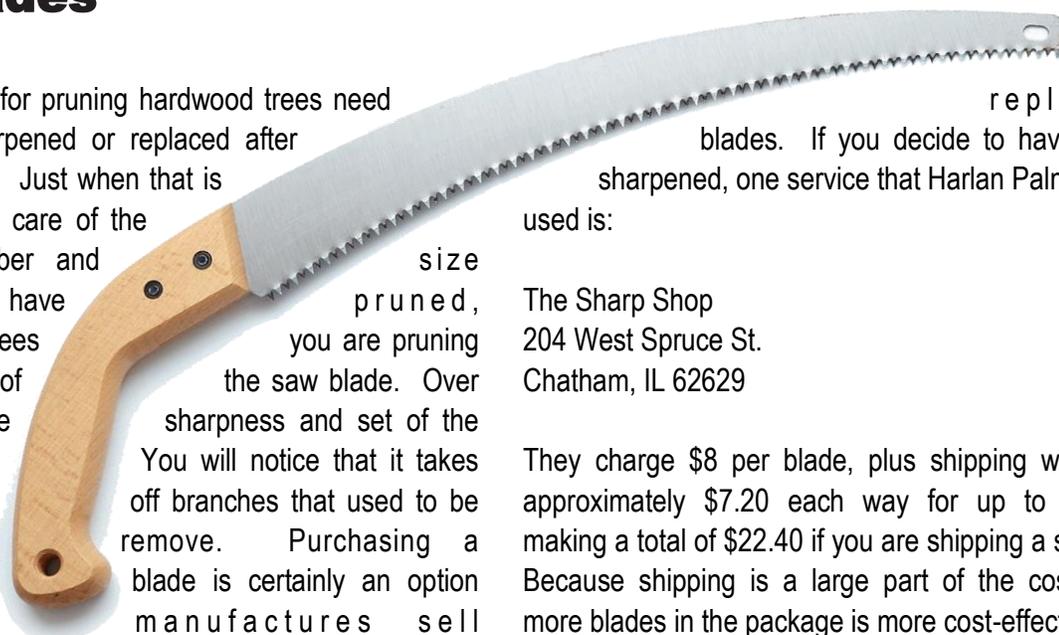
1. Thou shall know thy boundary lines.
2. Thou shall not plant a nut or seedling until thee has taken care of native regeneration and trees.
3. Thou shall diligently fight invasive species.
4. Thou shall prune only crop trees.
5. Thou shall thin when tops interlace.

6. Thou shall attend field days for interaction and information sharing with others who are interested in good forestry.
7. Thou shall use girdling to get rid of unwanted trees. Nature does the rest.
8. Thou shall beware of ticks and dull dirty tools.
9. Thou shall always use state and/or consulting foresters.
10. Thou shall pay thy Walnut Council dues on time.

Sharpening Pruning Saw Blades

By Bob Ball

Pole saw blades for pruning hardwood trees need to either be sharpened or replaced after considerable use. Just when that is depends on your care of the blade, the number and size of limbs you have pruned, the species of trees you are pruning and the quality of the saw blade. Over time, the sharpness and set of the blade diminishes. You will notice that it takes more work to cut off branches that used to be fairly easy to remove. Purchasing a replacement blade is certainly an option and pole saw



replacement blades. If you decide to have the blade sharpened, one service that Harlan Palm and I have used is:

The Sharp Shop
204 West Spruce St.
Chatham, IL 62629

They charge \$8 per blade, plus shipping which will be approximately \$7.20 each way for up to two blades making a total of \$22.40 if you are shipping a single blade. Because shipping is a large part of the cost, including more blades in the package is more cost-effective.

“Shooting a Double”: Managing Oaks for Acorn and Timber Production

By Hank Stelzer, MU Extension – School of Natural Resources

I fondly remember bird hunting with my dad. Clear, crisp autumn days made especially memorable seeing the satisfaction on his face when he “shot a double”, bagging two birds with one shot!



Releasing high-quality oak trees from neighboring trees can lead to an increase in wood volume and acorn production.

Flash forward to just the other day when I encountered a friend of mine, an avid deer hunter, coming back from a day of scouting his woodlands for the upcoming harvest season. His beaming countenance reminded me of my dad.

No. He did not take any deer out of season. His joy came from surveying the acorn crop an oak stand on his property he has been managing the past couple of years. Through his management efforts, he has “shot a double”; growing high-value timber and high-value food for wildlife!

Any landowner can do the same thing. For starters, do not try to do too much too fast. Many folks I know get easily discouraged trying to manage their entire property all at once. Think small and concentrate your effort on those acres of your property better able to respond to management. I am talking about north- and east-facing woodland slopes. On these sites, the soil tends to be deeper, moister, and more fertile. The microclimate is cooler and less stressful on tree growth. The result is potentially bigger trees (more wood) and larger crowns (more acorns).

Oaks are one of the most important and abundant hardwood trees found in Missouri’s forest. Besides producing high-quality wood products, oak acorns (along with nuts from hickory and walnut trees) provide an important food source called hard mast. This hard mast is not only used by deer, but also by wild turkeys, squirrels, and wood ducks. Their widespread occurrence, palatability, nutritional value, and availability during the fall and winter months make acorns an excellent source of needed energy.

Big oak trees with straight trunks are relatively easy for even a novice landowner to identify. But, what about a regular producer of acorns? The only way to know for sure which trees are the best producers is to check the acorn production over three to five years. When walking through your woodland, note the trees that seem to produce in an “off” year. These trees will likely yield the most acorns over the long run. If you do not want to wait three to five years, you can get a rough estimate of the acorn-producing capacity of individual trees by observing in a single year in which there is a good crop.

Nineteen species of oaks are found in Missouri. They are divided into two groups: the red (or black) oak species and the white oak species. Acorns of the red oak group take two growing seasons to mature and are bitter because they are high in tannic acid. White oak acorns are less bitter and mature in one growing season.

The best time to observe and rank trees for their potential acorn production is from mid- to late-August before acorns are consumed by a variety of insects and wildlife. Acorns can be easily seen through binoculars on bright, sunny days when they are silhouetted against the sky. Table 1 provides some general criteria for ranking an individual tree’s acorn production.

Not every oak tree in your woodland stand will be a ‘timber’

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Table 1: Ranking of acorn production potential for individual trees by red and white oak groups. These averages are based on the number of acorns counted on the terminal 24 inches of healthy branches found in the upper third of the tree crown.

Ranking	Average number of acorns per branch	
	White oak group	Red oak group
Excellent	18+	24+
Good	12 -17	16 - 23
Fair	6 – 11	8 - 15
Poor	0 -5	0 - 7

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future generations of woodland landowners. We have the expertise to help our forest resource partners in that regard. Others wear that educator's hat as well, but we can certainly do our part to ensure our forest stewardship ideals are being carried forward for generations to come.

We are launching our **Advocacy Committee** in this issue so look for the article by Jim Ball, Committee Chairman to learn about how you can become involved. We believe this is a tremendous opportunity for individual members and our Chapter to voice concerns and support for numerous natural resource issues and programs. If you have opinions or concerns about the management of our woodland resources, please let Jim or myself know. Empower yourselves to speak out...for the trees!

Be sure to also read about our **Fall Meeting and Field Day** September 29/30 in the Licking-Salem area. This event promises to be unique in many aspects, so look for the RSVP details on page one. This is a central location, so help make this a memorable event by joining us both days.

"Shooting a Double"—Continued from Page 4

tree and a good acorn producer. Sometimes, you will have to make tough choices. That is where the advice of a professional forester comes in handy. He or she can evaluate an individual tree's timber potential and its relationship with other trees in the stand to maintain proper spacing and species diversity. That information, coupled with your mast (acorn) records will help you make the final call as to which trees to keep in the stand.

Once you have identified which trees to keep, the next step is to conduct a 'crop tree release'. This is where you remove neighboring trees to expose the crown of your crop tree to full sunlight on all sides. This thinning facilitates the



Removing competition of neighboring trees provides more sunlight to the crop tree.

expansion and density of branches within the crown. Increasing the density of branches within the crown not

only increases the potential production of acorns, but it also allows the tree to produce more wood at a faster rate.

It is just like what happens when you weed a garden. Removing weeds and smaller tomato plants enables those remaining plants to not only grow bigger, but also produce more tomatoes!

For more information on managing your woodland for timber and wildlife, check out these MU Extension Guides:

MU Guide 9414: Managing oaks for acorn production to benefit wildlife in Missouri.

MU Guide 9415: Integrating woodland and wildlife management practices on your property.

About Missouri Chapter News

Missouri Chapter News is distributed to members of the Missouri Chapter, Walnut Council. The newsletter is intended to keep members informed about timely events while also distributing general information about the management of fine hardwoods. Members are encouraged to provide feedback about this outreach approach and suggest topics for future issues. Comments and suggestions can be emailed to [Aaron Twombly](mailto:Aaron.Twombly), Chapter Secretary. During the year we will also distribute "technical articles" on specific topics of interest to woodland landowners. Both the newsletters and technical articles will be archived at our [chapter website](#).