

# Missouri Chapter News

Walnut Council: Growing Walnut and Other Fine Hardwoods



## A Word from the President:

### Bob Ball



Our chapter co-sponsored the "Missouri Woodland Conference" held April 4/5 at Missouri Farm Bureau headquarters in Jefferson City. Forty of our members attended, and we had 105 people register for this highly informative event. I am glad so many of you took advantage of that great

learning opportunity!

The meeting room was packed with woodland experts, so no landowner should have returned home without all their questions asked and answered! Plus, there were five exhibitors: Forest and Woodland Association of Missouri, Grow Native, Missouri Department of Agriculture, Walnut Council, the Missouri Nut Growers Association, and the University of Missouri Center of Agroforestry. This conference would not have been possible without the

support of all co-sponsors: Missouri Farm Bureau, Forest and Woodland Association of Missouri, Missouri Tree Farm Committee, the Missouri Nut Growers Association, and Walnut Council. The sponsors received great exposure to an interesting group of woodland landowners who were maybe a little unsure what we all had in common when it



Members David Watson and Hank Stelzer talking on "Forestry Taxes and Timber Tax Basis" at the Woodland Conference.



Carol Davit, Executive Director, Missouri Prairie Foundation, at the "Grow Native" display with Mike Hoffmann, Executive Director, manning the Forest and Woodland Association of Missouri exhibit.

comes to managing trees. The exposure was good for all. Read my article in the May issue of "Green Horizons" for more specifics about the conference. You can also visit our chapter website to view the agenda and the PowerPoint presentations used by the speakers during the conference: <http://www.walnutcouncil.org/state-chapters/missouri.html>

Walnut Council members have even more learning opportunities coming up in June: the Walnut Council annual meeting June 11-14 combined with the TCD Research Meeting June 13-15 both being held at the Courtyard by Marriott, Lafayette, Indiana. The announcement was distributed earlier and it is posted at the Walnut Council website: <http://www.walnutcouncil.org>

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# Veneer Log Lengths

A common question at Chapter field days is "How high should I be pruning my Walnut trees"? Below is guidance from long-time consulting forester Fred Crouse.

A minimum log length for an A grade veneer log is about 8'6". The 6 inches is trim and is variable. Some buyers will take the log if there is only 3 inches of trim, one I know wants 7 inches of trim, so the 6 inches I am quoting is the more general trim length. About the maximum log length that mills can handle is 12 feet. Europe and Asia have their slicers at the mills on a 4 meter length (a little over 12 feet). I know that the veneer plants in KC and St. Joe back until the around the 80's had 17 foot slicers. Guess the world market figured there just was not that much of a demand for the longer lengths.

So if you are going to prune your trees for the maximum dollar, shoot for a 12'6" height. If you are going to prune higher, prune at least another 8'6". Even though that second log is not technically an A grade veneer log it will sell for a lot more than a lumber grade log. Usually, that second log, even if clear to the core, will bring half or two thirds of the value per board foot that a butt log will produce. If you want to get crazy with your pruning, prune that second log so that a 12'6" log will be possible.

The longer logs demand a higher value than an 8' log. I usually figure that a 12' log will bring an extra dollar per board foot more than the 8'.

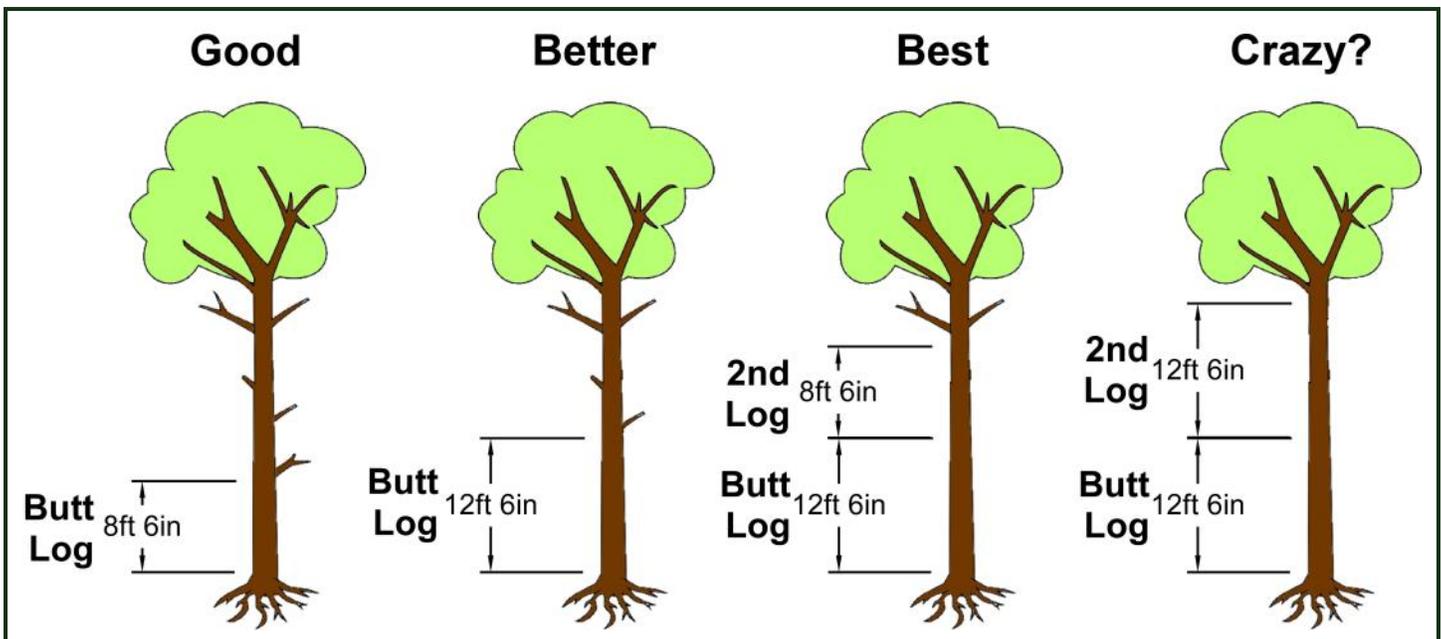
Mills will slice shorter logs (less than 8') but the price per board foot is low and in the past few years, the demand for lumber has been higher than for short veneer logs so a lot of them were turned into board or planks and the logs brought about the same, maybe a little more, than their veneer grade value.

But who knows what the markets will be like in 20 or 30 years but we know what it is now and that is what we have to work with.

## The Value of a DBH Tape

*By Scott Brundage, Consulting Forester*

Most forest landowners do not thin their woods enough in order to reduce the competition thereby enabling the faster growth of their more valuable trees. For example, a veneer quality, large walnut log can be worth \$10.00 a board foot or more. A common or typical honey locust, elm, boxelder, river birch, most hickories, and ash bring 6 cents to 8 cents on average per board foot. How can a landowner justify having one of these species crowding out a potentially quality walnut or white oak tree, for example. The best walnut tree I sold brought almost \$10,000.00 on the stump, and I have sold several



Selecting a height to prune your veneer Walnut trees does not have a perfect answer and will vary from tree to tree. The above four examples show some ideal sizes when targeting veneer lengths.

white oak trees for over \$1,000.00 on the stump. The best honey locust, elm, boxelder, or river birch I have sold brought less than \$20.00 on the stump.

The easiest way to thin/release your best (most valuable trees) is to know how fast they are growing. The easiest/best way to determine growth is to use a Diameter Breast Height (D.B.H.) tape. The cheapest tape I have found is the Stanley 10 ft. tape which also has a diameter tape on the back side of the tape, for which I paid under \$8.00. My Forestry Supplies Catalog has D.B.H. tapes from \$87.95 to

\$38.25. Add tax and shipping and those get expensive quickly. I spray a D.B.H. line on my tree at 4.5 feet above average ground level and a Tree Number so I can measure exactly the same place each year.

Sometimes I release a good tree (usually a walnut or white oak) by eliminating another walnut or white oak growing nearby, and I then want to know which one is growing the fastest.

A cheap D.B.H. Tape is "money well spent."

## Book Review—The Hidden Life of Trees:

### What They Feel, How They Communicate—Discoveries from a Secret World

*This book review was written by Barry Bingham, a member of the Missouri Chapter of the Walnut Council. His family owns a walnut plantation in Tennessee.*

This fascinating book will give you a deeper understanding and appreciation of trees the next time you walk in a forest or study trees that you may be growing.

Peter Wohlleben writes that a forest is a social network, and in many ways, mimics the lives of human families. Based on his observations and research, trees communicate using electrical impulses and a sense of smell and taste. Tree parents live together with their children, communicate with them, support them as they grow, share nutrients with those who are sick or struggling, and even warn each other of impending dangers. They take communal action against pests.

A single tree is not a forest. On its own, a tree cannot establish a consistent local climate. It is at the mercy of wind and weather. But together, many trees create an ecosystem that moderate extremes of heat and cold, stores a great deal of water, and generates humidity. In this protected environment, trees can live to be very old.

Trees warn each other through chemical signals sent through the fungal networks around their root tips. These fungi operate like fiber-optic Internet cables. Over centuries, a single fungus can cover many square miles and network an entire forest. Electrical impulses travel from tree to tree at the speed of a third of an inch per

second. Once alerted, oaks, for example, can pump tannins through their veins to ward off insects detrimental to the oak. Trees also communicate by means of olfactory as we note when trees are in bloom in the spring. They use scent to communicate.

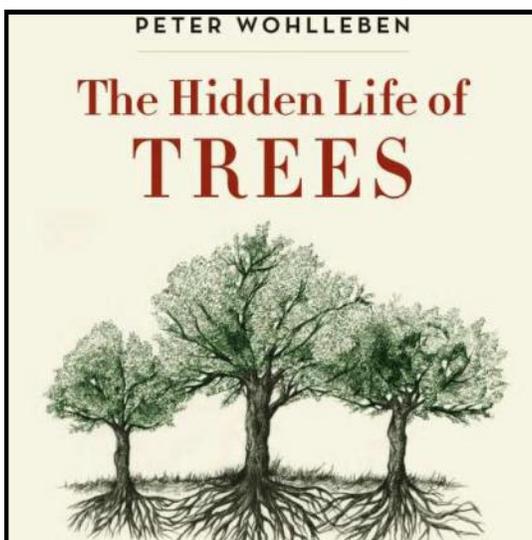
Mature, parent trees nourish their children (seedlings) through their roots and the fungal networks. Some seedlings must wait many years before the parent tree dies and opens the canopy for light. Trees of the same species help each other grow often providing nourishment to those nearby who are struggling with poor soil or other issues.

A mature beech tree can send more than 130 gallons of water a day to its branches and leaves. When the water supply is reduced, trees store water, especially over the winter.

Wohlleben's work focuses on beeches, oaks, and conifers in Germany. Reference is made to other forests, some in the United States.

Wohlleben criticizes artificial spacing of trees such as a plantation of walnuts or other hardwoods because this creates too much space between trees and disconnects them from their networks. Instead, he recommends at minimum continuous cover forests with careful selective cutting using horses to retrieve trees rather than machinery that disrupts the fungal network.

This informative and provocative book will enrich your understanding of trees.



### *A Word from the President—Continued from Page 1*

Closer to home, plan to attend our Missouri Chapter Fall Field Day and Business Meeting Friday and Saturday, September 29/30 in the Rolla area that includes a field day at Pioneer Forest which is a 153,000 acre privately owned, managed forest near Salem. View their website at: <http://www.ladfoundation.org/pioneerforest/> Additional tour stops and the meeting location will be finalized soon.

More assistance is available through “Ask the Experts” where you simply email: [mowalnutcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:mowalnutcouncil@gmail.com) and forward your woodland management questions. We will match up your questions with member(s) in the Chapter having the expertise who will respond to you directly. Secondly, we have just announced “Member Mentors” where we match up your management needs with a volunteer offering their mentoring services. Again, simply send us an email requesting a “Member Mentor” and tell us a little about the advice and recommendations you may be needing.

Two new chapter committees are beckoning your support: Advocacy and Membership. Aaron Twombly, Secretary and Newsletter Editor also serves as the initial primary contact for the Advocacy Committee. This is a permanent committee made up of volunteer members of the Chapter that 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 have a few members already on this committee, but we can use more help. Please notify [Aaron](#) if you would like to assist with this group.

I am the primary contact for the Membership Committee, but I’m searching for a volunteer to step forward to lead us. Our main purpose is to implement the recently finalized Membership Strategy to both grow and retain members. I know there are many of you with lots of great ideas. We can really use your help....so please volunteer to serve on either the Advocacy or Membership Committees.

We are also looking for a volunteer to oversee the design and development of our chapter event display that reflects who we are and how we can be of assistance to potential members. The chapter has access to regional display panels owned by the Missouri Tree Farm Committee. We simply need to prepare a graphic design, select images or color photos and develop captions or text messages telling the Walnut Council story. If you have someone with graphic design or marketing skills looking for a volunteer project, have them contact me soon! The chapter will pay for all production costs.

One of our newer members, Bo Young, has started developing a Facebook page for the Chapter. Wendy Akers has offered to assist with this project, so I look forward to viewing what Wendy and Bo come up with for us. They will be coordinating this page with our parent Walnut Council who is also working on a Facebook page. The social media may be growing faster than our trees!

## **Twomblys Featured in Missouri Conservationist**

Aaron and Tracy Twombly, Missouri Chapter members, were featured in the May issue of the Missouri Conservationist in the “I Am Conservation” section. The couple has reforested over 25 acres of cropland, establishing over 15 acres of native prairies, manages invasive species, has performed TSI on existing forestland, and has established a stream team to help clean and monitor Little Blackwater Creek. To read more, see the back cover of the May issue or [click here](#).



### **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](#), 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](#).