



Iowa Chapter News

Walnut Council: Growing Walnut and Other Fine Hardwoods

September 2019 Newsletter

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Updates

- The 2019 Iowa Tree Farmer of the Year is one of our own! This page and next.
- Speaking of that, our Fall Field Day will be in conjunction with the Tree Farm System, IDNR, and Iowa State University Extension. See pg. 3.
- It's been a bit over a year since the preparation and planting of the Krotz Farm pollinator/buffer strip, and it's coming along nicely. See pgs. 4-5.
- As a group, we need to consider the future of the Iowa Chapter and it's leadership. Please consider a role you might be able to assume! See pg. 6.

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If you have suggestions, questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.
Cindy Heisdorffer—chapter president

The 2019 Iowa Tree Farmer of the Year

By Lisa Louck, IDNR District Forester (District 5)

Congratulations to Bob and Deb Brown of Yarmouth, Iowa as 2019 Iowa Tree Farmer of the Year!!

Iowa Tree Farm Committee (and especially this District Forester) is excited to be bringing the title back to beautiful SE Iowa, showcasing the White Oak Hills LLLP Family Tree Farm! Bob (Spook) Brown will be our main tour guide for our upcoming fall field day, as he completes all the work throughout his tree farm. The land has been in the family for over 150 years, with Bob becoming the steward in 1990. The ground was pastured for many years prior, and since acquiring Bob and family have converted over 45 acres to hardwood plantings. Beginning in 1993 the Brown's started using common spacing and seedling planting methods to plant walnuts, chestnuts and some mixed oak. Since around 2000, Bob has embarked on annual direct seeding plantings, experimenting with spacing as close as 2" over the progression of many years, moving to mainly oak. Bob will take us through the process from seed collection to thinning the plantings in later years, with all the work in between, and we will have the opportunity to see nearly 20 years of various stages of these plantings. Like others of you outstanding Tree Farmers, it will be enough to wear you out to hear all the work done annually...but wait, there's more!



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Bob and Deb Brown

Aside from Bob's tireless reforestation efforts, he has worked on improvements on natural woodland areas, including invasive species control and Timber Stand Improvement. Something very unique and worthy of highlighting is Bob's long-term, wide-ranging recordkeeping of bloom times, seasonal changes, collection/planting dates, etc. that is not only invaluable to the farm but also to the area and state of forest issues in general. I'm not sure Aldo Leopold thought his records, impressions and observations would be as far reaching as they are still today, but Bob's extensive

knowledge of his farm and the changes occurring represent the enormous wealth of knowledge that working with the land provides, and may be as important a legacy as the many acres improved under his care.

Bob has been actively involved with Iowa Walnut Council and Iowa Woodland Owners Association in addition to Tree Farm. Bob hosted a local field day in 2010 and does a lot in his neighborhood and local area to promote tree planting and oak regeneration. The farm has been under an active stewardship plan since 1998, with Bob completing all work sans cost share, so thankfully still inviting his district forester to visit even though it's not required! The Brown family hunts and recreates on the ground, and are active managers in the farming. Bob and Deb's son Chris, his wife Stephanie and their family live next door and assist with many management activities, and get to enjoy the gorgeous view of the valley behind them every day, while their daughters Janet and Heather, their sons in law and other grandkids join in when visiting from out of state to involve the next generation in the improvement of the family ground.

The White Oak Hills Tree Farm shares many of the same challenges, and we will cover some flood issue, and some disease and insect threats that the farm and others are facing.

Please join us on October 29th, 2019 to celebrate the White Oak Hills Tree Farm as Iowa's 2019 Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year, and the extensive work completed by Bob Brown and family!!

(Information about the field day is on the next page.)

Iowa Tree Farmer of the Year Field Day

Brown Tree Farm: 18502 Golden Rd, Yarmouth, IA.
Tuesday, Oct. 29, 2019

Program

8:30-9 am: Registration

9-9:15 am: Welcome and Introductions

Morning concurrent sessions: 9:30-11:35 am

- 1-3 year direct nut seeding prep and maintenance
- Wildlife uses of early successional habitat
- 3-10 year direct nut seeding: next stage of management

11:35-12:45 pm: Lunch, Awards, IWOA/WC/TF updates

12:45-1:45 pm: The Perfect Storm and Land Transitions

Afternoon concurrent sessions: 2-3:55 pm

- Record keeping / direct nut seeder demo
- Enhancing water quality through forestry-landowner options
- Established and dense direct seeding-thinning discussion

4 pm: Wrap up and questions

Cost is \$15.00 ea., payable day of event with cash or check. Register via phone / email:
Des Moines Co. Extension (319-671-7165; tfriedel@iastate.edu) prior to 10/23 to ensure meal.

Speakers include:

Bob Brown—Landowner, Tree Farmer of the Year; Ray Lehn—IDNR District Forester;
Billy Beck—ISU Extension Forestry Specialist; Steve Bohr—Next Generation Ag Advocates;
Gretchen Cline—Geode Forestry; Holly Shutt—Pheasants Forever;
Lisa Louck—IDNR District Forester

A full list of Fall 2019 Field Days can be found within the “Educational Opportunities”
section of the ISU Forestry Extension website: www.extension.iastate.edu/forestry



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Extension and Outreach

Report #2 on the Krotz Farm Buffer Strips

In this article there is a partial copy of the May 2018 article where I first reported about this endeavor, then I added a bit about what has occurred since then.



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<https://www.nrem.iastate.edu/research/STRIPS/>

STRIPS stands for Science-based Trials of Rowcrops Integrated with Prairie Strips.

Prairie strips are a farmland conservation practice that deliver enormous soil, water and nutrient benefits while increasing wildlife habitat.

Results from more than eight years of trials showed that by converting 10 percent of a crop field to prairie strips could result in reduction of 95 percent of the sediment, 90 percent of the phosphorus and 84 percent of the nitrogen from overland flow of surface water. The experimental sites were not tile drained and all systems used no-till.

Prairie can be planted several times throughout the year. It is preferable to seed in either the fall after harvest, or the spring, before or after planting (but before June 30 in Iowa). Mid-summer is generally not a good time to plant. Prairies include two basic types of plants, forbs (i.e. wildflowers) and grasses.

There are numerous native seed dealers and technical service providers throughout Iowa and the Midwest. The [Plant Iowa Native website](#) has a comprehensive list and contact information for seed sales and technical service providers.

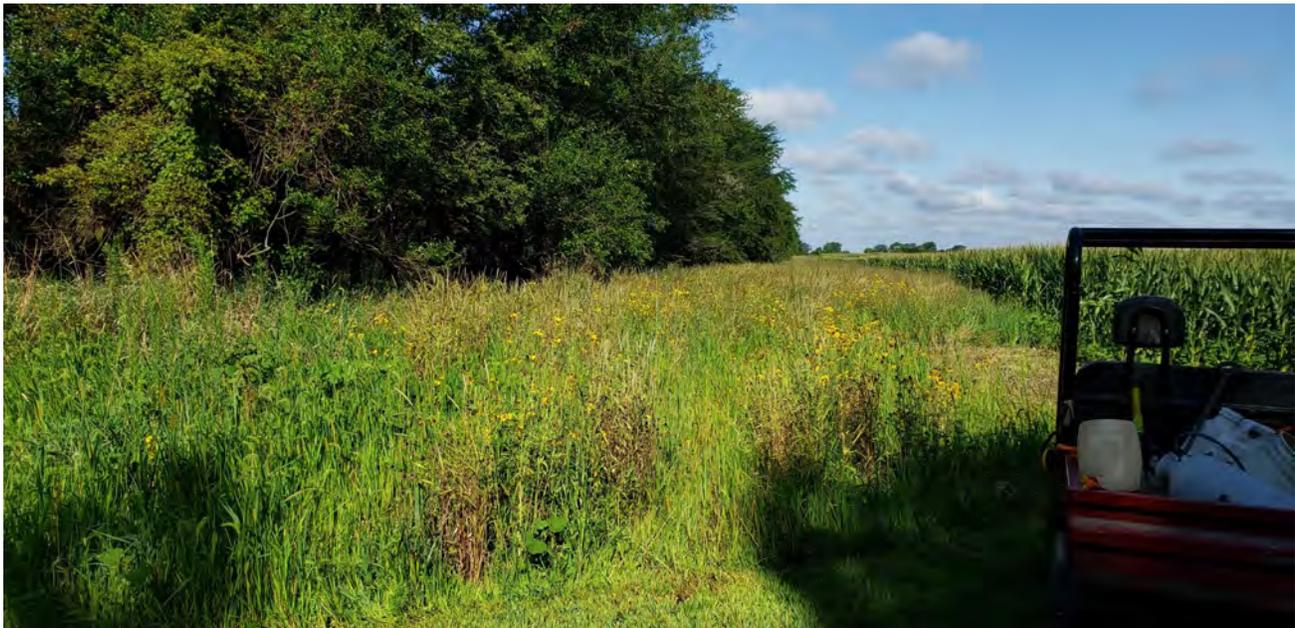
Multiple years will be required, three at minimum, for your prairie strips to start really looking like a prairie.

- During the first year, mowing is required. The strips will look like a short, vegetated buffer. It will not look like a prairie. Native species put most of their first-year energy in their roots and will not produce significant above-ground biomass.
- During the second year, early species (i.e., Canada wild rye, partridge pea, and black-eyed Susan) will be recognizable and may bloom. Unless there is considerable weed pressure, mowing is not necessary. Spot spraying can be used in year two if there are weedy areas.
- By the third year, most prairie restorations will begin to resemble a diverse native tallgrass plant community.
- Thereafter, maintenance will consist of spot application of herbicide as needed and baling or prescribed burning of the strips if desired. If prairie strips become dominated by weeds or invasive species, maintenance mowing and application of herbicide can be used to control them. Weeds and invasive species can be held in check by planting a diverse mix of native species in the initial planting and mowing the strips in the first year.

This process was started in the spring of 2018 on the property of Larry and Sandy Krotz near Washington, Iowa.



The images above are from the spring 2018 preparation and initial planting of approximately 13 acres of buffer strips, including both pollinator and quail/wildlife strips. The image below is from mid-August of 2019.



In this second year there is most definitely an abundance of pollinators throughout the season, and more than 90 species of plants have been identified. There are also lots of birds nesting in the area. There are quail, but the cover is so good that they're only heard and not seen at this point. Hopefully quail sightings will increase in the following years. At about 5 years, the planting will have to be disturbed with both mowing and rough disking to allow the forbs to gain on the grasses. This is generally done with fall or spring burning but that won't happen in this location due to the close proximity to trees. Canada Thistle has been somewhat of a problem as it is a perennial and grows from a rhizome whereas the other thistles are fairly well controlled by the lack of sunlight this buffer strip generates. The annual thistle requires a shorter grass cover to allow that tiny thistle seed to germinate and grow. Trees showing up in the strips is also going to be a problem to control, for which burning would be the best answer, but it's not considered an option in this location. (Update provided by Larry Krotz.)

The Iowa Chapter of the Walnut Council is in need of New Leadership!!!!

Consider taking a leadership position in the Iowa Chapter of the Walnut Council

There's no salary, but you learn a lot and meet great people.

I'm ready to pass the Iowa Chapter presidency torch to the next person. It's been a fun and informative 5 years, and it's a pleasure, but it's a bit much for 1 person to maintain forever. We are in need of:

- 1) a new president
- 2) a new vice president (Possibly. Larry Krotz might be talked into staying.)
- 3) And a secretary. (Though, I suppose I could keep this role if I'm going to stick with the newsletter.)
- 4) If someone would like to manage the Facebook page, something I've not been able to maintain, that would be nice, also.

Don't worry if you feel you don't have the skills! You don't have to have any particular talents, be especially knowledgeable, or even good looking :) There's no window washing, testing for hazardous materials or manure scooping. Here are some of the duties.

- Plan and organize meetings/field days. Usually a spring and a fall day.
- Anticipate the informational needs of members.
- Attend national board meetings. (2-3/year). I really enjoy these and would be willing to help with them.

I would appreciate not having to beg, but if I have to, I will. Let me know!



You may give me any suggestions or offers via phone call, snail mail or email. See the front page of this newsletter for contact info.

Depending on how people respond in the next few weeks, we could plan to have an organizational meeting in December or January, but I'd love some guidance before making those plans.

Thanks!

Cindy