



A Word from the President: Dennis Evans



The leaves have changed color and are starting to fall. I'm ready to get back into the forest and not worry about tick borne illnesses.

Our forestry field day at the Black Oak Ranch in Cowgill, Missouri, was a resounding success and a learning experience for all. A big round of applause to Jim and Schatzi Ball for hosting this magnificent event!

Our intent was to emphasize trees, wildlife and water quality as overall themes for this field day. Also, Jim Ball explained how they had to overcome various hurdles over their years of land ownership. Those hurdles included:

- Wildlife Management
- Water Quality Management, and
- Tree Management

One of the items I took from the meeting was the water absorption display from the different cover crops and conventional tilled soil. Luke Skinner, NRCS, demonstrated different plant cover crops and measured the amount of water infiltration and run off after a typical rain. The most surprising was the lack of water absorption and runoff on bare soil. The greatest absorption and infiltration were on the rotational grazing table. I encouraged Luke to include a

display of forest cover with decayed leaf matter in future demonstrations.

Another item on our field day that I took home was the amount of cost-share money available through the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Natural Resource Conservation Service. These programs will lessen the cost of growing trees and encourage you to do the right thing for wildlife and the environment.

Friday night we had a group discussion on different topics the members wanted to learn more about at the meeting and in the future (**See article on Page 2.**). These topics will be discussed further in future newsletters. One topic was deciding when to harvest your trees based on their biological or financial maturity.

This week, I visited with a client, and he asked me about our walnut trees in our plantation. He made a comment about a neighbor who called and a logger offered to harvest his walnut trees. He said he received a nice check for the logging. I had several questions about this comment to include *“Did he receive a competitive bid for his trees and were the trees ready to harvest or still gaining in value?”* Sadly, I'm sure this is the majority of the cases in Missouri where a landowner has no idea what their trees are worth or when or how to market their timber.

Our next field day is **April 20, 2024**, at the Paul and Lisa Heggemann tree farm near Jonesburg, Missouri. I hope to see all of you there. This will be another great event for our chapter. Mark your calendars now.

The hyperlink, below, gives you access to a gallery of photos taken during the Friday evening social and Saturday field day attended by 40 people. The weather was a little cool, but dry and making for an excellent fall day in the woods.

Photo Gallery:

<https://myalbum.com/album/ia4qjZ89aQjiWR/?invite=982dff92-670e-454f-8258-82931f638675>

May the forest be with you,

Dennis Evans

Missouri Chapter Fall Forestry Field Day

Black Oak Ranch, Cowgill, Missouri

Dennis Evans, President

Black Oak Ranch near Cowgill, Missouri was the site of our fall forestry field day hosted by Jim and Schatzi Ball Saturday, October 14th. The evening prior to the event several members gathered at the Branded Steer Restaurant in Richmond to socialize and finalize plans for the following day.

We noticed a direct correlation between the amount of time spent at the open bar to the ideas flowing from the participants!

Friday Evening Group Discussion Topics:

- Biological vs. Financial Maturity of Trees
- USDA-NRCS Programs
 - CSP versus CRP
- Tree Spacing
- Increase of Organic Matter in Plantations
- Tree Inventory
- Tree Seedling Mortality

These topics were in addition to the program finalized by the field day planning committee. The speakers Saturday attempted to address these six topics, but follow-up is needed to ensure these concerns are fully addressed.

The field day program and speakers included:

- Soil Health & Rain Table Demonstration - Luke Skinner, NRCS
- Fescue Toxicity & Soil Fertility - Impacts on Tree Growth - Luke Skinner and Jim Ball
- Demonstration of Equipment & Tools for High Pruning - Jim Ball
- USDA Financial Assistance Programs & Practices for Forest Health - Tyler Rodes, NRCS
- Using a Forest Stewardship Plan - Shane Strommer, MDC
- Black Walnut Tree Inventory - Fred Crouse, Consulting Forester
- Controlling Autumn Olive Using Equipment - Jim Ball
- Wildlife Habitat Management Challenges & Financial Assistance - Jim Ball
- Soil Health & Tree Growth and Pollinator Planting - Jim Ball

Chapter President, Dennis Evans, kicked the event off with a brief chapter business meeting before the group walked to the first learning station then everyone boarded wagons for the field tour. Later in the day Jim and Dennis responded to questions from the group before adjourning.



Chapter Secretary, Doug Butler, recorded ideas from the audience listing additional topics for discussion during the forestry field day.

About Missouri Chapter News

Missouri Chapter News is distributed to members of the Missouri Chapter, Walnut Council and selected guests. 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 [Bob Ball](#), Newsletter Editor. During the year we will also distribute “**technical articles**” on specific topics of interest to woodland landowners. Both the newsletters and technical articles are being archived at our [chapter website](#).

Photos from the Fall Forestry Field Day



Dennis Evans, left, presented **Fred Crouse** with a Meritorious Service Award for his many years of dedicated service to the Missouri Chapter.

Invasive species can come home with you from a fall hike. Here's how to keep them away.

Rosanne Loparch, Utica Observer Dispatch

Fall is the perfect time for outdoor activities such as hiking and enjoying the fall foliage.

As we enjoy what nature has to offer, it is also time to be aware of invasive species that can hitch a ride without our even knowing.

Invasive species are organisms that are not native to our area that can harm human health, the economy, or the environment. They can destroy places we love. Examples include insects such as emerald ash borer; plants such as Japanese knotweed or purple loosestrife; or diseases such as oak wilt. We can unknowingly spread these pests during everyday outdoor activities.



An Emerald Ash Borer resting on a honeysuckle branch.
Gerry Images/Stock photo.

Here are some suggestions to prevent the spread of invasives.

Clothing. Try to wear clothing that is not "seed friendly." Seeds and other plant material can easily stick to fabric such as wool or fleece. Cover these fabrics with a jacket or pants made of smooth material such as nylon.

What is on your feet. Footwear with deep tread can collect plants and other material that can spread invasives. Be sure to clean any footwear thoroughly after activities. Bring a brush or other tools with you to clean your gear.

Always have a check afterwards. As you finish your outdoor activity, look over your clothes and equipment for any seeds, plants pieces or insects. Check your hair, clothing, exposed skin, vehicles, trailers, and your pets.

Clean in parking lots or hard surfaces where pests are unlikely to spread. Avoid cleaning near waterways so invasive species will not spread to new areas via the water.

Remember not to move firewood which can carry seed material or invasive insect pests.

One of the best steps in stopping the spread is to be knowledgeable and to recognize invasive species. There are plenty of resources available and apps for your phone.

Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) is a great resource. Consider taking the pledge to protect our lands and waters by becoming a volunteer citizen scientist. Visit their website at sleloinvasives.org to recognize invasives and learn more on how to make sure you do not spread any invasives as you enjoy all that our outdoors has to offer.

Target Pruning and Compartmentalization

Dusty Walter, Jerry Van Sambeek, Mark Coggeshall with Bob Ball
Members, Missouri Chapter Walnut Council

You can increase the value of black walnut trees by appropriately applying **target pruning**. This technique removes unwanted branches AND makes use of specialized tissue located in a tree's branch collar predisposed to protect the tree from pathogens.

The advantage of target pruning is any pathogen we may have on our pruning tools is introduced into the branch wood which is quickly walled off from the stem wood. If we mistakenly cut into the stem wood, the stem wood will create a boundary to wall out any pathogens that may be introduced by pruning. This walling off is termed "**compartmentalization**" which requires some time to form. It is not a quick response. Flush cutting (cutting along line AX in the diagram on page 2) delays compartmentalization protection. It takes a long time to develop cells capable of walling off infestations unlike **target pruning** where the cells are already preprogrammed to provide a quick barrier.

How Branches Grow –

Tree branches grow in diameter very early in the spring BEFORE the stem begins to grow. The result of this timing is a strong branch union when the stem diameter growth overlaps the newly established branch wood produced earlier in that **same** spring timeline. If we can time the pruning of a branch - using the target pruning approach - to coincide with this natural late winter/very early spring diameter growth of the branch collar, the pruning wound will successfully close by 1) the new branch collar diameter growth, and then 2) the new stem diameter growth.

Black walnuts that are growing well and "not stressed" can completely cover pruning wounds with new wood within one growing season – provided the pruned branch diameter is 1.5 inches or less at the branch collar. Pruning larger branches greatly increases the time (years) needed to completely cover the pruning wounds. If the wounds (referred to as "cat faces") are large enough, they may be visible for years even after many layers of stem wood are laid down.

Importance of Target Pruning -

With target pruning we are less likely to need to disinfect our equipment between cuts or even between trees because any pathogens on our equipment are introduced into branch wood which is very quickly walled off by the tree. If our cuts remove part of the branch collar, these pathogens can be introduced into both branch and stem wood. Pathogens will move through the stem wood back into the main stem to produce discoloration, decay, or cankers depending on how vigorous the tree and pathogen are.

On trees where the branch collar is nearly invisible, your clue where to cut to stay outside the branch collar is the **branch bark ridge**. If the stem is straight, drop a vertical line from the top of the branch bark ridge parallel with the outside of the stem. Look at the angle made between that vertical line and the branch bark ridge. Image this same angle on the opposite side of the vertical line. Set your pruning saw just outside the top of the branch bark ridge and cut along this imaginary line.

Most pruning guidelines recommend using a three-cut process to remove large branches which can be very difficult using a pole saw on branches near the top of the future log. Instead, stub cutting followed by target pruning requires less work and is less likely to wound the stem.

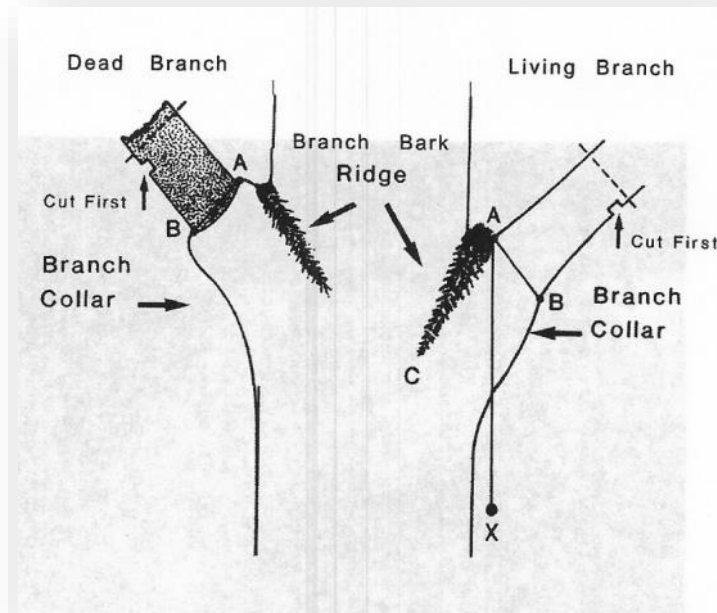
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Timing of Pruning -

It is recommended black walnut trees be pruned during the dormant period which is generally considered to be November through the end of February, but this period varies somewhat depending on seasonal temperatures. The loss of sap from bleeding caused by pruning wounds will not seriously injure the tree. However, sap flows can attract pathogen carrying spores and insects that can become a problem without the compartmentalization process taking place.

You should not prune oaks in the red oak group when the insect that carries oak wilt is active. Refer to the paper titled [“Time Pruning to Avoid Disease”](#) by Wright and Van Sambeek in the **Pruning Articles** on the Missouri Chapter Walnut Council website for more information.

Diagram of Target Pruning -



To Implement *Target Pruning*:

1. Locate the branch bark ridge.
2. Find target A – outside of the branch bark ridge.
3. Find target B – where the branch meets the branch collar.
4. If B is hard to find – drop a line at AX. The angle XAC is equal to the angle XAB.
5. If the branch to be pruned is large, avoid splitting and tearing by making an undercut at the location marked “Cut First” a few inches from the branch collar. Then, make a stub cut outside of the first cut.
6. Make the final cut at the line AB.

Note: An alternative for Step 5 is to make a “stub cut” approximately 18” outside of the branch collar to drop most of the weight of the branch then make the final cut as shown in Step 6. This stub cut is likely to peel some bark back along the underside of the stub as you finish the cut; however, it is unlikely to peel back to the branch collar. Adjust the distance in making that cut outside the collar based on branch size to ensure any peeling avoids the collar.

ATFS 2021 Standards of Sustainability, Eligibility, & Guidance

For

American Tree Farm System (ATFS) Certification

[The complete list of standards can be read in their entirety by clicking on this hyperlink.](#)

This article focuses ONLY on **Standard 2** of the 8 ATFS standards:

Standard 2: Compliance with Laws. Forest management activities comply with all relevant federal, state and local laws, regulations and ordinances.

Performance Measure 2.1: Landowner shall comply with all relevant federal, state, county and municipal laws, regulations and ordinances governing forest management activities. An Overview of Applicable Laws and Regulations is provided in Appendix A of the standards.

Landowners or designated representatives should employ the maxim, “When in doubt, ask.” Common forest management activities that are regulated in many states include conservation of state and federally protected species and their habitat, prescribed burning, **pesticide application**, harvesting, road building, pond construction and stream crossings.

These standards require additional documentation in the management of the forest and woodlands. Woodland landowners are *encouraged* to record their use of pesticides within their tree farm. Below is a sample table that could be used to keep track of your pesticide use. You can copy this template, expand it to a full page, print it, and keep it handy near your herbicides to record their use.

| Pesticide Usage Log for Tree Farm Certification | | | | |
|--|--------------|------|------------------------|------------------|
| Date | Timber Stand | Area | Pesticides & Rate Used | Reason for Using |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Please refer to your forest management plan to identify the Stand in which you are working. | | | | |
| Please record the area in approximately how many acres you utilized pesticides on while working. | | | | |

Producers Encouraged to Apply for USDA Conservation Programs

COLUMBIA, Mo., October 25, 2023 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is encouraging agricultural producers and forest landowners in Missouri to participate in voluntary conservation programs and adopt climate-smart practices in fiscal year 2024 as part of President Biden’s Investing in America agenda. USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), which help a variety of producers, including urban and organic producers.

“Whether you measure your farm in square feet or acres, or you farm in the country or in the middle of the city, the Natural Resources Conservation Service has conservation assistance for you,” said Missouri Acting State Conservationist Ashley Johnson. “Right now, we are offering a historic amount of funding through both the Farm Bill and the Inflation Reduction Act, so you should apply today. We encourage all who have natural resource concerns, including producers who haven’t worked with us before, to consider applying. A conservation plan and program may be right for your ag operation.”

For fiscal year 2024, NRCS has \$3 billion in Inflation Reduction Act funds to invest in [climate-smart mitigation activities](#). This year, NRCS expanded the list of those activities as well as expanded priority areas for ACEP for grasslands, wetlands and farmlands at risk of conversion. Learn more about those expansions in our [Sept. 28, 2023 news release](#).

Additionally, for fiscal year 2024, NRCS has more than \$2 billion in Farm Bill funding available to producers for priorities like organic and urban agriculture, soil health, water quality and quantity and wildlife habitat development. This extensive amount of funding will be used to meet producer demand for our oversubscribed programs, maximize climate benefits and help producers address their natural resource challenges.

NRCS accepts producer applications for its conservation programs year-round. Producers can apply for funding from both the Farm Bill and the Inflation Reduction Act. In some cases, because of additional flexibilities, applications for eligible practices that meet or exceed state-determined minimum ranking thresholds will automatically be considered for priority funding when applying for EQIP and CSP.

Organic Agriculture

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance for conservation practices that are popular among organic as well as traditional producers, including cover crops, integrated pest management, drip irrigation, high tunnels and rotational grazing. Additionally, for those producers transitioning to organic production, NRCS also provides assistance for a new organic management conservation practice, which was introduced in fiscal year 2023 as part of [USDA’s Organic Transition Initiative](#). The new organic management practice allows flexibility for producers to get the assistance and education they need, such as attending workshops or requesting help from experts or mentors. It supports organic conservation activities and practices required for organic certification and may provide foregone income reimbursement for dips in production during the transition period. Learn more on [NRCS’ Organic Agriculture webpage](#).

Urban Agriculture

NRCS provides technical and financial assistance for conservation practices that are popular among urban producers, including high tunnels, soil health management systems, composting, irrigation, and weed and pest management. Urban agriculture includes the cultivation, processing, and distribution of agricultural products in urban and suburban areas. Learn more on [NRCS’ Urban Agriculture webpage](#).

USDA is increasing staffing at its St. Louis, Mo., Urban Service Center where employees will offer farm loan, conservation, disaster assistance and risk management programs. USDA is also establishing an Urban County Committee in Kansas City, Mo. Both of these investments complement the broader network of [Urban Service Centers](#) across the country, and they are helping accelerate assistance for urban producers. Contact the new St. Louis Urban Service Center at 314-457-4746.

More Information

The Inflation Reduction Act, the largest climate investment in history, is a historic, once-in-a-generation investment and opportunity for the agricultural communities that USDA serves. In addition to the investments in agriculture, the Inflation Reduction Act extended authorities for certain Farm Bill programs – EQIP, CSP, ACEP and Regional Conservation Partnership Program – until fiscal year 2031.

For more information about assistance available, contact your local [USDA Service Center](#).