



# TREE Cookies Etc.

November 2005

Volume 1, Issue 1



**tree cookie** (trē' kookē) n. a cross sectional slice of a trunk or branch. The concentric rings tell not only the age of that part of the tree, but also a story about the environmental conditions, history, and dynamics of that tree, in that place.

**TREE Cookies Etc.** n. 1. a free electronic newsletter dedicated to tell the story of forest stewardship, tree care, and natural resource management. 2. to help people make best decisions regarding the resources entrusted to them.

## Calendar

- Nov. 10, 2005:  
**Northern Virginia Urban Forestry Conference** – Clearing the Air with Virginia's Trees. Sterling, VA
- Jan. 21, 2006:  
**Landowners Woods & Wildlife Conference**, Manassas, VA
- Jan. 19-20, 2006  
**Determining the Root Causes of Planting Failure** Danville, VA
- Jan. 25 - 27, 2006:  
**Appalachian Society of American Foresters** – The 3 Ps of Certification Charlottesville, VA
- Feb. 4, 2006:  
**Landowners Woods & Wildlife Conference**, Charlottesville, VA

## Virginia Cooperative Extension

Madison County Office  
P.O. Box 10  
Madison, VA 22727

Tel: 540-948-6881  
Fax: 540-948-6883  
adowning@vt.edu

## Welcome!

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Tree Cookies Etc!* The intent of this newsletter is to provide free, unbiased, research based information relevant to people who own a single tree or a whole forest full or work with trees in one capacity or another.

A wealth of information exists for anyone with an interest in forest, tree and natural resource issues. Ten times the wealth exist for those half savvy with the Internet. A central challenge today is to

sort out the information as to what is relevant and “right.” One of the goals of this newsletter is to provide some guidance toward accurate information.

My hope is that this newsletter will play a part in increasing awareness and knowledge which should translate into a healthier, more sustainable environment, one person at a time.

continued

## Got Woods? Investment Strategy #1

If you own land, chances are you own some woods too. Do you value your tree-covered land? Most landowners do but maybe don't realize its full value. Most forestland owners value their woods for yearly activities such as hunting, hiking, beauty and firewood. But have you viewed your forest as an investment?

Forestland has always been a fairly safe and often lucrative investment, even in today's volatile market. Its growth in value is very unique. Trees increase in value by: 1) getting bigger which not only increases volume but often increases the grade, i.e. quality of timber and 2) by price increases driven by supply & demand. Additionally, this increase in value is tax deferred! While you do pay annual property taxes for your

forest(s), the income from a timber sale usually qualifies for capital gains which is generally more favorable than the ordinary income rate. Also, investing in growing trees is a good way to transfer wealth from one generation to the next, if the right kind of planning takes place.

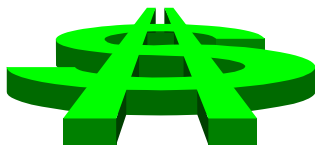
Planning is actually the key to any investment, and forestland is no different. You will increase the value of your forestland, both for enjoyment and financial returns, with simple planning. The first step of planning is to determine what your goals and objectives are. This stage should not be taken

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*Knowledge for the Commonwealth*



## Got Woods - continued



*"You will increase the value of your forestland, both for enjoyment and financial returns, with simple planning.."*

lightly; it will/should guide all future decisions. Next it's time to spend some time in the woods. Know what you have. You may want to have an inventory completed by a professional forester to help you sort out the resources your forestland holds.

With this information in hand, you'll need to revisit your objectives. Are they realistic? For example, you may want to harvest timber when junior goes to college in five years, but maybe some improvement work needs to be done first and a sale would be more profitable in 10 years. After you make sure your

objectives are realistic, determine what needs to be done and when, to meet your goals and objectives. A forester can recommend various management strategies and help you pare it down to a defined activity schedule with specific actions and timelines.

If you've got woods, consider them part of your farm's assets and properly manage them. This starts with a plan. For more information on forest management plans, give your local Department of Forestry forester or the Madison County Extension Office a call. It'll be a good investment of your time. ✍ AKD

## Tree id

The first step in getting to know your woods or trees a little bit better is to know what you have. Is that an oak or a maple? What exact species is it? Northern Red Oak or Southern Red Oak?

Learning tree id can be a daunting task, especially in the Eastern United States where we have a rather wide variety of species. While there are hundreds of species present somewhere in Virginia, far fewer are common. *Common Forest Trees of Virginia: How to know them* (Virginia Department of Forestry, 2001) lists less than 80 different species. Of these 80 species, most woodlots contain fewer than half these; furthermore, probably 90% of the trees will be one of your forests ten most common species.

Tree id is like anything else... with a little practice and the right resources, you can become an ace.

An excellent on-line resource is available to anyone with access to the internet. The Virginia Tech Department of Forestry hosts a site created by Drs. Seiler and Peterson at: <http://www.cnr.vt.edu/dendro/dendrology/main.htm>

The home page offers several resources for tree enthusiast including fact sheets, an identification quiz, landowner fact sheets (geared toward forest management) and perhaps the most valuable is the on-line key.

An identification key is a wonderful tool for individuals, beginners or

"An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest."  
- Benjamin Franklin

continued



expert, to identify new trees. A key guides you through a series of questions which gradually narrows down the possible choices. If you work through the key properly, you will arrive at the correct species.

A downside of the online resources is that you can't very easily take it to the woods with you. From a landowner's standpoint, a pocket size tree-id field guide is the most practical. The "key" (pun intended) is to find one you like, then stick with it so you become familiar with how to best use it. Some keys are much more complicated than others and I personally have found some of the most simplistic to be my favorites.

A parting thought on tree id... have fun with it! I personally find it very satisfying to be able to look at most any tree and know what it is or at least be confident I can figure it out.

≈ AKD



## Welcome - continued

As your host, I will attempt to distribute this on a bi-monthly basis, by way of the internet. If there is sufficient demand for printed copies sent in the mail, that option may be explored.

Note: at this point the only way to receive this newsletter is to sign-up for it electronically. To receive this newsletter in the future, you must join the "Tree\_Cookies\_Etc" Listserv by sending an e-mail to: [LISTSERV@LISTSERV.VT.EDU](mailto:LISTSERV@LISTSERV.VT.EDU) with <SUBSCRIBE Tree\_Cookies\_Etc> in the body (and nothing else). Leave the subject line blank and be sure to turn off any automatic signatures.. If you have any problems with this, please contact me by phone or e-mail.

Otherwise, I welcome your comments and suggestions at any time! My contact information is on the last page.



## <World Wide Web Watch>

Virginia SHARP Logger

<http://www.sharplogger.vt.edu/>

Provides access to SHARP (Sustainable Harvesting & Resource Professionals) on a county by county basis. Search to see if "your logger" has obtained SHARP logger status and is up to date with continuing education credits.





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# Virginia Cooperative Extension

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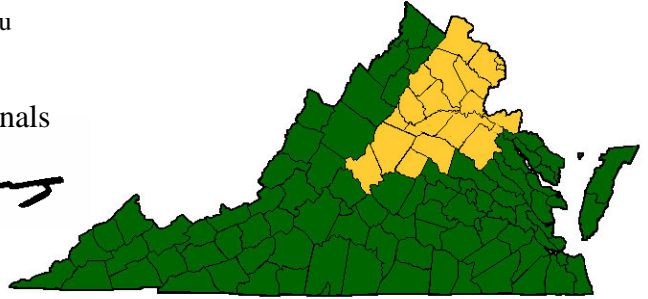
VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 10  
Madison, VA 22727  
540-948-6881  
adowning@vt.edu

Date: February 20, 2006

To: Citizens, Landowners, and Natural resource professionals

From: Adam K. Downing  
Extension Agent, Forestry & Natural Resources  
Northern District



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