

seeks to prevent injury or loss of human life, minimize property damage, and protect the forest resource.

Wildfire control is part of this mission. One aspect of the wildfire control plan is Virginia's 4 p.m. Burn Law, which is in effect during the spring fire season (February 15 – April 30). During these times, it is unlawful to have an open air fire within 300 feet of woods or dry grass which can carry fire into the woods before 4 p.m. Extra precautions should be taken during the fall fire season (October 15 – November 30) as well.

FireWise Virginia: Free things you can do to protect your home from wildfire

- Perform a FIREWISE assessment of your home.
- Move your firewood pile out of your home's defensible space.
- Clean your roof and gutters of leaves and pine needles (best done in October).
- Clear the view of your house number so it can be easily seen from the street.
- Put a hose (at least 100' long) on a rack and attach it to an outside faucet.
- Trim all tree branches from within 20' of all chimneys.
- Remove trees along the driveway to make it 12' wide.
- Prune branches overhanging the driveway to have 14' overhead clearance.
- Maintain a green lawn for 30' around your home. If new homes are still being built in your area, talk to the developer and local zoning officials about building standards.
- Plan and discuss an escape plan with your family. Include your pets. Have a practice drill.
- Check your fire extinguishers. Are they still charged? Are they easy to get to in an emergency? Does everyone in the family know where they are and how to use them?
- Clear deadwood and dense flammable vegetation from your home's defensible space.
- Remove conifer shrubs from your home's defensible space especially if your home is in a high-risk area.
- Review your homeowner's insurance policy for adequate coverage. Consult your insurance agent about costs of rebuilding and repairs in your area.
- Talk to your children about not starting fires or playing with matches.
- Compost leaves in the fall, don't burn them.
- If you burn your brush piles or grass in the spring, get a burning permit.
- Always have a shovel on hand and hook up the garden hose BEFORE you start the fire.
- Never burn if the smoke and flames are blowing towards your home (or your neighbor's home).

For more Firewise tips, visit <http://www.dof.virginia.gov/fire/firewise-index.htm>; To determine if your property is at risk, take the quiz: <http://www.dof.virginia.gov/fire/firewise-hazard-test.shtml>. Another useful resource from the University of Florida: Wildfire Risk Assessment for Homeowners in the Southern United States: <http://www.bugwood.org/acrobat/WildfireRAGH.pdf>.

VIRGINIA FOREST LANDOWNER UPDATE

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Have you....

...visited the VA LEAF website lately? Virginia's Links to Education About Forests site now has 5 on-line learning modules available free to forest landowners. Topics include: water quality, Best Management Practices, how to conduct a deed search, basic timber cruising, and basic chainsaw safety and felling. More will be posted as this year progresses. Check them out at: <http://valeaf.org/education.php>

...lost timber as a result of a storm? If so, the updated publication from the USDA Forest Service, *Income Tax Deduction for Timber Casualty Loss*, may be helpful to you. Download a copy from: <http://www.timbertax.org/publications/Timber%20Casualty%20Loss%20Tax%20Deduction-2011-2.pdf>

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VIRGINIA FOREST LANDOWNER UPDATE

Events, news, and information promoting the stewardship of Virginia's forest resources.

VIRGINIA FOREST LANDOWNER EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Useful Resources – Be Wise About Wildfire By: Jennifer Gagnon, Virginia Tech

In much of the country, it's that time of year again – wildfire season. Temperatures and fuel loads are high, precipitation is low. The Wal-low Fire, which as of this writing is now 100% contained, is the largest blaze in Arizona history, burning over 538,000 acres, destroying 32 homes, and costing over \$109 million. Since January, over 33 million acres have burned in the U.S. In Virginia, there have been 636 fires which consumed 11,459 acres and damaged 15 homes since January.



A wildfire in Oregon. Photo by: Dave Powell, USDA Forest Service

So what can you do to keep your home safe and reduce the chance of ignition from a wildfire? First, stay informed. You can keep track of wildfires nationally using the USDA Forest Service's Incident Information System (INCIWeb) at: <http://www.inciweb.org/>. INCIWeb provides information on where wildfires are located, their status, and the number of acres affected. In Virginia, citizens can use the Daily Report to keep track of local wildfires: <http://www.dof.virginia.gov/fire/sit-rep.htm> (the USDA Forest Service and cooperators, such as the Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF), are the primary agencies responsible for fighting wildfires).

Second, you can take specific steps to protect your home. The USDA Forest Service's National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy takes a three-pronged approach to dealing with wildfires, which involves: maintaining resilient landscapes, creating fire-adapted communities, and wildfire response. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA; www.nfpa.org), developed the Firewise Communities Program (<http://firewise.org/>) which addresses the second part of this strategy, creating fire-adapted communities.

The National Fire Protection Association's (NFPA) - world's leading advocate of fire prevention - develops, publishes and disseminates more than 300 consensus codes and standards intended to minimize the possibility and effects of fire and other risks. NFPA's mission is to: safely and effectively extinguish fire, when needed; use fire where allowable; manage our natural resources; and, as a Nation, live with wildland fire.

The Firewise Communities Program teaches homeowners how to adapt to live with wildfire and encourages neighbors to work together to prevent loss. The Firewise quarterly How-to Newsletter (on the Firewise website) is free and provides homeowners located in regions susceptible to fires with information on how to protect their homes and families in the event of wildfires. Virginia has also adopted a Firewise strategy. More information on FireWise Virginia is available at: <http://www.dof.virginia.gov/fire/firewise-index.htm>.

FireWise Virginia is part of VDOF's larger Forest Protection Program. The Forest Protection Program

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EVENTS CALENDAR			For the most complete listing of natural resource education events, visit the on-line events calendar at www.cnr.vt.edu/foreupdate		
Contact	Date	Location	Event	Time	Fee
DCR	April, May & June	Virginia State Parks	A variety of events and activities. For a complete list, visit: www.dcr.virginia.gov/parks	Varies	Varies
MP	Year-round	State-wide	Virginia Master Naturalist Volunteer basic training. www.virginiamasternaturalist.org/chapters.html	Varies	Varies
JG	Aug. 9	White Stone	Real Forestry for Real Estate If you sell rural lands, this 8-hour class will teach you more about your product - including how to determine land use history and site quality, tree ID, the value of forests, and more. Approved for 8 PLE/CE/Appraisal CE credits.	8 - 5	\$30*
JG	Aug. 10	Culpeper	Real Forestry for Real Estate See above	8 - 5	\$20*
JG	Aug. 11	Charlottesville	Real Forestry for Real Estate See above	8 - 5	\$25*
AD	Aug. 9 & 16	Palmyra	Family & Forestland Short Course: Transferring Land to Generation NEXT Please join us for a hands-on workshop with free legal guidance from professionals experienced in inter-generational land transfer and landowner testimonials of estate planning steps & strategies they have used. Land may be your biggest asset.	12:30 - 7	\$50* for up to 2 members of the same family; \$25 for each additional.
TV	Aug. 17	Abingdon	Preparing for Emerald Ash Borer This workshop will help participants prepare for the eventual arrival of the emerald ash borer, including the latest information on EAB from forest health specialists representing both the public and private sector.	8:30 - 4	\$30/\$40 after Aug. 10*
JG	Aug. 25	South Boston	Real Forestry for Real Estate See above	8 - 5	\$25
AD	Sept. 13 & 20	Luray	The Woods in Your Backyard This workshop will use the award winning, The Woods in Your Backyard: Learning to Create and Enhance Natural Areas Around Your Home, to equip owners of 1-10 acres to be better stewards of their property. The full-color, 139-page manual helps users identify goals for their land, and offers guidance.	6:30 - 9:00	\$20/person; \$25/couple
AD	Sept. 17	Boyce	The Woods in Your Backyard See above.	9 - 3	\$20/person; \$25/couple
AD	Oct. 1	Madison	Natural Hardwood Making Demonstration: Madison Farmer's Market Learn how you can use wastewood to make a valuable product.	9- 12	Free
JF	Oct. 13	Pittsylvania County	35th Annual Fall Forestry & Wildlife Field Tour Help celebrate the 35th anniversary of the bus tours! Join natural resource professionals and other landowners as we visit private, public, and company lands to learn about managing forests and the wildlife in them.	8:30 - 4:30	\$45*
AD	Oct. 21	Spotsylvania County	35th Annual Fall Forestry & Wildlife Field Tour See above		\$45*
AD	Oct. 23	Montpelier Station	Montpelier's Working Woods Walk Join the Old Rag Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists as they take you on a tour of the demonstration forest at James Madison's Montpelier.	2:00	Normal visitor's fees apply
NC	Oct. 25	Eastern Virginia	35th Annual Fall Forestry & Wildlife Field Tour See above	8:30 - 4:30	\$45*
BW	Oct. 28	Washington County	35th Annual Fall Forestry & Wildlife Field Tour See above	8:30 - 4:30	\$45*

*meal(s) included in registration fee

Bizarro-World You Ain't From Around Here!

Fall Webworm and Staghorn Sumac

By: Yujuan Chen, Virginia Tech

Editor's note: When we think about exotic invasive species, we often only think about those that were introduced to the U.S. from other countries (and often from China). However, other countries have invasive species problems as well. In fact, of the world's 100 worst invasive species, 50 can be found in China. These cause the Chinese economy to lose over \$29.3 billion a year. This article takes a look at two species which are (or may be) invasive in China thanks to an introduction from the U.S.

China is a vast country with rich biodiversity, making it especially vulnerable to invasions of non-native species. In fact, there is a long history of non-native species introduction. Alien species occur in each of China's 34 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions. They occur widely in both urban and rural landscapes, and in protected areas. Alien plants have been reported everywhere, except in a few remote reserves in the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, Hengduan Mountain, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia (Yan et al., 2001).

By the middle of the 1990's, there were about 58 invasive plant species reported; by the late 1990's, 108; by 2003, 283 alien invasive species have been identified in China. The number of species of alien invasive microorganisms, aquatic plants, terrestrial plants, aquatic invertebrates, terrestrial invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles, fish, and mammals were 19, 18, 170, 25, 33, 3, 10, and 5, respectively. The proportion of alien invasive species originating from America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania were 55, 22, 10, 8 and 0.6%, respectively (HaiGen et al., 2004).

The fall webworm (*Hyphantria cunea*) and staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*) are two invasive species introduced to China from the U.S.

The fall webworm (*Hyphantria cunea*), which is native to North America, was introduced to Dandong and Xinjin in Liaoning Province in 1979. Since then, it has spread to Shandong and Shanxi, where it has caused serious damage in orchards, forests, and croplands. Fall webworm has been reported to infest more than 100 plant species in China. Within its introduced range, the species totally defoliates trees in orchards, in parks and recreation areas, and in horticultural plantings along boulevards, causing significant mortality of trees in both urban and rural areas (Yan et al., 2001; ZhongQi and YongAn, 2007).



Damage caused by fall webworm on trees in China.

typhina has been introduced from its native North America to many other countries, including China. Recently, the fast vegetative and reproductive growth of this nonnative species, however, has led some to believe that it may become invasive and out of control if cultivated in large numbers (Zhang et al., 2009).



The fall webworm regional distribution in China (www.dglyj.gov.cn) (Darker regions show areas under severe invasive conditions and lighter regions show areas under a warning for an invasive situation).

An integrated biological control technique was developed which controls 2 generations of the fall webworm successively. Effective and sustainable control results were reached and the fall webworm was suppressed for 6 years in Shanghai, Dalian, Yantai and Qingdao cities in China. Staghorn sumac (*Rhus typhina*) is a native of the eastern United States. It grows very fast and has brightly colored foliage during fall. Because of its ecological benefits and horticultural uses, *R.*

Bizarro-World cont. from page 3



Fall webworm control strategies in China include both herbicide applications and biological control techniques.

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Editor's note: China is not the only country which is experiencing loss of biodiversity as a result of the introduction of invasive species. In response, a number of international working groups have formed to develop strategies for reducing biodiversity losses. I will be revisiting this topic in future newsletters. For those interested, there is a wealth of information available on this global problem from these organizations.

- National Invasive Species Information Center <http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/international/main.shtml>
- 2010 Biodiversity Indicators <http://www.bipindicators.net/>
- Convention on Biological Diversity <http://www.cbd.int/invasive/>



The foliage of staghorn sumac.

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