



# Washtenaw County Conservation District

JANUARY 2019

## Wood is Good

By Bill Cook, MSU Extension Forester/Biologist

*All goods are manufactured with raw materials obtained from the Earth. By far, wood use has the least number of negative aspects and, in fact, actually has a range of positive impacts. For the environmentally-minded, wood should be the raw material of choice*

There is no such thing as zero-impact as humans go about their daily activities. From the environmental standpoint, there are both positive and negative impacts, if a person chooses that sort of value sets. Although, arguments can be made about definitions of “environmental”, “positive”, and “negative”.

We can all do our part to “reduce-reuse-recycle”, all good behaviors, but wood is the only material that is also “renewable”. It

grows back after a harvest. Petroleum, natural gas, coal, minerals, gravel, and other raw materials do not.

For the most part, it’s pretty easy to hold wood as the friendliest material available. The processes of extraction, manufacturing, and disposal consume less energy and water than other raw materials, and produce fewer emissions and waste. Many public and private groups have run life cycle analyses that demonstrate this.

Using wood-based items rather than non-wood items reduces an environmental footprint.

Logging is in the forefront of bringing the best-choice raw material into the larger market, which is a \$20 billion manufacturing sector in Michigan and \$25 billion in

Wisconsin. Rather than viewing the logging profession dimly, it would be more accurate to recognize the advanced technology and professional skills that are employed. The days of Paul Bunyan belong to the tourists, not the modern industry.

However, many of us have been convinced that cutting trees is a bad thing. Alternatively, here are ten ideas to think about. Each can lead to discussions in their own right but, generally speaking, there’s a lot of science and experience to support these statements. Some are counter-intuitive, at first, and others might fly in the face of urban mythology.

1. Trees (wood) come mostly from the atmosphere, not from the crust of the Earth or

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## Planning for Habitat and Wildlife By Nick Machinski

Happy New Year! Since tree sale is already upon us, I thought I would plug the newest type of verification MAEAP has to offer to landowners: Forest, Wetland and Habitat (FWH). Now, you probably know that MAEAP mainly works with farmers of all sizes, but the program wanted to include those who perhaps harvest trees for wood, take time to preserve wetlands, and provide habitat for wildlife to thrive in. So, you don't have to be a farmer to participate in MAEAP anymore. You could have a forest, pond, fallow field, etc. and still participate in MAEAP.

You would work with me to get your goals and how you would care for the land on paper, so you will have a plan for years down the road. I will perform a site visit to walk the property with you, answer questions, take inventory of wildlife and even see if our property could be home to endangered or threatened species. And it doesn't cost anything to participate since MAEAP is a voluntary program!

If you complete the MAEAP process with me, you would get recognized in local publications as well as a sign saying that your land has been "Environmentally Verified."

Planning out the future of your own property is fun and extremely rewarding. If you have a piece of property that is dedicated to habitat and wildlife but are unsure of how to manage it or would like to get your ideas down on paper, please contact me, Nick Machinski at (734)-205-1218 or [Nicholas.machinski@mi.nacdnet.net](mailto:Nicholas.machinski@mi.nacdnet.net)



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## Washtenaw Native Plant Expo & Marketplace

Saturday, June 1st, 9AM—2PM

Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds

Featuring over 10 businesses and organizations offering a variety of native plants, seeds, tools, resources and programming to **expand your native plant landscapes or get started from scratch!**

For a complete list of vendors visit the

WCCD website at

[www.washtenawcd.org](http://www.washtenawcd.org)

## Planting Persimmons By Megan DeLeeuw

Persimmons are *not* self-fertile. Up until last week I believed that persimmons were, and labeled them as such in the 2019 tree sale order form! It has been a while since my botany course in college, I'll admit. I did not understand that common persimmons either produce male or female flowers and need both in order to fruit properly. Luckily, this mistake allowed me to go back and learn a thing or two about the mysterious persimmon and share it with you all here.

If you plant a common persimmon from the Conservation District, you have an equal chance of planting a male or female plant. The common persimmons we are providing are not organized by sex. The best way to ensure pollination is to plant several trees (rather than a single tree) or to graft a tree of known variety onto the common rootstock. Without grafting and *with* proper pollination, the common persimmon should fruit in as soon as ten years or can take up to 50 years. The key take away is: wildlife will eventually benefit but not in the short term.

Although not native to Michigan, persimmons range throughout the Midwest up to the border of Michigan and Ohio. Persimmons have a deep tap root and are excellent for soil erosion control. As a slow grower, the persimmon typically reaches less than 20 feet tall over its life span. Persimmons can grow in a range of conditions (dry to river bottom). They enjoy sandy, heavy loam and even clay. Often persimmons are found growing on cropland that has been abandoned and along fence rows. The wood is also very hard and dense and excellent for golf clubs, drum sticks, musical instruments, tool handles, flooring, furniture, and veneers.

Once the persimmon does fruit, its very unique, tropical-like fruit will certainly attract a variety of wildlife. After frost hits and fruit becomes decadently sweet, you can expect deer, raccoons, foxes, bears, skunks and various moths and birds to compete with you for the long awaited treat!

## Volunteer for the Tree Sale By Megan DeLeeuw

Our tree sale wouldn't be the success that it is today if it were not for a dedicated group of volunteers—some of whom have been helping for over a decade! Volunteering is a great way to meet new conservation minded friends, give back to the community and log volunteer hours for programs like Master Gardeners and/or Conservation Stewardship Program! RSVP with Megan at [megan.deleeuw@macd.org](mailto:megan.deleeuw@macd.org).

### Tree Sale pre-packing party

**Tuesday, April 9th, 5:30-7:30 PM**

**WCCD office (7203 Jackson Rd)**

Help count and bundle marking flags, fertilizer tablets and other materials prior to the tree sale!

### Tree *Un*packing party

**Thursday, April 25th, time TBD, Farm Council Grounds**

Help the board and other volunteers unload trees and prepare for the sale! Free pizza & beverages for volunteers!

### Tree Days

**Friday, April 26th, 1-6 PM**

**Sat, April 27th, 9-10:30AM**

**Farm Council grounds**

The main event! Help residents select and pick up trees & shrubs!

from an ancient geological era. The carbon, for instance, simply moves among the pools of the natural carbon cycle, of which trees are a part. Fossil carbon causes those pools to overflow. Forests sequester a large percentage of our annual carbon emissions. The caveat is that forests must remain as forests, in particular, as managed forests.

2. Harvesting wood can actually serve benefits other than just timber supplies. Many forest owner goals can be enhanced through harvesting timber. In fact, timber harvesting is often the only way to work towards these goals.

3. Wildlife habitat? Timber harvest results in intentional changes of habitat. Nothing is “destroyed”. There are temporary “winners” and “losers”. However, the same is true with no harvest. It’s all about forest owner preferences and desired future conditions. And, of course, understanding the resources.

4. Trees and forests are not (repeat “not”) responsible for the planet’s fresh oxygen. The oceans claim top-ranking in this function, by far. If oxygen were the only thing forests were good for, we could live without forests.

5. Forest management does far more to maintain biodiversity than any other land use practice. Think of what agriculture has done to the prairies. It’s also the primary cause of deforestation. Even plantation management is far more “natural” than a soybean field. Then also, urban sprawl (and rural splatter) has consumed millions of forest acres. That means both you and me.

6. Many forest products store carbon for decades. This is good. Think of housing or furniture. Even landfills store huge amounts of carbon. Maybe not the best idea, but that carbon and all the other materials will be there in a hundred years, or longer. Landfills can be mined whenever the technology and needs arise.

7. Wood-based energy, especially that involving advanced wood energy systems, is clean, renewable, and sustainable. Additionally, wood-based heating and cooling uses local resources and helps support communities. However, it’s odd that the United States has largely ignored this low-hanging fruit in favor of the technologically more difficult applications of power generation and transportation fuel.

8. Logging managed ecosystems does not destroy forests. Even clearcutting in the appropriate forest types serves to regenerate. That’s why foresters cite clearcutting as one example of a “regeneration cut”. The vast majority of our Lake States wood consumption originates in the region, not from a tropical rainforest cleared by the poor in an attempt to survive. Our forests are managed for sustainability. We could capitalize on that.

9. Electronic communication and digital transfer is not necessarily “greener” than using paper and snail mail. And you cannot “save a tree” by making fewer copies in the copy room. These are ploys by companies and agencies to save money, not forests.

10. We don’t have to “put up” with the forest industry because it supplies us with critical goods. Rather, the industry provides a wide range of services that include water quality, habitat diversity, healthy forests, restoration possibilities, and many other benefits. Trails, vistas, visual quality, and human safety can be enhanced through timber management. Forest owners, public and private, are not going to manage forests unless there is a commercial incentive. It’s one way to help to achieve a better society, economy, and environment.

“Wood is Good” is a lot more than a catchy slogan used by the forest industry for marketing purposes. It’s deeply ingrained in the ecological, social, and economic sciences. Explaining why wood is good requires more than casual consideration.



## Japanese Stiltgrass Primer

By Dr. Shikha Singh

Japanese stiltgrass is an annual grass that is native to Asia, and currently listed on the State of Michigan's invasive species watch list. Invasive species are organisms that are not from around here and cause some time of harm (economic, environmental and/or to human health).

Stiltgrass spreads quickly, once established, it reduces biodiversity by creating large monocultures. Known populations exist in Cass, Washtenaw and Lenawee Counties. While significant treatment progress has been made on several parcels of land, new survey efforts have found additional locations containing Japanese stiltgrass.

Recently, the Jackson, Lenawee, Washtenaw Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (JLW CISMA) and the Department of Natural Resources received funding to increase treatment/management efforts, perform educational outreach and increase mapping efforts. We hope to start management activities in the coming summer months. If you think you may have Japanese stiltgrass, please contact the JLW CISMA coordinator Dr. Shikha Singh at [shikha.singh@macd.org](mailto:shikha.singh@macd.org) or 517-395-2089.

## Upcoming Events:

**February 16th: Washtenaw Local Food Summit** (organized by MSUE) 8AM– 4PM  
Washtenaw Community College. Visit [www.localfoodsummit.org](http://www.localfoodsummit.org) for details.

**February 21st: Washtenaw Farmer Shop Talk**  
9AM—12PM, Farm Council Grounds (5055 Ann Arbor-Saline Rd). Free lunch included. RSVP.

**February 27th: Pesticide Manual Review Class**  
8AM—12PM, MSU Extension Washtenaw (705 N. Zeeb Rd, Ann Arbor). Cost is \$10.


**March 6th: Introduction to Native Planting**  
6PM—8PM, Scio Township Hall. Vern Stephens of Designs by Nature introduces native planting concepts. Cost is \$10, RSVP.

**March 21st: MAEAP 5,000 Verifications**  
10AM—3AM. The Lansing Center. Free lunch included.

**March 27th: Introduction to Beekeeping**  
6PM—8PM, Scio Township Hall. Cost is \$10, RSVP by March 25th.

**April 26th & 27th 2019: Spring Tree and Shrub Sale**

**June 1, 2019: Native Plant Expo & Marketplace & Fish Stock Distribution.**



**Burhop Forestry Consulting**

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TIMBER SALE PREPARATION  
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