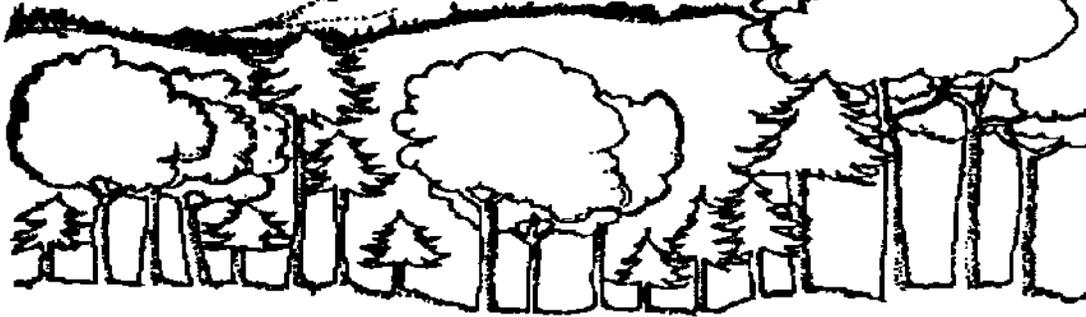




# Tall Timber Topics



A newsletter for those interested in Forestry, Woodland Management and Christmas Trees in Northwest Oregon

Fall 2016

Some of our local woodland owners from right here in Columbia County made national headlines last month! Eve Lonnquist and Lynn Baker, who own Cedar Row Farm in Mist along with Eve’s siblings, were featured in a New York Times article about the potential for small woodland owners to store carbon and sell carbon credits. Here is the link to the article which is well worth the read: <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/27/science/private-forests-global-warming.html>

The idea of forest owners being compensated for the carbon that their trees store has been puzzled over for at least a decade, but has been slow to gain traction. Larger public land owners such as the City of Astoria Watershed have signed carbon deals, but for small woodland owners there are many barriers to entry. That may be changing with new technology making the task of measuring carbon in forests much more streamlined and cost-effective, and with partnerships to help woodland owners access markets.

Locally in NW Oregon, the Pinchot Institute for Conservation has been leading the way in conjunction with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to create carbon offset opportunities for small woodland owners. They have worked with another non-profit, Ecotrust, to develop a quick evaluation tool to assess whether a property has any viable potential to sell carbon—based on property acreage, forest conditions, and management objectives. If the results of that assessment look promising, landowners can enroll in an NRCS program to offset the cost of a management plan and the required carbon inventory, all precursors to a carbon sale. This program is currently available to landowners in Columbia, Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas Counties.

These projects are best suited to landowners with larger (> 70 acre) properties who manage on longer rotations than the industry standard, or who prefer selective harvests or uneven-aged management. Logging is compatible with carbon projects, but landowners must be willing to commit to their management plan for a relatively long time. It’s not for everyone but for some it could be a way to bring in added income while managing with a lighter touch.

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If you would like to explore whether carbon markets might be a fit for your land, you can learn more at the Pinchot Institute’s web page:

<http://www.pinchot.org/gp/RCPP>

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## Upcoming Events



### **Land Stewardship Workshop Series**

Have you recently purchased a rural property or are looking to purchase rural property? This survey workshop series is meant to introduce relevant issues regarding land ownership and provide answers and tips from local experts for new property owners to be successful land managers! At Chemeketa Community College in McMinnville. Cost: \$15/class, includes dinner. Attend one or all! For more information and to register: <http://www.yamhillswcd.org/LandStewardshipWorkshopSeries>

**October 18th, 6-8pm : Visioning and Conservation Planning for Your Rural Property**, Heather Stoven, OSU Extension and Marie Vicksta, Yamhill SWCD

**October 25th, 6-8pm : Introduction to Oregon Water Rights and Small Woodland Management**, Joel Plahn, District 16 Watermaster and Brent O’Nion, ODF Stewardship Forester

**November 1st, 6-8pm : Web Soil Survey, Farm Bill Programs for Beginning Farmer/Rancher, Year Round Pasture Management**, Thomas Hoskins, NRCS and Gene Pirelli, OSU Extension

**November 8th, 6-8pm : Tax Assessments for Rural Properties & Noxious Weed Management**, Scott Maytubby and Derrick Wharff, Current/Incumbent Yamhill County Tax Assessors and Michael Crabtree, Yamhill SWCD

### **OSU Extension Washington County Open House**

**Thursday, October 20th, 3-6 pm, 1815 NW 169th Pl. Suite 1000, Beaverton**

The OSU Washington County Extension office moved over the summer to the new Extension Service Education Center. Come to the open house to learn all about what OSU has to offer in Washington County. Food and prizes! See p. 8 for more information.

### **DEQ Hazardous Waste Collection Event for Farms and Small Businesses**

**Friday, October 21st, 8:00 am—2:00 pm, Jessie Mays Community Ctr, 30975 NW Hillcrest, North Plains**

Farms and small businesses can return mercury and pesticides for free and hazardous waste at a reduced rate. Pre-registration required by 10/14, contact 360-607-5434 or simpson.taylor@cleanharbors.com for more info.

### **Washington County Small Woodlands Association Chapter Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 25th, 7:00 pm, North Plains Fire Station (31370 NW Commercial St.)**

Victor Villegas from OSU Extension will discuss drone technology, research, and potential applications for small woodlands. There will be a drone flight simulator for anyone to try after the presentation!

### **Yamhill County Small Woodlands Association Chapter Meeting**

**Wednesday, October 26, 6:30 pm social/7 pm program, 2050 NE Lafayette Ave, McMinnville**

“Assistance for Woodland Owners”; speakers Josh Togstadt, Yamhill SWCD and Tom Hoskins, NRCS

### **Women Owning Woodlands Network Retreat**

**November 4th—6th, Silver Falls State Park, Silverton**

Three days of small group workshops and sharing knowledge with other women woodland owners. Cost: \$200 covers all food & lodging (\$125 for shared room). Registration deadline: Oct. 18. Contact: Tiffany.fegel@oregonstate.edu

### **Columbia County Small Woodlands Association Annual Meeting & Banquet**

**Saturday, November 12, 5:30 pm, Quincy Grange**

Speaker: Mary Castle, Sr. Engineer for Weyerhaeuser on the topic of roads and rock pits. Dinner cost: \$12/adults or \$6/under 12. RSVP: Mark Dreyer, 503-369-9592 or mdreyer51@msn.com

### **Yamhill County Small Woodlands Association Chapter Meeting**

**Wednesday, November 16, 6:30 pm social/7 pm program, 2050 NE Lafayette Ave, McMinnville**

“Forest Restoration”; speaker Steve Walker of Dupee Valley Timber LLC will talk about their work to convert non-stocked and poorly stocked land into well-stocked Douglas-fir forest and developing natural oak stands into oak savannah and oak woodland.

### **Washington County Small Woodlands Association Annual Banquet**

**Saturday, November 19th, 5:30 pm, Meriwether Golf Club, 5200 SW Rood Bridge Rd, Hillsboro**

Speaker is Dr. Thomas Maness, Dean of the OSU College of Forestry. Many door prizes. Cost is \$18/person. You must RSVP by Nov. 10 to Bob Shumaker, 503-324-7825.

## What to do about those drought-damaged trees?

By Amy Grotta and Brad Withrow-Robinson, OSU Forestry & Natural Resources Extension

Adapted from TreeTopics, <http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/treetopics>, September 7, 2016

We have certainly experienced some significant drought conditions lately. Stressed and dying trees are showing up all around the Willamette Valley, with concern that this could lead to beetle outbreaks and still more trees killed. Is it time to throw in the towel, cut your losses (so to speak) and just salvage everything that is looking poorly? Maybe, maybe not. The decision needs to be considered carefully, weighing individual sites and stand conditions along with your objectives for your property. **Anybody considering a salvage harvest needs to look before they leap.**

[As we've discussed several times](#) over the past few years, 2013-2015 were hard drought years and we continue to see the cumulative effects on our trees. Many trees, conifers in particular, have dead tops or have died outright. Since drought symptoms typically take a season or two to be expressed, what showed up this year is a result of damage from 2015. So far 2016 is proving to be a more normal year, though it remains to be seen how the fall and winter will play out. If we continue to get decent rainfall then we should start to see new damage taper off, but it's too early to tell.

Beetles are a concern and both Extension and ODF have been getting plenty of calls about this. Yes, bark beetles have been more active in the Valley this year in drought-stressed stands. We expect this since beetles make their living off of dying trees, and are often seen more as a symptom than a cause of problems. Having drought stressed trees does not automatically mean bark beetles will come find them. And there are several types of bark beetles, some more damaging than others.

That said, if you have trees that suffered partial damage a year or two ago, and then died completely this year, it is worth taking a closer look on these and surrounding live trees for signs and symptoms of bark beetles such as pitch streams, frass, and fading crowns on live trees. Fact sheets from the Oregon Department of Forestry on the [Douglas-fir beetle](#) and the [fir engraver](#) will help you. If you see something of concern you can contact the ODF Forest Health experts or your OSU Extension Agent for help (for backyard trees, call a certified arborist). Where there are significant numbers of beetles, landowners will be looking to sanitize their stands by removing infested trees before new adults emerge next spring.



Group mortality of Douglas-fir in May 2015. Douglas-fir beetle was found in all these trees. Photo Kara Shaw



Reddish frass in bark crevices is a sign of Douglas-fir beetle. Photo: B. Withrow-Robinson

**This is where you want to exercise caution and be wary of door knockers.**

Regrettably there is a history of shady operators approaching landowners telling them one story or another about their trees dying or markets disappearing and encouraging them to harvest trees "before it is too late". It is invariably tied to an offer to take care of the problem for them. Unfortunately, the landscape is littered with stories of folks who have accepted those offers and sold off some timber they had not otherwise intended to sell, often for much less than it was worth.

(continued next page)

## What to do about those drought-damaged trees? (continued)

We are aware of a number of small woodland owners in the Valley having received unsolicited offers to buy their timber as a way to mitigate drought damage. The “buyers” warn of all the trees damaged by drought being killed by beetles and being lost unless harvested, and encouraging people to sell and get some value before everything dies.

Unsolicited offers to buy timber are nothing new to small woodland owners, and we always advise to be wary of them. But this seems like a time to be particularly cautious.

An unsolicited buyer offering to assess the health of your trees for you is a clear conflict of interest and a definite **red flag**. One outcome could be the buyer exaggerating the potential for future loss, thereby convincing you to sell healthy trees you had no intention to log or to accept a lower price for the timber than you'd like (claiming that it's “better than nothing”). Have a third party help you evaluate damage and if you think you want to proceed with salvage or sanitation harvest, move ahead as recommended with any harvest and seek bids from different operators.

You should realize that nobody knows the fate of these trees with any certainty. Drought conditions may be winding down, or may stick around for a while yet. Both choices – wait and see or do some preemptive salvage – involve risks that you need weigh. Don't be driven by speculative claims about the trees dying, and do not panic. One or two beetle-killed trees in a stand is not an uncommon event and not a certain epidemic in the making. The decision to salvage needs to be well-timed and well-planned. Starting the job and then not finishing before beetles emerge in spring, or not [properly dealing with slash](#), can make matters worse instead of better. [Applying pheromone caps](#) is another option to protect healthy trees if beetle-infested material cannot be removed in a timely manner.

So, suppose that you've done your homework and decide that salvaging drought-damaged or insect-damaged trees is in your best interest and meets your property objectives. You still have some due diligence to take care of. Get bids and ask the logger for references, go see his past jobs and talk with people who worked with him. Contact ODF to find out if there are any past violations, or the Association of Oregon Loggers for information on their credentials. Finally, insist on a written contract. Consult these publications for more guidance: [Small Scale Harvesting for Woodland Owners](#) and [Contracts for Woodland Owners](#).

## New Publications

### [Wildlife in Managed Forests: The American Beaver](#)

Published by Oregon Forest Resources Institute. This 24-page technical guide discusses beaver ecology and behavior as well as management recommendations to balance wildlife benefits with road and timber resource protection. Free download or order from: <http://oregonforests.org/content/ofri-resources>.



### [Managing Small Woodlands for Raptors: Oregon & Washington](#)

Published by the Woodland Fish & Wildlife Group. This 12-page brochure discusses common raptors in the Pacific NW and the types of forests they inhabit, as well strategies for small woodland owners to identify and enhance raptor habitat. Free download at: <http://westernforestry.org/WoodlandFishAndWildlife/>.

### [Propagating Shrubs, Vines and Trees from Stem Cuttings](#)

By G.N.M. Kumar. PNW 152 publication in the OSU Extension Catalog. This publication outlines the step-by-step process of successfully propagating plants with stem cuttings. It includes reference guides for 117 easy-to-root deciduous and evergreen plants, including horticultural and native species. Free download at: <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/>.

## Young Stand Thinning Strategies

By Brad Withrow-Robinson, OSU Forestry & Natural Resources Extension (Benton, Linn and Polk Counties)

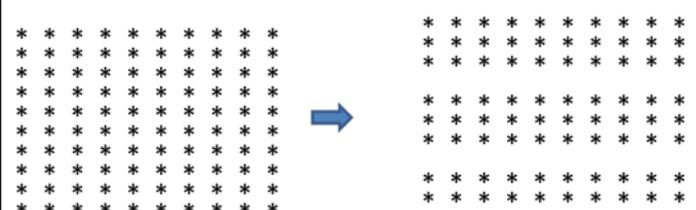
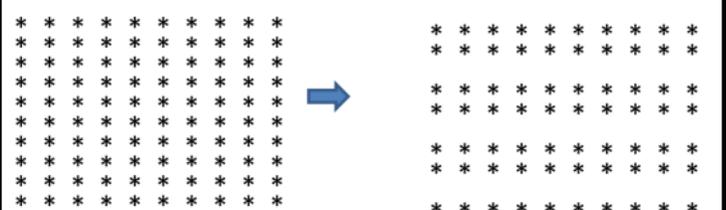
Adapted from TreeTopics, <http://blogs.oregonstate.edu/treetopics>, August 5, 2016

Continuing with [previous discussions of young stand management](#) and especially the need for thinning, I'd like to look at strategies for thinning a young stand. Let's start with some things to keep in mind about Young Stand Thinning or YST (also called precommercial thinning or PCT):

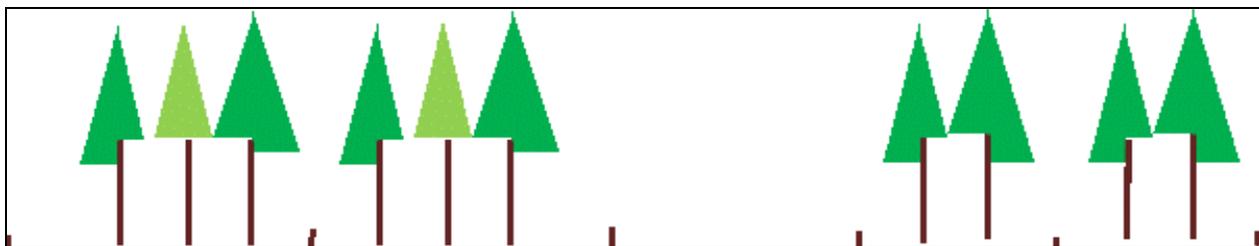
- The idea of young stand thinning (YST) is to avoid harmful overcrowding later by removing excess trees early on.
- The impact of thinning out a tree is very local. The overall stocking level (trees per acre) can be misleading. It is the spacing among immediate neighbors that counts.
- The greatest benefit of YST is increased growing space rather than selection among trees. Creating more growing space to benefit as many leave trees as possible is the primary goal. Culling is secondary.
- YST is key to achieving longer rotations and many non-timber objectives many family forest landowners desire.

As discussed previously, the common practice of planting Douglas-fir on a 10x10 grid gives about 440 trees per acre (tpa), which is too many trees to carry to an initial thinning harvest. We plant extra trees to allow for seedling losses in the establishment phase, but depending on survival, we will likely be well above our target for the initial thinning harvest (250-300tpa). So we need to remove 1/4 to 1/3 of the trees in a YST if trees are to reach a usable size before they become overcrowded. There are several approaches to that.

If we have a plantation with a regular and uniform planting pattern, a very simple and efficient approach to this is row removal. Removing every fourth row would reduce to 75% of original trees/planting spaces (reducing from 440 tpa to 330 tpa, below left) and removing every third row would reduce to 67% (from 440 tpa to 295 tpa, below right).

 <p><i>This illustrates removing each fourth row. Each tree in the two rows adjacent to the row removed is given space on one side (a common thinning rule of thumb), but not on the third row, so not every tree benefits similarly. Still, this may be an adequate thinning if we saw moderate initial survival (75-85%) and do some additional thinning in the inner leave row.</i></p>	 <p><i>In this illustration removing each third row, notice that every remaining tree is given space on one side, ensuring that every tree benefits similarly. This thinning ratio is well suited to stands with high planting survival, but might be overly aggressive in stands with more modest survival.</i></p>
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Besides the mechanical and intellectual ease of row thinning, it can have added benefits if you are a little late in doing the job, and having trouble getting the larger trees to fall to the ground. Felling a row gives room to fell trees into an open space.



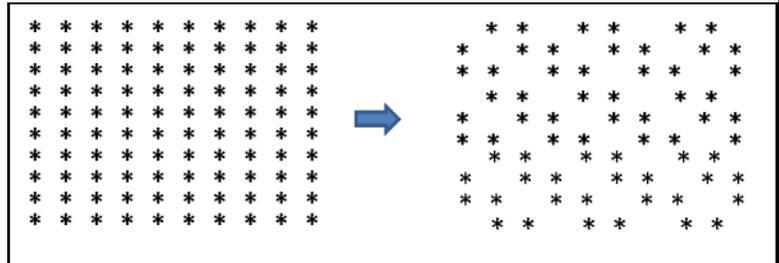
*This illustrates the two systematic thinning strategies (1/4 left, 1/3 right), the local effect of a thinning gap and how it allows a tree to retain more crown. The greatest benefit comes from releasing each tree on at least one side.*

(Continued on next page)

### Young Stand Thinning Strategies (continued)

Another systematic and only slightly less straight forward approach is to remove every third or fourth tree in a row. That sound too easy? By saying you will choose any one of every 3 or 4 trees in each row, you can do some limited selection and remove small or defective trees preferentially. But don't get carried away, stay focused on the main goal of removing one of each group of three or four trees, not culling. That comes later. When you come upon a gap with a missing tree (previously thinned by deer, voles or drought) you may count it as a removal and move on, or not, depending on you actual stocking, your target stocking, and how many trees you need to remove. You can also take a couple rows at a time and consider the 3 or 4 spaces in each row as a group of 6 or 8 from which to choose your two trees to thin out.

So there you have a few simple approaches that will allow you to expand the growing space and effectively redistribute resources among your leave trees through YST. Each can be done with a minimal amount of thought and debate. There are other schemes that also work. But the point is to choose an approach that makes sense to you, one that you can do consistently, effectively and efficiently. The earlier you do it (maybe around age 10 in western Oregon) the more efficient and beneficial it will be.



*In this illustration removing every third tree in a row, notice that it also creates a pretty uniform benefit to all trees. Each leave tree generally gets opened up on two sides (when removal is staggered row to row), benefiting every tree similarly.*

Remember, the idea of YST is to make room for trees to grow without harmful competition until more can be removed in the first thinning harvest, which should then pay for itself. It is at that initial thinning harvest that you can make more complicated decisions about spacing and arrangement to reflect your long term goals for a stand, such as habitat diversity or timber quality.

Young stand thinning is not all that complicated, but it does seem hard for people to get done. If you have too many trees it is a very important step towards keeping you on track. Without it, it is often harder to achieve many landowners' goals, especially those relating to aesthetics or habitat diversity.

### Trees and Forestry in the News

#### New Oregon State Forester

The Oregon Board of Forestry unanimously selected Peter Daugherty as the next State Forester. Daugherty, whose appointment became effective Oct. 1, had been serving as ODF's Chief of the Private Forests Division. He takes over as the 13th State Forester since the agency's creation in 1911, replacing Doug Decker who has retired.



#### Hampton Lumber of Portland acquires Banks Lumber mill

Hampton Lumber has acquired the assets of the Banks Lumber mill, just months after the mill had laid off employees and ceased operations. Hampton plans to upgrade the mill and reopen in about six months. More in [The Oregonian article](#) from August 2016.

### Reading this on paper?

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Just send an email to [vicki.krenz@oregonstate.edu](mailto:vicki.krenz@oregonstate.edu) and request to be on the forestry email list.

Please indicate which county you are in. Include a physical address and phone number (so we can remove you from our paper mailing list and keep our email list current).

## Shrubs for Wildlife: Vine Maple

By Amy Grotta, OSU Forestry and Natural Resources Extension



For the fourth installment in our [series on native shrubs that are beneficial to wildlife](#), I've chosen one that appropriate to the season, provides some nice fall color to our forests. Now I've met more than a few woodland owners who are not fans of vine maple; it's not a favorite of those who prefer a tidy or parklike forest. Working or wandering in mature forests you've probably tripped over it or crawled under it and possibly cursed it under your breath. Nevertheless, vine maple is another of those "brush" species that benefits wildlife in numerous ways. With some tolerance for its rambling ways you can find a place for this species to provide that service on your woodland in concert with your other land management goals. If you are interested in enhancing wildlife habitat on your property, read on for our species profile.

**Species name:** Vine maple (*Acer circinatum*)

**Description:** A large, multi-stemmed large shrub or small tree. Like all maples, leaves are lobed like a fan or the palm of your hand ("palmate") and in opposite arrangement on the branch; seeds are in winged pairs (samaras). The bark is smooth and greenish. Vine maple grows on moist sites in sun or shade, in regenerating to mature forests. In sun, its habit is denser and erect; seed production is more abundant, and leaves turn orange to red in fall. In a shady understory, it lives up to its name, with long spindly stems that arch to the ground and re-root upon contact. Fall foliage is less brilliant in the shade, and fewer seeds are produced.

**Wildlife value:** Vine maple is considered a preferred and nutritious summer forage for deer and elk. Elk continue to browse the twigs and buds in winter. Squirrels will cache the seeds for winter feeding. In open regenerating (i.e. early seral) areas, songbirds rely on deciduous shrubs such as vine maple for nesting cover and will forage for insects that feed on the foliage.

**Management considerations:** Vine maple is considered a "good shrub to leave behind", or carry over from one timber rotation to the next to support early seral associated songbirds. Doing so, acknowledge that you'll have to grant it a little real estate as it won't play too well with little neighboring conifer seedlings. You don't need a lot to make a difference. Leaving vine maple along the edges of patch cuts or in clumps with other retained shrubs reduces interference with planted trees. In mature stands, vine maple will fill in the understory after thinning or disturbances allow light to filter through the canopy, providing a food resource and cover for deer and elk.

References:

Jensen, E. 2013. [Shrubs to Know in Pacific Northwest Forests](#) (OSU Extension Catalog)

Uchytil, R. 1989. [Acer circinatum](#). (USFS Fire Effects Information System Online)

Oregon Forest Resources Institute. 2015. [Wildlife in Managed Forests: Early Seral-Associated Songbirds](#)

Woodland Fish & Wildlife. 2014. [Managing for Deer and Elk on Small Woodlands](#).



Two photos taken on the same day and site in late September. Top, on the edge of a patch cut with colorful foliage and abundant seeds. Bottom, in adjacent mature stand with green foliage and few seeds.



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