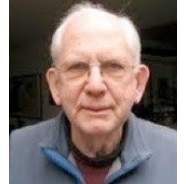


# Newsletter

**SPRING 2015**  
**BGWA Member Newsletter**

## Introduction

Malcolm Silver, Newsletter Editor



Hola!

This is the first Newsletter of the group formed by the merger of the Bruce and Grey County Woodlot Associations.

Most members indicated they wish to receive a Newsletter via the Internet. Thus, it will appear on the website in PDF form that may be downloaded and printed-out if you wish; a small minority asked to receive all their communications by postal mail only and their needs will be met.

Because the Communications Committee wished to get a Newsletter out ASAP this one appears as a No Name edition. The reason is the Board, with your help, will define both a new name for the group and establish its logo; then the Newsletter can have a proper banner heading.

The Committee aims to produce four Newsletters per annum, each appearing seasonally. In format each will contain an article from the president outlining Board and other activities; include informative articles about your woodlots and nature in them; list upcoming events and refer you to interesting articles that cannot be reproduced, because of copyright restrictions. Again, the Communications Committee would welcome your comment and any articles that you care to submit.



### **TREE PLANTING WORKSHOP: Saturday May 16th, 10 - noon**

Are you considering a tree planting project on your property? Or have you ever wondered how professionals put in so many trees and boost their chances of success? This BGWA workshop, guided by tree planting professionals, will bring you on-site to a current project and step you through the process from beginning to end. **FREE for current members; \$10/person non-members.**

Location: Conc 12, first laneway south of Grey Rd 16, just west of Keady in Chatsworth Twp. There is no fire number at this lot. Look for event sign by the green gate. Park safely on Conc 12 and walk in.

**COMPLETE DETAILS AND REGISTRATION AT [WWW.BGWA.CA](http://WWW.BGWA.CA)**

### *A new name?!*

Join the discussion at  
www.bgwa.ca... read  
others' suggestions.  
Offer up your own.  
It's your association!

### *Your vote counts!*

BGWA general vote  
closes May 7.  
Review Constitution  
and vote online to  
approve or not.

#### **BGWA MEMBER NEWSLETTER**

is published quarterly and distributed to current BGWA members. Submissions are always welcomed on any topic related to BGWA's vision:

*Promoting healthy forests and ecosystems in Bruce and Grey Counties through education, recreation and sustainable management practices.*

Information, opinions, and directions in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect BGWA policy.

bgwa-webadmin@naturemail.ca

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## President's Message

Chris VanderHout



While I write this spring has arrived and yet another long, cold winter is a memory. Two indicators of this change in the forest are wild leeks popping up through the forest leaf litter and hepatica showing their early flowers. The forest is definitely awakening after its long winter sleep.

During this consistently cold winter I found good opportunity for the improvement cutting that I do in my 28 acre forested property located just south of Ayton; the South Saugeen River runs through it. The property is quite hilly and I cut trees and slice the wood into firewood lengths collecting the pieces in the early spring. This has me traveling on forest pathways and carrying wood to the pathways and that is what I am doing in the evenings right now, when time permits. Though this process is labour intensive I like that it keeps forest disturbance to a minimum. I have been active in my Woodlot since purchasing the land in 2002 and have had the forest registered under a MFTIP since the first year we owned the property.

My wife, Christine Hoy and I moved to Grey County from the Hamilton Area. She works as a laboratory technologist. I co owned a metal stamping shop within my trade as a tool and die

maker, and since building our home here, launched into a career of green construction. I co-own a company called Evolve Builders Group that is involved in all types of green building systems including using straw bales to build walls that are super energy efficient. Christine, our 4 year old son Mola and I are permanent residents here and enjoy Grey and Bruce counties for all the diversity they offer.

I absolutely love working and being in the forest and observing all elements that make it the miraculous ecosystem that it is. I am passionate about nature and when called to step into the role of the President of this Association, it seemed a natural fit.

I had been a member of the Grey County Association since 2002, and was inspired by what it did and stood for. I sat on its Board for 2 years prior to this and in that time got a good sense of how the board operates. I am very excited to have been a part of seeing the Grey and Bruce Associations merge and about the possibilities for that organization to move forward. I am committed to the work the association does and the services and learning experiences it offers to you, the members.

#### Board Update

Moving now to activities of the new Board of Directors it has had two meetings since the AGM in March, with good progress. Board Minutes will not be forwarded to members. Rather, to keep you up-

*(Continued on page 3)*

(Continued from page 2)

to-date on what your Board is working on, I will use this space in each newsletter to recap Board activities in a message appearing in each Newsletter. Below are the highlights of what the board has accomplished:

- The executive group was formed – see list on back page.
- The programs & events, communications/newsletter and membership committees were formed.
- The Constitution was reviewed, revised and forwarded to the membership for a vote on acceptance.
- Planned and set up a booth at the Elmwood Woodlot conference
- Reviewed treasurer's reports and agreed to a proposed budget.
- Requested members, through our website, to suggest a new name for the conjoint association.
- Planned a tree planting workshop with other suggested workshops yet to be determined, for example - chainsaw safety, tree marking, mushroom walk, pruning, wild edibles, stream crossings and cedar management.
- Committed to providing 4 newsletters/annum, headed-up by Malcolm Silver.
- Some directors will contact old members who had not renewed their membership to invite them to stay with us.

Kevin Prendon attended the Green Belt review planning meeting in Owen Sound to represent our association in that discussion.

Ron Stewart will sit on the Forest Festival planning committee; Craig Todd with the Grey Bruce Envirothon and Jim Cullen with the Roots of Bruce

The board has 4 more meetings planned this year on Thursday evenings at 7:00 pm with dates and locations as follows. Members are welcome to attend:

Jun 11 - GSCA, Owen Sound

Aug 13 -Sulphur Springs, Hanover

Oct 8 - GSCA, Owen Sound

Dec 10 -Sulphur Springs, Hanover

I am very pleased to see the enthusiastic involvement by all board members and look forward to many exciting events and a continuation of the great foundational work initiated by the previous two organizations. We are very lucky to have this framework and will continue building a strong organization that affects and influences the communities and environment that we all live in.

Thanks to all for your support during the coming year!



## How do you want to hear from BGWA?



**Neil Baldwin, Chair  
Communications Sub-Committee**

From my off-grid home, surrounded by 50 acres of woodlot in the west end of Chatsworth Twp, I can look after our BGWA web site... yay, a useful application of technology! Looking at the most recent list, all but 5 current members have email. We are doing our best to use technology to improve communication with members, yet also ensure nobody is left out.

If you have provided BGWA your email address, that is the mode you will receive all essential communications which include:

- Newsletter
- Formal notices as required by Constitution (AGM, Election of Directors, etc.).
- Motions up for general vote by membership
- Membership renewal requests
- Occasional updates/events when it is impossible for it to wait until next newsletter.

If you have not provided BGWA with an email, you will receive all this same essential communications by postal mail.

If you want additional and more timely updates & news beyond the essential communications, you can subscribe your email in the "Stay Connected" box on our web site [www.bgwa.ca](http://www.bgwa.ca) This is the best option if you like to feel involved in BGWA or if you like to be first in the know!



## Forest & Nature Notes

Prepared by Malcolm Silver

### Winter damage in my forest and that in urban gardens.

On my 200 acre lot I have stands of mixed hardwoods, white cedars & evergreen plantations of various ages, some planted in the past as monocultures of pine or spruce but more recent ones have European larch, cherry and black walnut mixed with evergreens. With snow cover gone, I have been assessing damage from this past winter. A toll was caused by human or wildlife activity and by the effects of weather. Surveying the damage I must assume a *laissez faire* attitude about it and contrast that with preventive steps an urban gardener might take.

### Human damage

Some kind souls rode snowmobiles through a field of young trees that abut the county road. I have signs indicating trees are planted there & fences but when snow is high that does not deter irresponsible riders. Many larches had been bent; it is possible snow caused some of the latter damage & the trees will straighten, but others had been snapped off at their bases and destroyed. One is not allowed to shoot snowmobilers although if caught they could be charged with trespass. I grind my teeth, must regard these as unavoidable losses & consider replanting with other species.

Probably the urban gardener does not often encounter this annoyance.

### Wildlife damage

Deer sheltered in my cedar stands & helped themselves to foliage; they also nipped-off small cherry tree branches and those of small pines. Rodents like voles, mice and jack rabbits had been busy.

Subsurface damage is often caused by voles, which feed on the roots and bark of trees; mice feed on saplings below the snow and within the grass layer. This type of damage with or without girdling could explain why some young trees that appeared healthy in the fall were now brown & dead. Rabbits assault bark and tender buds on areas higher up the bole than

voles and mice reach. They like the trunks of young, thin-barked, trees like apples serviceberries and poplars. Again, some had been girdled. Most of these latter trees are in hedgerows and I don't worry about their loss. In many instances damage is recoverable providing growing points or buds are preserved. However, future development of young trees will be delayed; some may coppice

Porcupines are busy in pine plantations during all seasons. Sometimes they fatally girdle small sapling or older trees. Affected trees responded to damage by pouring out resin with those sites a possible portage for future infections.

I do not worry about wild turkeys or animals that hibernate and do not shoot wildlife. However I do allow some hunting on the property, to limit animal numbers.

In contrast, an urban gardener might be driven to distraction seeing precious specimens destroyed or damaged. Rabbits particularly like deciduous shrubs. A five foot tall metal fence around a small garden is the best defense against most critters. Secure the bottom tight to the ground or bury it several inches to prevent rabbits, voles and other small wildlife from crawling underneath.

Precious saplings can be protected by metal or plastic tree guards. They should extend two inches below the soil line, assuring they don't damage roots when implanted and reach 45-60 cm above the anticipated snow line. Make sure that from year to year, as a tree grows, a guard does not impede growth.

Homemade or commercial repellents can also be used. Make sure they are safe on the plants being treated and apply them before animals start feeding; it is easier to prevent damage than break a habit of dining in your garden. The most effective repellents for rodents contain thiram, a fungicide that is distasteful, yet does not harm rodents. It is a water-soluble spray or paint and is applied with a surfactant. One application is usually enough for the entire dormant season but use multiple applications during the growing season.

*(Continued on page 5)*

*(Continued from page 4)*

Garden specimens nipped to their base can coppice but if one was grafted the original root stock will grow instead of the grafted species, leading to disappointment. Sadly animal decimation delays shrub and tree growth. The key in deer-damaged evergreens is the presence of growing points or buds on browsed branches. Those that have had all buds devoured will not produce new growth come spring. As a result, some small specimens will be destroyed. Larger evergreens may permanently lose their lower branches; indeed, I have seen some eaten off as high as an animal could reach. Since buds on arborvitae and yews are difficult to see, wait until late spring before taking action. Branches that are completely bare in early June can be removed.

### **Weather damage: Desiccation**

This was obvious as discolored, burned evergreen needles or tree leaves and was worst both on the side facing the prevailing wind and affecting recent plantings. Desiccation is a significant cause of evergreen damage. It occurs when water leaves a plant faster than it is taken in. Needles of evergreens transpire some moisture even during winter months. During severely cold weather, the ground may freeze to a depth beyond a root system, thereby cutting off the water supply. Water loss is greatest during strong winds and sunny, mild weather. The sun's heat can cause stomata on the lower sides of leaves to open, increasing transpiration. Here, in prevention I must hope for heavy autumnal rains & that there may be a thaw in later winter months; sadly not the case this past winter.

The urban gardener can both protect plants from prevailing winds and assure heavy watering in the late fall that will supply water to the entire root system before the ground freezes. This practice is especially important for evergreens. Watering when there are warm days during January, February, and March is also important. Mulching is a means to control erosion and water loss. A 2-inch layer will reduce the latter and help maintain uniform soil moisture around roots.

Do not bother with anti-desiccant compounds sold in garden centers or catalogues, research has shown that they degrade rapidly and are of little value.

Small evergreens can be protected by using wind-breaks made off burlap or similar materials. Wind-breaks both reduce wind force and shade plants. They are best erected by attaching materials to a frame around a plant or, a complete wrapping of straw or burlap can be used. Do not use black plastic; during the day heat builds up inside it increasing an extreme fluctuation between day and night temperatures and speeding-up bud growth in the spring, making them more susceptible to a late frost.

Frost heaving occurs when alternate freezing and thawing of the soil pushes small, shallow-rooted plants out of the ground, exposing the roots to wind desiccation. Mulch acts as a buffer to the soil. It reduces the alternate freezing and thawing which causes frost heaving. If a plant has been heaved from the ground, replant it as soon as the soil thaws. Unless the root system is small enough to be pushed into soft soil easily with the fingers, dig-up the plant, retaining as much of the root system as possible within a soil ball, and replant it.

### **Freezing**

Freezing injury is caused by ice crystals rupturing cell walls. It is obvious as dead branch tips and branches. A sharp temperature change between day and night may freeze water within a trunk causing it to explode or split open in a symptom called frost cracking. If not severe, these cracks close when warm weather arrives, although wood fibers within may not grow back together. This is sometimes called southwest injury because it is commonly found on the southwest side of shade trees where warm afternoon sun creates further extremes between day and night temperatures. The sun can also prematurely stimulate the opening of leaf buds in the spring; freezing night temperatures might kill these buds.

The urban gardener should realize that new growth stimulated in early fall by late summer fertilization or pruning may not have time to harden sufficiently to survive sudden temperature drops below freezing.

*(Continued on page 6)*

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Avoid wounding trees when they are young. Wrapping trunks with burlap strips or commercial tree wrap, painting them white, or even shading with a board may prevent bark splitting. All of these methods reflect sunlight and reduce heat build-up during the day, thus reducing temperature fluctuations that cause splitting. Any wraps should be removed, after one season, to prevent insect or moisture damage. Even with good management, injury to young growth or insufficiently hardened tissues may still occur as a result of unusual weather patterns.

Little can be done to prevent injury in these instances. Root injury may occur in containers and planters, or balled and burlapped (B&B) stock, which has been left exposed during the winter. Lethal root temperatures can start at -2 C on some species. Containerized or B&B plants should be placed in protected areas, sunk into the ground, grouped together, or heavily mulched to avoid low temperature injury to roots.

### Breakage

Breakage of branches is usually related to snow and ice and their excess weight. It was not a major issue this past winter. High winds compound the damage to ice-covered plants. It may take the form of misshapen plants, or actually result in broken branches and split trunks.

For both me in my forests and the urban gardener, proper pruning at an appropriate time during the year is effective in reducing damage by ice and snow. Particularly important is the removal of weak, narrow-angled, V-shaped crotches. Also, avoid late-summer pruning that stimulates new, tender growth and reduces the nutrient supply to a plant.

*My thanks to Anne Lennox for reviewing this article.  
Much appreciate your help & efforts! Malcolm.*



### Bald Squirrels

Mother Nature has been tardy in giving us spring-like weather this year. Nevertheless, squirrels have reappeared from hibernation. Theirs is not the winter-long sleep of a groundhog, for example, for they are active on some milder winter days. Some animals reappear sleek and fat but others are scruffy and bear unattractive areas of hair loss.

The most common cause of this change is a variety of superficial fungal diseases generally termed dermatomycoses. The hair of an infected squirrel typically breaks off at the skin, leaving a fine stubble of short hairs. Damp weather is thought to play a role in some fungal outbreaks. Most animals will eventually gain an immune response and recover from the fungal infection with no apparent consequences.

Some might assume that the baldness is a result of mange, a disease caused by microscopic mites that burrow into the skin causing hair loss, with associated dry, thickened and dark skin, a condition most commonly spread by direct animal to animal contact. But this assumption is usually wrong.

Some hair loss in our squirrels is thought to be an inherited condition where the hair follicles are non-functional or absent, although studies confirming this have not been done. These squirrels have normal, but bare skin.

So, the next time you see a spring-time squirrel with hair loss, don't be alarmed. In most cases, the hair will return with no apparent ill affects to the animal.

## Tree Planting Primer

By Steve Bowers, Trees Ontario

It appears that winter is slowly losing its grip on our landscape and spring will soon be here along with the burst of activity it brings. Spring is planting time, not just for farm crops, but also for trees. Organizations or contractors involved with tree planting are in a similar situation to farmers during spring as they try to get their crop planted in a timely fashion in the face of potential weather issues and a multitude of other challenges. One of the biggest challenges tree planters face is last minute requests for assistance at this busiest time of year. While they do their best to accommodate late requests, if you are interested in planting trees on your property, it might be best to start planning right now for tree planting in the spring of 2016.

There are many things to think about for a tree planting project. First of all, you need to come up with a tree planting plan that will clearly outline details of your project. It takes time to do a proper site inspection, review soil type and drainage conditions, develop maps as well as factor in other considerations such as access trails, aesthetics, likely future management activities, etc. An accurate measure of area and deciding on spacing between trees are basic requirements in order to calculate the number of trees required for your project.

The choice of tree species will depend on what your primary objectives for tree planting are. Of course the species selected must also be suited to the soil and drainage conditions on your site. Unique challenges on your site and the type of tending to be used will also affect species choice. For example, if your site has a heavy deer or rodent population, you'll likely want to avoid species such as red oak that are favourite food choices. Your ability or willingness to provide after planting care will also affect species choice. Many of the hardwood species require more care after planting than conifers (e.g. controlling competing vegetation by mowing or cultivating between rows, additional herbicide application, etc.).

Of course your species choice is also affected by what is available at the nurseries. You have a better chance of getting the species you want if they are ordered well in advance. Leaving your order until the last minute may mean that some species are out of stock.

Your site may need preparation to facilitate the tree planting operation and enhance potential tree survival and growth. If your site is currently cultivated, you may wish to establish a cover crop such as low growing Dutch white clover that will help stabilize the site against erosion and help prevent weeds from invading the site while also being easily controlled with herbicides in the area immediately adjacent to the trees. A cover crop can sometimes be frost seeded onto the site in early spring before planting depending on what crop was in the field the previous year. This approach works well for soybean stubble, but corn stubble tends to plug the planting machine so once again, advance planning can be very helpful. When heavy vegetation is already present on the site, mowing and / or banded herbicide application in the fall prior to planting may be needed. For field windbreaks you may need to level the site, remove brush or other debris and possibly discuss the project with your neighbour.

Of course you also need to plan for ongoing monitoring to check for health issues, assess replanting requirements or just to enjoy watching your young plantation grow.

If you are interested in planting trees, by all means contact a local tree planting agency or contractor to see if they can accommodate your project this spring. If they can't, don't just forget about it until next spring; start planning now so you'll be ready to implement your project next year.

If you are uncertain who to talk about tree planting in your area feel free to contact me and I'll try to help point you in the right direction. My phone number is 519-887-9137 or email [srbowers@tcc.on.ca](mailto:srbowers@tcc.on.ca)

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**Program & Events**

Cam Bennett  
Carl Sadler  
Ron Stewart

## New Science & Interesting Articles

### Mountain pine beetle genome decoded

The genome of the mountain pine beetle – the insect that has devastated B.C.'s lodgepole pine forests – has been decoded by researchers at the University of British Columbia and Canada's Michael Smith Genome Sciences Centre. The insect has 12 pairs of chromosomes and approximately 13,000 genes. The genome revealed large variation among individuals of the species. Researchers isolated genes that help detoxify defense compounds found under the bark of the tree – where the beetles live and genes that degrade plant cell walls, which allow the beetles to get nutrients from the tree. This new information may offer better means of tackling the pest. . For more information visit <http://thetriaproject.ca>

### Could maple syrup help cut use of antibiotics?

A concentrated extract of maple syrup makes disease-causing bacteria more susceptible to antibiotics, according to laboratory experiments. The findings suggest that combining maple syrup extract with common antibiotics could increase the microbes' susceptibility, leading to lower antibiotic usage.

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/04/150416132632.htm>

### Oral milk thistle extract stops colorectal cancer stem cells from growing tumors

A new study shows that orally administering the chemical silibinin, purified from milk thistle, slows the ability of colorectal cancer stem cells to grow the disease. When stem cells from tumors grown in silibinin-fed conditions were re-injected into new models, the cells failed to develop equally aggressive tumors even in the absence of silibinin. More details: <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/04/150420144350.htm>

### Pine Needle tea

Pine is an excellent source of vitamin C, something we all probably use after our never-ending winter. This is a good time to pick pine needles as spring spurs sap movement within the tree. but you can harvest them anytime during the year. Infusing the needles with hot water in a tea is the simplest way to enjoy them, particularly if you relish the piney taste.

*Caution: If you do this, be sure you're harvesting white pine or another safe-to-consume pine species as not all pines or evergreens are edible! Source: Bangor Daily News.*