

Greenleaves

Newsletter of the Bruce Grey Woodlands Association

SUMMER 2016



www.bgwa.ca

Introduction

Neil Baldwin, "Guest" Newsletter Editor



In an anomaly of timing, both Malcolm (our Newsletter Editor) and Chris (our President) are on vacation so I am Chief Cook and Bottle Washer for this edition of *Greenleaves*!

I was tempted to employ the "when the cat's away the mice will play" principle and either do something funky or attempt something humorous with this edition. But, as it happens, a lack of time and lack of creativity got the better of me. What's more, being the son of an accountant and having half those genetics, you may appreciate that humour is unlikely... and should it occur it would be dry humour, which means you would realize it was funny only long after you read it.

Ordinarily I just do the newsletter visual layout and Malcolm looks after soliciting, vetting and checking all the content so bear with me – and I know that Malcolm will likely chastise me for missing a scientific name which should have been italicized © But in Malcolm's absence this seems a good opportunity to thank him, on behalf of all BGWA members, for the many hours he spends on newsletter content, including researching & writing many of the articles himself.

ANNUAL MEMBERS' BBQ - SATURDAY SEP 10th 10AM - 2PM Rain-or-Shine



At Grey-Sauble Conservation Centre, 237897 Inglis Falls Rd, Owen Sound
Morning program features edible wilds guided hike with Nature Educator & Tracker Alexis Burnett from EarthTracks wilderness school, followed by BBQ lunch and social to meet old friends and greet new members.

\$8/single or \$12/family - Prize draw for members who register in advance.

REGISTER INSTANTLY ONLINE at BGWA.CA or call 519-371-8465

Next Board Meeting

Thu October 20, 7-9PM

GSCA Office

Inglis Falls Rd, Owen Sound

BGWA members always
welcome to attend!**2016 Password
for web site
Members' area**

If you are a current
member you should have
received a new password.
If you did not, or have
lost it, contact:
bgwa@naturemail.ca

GREENLEAVES

is the member newsletter of the Bruce Grey Woodlands Association, 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 advice or policy.

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Vice-President's Message

Neil Baldwin



As mentioned on the page 1, Chris is away so here I am again – with a different picture just to keep it interesting – to fill you in on what has been going on with the Board and BGWA since the President's Update in the last newsletter.

We had a well-attended and highly informative Trail Building Workshop back in June, with many thanks to the Bruce County trail crew for making it so!

A few workshop attendees were from the Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club (BVBTC), as a result of outreach work by Chris, following on the BGWA priorities & planning document which was tabled at the 2016 AGM (also available online).

BVBTC has invited BGWA members to a special hike **October 16th** to attend the dedication of the new Webwood Falls (near Kimberley) viewing platform followed by a potluck social. More details on the back page of this newsletter.

Speaking of outreach, BGWA had a display at the Bruce Heritage Show in early August and will be at the Paisley Fair on **September 11th** (thanks, Ron Stewart!) We need volunteers to help at Paisley so contact Ron if you can lend a hand for set-up or booth staffing.

BGWA will also have a booth at the **September 21st** opening of the *Extraordinary Tree Lecture Series*, being held at Grey Roots Museum, which draws together some of

North America's foremost ecologists to draft a compelling narrative that recounts the story of our trees. The opening night is on National Tree Day, with the remaining 5 speakers in November. For details: www.extraordinarytree.com

Our web site continues to post, in addition to BGWA notices, news relevant to woodland property owners and enthusiasts in Grey and Bruce counties. If you have not yet subscribed to our web site you are missing out... go to www.bgwa.ca and enter your email in the *Stay Connected* box.

Your board has other events percolating on the back burner. We are working on launching a Tree-0-Caching activity for next year, combining the growing popularity of Geocaching (GPS "treasure hunting" see www.geocaching.com) with unique tree specimens across Grey & Bruce. We are also hoping to put together a tree-themed film night for members and the general public. But your Board are all volunteers so assistance from the membership is welcome and encouraged to make these a reality.

On the topic of volunteers, our President Chris is always gracious in thanking others but, filling in for him this edition, is an occasion to extend deep thanks on behalf of all members for his dedication to BGWA. Chris has busy life and on top of it all spends countless hours behind the scenes on BGWA work, not to mention diplomatically chairing our Board meetings and guiding our planning & priorities.

**Hope to see you at the BBQ...
C'mon out Saturday, Sept 10th!!!**

Bird's Eye Ivy?

By Larry Cluchey

I take a small sample of Bird's Eye Maple veneer with me where ever I show my wood turnings. It is by far the one wood I get questions about and the one most people will suggest as the name for most any type of figured wood I might have on display. I have never had a bird's eye maple piece for sale and have, in fact, only made two or three Bird's Eye Maple pieces in a 26 year career.

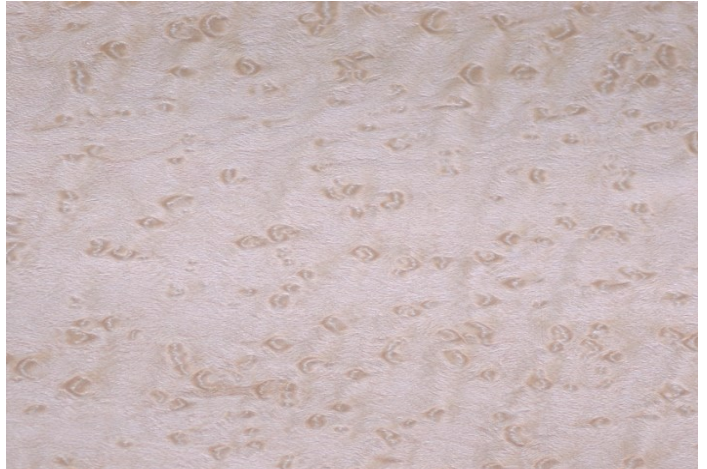
Evidently, there seems to be much confusion as to what exactly Bird's Eye Maple is, where it comes from and what it looks like. So much so that I was not totally shocked to get the following description in an email from a lumber supplier in Oregon who was offering some Bird's Eye Maple boards for sale:

BIRDSEYE MAPLE - Acer saccharum (translated sugary) refers to the sweet sap that maple sugar is derived from. It is known as hard rock maple, sweet maple, white maple, and black maple. During growth, numerous small leaves extend outward from the trunk surrounding it from the stump upward to the canopy. It is easy to spot because the trunk looks like it is covered with ivy. When these small limbs are sliced off in the milling process there is a tell-tale bird's eye that remains. The highest grade lumber is flat or slab sawn to show the birdseyes (not quartersawn as in curly Maple). This valuable tree produces hard rock maple lumber and maple sugar. It is the state tree of 4 states. Birdseye and fiddle back figure is present in a few select logs and produces beautiful wood! The wood works well and takes a nice polish. All stock is kiln dried, surfaced on two sides and is ready to use.

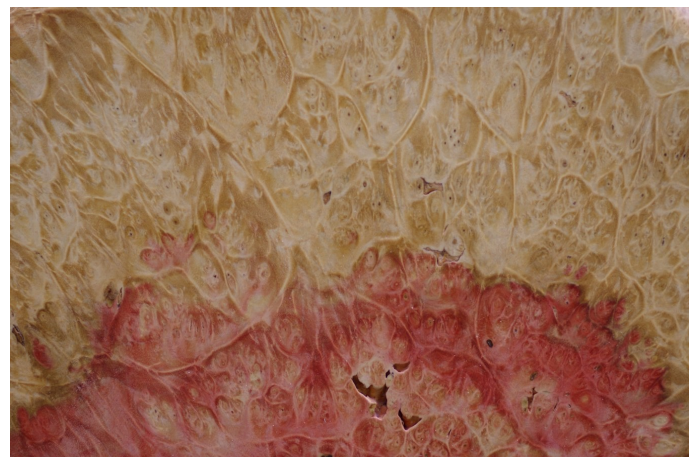
There are so many errors in this statement it is hard to know where to start, but to begin with *saccharum* translates to sugar, not sugary. Sugary might better describe the Silver Maple *Acer saccharinum*, since *saccharinum* translates to sugar like.

Acer saccharum, the Sugar Maple is often called Hard Maple or Rock Maple but never 'hard rock maple'. I can find no references to Sugar Maple being called

'sweet maple' and 'white maple' more often refers to the Silver Maple. Black Maple *Acer nigrum* is a different species, well maybe, since some authorities think Black Maple may be just a more southerly race of the Sugar Maple.



Now, it is safe to say if you find a maple tree covered in what looks like ivy it is probably just that, ivy growing on the tree and not a Bird's Eye Maple tree. This is definitely not what a Bird's Eye Maple tree would look like. I think the confusion in the above statement comes from the fact that the bird's eye figure (image above) looks superficially like the figure that can be found in some types of burls (growths) on a variety of different trees. These 'bud burls' (image below shows a bud burl in Box Elder), as I like to call them, are capable of sprouting small branches from any of the small residual buds found in the burl and do at times have small branches in leaf protruding from the surface.



(Continued on page 4)

(Bird's Eye Ivy, continued from page 3)

The small depressions that make up bird's eye figure in maple is a defect within the cells of the wood and no amount of coaxing will get it to sprout a leaf or branch.

Additionally, Bird's Eye Maple is a rare and often valuable wood. If they were as easy to spot as looking for maple trees completely covered in small green branches they would have disappeared from forests everywhere many decades ago.

So, why do some maples develop bird's eye figure and just how does one spot them in the forest?

The exact cause of bird's eye figure is unknown but a few things are known about the tree's life. Bird's Eye Maple trees are thought to have spent most or all of their lives under constant stress, low light, poor or thin soils, lots of competition from neighbouring trees, harsh climates and or steep north facing slopes.

It is possible for a Bird's Eye Maple to spend its first one hundred years as a sapling. Not surprisingly, they are an artifact of old growth forests or are found on the fringes of the natural range of the species. As more and more woodlands come under forest management Bird's Eye Maple trees will disappear.

Even though the odds of finding a Bird's Eye Maple in Bruce and Grey are pretty small, if you want to scour your woodlands here is what to keep in mind:

Potential locations

- The steep wooded north facing slopes of drumlins and eskers (which are plentiful in Grey and Bruce) with their thin soils over glacial sand and gravel deposits.
- Dense stands of Hemlock. Hemlocks live for a long time and if a maple had gotten its start here it would almost certainly be growing under stress from many years.

The bark tells the story

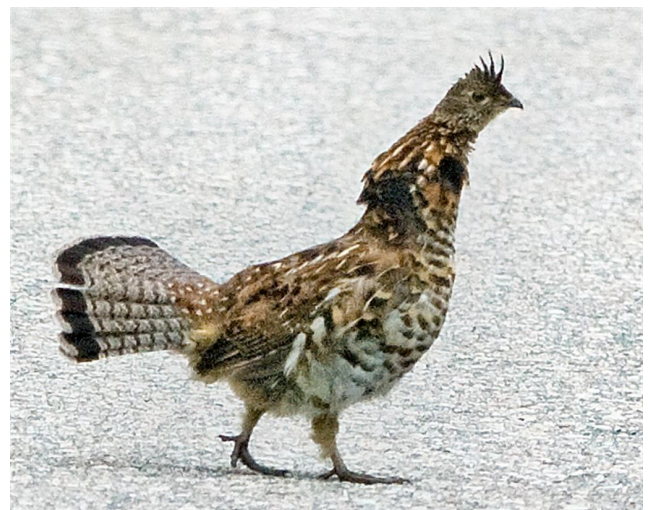
Each year the cambian layer or actively growing layer of a tree produces an inner wood layer (xylem) and an outer bark layer (phloem). These layers become a mirror image of each other which means whatever figure is found in the wood will also be present in the bark. For Bird's Eye Maple careful inspection of the bark will reveal small concave depressions that would correspond to the 'eyes' in the figured wood.

By the way, bird's eye figure also occurs in few other species besides maple. Notably cherry and a few tropical hardwoods.

And finally, contrary to the above description the wood is not easy to work, it is notoriously difficult to work. Planning by machine or hand usually results in the eyes lifting out, leaving an area of torn grain. Even scraping can be difficult, so it's often sawing followed by sanding and more sanding.

Search - 'Bird's Eye Maple' on YouTube to view a short video as a forester spots living trees in the Upper Michigan Peninsula.

Happy hunting!



Ruffed Grouse

Grouse Encounter

By Malcolm Silver

Tim Keeling, a member who has a woodlot in the Bognor region, wrote that a male ruffed grouse seemed attracted to noise/vibrations of all sorts:

He is not afraid of the mower, tractor, back hoe, ATV, chainsaw, string trimmer, truck or wood splitter. He runs after the tractor or ATV when I'm skidding dead ash poles from the woodlot and stands a foot away from wood I am cutting with a saw. Flying sawdust, some landing on him, doesn't faze him. He will jump onto a branch and move back and forth looking at me. I can take a twig and brush the top of his head, breast and back without him flinching; his cowl will flare when I do this. He will hop on a block of wood that I'm sitting on and just sit there, sometimes beside or behind me and make bird sounds. He follows me from one wood pile to another, to and fro and comes very close to where I'm felling a tree if never getting in the way when it falls. When I walk away from him he'll jump at the back of my calf.

I would have thought this unusual grouse behavior and set out to see if that was the case. In my library it is not mentioned in old books (1, 2.) but is described in the Audubon Encyclopedia under the heading tameness.(3)

There is a dearth of similar reports on the net. (4–7) However wildlife experts, as indicated in one of those reports suggest this is not as rare an occurrence as you might think. (7) Thus, one associated with the Ruffed Grouse Society said: "I get reports of tame ruffed grouse each year across their range and have seen three individual birds exhibit this strange behavior myself. Male grouse are mostly solitary. They seek out and set up a territory, which usually covers 6-12 acres, and then they become notably territorial and challenge intruders. They let other males know they own the area by drumming at various times of the year. Hearing a drumming sound stimulates an established grouse to come out and protect its territory. Most tame birds have responded to a sound that is close to their drumming such as noise from an ATV, chain saw or old truck with a bad muffler. It's assumed the drumming-like noise elicits a response by a male grouse to confront

this intruder. When he finds it is not a competing grouse he checks things out. The birds I've encountered would only follow me to certain spots, which I suspected was the edge of their territories, and then they'd leave."

Another wildlife biologist with the Ruffed Grouse Society said he hears numerous cases of ruffed grouse forming bonds with humans each year. Nevertheless, these relationships do not last long because ruffed grouse normally live two or three years.

In contrast to this tameness, and as indicated above, male grouse may attack folk who wander into their territory. Not to be outdone by its distaff side a human coming too close to a grouse family may be immediately confronted by a very angry hen. With head held high, its crest fully raised, her plumage puffed out and her wings held outward and slightly downward to create the impression of a much larger and fierce looking creature, the hen will repeatedly make hissing noises and appear as if ready to launch an attack. Indeed, she may do so. Several YouTube videos (which can be viewed under the heading *Ruffed Grouse Attack*) depict both male and female ruffed grouse attacking humans. Other videos show grouse of other species doing this too.

References

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6. Why are ruffed grouse taking a shine to retired North Idaho men? www.spokesman.com/stories/2011/nov/06/ruff-neighborhood Nov 6, 2011 -
7. The Attack of the Ruffed Grouse - The Adirondack Almanack www.adirondackalmanack.com/.../the-attack-of-the-ruffed-grouse.html

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Woodlot Tools: The Battery Chronicles

By Neil Baldwin, BGWA Web Guy and Techy Fool

You might recall from the autumn edition of the newsletter, I had recently purchased a battery powered chainsaw (Greenworks, 40V, 16" bar) to do some of the "lighter" work around the woodlot. As it turned out, the battery saw has been doing the lion's share of the tree felling work around my woodlot. It has been capably and reliably felling, bucking and limbing lots of elm up to 12-14" as well as easily eating through pine and larch. I am impressed with the torque of the brushless motor, surprised by how long the battery lasts, and tickled not to be breathing in exhaust fumes being in such close proximity to the saw such as one is when operating it.

Seeing as I seem to make a hobby of scanning the Canadian Tire flyer for sales in conjunction with bonus point deals or gift card offers, I lucked out to find a powerful line trimmer, with brush cutter disc blade, which uses the same battery as the chain saw. So now a sawing session is near endless alternating batteries until it's me who runs out of charge!



Hike Webwood Falls!

As a result of BGWA's outreach initiative, the Beaver Valley Bruce Trail Club (BVTBC) has kindly extended an invitation to all BGWA members to attend a hike to Webwood Falls, near Kimberley, for the new viewing platform dedication on **Sunday Oct 16th**. BGWA is also welcomed to the potluck meal afterwards so members from the two groups can meet.



Details: Meet at 1:30 p.m. at Webwood Falls, #806424 Sideroad 25 (Bruce Trail Map 28, km100.2) to carpool to start of a 7.3 km moderate hike. Inquiries & Register with hike leader Scott Thompson 519-924-2556 sethompson1955@gmail.com

Platform dedication at 4:00 p.m. at Webwood Falls. Potluck to follow, hosted by Garth and Norine Baron at #194814 Grey Rd. 13, south of Kimberley. Register for potluck with hosts: 519-599-2442.