



MISSOURI ForestKeepers MONITOR

FALL 2009

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Members Respond to Survey

By Justine Gartner, Forestry Field Program Supervisor, Missouri Department of Conservation

A whopping 538 of you completed the Member Survey last spring. Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts and ideas. I am pleased to share the highlights from your replies.

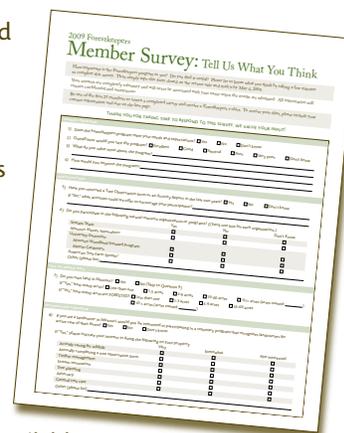
OVERALL PROGRAM

When asked if the program meets your expectations, 72 percent of you said “Yes.” Many of you noted the educational nature of the program, the tools available to help students, and the newsletter as being valuable aspects of the Missouri Forestkeepers Network. Appreciation was also expressed for the opportunity to have an impact on forests in our state through volunteerism and advocacy.

Suggestions to improve the program include more “how-to” information, additional programs offered locally, and a more regional approach to the information that is presented in the newsletter. Offering more programs in multiple locations across the state is a challenge with limited staff and funding. Interest was expressed in participating in training offered online. We anticipate offering a few online classes next spring.

The Missouri Department of Conservation is also working toward offering regional landowner workshops. As those are confirmed, we will pass along the registration information.

For those of you who are landowners, we trust a new resource will help to address the desire for more “how-to” information. It will be an electronic library of tree and forestry-related publications on CD, which you can reference and view at your



convenience. This resource will be available in the coming months.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED

Most members represent just themselves. However, 31 percent of you told us that your membership represents a group of nine people on average. This means that although our membership records indicate we have just over 2,000 members, we now know that the program reaches about 7,415 people.

MISSOURI LANDOWNERS

The survey results show 85 percent of the responding Forestkeepers own land in Missouri. A third own less than 10 acres and 64 percent own less than 60 acres. These percentages are in line with national trends. It is expected that the number of landowners with less than 10 acres of land will rapidly climb over the coming years.

Most members said they are interested in a landowner recognition program. Activities like caring for wildlife, general tree care, and tree planting were identified as the most interesting tasks to undertake.

PARTICIPATION

Thirty-six percent of you returned a Tree Observation Form or Activity Report in the last two years. Time constraints, reluctance to submit inaccurate information, and health were the primary obstacles to submitting the forms. In addition, many of you said that you would be interested in working with another Forestkeeper member to coach you through completion of the

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MISSION:

To develop a network of informed citizens working to conserve, sustain and enhance Missouri's urban and rural forest resources through volunteerism, advocacy, and management.

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Courtesy of the Missouri Department of Conservation

The Missouri Forestkeepers Network is a statewide volunteer program administered by Forest ReLeaf of Missouri in partnership with the Missouri Department of Conservation. Membership is free.

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 printed on recycled paper with 30% post-consumer waste

Living Christmas Trees

By Terry Truttmann, Forestry District Supervisor

As a small boy, I can remember a large Norway spruce in my grandparents' yard that was their indoor living Christmas tree one year. The tree stood tall and pyramidal and was a featured part of the landscaping. Living Christmas trees can be planted as landscape trees after the holidays, however some planning and thought must go into the process.

Few evergreens used as Christmas trees are native to Missouri, therefore acclimation to the Missouri environment and soil types should be taken into account. The mature height, planting location, variety, condition, and size of the tree when purchased must all be considered early in the process. Missouri has varied weather around the holidays, and also varies in the state from North to South. For more information about species that will grow in your area, contact a local state or extension forester.

Here are a few other things to consider when purchasing a living Christmas tree: Will it fit through the doorways? Will it fit in the room I want it in? How heavy and large is the burlapped ball or container the tree is growing in? More importantly, how heavy will the ball or container be when it is time to carry it out after it is watered for many days?

To prepare for planting, dig the hole prior to the ground freezing and cover it with straw or mulch to keep it frost free. Also cover the soil you removed. Be sure the hole is larger than you need, because if the ground does freeze, expanding the hole will be very difficult.

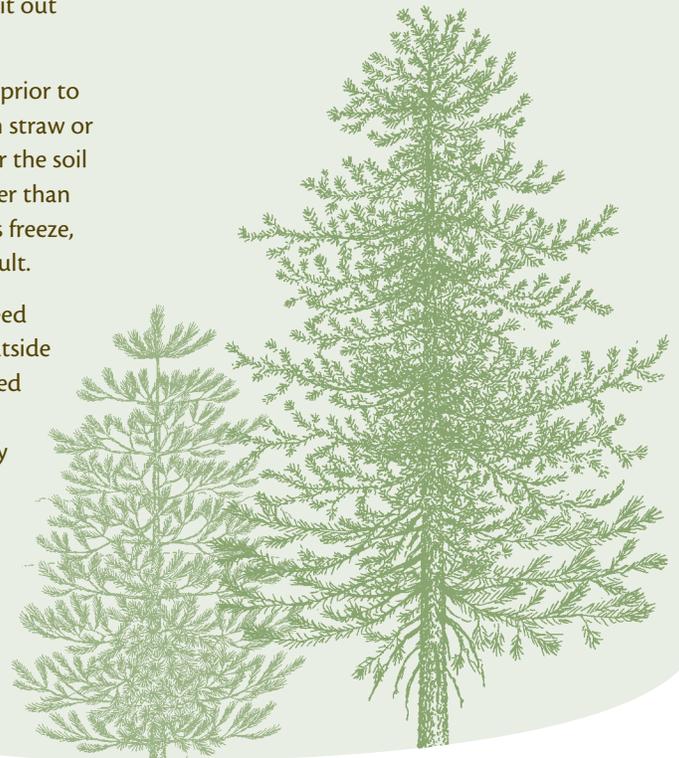
After purchasing the tree, you will need to help it transition from the cold outside to your heated home. A garage or shed above freezing, and not heated, is ideal. Plan to store the tree there only for a week or two and keep the container or root ball moist.

When it is time to move the tree indoors, locate a spot that is away from heat sources, and has

adequate space and light. Choose a larger, leak-proof container in which to place the root ball or container. Slightly elevate the tree off the bottom of the container using rocks or a block of wood. Place mulch, newspaper or other material around the root ball to keep it upright and from drying out too fast. The root ball should be kept moist, but not wet. The tree should be in the house for as short a time as possible, ideally not more than seven to 10 days.

After Christmas, move the tree back to the transition area. Keep it watered and above freezing for a few days to gradually acclimate it to the cooler outside temperatures. Remove the covering from the planting hole just prior to planting. Place the tree in the hole at the proper depth, replace the soil you removed, and water well. Mulch the tree out beyond the disturbed soil with about two or three inches of mulch to minimize soil temperature fluctuations.

Bringing your Christmas tree outside is not the easiest route to take when establishing landscaping, but it can be a lasting one. With a little planning and thought, an evergreen will be a lasting gift for your family.



FEATURED SPECIES:
PERSIMMON

Diospyros virginiana L.



Illustrations courtesy of the Missouri Department of Conservation

As winter approaches, the persimmon tree may be of help in forecasting the weather. Folklore says that if you slice the seeds, the shape that shows up the most inside each seed will indicate what kind of winter to expect. The three shapes resemble our three eating utensils. A knife shape indicates there will be a cold icy winter (as in, “the wind will slice through you like a knife”); a spoon shape means there will be plenty of snow to shovel; a fork shape means there will be a mild winter.

Persimmon is a medium-sized tree that grows from 30 to 60 feet tall, and can spread up to 35 feet wide. Its lightly colored, fine-grained wood is used to manufacture billiard cues, and was once widely used to make the heads of golf clubs, hence the name “woods.” Tea from the bark is a folk remedy for a number of stomach conditions, and a tea can also be made from the leaves, tasting much like sassafras tea. The ripe fruit is used in cookies, breads, cakes, puddings, salads and even as a topping for breakfast cereal.

LEAVES: Simple, alternate, from 2 to 6 inches long and 1 to 3 inches wide; pointed tip; shiny and dark green on top, with a paler underside that can be smooth to hairy; turn reddish-yellow to greenish-yellow in fall.

BARK: Dark brown to black with deep grooves and ridges broken into distinctive square to rectangular blocks.

FLOWERS: Bloom in late spring after the leaves have emerged; male and female flowers are usually produced on separate trees. The solitary female flowers are fragrant and about ¼ to ½ inch long.

FRUIT: Ripens in September to October; globe-shaped and about ¾ to 1½ inches long and wide; orange to orange-purple with a whitish coating; sweet and edible when ripe, but very bitter when green. Each fruit, which is actually a berry, has four to eight large, flat seeds, which are dark brown, wrinkled and about ½ inch long. The berries are eaten by many bird species and other animals.

HABITAT & RANGE: Found in dry rocky woods, fencerows, old fields, bottomlands, and ditches in many counties in Missouri. Persimmon is somewhat difficult to transplant, but animals help spread the seeds in natural areas. The tree also commonly forms thickets by spreading from sucker roots.

Compiled from *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* by Michael A. Dirr and *Trees of Missouri* by Don Kurz.

Treevia

FUN FOREST FACTS
TO KNOW AND TELL!

The state champion persimmon is located in Big Oak Tree State Park in Mississippi County. It measures 93 inches in circumference, is 124 feet high, and has a spread of 40 feet. Now that’s one big persimmon!

Q&A

Q: How do I know when persimmons are ripe?

A: *The berries are ripe when the skin is wrinkled and they feel squishy and almost overripe. The most common variety in the state ripens when the temperatures begin to drop in the fall. Catch them when they are just right, and they are a sweet treat, living up to one translation of *Diospyros virginiana* – “food for the gods.” Pick them too early, and they are extremely bitter and unfit to eat.*

Have a question about Forestkeepers, trees, or what you read in this issue? Contact us at information@forestkeepers.org or by mail to: Q&A, c/o Forest ReLeaf of Missouri, 4207 Lindell Blvd., Suite 301, St. Louis, MO 63108.

Members Respond to Survey *continued from page 1*

Tree Observation Form. Please keep in mind that we do offer a Mentor/Apprentice Program and would be happy to try to match you up with another, more experienced member.

A large percentage of members indicated that they participate in other volunteer groups, with the Missouri Stream Team program mentioned most often. The University of Missouri Extension Master Gardeners program, Missouri Woodland Stewards program and the Missouri Master Naturalist® program were also common choices.

FORESTKEEPERS WEBSITE

About a third of the respondents have visited the Forestkeepers website. Many members who have not accessed site noted they do

not have a computer and/or access to the Internet. Suggested improvements included more information, (particularly on tree identification), more links, and faster load time for dial-up users.

NEWSLETTER

An overwhelming majority of you like the newsletter. Suggestions for improvement include a how-to section, more information on tree diseases, tree identification information, and a corner for teachers and scout leaders.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey and thank you to everyone who participated in the Network in 2009. Continue to monitor your trees and send in your observations and Activity Reports. *Keep up the great work!*

Welcome New Members

We would like to welcome the following new members to the Missouri Forestkeepers Network:

Fritzi Anderson, Living
Water Academy

Jonathan Gano
Kim Garbs, Ft. Zumwalt
North High School

Mandy Kotraba,
Lafayette High School

Melissa Robison,
Kratz School

David Aniak

Lisa Garro and family

Tamara McClellan

Scott Starrett

Cathy Borgmeyer

Lance Hertlein, Eureka
High School

Kyle McCommis

Amanda Werner

Al Bouthillier

Larry Howard and family

Brandon and Leona
McGowen

Dan Wilhite

Steve Chabotte

Dianne Johnson, Eureka
High School

Warren and Marie
Mendenhall

Anthony Zukoff

Scott Childers

Emily Crawford,
Eureka High School

Martin Kern

Brenda Putthoff

Dusty Davidson and
Lone Jack FFA

Bill Roberts and family

Do you know someone who might be interested in becoming a Forestkeeper? Call 1-888-9-Forest or visit www.forestkeepers.org for details on joining our Network of over 2,000 citizens who are working to conserve, sustain, and enhance Missouri's urban and rural forest resources.

FALL ACTIVITY

A seasonal project to enjoy with the whole family



Hatching Leaf Galls

Leaf galls are insect homes that are found on leaves. Did you know it is actually possible to "hatch" a leaf gall?

In autumn when the leaves are beginning to fall, look for bumpy galls on oak and willow leaves. There are hundreds of different kinds of galls, so you may find many different types, even on the same leaf. Galls can be as small as a pin head or as big as a button.

Put a leaf with galls in a jar. Secure a small rag over the mouth of the jar with a rubber band, and place it outside where it is protected from rain. Keep the leaves damp. In early spring, the insects will come out. You will see tiny brown or black ant-like creatures, which may or may not have wings.

The insects which emerge may not be the ones who made the galls. Other insects

attack galls, kill the occupants, and take over their homes. As all of these insects are part of the natural ecosystem and not particularly harmful to trees, let them go when you are finished studying them.





FORESTKEEPERS BULLETIN

Wildlife – A Nuisance?

From the Missouri
Department
of Conservation

CUDDLY BUNNIES, RACCOONS WITH THEIR comical black masks, and deer with their dainty legs are often oohed and awed over. Many people even spend lots of time and money feeding wild mammals.

People often view themselves as stewards of the Earth and all of its animals. When we think wildlife is suffering from a food shortage, our natural tendency is to relieve their perceived suffering by providing food. Some take this practice to an extreme by feeding throughout the year, intending to prevent food shortages in the first place. So, is this 'extra' feeding a good thing or a bad thing?

Wildlife biologists would argue that feeding wildlife can create some serious problems and even create nuisances out of your favorite furry beasts.



Concentration of animals, particularly an over-abundance of grazing animals such as deer, leads to over-browsing of plants. This can be a serious problem — think about deer eating all of the plants in your flower beds or in your garden.

In areas with high numbers of deer, it is often impossible to grow a quality

new forest. The seedlings are consumed before they have a chance to reach any height, allowing less desirable trees and plants to become established. The result is a forest that is less valuable as habitat for deer and other wildlife. Farmers cannot successfully grow crops in areas with an over-abundance of deer, and commuters must be constantly vigilant to avoid collisions.

CONSEQUENCES OF SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING

When people supply wildlife with nutritious food, the animals respond by changing their behavior and concentrating at the feeding site. Feeding improves conditions for wildlife, enhancing their survival and numbers. In the wild, wildlife numbers are determined by habitat quality and quantity. Food is the factor that most often and most significantly limits wildlife abundance. When humans provide food, diet improves, enhancing both reproduction and survival. This is a double-edged sword. Yes, there are more of the critters we love to see, but often the number of animals exceeds the ability of the land to support them.

When animals become concentrated in an area, disease outbreaks become common and sometimes very serious. Consider tuberculosis in white-tailed deer, aflatoxin poisoning in deer and birds, and blackhead in turkey.

Despite supplemental feeding, wildlife populations may exhibit poor physical condition and experience malnutrition if their numbers grow to exceed the amount of nourishment provided by the extra food. Supplemental feeding does not prevent malnourishment — it usually just increases the population size. You have more deer which are poorly fed. Remember the laws of nature — the biggest and strongest will be fed first. All too

continued on next page >



**PREVIOUS
TECHNICAL BULLETINS:**

- #1 Our Upland Oak-Hickory Forests
- #2 Bottomland Forests
- #3 Missouri's Coniferous Forests
- #4 Urban Forests and Plantations
- #5 The Gypsy Moth
- #6 Dogwood Anthracnose
- #7 The Japanese Beetle in Missouri
- #8 Butternut Canker and Its Dwindling Host
- #9 Asian Longhorned Beetle
- #10 Chip Mills in Missouri
- #11 Community Forestry
- #12 Proper Pruning
- #13 How to Hire an Arborist
- #14 Can These Trees Be Saved?
- #15 Maintenance of Backyard Trees
- #16 Selecting Professional Tree Care
- #17 Tree Protection During Construction
- #18 Poison Ivy
- #19 Tick-Borne Diseases
- #20 Chiggers
- #21 Snakes of Missouri
- #22 Managing Your Forest
- #23 Are You Protecting Missouri's Water?
- #24 Selling Timber the Smart Way
- #25 Timber Stand Improvement
- #26 Benefits of Livestock Fencing
- #27 Edge Feathering
- #28 Managing for White-Tailed Deer
- #29 Turkeys & Woodlands
- #30 Underutilized Trees for Missouri Landscapes
- #31 Managing Your Yard for Trees and Grass
- #32 Windbreaks: Protection That Grows
- #33 Evergreens: Selections for Your Landscape
- #34 Specialty Products
- #35 Heating with Wood
- #36 Utilizing Eastern Red Cedar
- #37 Black Walnut: Missouri's Most Valuable Tree
- #38 Those Pesky Insects
- #39 Diseases and Healthy Forests
- #40 I Hurt My Tree?
- #41 Exotic Forest Pests Are Becoming A Common Threat
- #42 Trees Pay Us Back
- #43 How Is Your Habitat?
- #44 Who Owns Missouri's Forests?
- #45 Managing Invasive Plants
- #46 Understanding Missouri Streams
- #47 Simple Trail Construction for Landowners

You can access these bulletins online at www.forestkeepers.org by clicking on "Newsletters" on the homepage.

Wildlife – A Nuisance?

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frequently the young and the weak are excluded from feeding sites by the larger, healthier, and more aggressive individuals.

WHAT TO DO IF WILDLIFE BECOMES A PROBLEM

Keeping wildlife apart from your garden or landscape plants can be a challenge. Here are three methods to consider:

Repellants ward off animals based on taste and smell. Factors that affect the efficiency of repellants include: how hungry the animals are; the animals' familiarity with repellants; characteristics of the animal species you are trying to repel; the dosage of repellent used.

Taste repellents must be applied directly to the plants that they are intended to protect. For this reason, taste repellents don't work well on vegetable crops. Repellants that work by smell are better suited for gardens. Home remedy repellents include human hair, smelly socks, blood meal, bath soap, and liquid manure. Although these repellants don't always work, many can at least double as a fertilizer.

Fencing can be a successful tool to exclude wildlife and minimize damage. A simple three-foot-high chicken wire fence will keep box turtles from your cantaloupe and rabbits from your greens, provided that the fence is tightly secured to the ground. Raccoons can be effectively repelled with a two-strand electric fence. Place strands at 5 and 10 inch heights, clear vegetation from the wires, and turn on the power. After a zap or two (much like the invisible fences used for dogs), the masked bandits will go elsewhere to feed. This arrangement will also keep other small animals, such as woodchucks, skunks and rabbits, out of your garden.

Deer are perhaps the worst menace to growing trees. In the fall, bucks 'feeling their oats' rub their antlers on young trees, which sometimes kills them. During the rest of the year, both sexes of deer eat the succulent buds and leaves of trees.

A single strand electric fence 30 inches above the ground will keep deer from gardens, flower beds or small orchards. The fence isn't a barrier, but rather a tool to teach deer

where not to go. Large areas or areas with high deer numbers may require more wires or a different design.

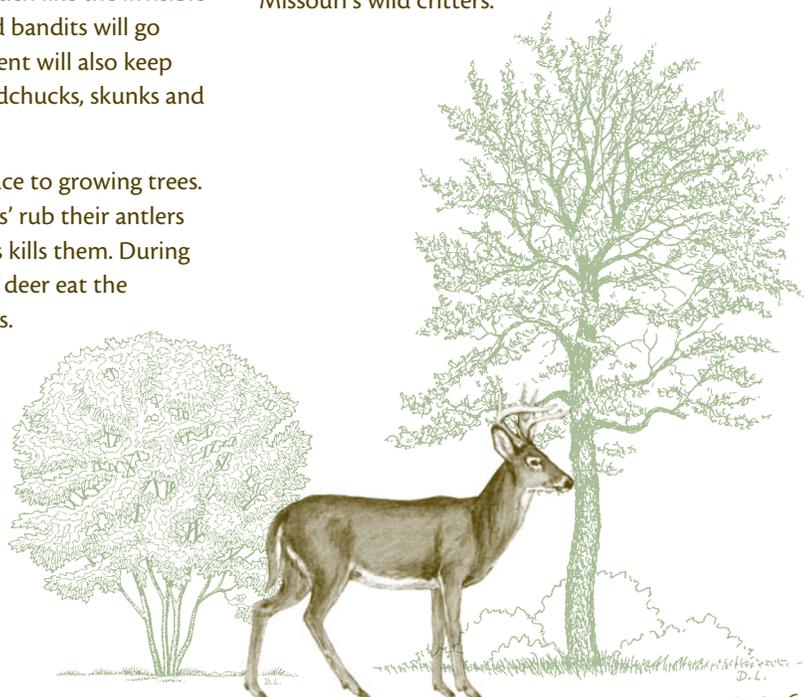
Utilizing plants which are not tasty to wildlife is another approach. While this option isn't always possible, it deserves consideration. Visit <http://lancaster.unl.edu/pest/resources/Deerplants.shtml> for a list of plants that deer find unpalatable.

For information on minimizing damage from wildlife that is a nuisance, visit <http://mdc.mo.gov/landown/wild/nuisance/>.

The future of wildlife depends on wild places that support diverse, healthy and sustainable populations. There are no shortcuts in providing for this habitat. In most circumstances, supplemental feeding is used as a shortcut, but it invariably leads to more problems and ultimately less wildlife.

Supplemental feeding maybe viewed by some people as a way to make up for the impact that humans have caused to natural systems. However, it is false logic to believe that these wildlife populations are protected from the larger ills of habitat loss or degradation. Supplemental feeding is not a panacea for the health of natural processes. There is no substitute for healthy natural habits.

To assure quality habitat, it is incumbent on all landowners to manage their property in a sustainable manner that assures forest health and a diversity of habitat. Healthy forests and habitat diversity are the keys to assuring the long term success of Missouri's wild critters.



Tree Planting to Improve Stream Health

Adapted from *Tree and Shrub Planting* by the Kansas Forest Service

Reestablishing streamside or riparian forests by planting trees and shrubs can reap big dividends in improved water quality and bank stabilization. Forests located directly adjacent to streams, rivers and other bodies of water improve water quality by filtering sediment and pollutants from overland flow. They also hold soils in place and decrease stream bank erosion by slowing damaging flood waters. Riparian forests provide valuable wildlife and fishery habitat and support high-value timber species.

Missouri has been losing these valuable riparian forests at an alarming rate. This loss has come about as a result of land clearing and overgrazing, leaving many areas vulnerable to flooding. These productive and useful forests are not being replaced, and many acres of valuable bottomland soil have been lost as a result.

However, riparian vegetation can recover quickly from disturbance. In many cases "backing off" from the bank of the stream will be enough to let the area naturally re-vegetate, but planting the area can accelerate recovery.

Before trees and shrubs are planted, several important factors must be considered. Think about how much area you want to plant in trees. The minimum recommended width of a planting intended to protect water quality is 50 feet on each side of the stream. This can be reduced or expanded based on other benefits that are desired from the planting. Other important considerations are soil type and available moisture in the area to be planted, along with flooding patterns. Be sure to choose species that are suited to the area.

Flood-Tolerant Species – can withstand flooding for most of one growing season

Baldcypress	Peach-leaved willow	Silver maple
Black willow	Persimmon	Sycamore
Eastern cottonwood	Sandbar willow	

Intermediate Flood-Tolerant Species – can withstand flooding for one to three months during growing season

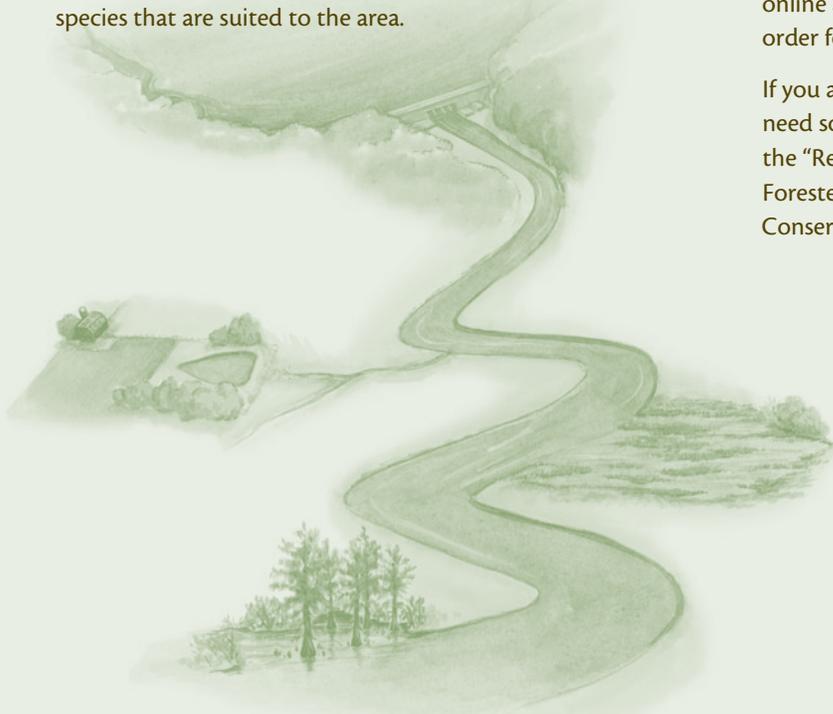
American elm	Hackberry	Pin oak
American basswood (linden)	Honeylocust	Red oak
Bitternut hickory	Mockernut hickory	River birch
Bur oak	Mulberry	Shumard oak
Catalpa	Osage-orange	Sweetgum
	Pecan	

Flood-Intolerant Species – cannot withstand flooding for a period of a month or more during the growing season

Black cherry	Eastern redcedar	Shingle oak
Black oak	Northern red oak	Slippery elm
Black walnut	Post oak	Sugar maple
Blackjack oak	Shagbark hickory	White oak
Chinquapin oak	Shellbark hickory	

Late fall and winter are wonderful times to plant trees. Seedling trees can be purchased from the George O. White State Nursery from mid-November through April. Ordering can be done online at www.missouriconservation.org or you can request an order form by calling Donna Baldwin at 573-522-4115, ext. 3111.

If you are interested in reestablishing a stream corridor and need some additional help, check out www.forestkeepers.org. In the "Resources" section on the homepage, just click on "Ask the Forester" to find the closest Missouri Department of Conservation forester.



Help to Save Trees

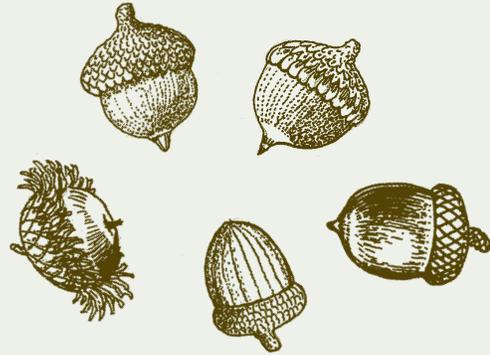
More and more Forestkeepers are opting to go online to get workshop announcements, activity reporting forms, and other mailings from the Network. Some members even read this newsletter online! If you would like to help us cut down on the number of hard copies mailed, just send an email to information@forestkeepers.org or call 1-888-9-FOREST.

Be sure to let us know whether you would like to access all mailings on the website, or whether you would still like to get a hard copy of the newsletter mailed to you. We will then send you an email when new materials are available on the website.

Thanks for the Nuts!

Thanks to all the members who participated in this year's Mast Survey. The preliminary results are in and Forestkeepers surveyed 2,771 oak trees, representing a 50 percent increase over last year.

Watch for a complete report on the *2009 Mast Survey* in an upcoming issue of this newsletter.



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