

Cutting Firewood Can Benefit The Forest

HUNTINGDON (Huntingdon Co.) — Chilly winter weather is just around the corner and Pennsylvanians with fireplaces and woodburning stoves are heading into forests and woodlots to cut firewood. If you're among them, be sure to develop a plan before you start up your chainsaw, warns an expert in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

"If done properly, cutting firewood serves a dual purpose," said Dr. James Finley, instructor in the college's School of Forest Resources. "Using wood for fuel also gives us the opportunity to improve woodlots that have been mismanaged, overcut or neglected."

"Past cutting practices left many woodlands with an overabundance of crooked, diseased

and otherwise unsalable trees that hamper the growth of straight, healthy trees needed for lumber and veneer. Removing less desirable trees helps the best trees on the woodlot to grow."

Before cutting firewood in your stand, you should know the value of the trees you are thinning. "As a rule, sugar maple, ash and cherry are more valuable than red maple, beech or aspen," Finley said. "And oaks are more valuable than hickories."

Your choice of trees to cut for firewood also affects the wildlife in your woodlot. "Dead trees, whether standing or fallen, are particularly important for wildlife," said Finley. "Some people think that leaving dead trees in the forest to rot is a waste of resources, but dead trees offer both

shelter and food to many wildlife species. The existence of numerous species depends on the presence of dead trees."

A fallen tree soon is infested with fungi and insects, which decompose the tree and return nutrients to the soil. Insects, salaman-

ders, snakes, mice and shrews seek refuge in rotting logs. Skunks, bears and woodpeckers frequent these "cafeterias" for easy pickings.

Ruffed grouse, rufous-sided towhees and other species nest under partially elevated logs. Hollow

logs shelter a variety of forest mammals such as shrews, chipmunks and bears. Foxes and coyotes also may use logs for dens. Cavities in live or dead trees are used by 35 species of birds and 20 species of mammals in Pennsylvania.

"Using dead wood for wildlife rather than firewood requires making a choice," Finley said. "The value of the wood for fuel must be weighed against the possible value of the wildlife a dead log can attract. For instance, a hollow oak that serves as a den for a raccoon family could be cut up for fuel. But it may take decades to 'grow' another hollow tree for these raccoons. Is the firewood worth the cost of not seeing a raccoon family using your woodlot?"

When cutting firewood, it's vital to be aware of how your choices will affect the forest. "If it's done right, firewood can be cut without disturbing the natural environment," Finley said.

"But unplanned cuttings can devastate your woodlot. Make a plan before you start felling trees." Service and extension foresters can answer your questions and help you devise a cutting plan, Finley said.

More information about cutting firewood to benefit the forest is available from your local Penn State Cooperative Extension office.

Ag Commissioner Visits Grange Session

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N.Y. — New York farmers should remain concerned about an historic problem — getting a good price for their product — but at the same time they should be excited about the kinds of opportunities that technological advances will soon bring, said Richard McGuire, New York state commissioner of agriculture and markets.

McGuire, speaking to Grangers gathered here for the organization's 121st annual session, outlined some of those technological possibilities.

"New doors of opportunity for growing food are going to open in the Northeast thanks to plant genetics and the like," said McGuire, who spoke of pesticide-free "under glass" production that can mean moving production away from traditional locations to

anywhere land is available. "A controlled growing environment means crops like red peppers, for instance, can be grown anywhere — including the Northeast. Agricultural research is going on all around the world, and it has the potential to change the profile of agriculture in New York."

McGuire said leaders continue to look at ways to provide a better pricing structure for state dairy farmers, whose production costs often exceed profit. He was critical, too, of an environmental movement that can have a negative impact on agriculture. "It doesn't do any good to preserve farmland, or to be politically correct, if we starve at the same time," he said. "We need to educate consumers and improve their attitude about agriculture. It's vital."

Walk Shows Grand

(Continued from Page C2)

Eshleman led the group in prayer for Jere Wingert, a former 4-H member, who lost part of a limb in a farming accident.

Following is a list of show placings.

FRANKLIN COUNTY BEEF SHOW RESULTS FITTING

NOVICE: Ages 8, 9 & 10: 1. Jordan Con-

ner; 2. Jodi Meyers; 3. Matt Hawbaker.
INTERMEDIATE: Ages 11, 12 & 13: 1. Justin Conner; 2. Bradley Divalbis; 3. Jimmy Clapsaddle.
JUNIOR: Ages 14 & 15: 1. Ariane Rife; 2. Crystal Meyers; 3. Cheryl Hawbaker.

SENIOR: Ages 16 & up: 1. Spencer Walk;

2. Daren Staler.

SHOWING
NOVICE: Ages 8, 9 & 10: 1. Jordan Con-

ner; 2. Tim Mackey; 3. Matt Hawbaker.

INTERMEDIATE: Ages 11, 12 & 13: 1.

Justin Conner; 2. David Grove; 3. Brad Rife.

JUNIOR: Ages 14 & 15: 1. Crystal Mey-

ers; 2. Seth Walk; 3. Chad Grove.

SENIOR: Ages 16 & up: 1. Spencer Walk.

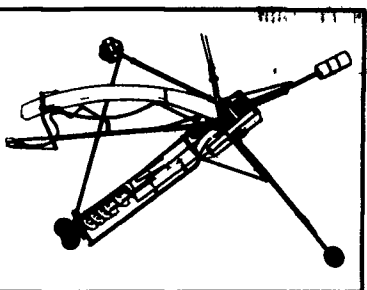


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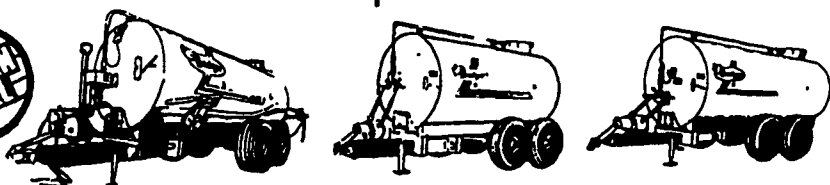
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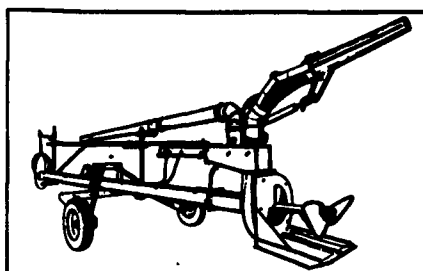


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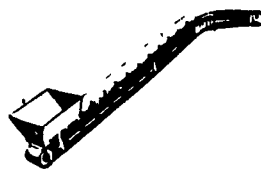


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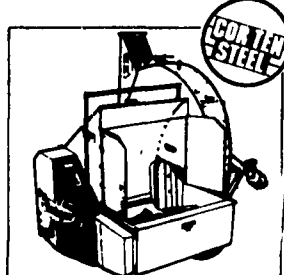


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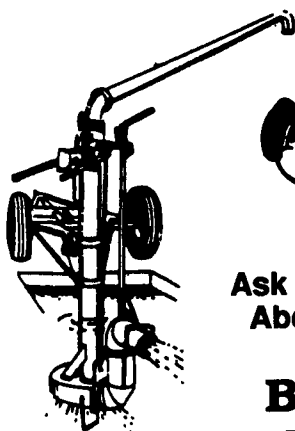
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Christmas Market Set

CHELTENHAM, Md. — The Southern Maryland Regional Farmers Market, located on U.S. Rt. 301, south in Cheltenham, is planning its third annual Farmers Christmas Market.

On Saturday, November 27, the inside of the state warehouse will open for a Christmas market. The market will operate every Saturday until Christmas from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Farmers and crafters are needed to sell poinsettias, wreaths, crafts, dried flowers, winter fruits and vegetables, honey, jams and jellies, baked goods, hams, nuts, etc. The goal is to fill the warehouse with quality homemade products. Christmas trees are the only item limited to one Maryland Christmas tree grower. The fee to sell at the market is \$20 per day.

Anyone interested in participating should contact Regina Prunty, market manager, at (800) 533-FARM (3276) or (301) 372-1066, as soon as possible. Because of the popularity of this event, space may be limited.

