



# Alcona Conservation Update

Conservation District News

January 2023

Forester Russell Williams



## Tree Sale Almost Active!

The catalog for the tree sale is in the final proofing stage. We will soon have them in the Harrisville office. We are currently looking into how to get the catalog onto our website.



## Free Forester Visits

When you want Russell the Forester to come out to your parcel for a free educational site-visit please call or text his cell phone at 989-310-6408. Whether a single tree or a forest full he is glad to visit.



## Alcona Community School Forest

Stop out to the 40-acre forest and check out the trails. There is a small parking area right across from Carbide Drive on Barlow Road, about 1/2 mile north of M-72. There are big plans for this area going forward and a lot of work will be required, please call the Conservation District to get on a volunteer list at 989-724-5272.



## Maple Trees

There are more than a couple kinds of maple trees to be found in the woods of Michigan. Most people know of the sugar maple because of its use in maple syrup production. Other species are red maple, silver maple, black maple, ash-leaf maple or boxelder, and a couple more that are not common.

All the different maples can be tapped for sap collection to make syrup. Sugar maple sap has the highest sugar percentage, so you don't have to boil it as long.

If you are not sure what kind of maples you have in your woods, or even if you do, schedule a time for the forester to come out for a visit to hear about different forest management options.



## Plant Plants

I believe it is wise to regularly plant trees and shrubs, even if your parcel is well treed. You can, for example, improve the species diversity, or potential future timber value.

The Conservation District tree sale fundraiser is a great way to get some plants. Russell the Forester is always happy to come out to your site and talk over some good options for planting. His cell number is 989-310-6408 talk or text.



## Beech bark disease is spreading

If your beech trees don't have it yet they likely will before too long.

The first part of the disease is the occurrence of high numbers of scale insects. They make a white cottony looking covering, so the tree increasingly looks like it is covered with snow. The scale insects are sort of like aphids in that they feed on the sap through little tube-like mouth parts.

The second part of the disease is the fungus. All the little feeding holes in the bark from the scale amount to a lot of pathways into the tree that the fungus exploits. A few percent of the beech are likely to survive but they will be forever scarred.

For more information stop in the District Office or give us a call and the forester will make a trip out for a visit.



## Little Bees

Pollinator insects are having a tough time. Plant some flowering shrubs, perennials, and trees like basswood, to help them out. These little insects are major players in the growing of food, and I like food.

Spend some time watching the dandelions growing in your yard and keep an eye out for our native bees. They are much smaller than honeybees and usually go about their business unnoticed.



## Measurements

One old unit of measure that is still used in forestry and surveying is the *chain*. There are 80 chains in every mile and 66 feet in every chain. Each chain has 100 links and 4 rods.



## Street Trees

Trees growing along roadways are in a tough spot. Hard surfaces stop water, and air, from getting to the soil. Healthy soils require moisture and gas exchange - to support soil microbes, insects, and plant roots.

Concrete and asphalt absorb sunshine and radiate heat even into the evening hours driving out leaf moisture. Dry leaves are stressed, and this leads to impacts on energy collection and transformation in the chloroplasts, resulting in lower sugar production. Lower sugar means less vigorous growth and lower resistance to disease and insects.

Lawn equipment often causes damage to the base of trees, tearing bark from root flares, and in time the injuries can girdle the entire tree. Just under the bark is the most active part of the tree, vital tissues that conduct sap up and down the trunk. String trimmers too cause damage. Use care with equipment around trees.

Water your trees, they will like you and be nice to you.