



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DODGE COUNTY

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For Immediate Release
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Extension Forestry Update

February in Wisconsin is generally a quieter time in the woods, but the warm weather has jump started activity for maple sugar producers across the state. If you're not busy making maple syrup here are a few ways any woodland owner can take advantage of the conditions.

1. Take Inventory of Your Trees

With leaves gone, February provides a clear view of your forest's composition. This is the perfect time to conduct a tree inventory, creating a map that identifies different species, age classes, and overall health. Utilize online resources, forestry assistance programs, or consult a professional forester to help you with this crucial task. Understanding your forest's makeup empowers you to make informed decisions about future management practices like selective harvesting, invasive species control, and wildlife habitat improvement.

2. Seedling Selection and Sourcing

Spring signifies new beginnings, and for your woodland, it might involve planting! February is the ideal time to research and select native tree species suitable for your soil type, climate, and desired outcomes. Consider diversifying your tree composition to enhance ecological resilience and create a multi-layered ecosystem. Partner with reputable nurseries or state-run programs to ensure high-quality, locally sourced seedlings adapted to your specific region. Remember, planting native trees not only beautifies your land but also supports local wildlife and promotes biodiversity.

3. Sustainable Harvesting Strategies

Does your woodland boast mature trees nearing the end of their natural lifespan? February can be an excellent time to explore the possibility of a sustainable timber sale. Consulting a professional forester is crucial in this process. They can assess your forest's health, recommend appropriate harvesting methods, and guide you through the legalities and economics involved. Sustainable timber harvesting can provide financial benefits while promoting forest regeneration and creating valuable wildlife habitat.

4. Invasive Species Management

Winter's dormancy extends to many invasive plants, making February an opportune moment to strategize their control. Research common invasive species in your area and identify any present on your land. Develop a plan that outlines control methods like manual removal, prescribed fire, or herbicide application (always follow regulations and best practices). Early intervention is key to preventing the spread of invasives and protecting your woodland's native biodiversity.



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5. Wildlife Habitat Enhancement

Wisconsin's woodlands support diverse wildlife, and February presents a chance to consider their needs. Research the specific requirements of native species you value, such as cavity nesters or ground-dwelling mammals. Create and maintain wildlife corridors by strategically removing brush or planting native shrubs that provide food and shelter. Consider installing birdhouses or bat boxes to encourage beneficial fauna that plays a crucial role in your forest's ecosystem.

6. Building Bridges: Connecting with Conservation Resources

Wisconsin boasts a wealth of conservation organizations and government agencies dedicated to supporting woodland owners. February is an excellent time to connect with these resources. Attend workshops, join online forums, or seek guidance from professionals. Networking with fellow woodland owners and experts allows you to share experiences, learn best practices, and access valuable information and support.

Remember: February might usually be quiet in the woods, but for woodland stewards, it's a season of proactive planning and thoughtful action. By taking the time to assess your land, strategize for the future, and connect with resources, you can ensure the long-term health and sustainability of your woodlands. So, make the most of this planning season, and watch your forest flourish in the seasons to come!

Upcoming events:

2/15/24 - 'Wisconsin Maple Hour' Tree Tapping Webinar (registration and recordings - <https://maple.extension.wisc.edu/maplehour/>)

3/9/24 - WI Woodland Owners Assoc. Conference in Baldwin, WI (info and registration - <https://woodlandinfo.org/events>)

3/13/24 - 'Wisconsin Maple Hour' Invasive Plants in the Sugarbush (registration and recordings - <https://maple.extension.wisc.edu/maplehour/>)

4/4-5/30 - Your Land, Your Legacy online family succession classes (info and registration - <https://woodlandinfo.org/events>)

4/16-4/30 - 'Getting Started with Stewardship' conservation networking webinars (info and registration - <https://woodlandinfo.org/events>)



Maple Syrup Program
Division of Extension



Extension Forestry
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



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