



TEXAS

FORESTRY

ESTABLISHED IN 1914 - FOR PEOPLE INTERESTED IN FORESTRY ISSUES.

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TFA Seeks Board of Director Nominations

Silviculture 101 Lesson 4 - Hardwood Management

TEXAS FORESTRY ASSOCIATION

THE VAST IMPACT OF TEXAS' WORKING FORESTS

- 91% OF THE FORESTS IN EAST TEXAS ARE OWNED BY PRIVATE LANDOWNERS, 83% OF WHICH ARE FAMILY FOREST OWNERS
- 168,000 TEXAS JOBS ARE SUPPORTED BY FORESTRY
- THE FOREST-BASED INDUSTRY IS ONE OF THE **TOP 10** MANUFACTURING SECTORS IN THE STATE (2019)

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Whether you care about drinking water, clean air or economic benefits, working forests play a vital role - and so do the people who own, manage, harvest and process them.

- \$37B** IMPACT ON THE TEXAS ECONOMY
- 34% OF THE STATE'S GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT IS SUPPORTED BY FORESTRY



There's nothing wrong with growing old -

Even for Trees

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My creaky joints often remind me that growing old is no fun, but I guess it's part of life. In the case of our forests, sometimes it's a great thing to let those trees grow old. Many timber owners in the southeastern United States focus on shorter-rotation harvests of pulpwood to generate a

- they aren't allowed to grow old like you and me. In fact, they are harvested just as they are starting to be productive for most wildlife. We often forget that certain birds and other wildlife live in forests dominated with a larger, older age-class of trees. From a forestry perspective, those older

trees are classified as sawtimber. Sawtimber has large-diameter trunks and, when left in your forest, can provide homes for lots of species of birds, mammals, and other wildlife. Delaying a timber harvest to let your pole-sized timber grow into larger, high-demand sizes used for lumber products can maximize your profits when you do harvest and will prolong habitat for more wildlife.

The brown-headed nuthatch and pileated woodpecker, to name a few, are two East Texas species of birds that need older large diameter pine timber for



Snag: Any standing dead wood, as shown in this photo, is called a snag. For wildlife, snags still have a lot of life as they provide foraging and nesting sites for many species including wood ducks nesting in abandoned pileated woodpecker cavities.



Sawtimber Tree: This large diameter pine, very much alive, is often referred to as a saw log or sawtimber-sized tree. Such stately trees are important to many species of insectivorous birds, including warblers and woodpeckers, that help keep our insect numbers in-check. Notice that this person happens to be standing on something else discussed in this article.

relatively rapid return on investment. Short-rotation means trees aren't allowed to reach their maximum size and potential

and pileated woodpecker, to name a few, are two East Texas species of birds that need older large diameter pine timber for

nest placement. The pileated woodpecker, our nation's largest species of woodpecker, can't carve a nest in a small diameter tree or limb - such a nest won't be large enough. And guess what wood ducks often use for nesting? Yep, an old pileated cavity. And the tiny brown-headed nuthatch must think he's a much bigger bird than he is,

as nuthatches always carve out a hole for their nests in the fattest part of the trunk of a dead pine.

Both the nuthatch and woodpecker prey on insects that can be harmful to our forests thus, for free, they're providing a necessary service of "pest control." The same goes for several species of warblers, including Northern Parula and Yellow-throated Warbler, that seek out the canopy of the bigger and older trees in our hardwood bottoms during the breeding season. These warblers are gleaning pesky insects off of the leaves and bark, which helps keep insect numbers in balance. Without these sorts of birds, our forests could be in trouble.

Bigger is better not just when selling timber but also when leaving timber for birds and other wildlife. Consider raising your forest like a community of humans with a varied age-class from toddlers to senior citizens. In many of our forests, it's the senior citizen age class that's lacking yet that's often the most productive for many animals. Besides, I find the older humans much more interesting to talk to since they have experienced so much over the decades. Older trees also have stories to tell. Whether you have a commercial timber operation or even just a small stand of trees to harvest on your property, consider delaying harvest or even leaving some of the more senior and stately trees. When trees die and rot, they recycle important nutrients back into the soil. Such soil health is critical to those trying to grow bigger and better trees.

When it comes to trees on your property, consider letting some dead trees live, so to speak. The term "dead wood" in the workplace usually doesn't mean good things, but that same term in the outdoors can mean great things for a variety of wildlife. First, a couple of definitions: a snag is any standing dead tree. Once that snag falls to the ground, its name immediately changes to a log. The terms "stob" and "stub" are popular and usually refer to a dead limb in a live tree or remnants of a dead tree peeking up above the water in a reservoir or pond.



Log: Dead wood not only can return essential nutrients back into the soil but there are certain species that still use them. Notice the cavity in the middle of this large pine log that, when formerly upright as a snag, would have been used for years by birds, squirrels, and other animals.

Snags allow for cavities or "hollows" to be created. These hollows can host a diversity of living critters, especially nesting birds. There are over 80 species of cavity-using birds across the entire U.S. Many of them are familiar to us here in East Texas including wood duck, eastern bluebird, several species of woodpeckers, Carolina chickadee and titmouse. Raptors use snags as perches - they are easy because there aren't any limbs and leaves to crash through during landings and they give raptors a real "bird's-eye view" of their surroundings while searching for prey. Raptors are important in keeping rodent numbers in-check.

The two species of diurnal squirrels in our area also use cavities found in dead wood. These cavities allow them warm winter dens as well as nesting sites to raise their young. Similar to Johnny Appleseed, squirrels help with re-seeding our forests

and, as a game species, they're popular with family hunts. While in the woods, nothing beats watching a seasoned hunting dog sniff out and "tree" a squirrel.

When a tree on your property dies and needs to be removed to prevent it from falling on the house or the carport, consider leaving 10-20 feet of trunk intact for woodpeckers and other wildlife. This is good for both wildlife and your pocketbook since the trunk is the biggest and heaviest and thus most expensive part of the tree to remove.

In summary, keep sawtimber-sized trees, snags, and logs intact on your property as much as possible -- do it for the birds and other wildlife, do it because it saves you money, and do it for your viewing enjoyment of nature. Do it because getting old doesn't mean you're not valuable -- whether you're a human or a tree.