



From the Woods...

Kentucky Woodlands Magazine interviewed Dr. Maurice Cook, Franklin County woodland owner, to learn about his experiences with the emerald ash borer on his property.

KWM: Please tell us a little about the management objectives for your property.

Maurice Cook: My primary objective is to have a healthy, sustainable woodland that will produce good timber and also enhance related natural resources. To achieve this objective, I have done (or am doing) the following things: 1) Completed a post-harvest timber stand improvement program following a timber harvest in 2000; 2) Currently practicing hardwood crop tree release through the Conservation Stewardship Program administered by NRCS; 3) Currently implementing Forestry BMPs for soil erosion control and watershed protection.



Maurice Cook, his wife and granddaughter.

KWM: How did you learn you had emerald ash borer on your property?

Maurice Cook: Ben Lyle, Forester with the Kentucky Division of Forestry (KDF), advised me of that fact some time in 2008. Ben had observed signs of declining ash trees in 2006. However, the presence of emerald ash borer (EAB) was not confirmed until two years later. I understand that my property has the dubious distinction of being the first confirmed EAB site in Franklin County.

KWM: Has the presence of emerald ash borer impacted the management of your property? If so, how?

Maurice Cook: It has modified the timetable for my next timber harvest. Ash was a significant tree species on the property and much of it would have been ready for harvest in the next 3-4 years. When the presence of the EAB was confirmed, Ben Lyle and I discussed the situation and decided that the volume of ash trees was too low to justify a harvest. Furthermore, the modest amount of revenue generated from an ash tree harvest would have been offset by damage to saplings and crop trees. Oak regeneration on the ash tree sites is going extremely well. The consequence, though, is that the next harvest is now about 10 years away in order for more of the oak trees to reach a desired size for harvest, and for the very small (1-2 inch diameter) oaks to become large enough to avoid being uprooted or permanently damaged by the timber harvesting process.

KWM: What advice do you have for other woodland owners that are currently dealing with emerald ash borer or might have to in the future?

Maurice Cook: FIRST AND FOREMOST, get assistance from a professional forester. That individual can tell you if you have the EAB, which gives you a starting point in planning how to deal with it. Even if you don't have the EAB, a professional forester can help you plan in the event you do have it---which is highly probable considering the aggressiveness of the EAB being what it is. I am an absentee landowner. Thus, I have found the services of the KDF absolutely essential in enabling me to achieve the objectives I have for my woodland.