



# Illinois Small Farm News

*Landwise—Featuring Innovative Illinois Farmers*

## A Forest Reborn in Fithian, Illinois

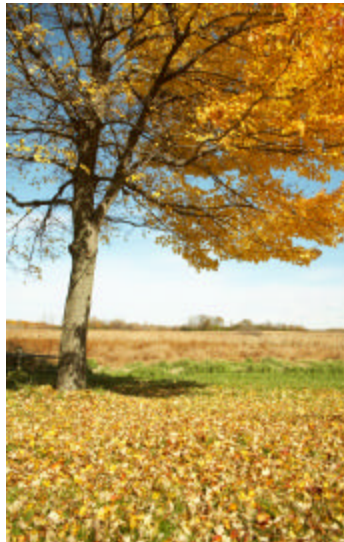
*Leanne Lucas*

More than 100 years ago, prairie fires regularly swept across the Midwestern plains. Those fires primarily eliminated maple trees because the nut trees (such as oak, hickory and walnut) were more resistant to fires. But as humans took control of the prairie, the natural process that kept a healthy balance in the tree population was eliminated and hard maple began to take over. Hard maples grow more readily in an open space with full sunshine, so today when a nut tree dies, a hard maple usually takes its place.

Kevin Green, a farmer near Fithian, Illinois, has decided—with the help of a SARE grant—to take a portion of the woods on his family farm and restore it to a more traditional oak/walnut/hickory forest. “I took approximately 2 acres (of a 40-acre woods) and tried a variety of techniques to eliminate the maple trees and allow the nut trees to regenerate themselves,” says Green.

First, Green cut the smallest maple trees (the size of a pencil to a broomstick) flush

with the ground and sprayed the stumps with the herbicide Garlon. On trees with a diameter of 6 to 8 inches, Green made several inch-deep cuts all the way around the tree and sprayed Garlon in the girdlings. The largest maple trees, with diameters of 8 inches and



Fall-colored sugar maple overlooking a tallgrass prairie  
Photo by Jim Jurica  
iStockphoto

up, were cut and harvested for firewood and lumber. “On the trees that were cut off at the base, or the trees that were girdled, we had about a 90- to 95-percent non-survival rate,” said Green. “After two or three years, if any of those grew

up again, we would re-spray them.”

Next, Green chose different areas of open forest, partially shaded forest, and densely shaded forest and tried three different methods to regenerate the nut trees in each area. “Our first method allowed the areas to naturally regenerate.

Whatever nuts fell from the trees, we let nature take its course,” says Green. “We also planted bare root stock—seedling trees that come 20 to a bundle that fits in a grocery sack. Those are maybe a foot tall. Finally, we planted slightly larger trees from 1-gallon pots.”

What were his results? “Pretty much what you can imagine,” he says. “In densely shaded forest, the natural generation worked the best and the potted plants all died out. In open forest, with no canopy, the potted plants flourished.”

Today, Green says, the natural takeover by the hard nut trees is doing quite well. “There are hundreds of tall oak and hickory and walnut trees out in that part of the woods. It’s real nice down

*(Continued on page 3)*

Volume 3, Issue 1

Winter 2010

### Inside this issue:

Landwise	1
SARE Corner	2
Calendar	4

### Resource Spotlight: Midwest Permaculture

Provides quality permaculture education and training throughout the Midwest and beyond. “Permaculture is a creative and artful way of living, where people and nature are both preserved and enhanced by thoughtful planning, the careful use of resources, mimicking the patterns found in nature (biomimicry) and a respectful approach to life. Thus embraced, these attributes create an environment where all may thrive for untold generations.” Bill Wilson

[www.midwestpermaculture.com/](http://www.midwestpermaculture.com/)



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
EXTENSION



### Resource Spotlight: FamilyFarmed.org

FamilyFarmed.org's mission is to expand the production, marketing and distribution of locally grown and responsibly produced food, in order to enhance the social, economic and environmental health of our communities.

7115 W. North Ave.  
#504  
Oak Park, IL 60302  
708-763-9920  
info@familyfarmed.org  
www.familyfarmed.org

Mark your calendar for the **Fifth Family-Farmed.org Expo** on March 11-13 at the University of Illinois at Chicago Forum. Events include: Financing Farm to Fork Conference (March 11), Chicago Food Policy Advisory Council Annual Summit, Localicious Party and Trade Show (March 12) and Local Food Festival (March 13). For more information, visit: [www.familyfarmedexpo.com](http://www.familyfarmedexpo.com)



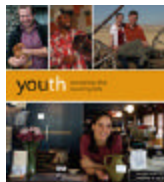
## SARE Corner

Information and Resources about the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program

### NCR-SARE Announces 2010 Call for Graduate Student Proposals

The call for proposals is available on the NCR-SARE website ([www.sare.org/ncrsare](http://www.sare.org/ncrsare)). Graduate students can submit proposals for up to \$10,000 to fund sustainable agriculture projects that will be part of their educational programs; the work must benefit agriculture in the North Central Region of the U.S. at least as much as other parts of the world. We expect to fund about 15 projects in the twelve-state North Central Region. Proposals are due in the NCR-SARE office in St Paul MN by 4:30 p.m. CST, January 28, 2010. If you have questions about the program, contact NCR-SARE at [ncrsare@umn.edu](mailto:ncrsare@umn.edu), (612) 626-3113 or Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant, SARE Coordinator, at [cvnghgrn@illinois.edu](mailto:cvnghgrn@illinois.edu), (217)968-5512.

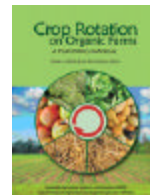
Youth Renewing the Countryside Whether we live in Manhattan or Peoria, we depend on a healthy countryside: it supplies the food we eat. So it's welcome news that across the nation, a hearty crop is taking root. Smart,



young people are returning to the roots of American Agriculture—roots steeped in a tradition and culture of diversity, quality, and respect for the Earth. Full of brilliant color photographs, *Youth Renewing the Countryside* shares remarkable stories of young people in each state changing the world through rural renewal. Produced by Renewing the Countryside in partnership with young writers and photographers across the country and with support from SARE and the Center for Rural Strategies. How to Order—[www.sare.org/publications/order.htm](http://www.sare.org/publications/order.htm) Online pdf—[www.sare.org/publications/youth/youth.pdf](http://www.sare.org/publications/youth/youth.pdf)

### Crop Rotation on Organic Farms: A Planning Manual

*Crop Rotation on Organic Farms: A Planning Manual* provides an in-depth review of the applications of crop rotation—including improving soil quality and health, and managing pests, diseases, and weeds. Consulting with expert organic farmers, the authors share rotation strategies that can be applied under various field conditions and with a wide



range of crops. *Crop Rotation on Organic Farms* will be most applicable for the Northeastern United States and Eastern Canada, but also in other parts of the U.S., Canada, and Europe. Published by the Natural Resource, Agriculture and Engineering Service (NRAES) and funded in part by SARE, the book includes instructions for making rotation planning maps and discusses the transition to organic farming. How to Order—[www.nraes.org/nra\\_crof.html](http://www.nraes.org/nra_crof.html) Online pdf—[www.sare.org/publications/croprotonation/croprotonation.pdf](http://www.sare.org/publications/croprotonation/croprotonation.pdf)

### North Central Region SARE Field Notes

For more information about the North Central Region SARE program, check out the Summer/Fall 2009 (Issue 21) *Field Notes* at [www.sare.org/ncrsare/documents/Field\\_Notes\\_SummFall09.pdf](http://www.sare.org/ncrsare/documents/Field_Notes_SummFall09.pdf) *Field Notes* is a newsletter that shares announcements and news topics from the North Central Region SARE program. It is mailed to subscribers upon request. E-mail [ncrsare@unl.edu](mailto:ncrsare@unl.edu) to request printed copies or subscribe to the printed version.

## Organizations and Programs Supporting Small Farms

Small Farm and Family Expo on June 27-28, 2010

The Small Farm and Family Expo, an outdoor event that provides small farming enterprises the opportunity to learn about the latest research, resources, equipment and technology, is scheduled for June 27-28, 2010 at Progress City USA which is the bi-annual site of the Farm Progress Show in Decatur, Illinois. The Expo focuses on the needs of the smaller acreage farmer and family. Its components include: seminars covering topics on Alternative Energy, Business and Marketing, Horticulture, Livestock, Organic and Sustainable Farming and more; a trade show that allows participants to handle, operate and/or in some way experience the equipment; demonstrations

and specialty displays; children's area that includes mini-seminars; and fun events yet to be announced.

*This Expo provides small farming ventures the opportunity to learn about the latest research, resources, equipment, and technology that will enhance their abilities to be successful. There are seminars covering a multitude of topics and a trade show that allows participants to handle, operate, and/or in some way experience the equipment. Specialty displays, demonstrations and events are on-going throughout the two days.*

Progress City USA is proud to host and be a sponsor of the Expo because the small farm

contribution to society is so massive, encompassing a diversity of ownership, cropping systems, landscapes, biological organization, culture and traditions. They account for 91% of all farms and their numbers continue to grow exponentially. Representatives from the University of Illinois Extension, Richland Community College, Illinois Specialty Growers Association, Illinois Farm Bureau, Illinois Department of Agriculture, Macon County Farm Bureau, Farm Progress Show and Macon County Soil and Water District have come together to assist in the Expo development. Other organizations and programs are encouraged to join and may do so by contacting Cindy Laegeler at [claegele@richland.edu](mailto:claegele@richland.edu) or (217)875-7211 extension 577.



Save the Date:  
Small Farm and Family Expo  
Sunday and Monday,  
June 27-28, 2010  
Progress City USA  
(biannual site of the Farm Progress Show)  
Decatur, IL

For more information contact Progress City USA at (217)875-7211 ext. 577 or [claegele@richland.edu](mailto:claegele@richland.edu).

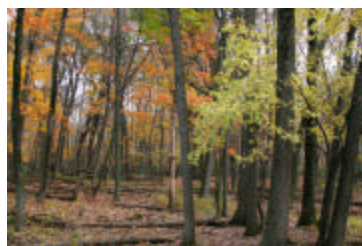
## A Forest Reborn...

(Continued from page 1)

there. It looks like a traditional hardwood forest.”

At this time, Green has no plans to market the byproducts of the forest, “although I certainly could if I wanted to,” he says. “Income could definitely be garnered from the sale of nuts, firewood, or lumber. Veneer logs would be another byproduct, although it takes about 100 years to get a good veneer log. So those will be there for my grandchildren or

greatgrandchildren.”



A colorful Fall day in an Illinois Burr-oak savannah  
Photo by Jim Jurica  
iStockphoto

Green primarily uses the area for the personal enjoyment of his family and friends. “It’s an excellent deer habitat,” he says, “so

we mainly use the area to hunt. In fact, it’s been so attractive to deer that a friend and I go down periodically and thin out a few more maple trees. It’s also been a great habitat for morel mushrooms.”

Green is clearly pleased with the results of his project, so much so that he has only one regret. “I think I should have been more aggressive,” he says. “Had I known then what I know now, I would have hired several people and done a lot more acreage.”

In response to the overpopulation of maple trees in the Midwest, Kevin Green received a SARE grant to restore a portion of the woods on his family farm to a more traditional oak/walnut/hickory forest.



Small farm and antique tractor in winter  
Photo by Jim Jurica  
iStockphoto  
www.jimjurica.com



University of Illinois  
Extension  
Small Farm Program

www.extension.uiuc.edu/smallfarm



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS  
EXTENSION

Helping you put knowledge to work.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant at (217)968-5512, cvnghgrn@illinois.edu.

University of Illinois - U.S. Department of Agriculture - Local Extension Councils Cooperating

University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

If you need a disability accommodation to participate in any University of Illinois Extension program listed in this newsletter, please contact Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant at (217)968-5512, cvnghgrn@illinois.edu.

## Calendar

January 20-23, 2010  
19th Annual Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms - Southern SAWG  
Location: Chattanooga, TN  
Visit: [www.ssawg.org/conference-.html](http://www.ssawg.org/conference-.html)

February 6, 2010  
Putting Small Acreage to Work-Alternative Agriculture Options  
Location: Sycamore, IL  
Visit: <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/dekalb>

February 8, 2010  
7th Annual Composting Symposium: Backyard, Business, and Beyond  
Location: Springfield, IL  
Visit: <http://>

[web.extension.uiuc.edu/sangamonmenard/](http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/sangamonmenard/)

February 13, 2010  
Putting Small Acres To Work  
Location: Quincy, IL  
Visit: <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/adamsbrown>

February 16, 2009  
Tree Fruit and Vegetable School  
Location: Quincy, IL  
Visit: <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/adamsbrown>

February 25-27, 2010  
Organic Farming Conference  
Location: La Crosse, WI  
Visit: [www.mosesorganic.org/conference.html](http://www.mosesorganic.org/conference.html)

March 13, 2010  
Tri-State Forest Stewardship Conference  
Location: Sinsinawa, WI  
Visit: <http://basineducation.uwex.edu/gpsp>

Additional events may be found on University of Illinois Extension's small farm website at: <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/smallfarm/events.cfm>

### 2010 NCR-SARE Grant Timelines

#### Farmer Rancher Grant Timeline

August - Call for Proposals  
December - Proposals Due  
March - Authors Notified on Status of Proposal  
April - Funds Available to Recipients

#### Professional Development Grant Timeline

March - Call for Pre-Proposals  
Late May - Pre-Proposals Due  
Late June - Authors Notified on Status  
Late August - Full Proposals Due  
November - Funding Decisions Made

#### Research and Education Grant Timeline

April - Call for Pre-Proposals  
June - Pre-Proposals Due  
Early Fall - Authors Notified on Status of Pre-Proposal  
Late Fall - Full Proposals Due  
March - Funding Decisions Made by NCR-SARE  
Spring - Authors Notified on Status of Proposal

#### Graduate Student Grant Timeline

Fall - Call for Proposals  
January - Proposals Due  
March - Funding Decisions Made by NCR-SARE  
Spring - Authors Notified on Status of Proposal  
Fall - Funds Available to Recipients

*Illinois Small Farm News* is published by University of Illinois Extension's Small Farm Program. This newsletter is designed to inform its readers (both the commercial small farmer as well as the small acreage landowner) about the latest small farm programs and about people and activities in the state of Illinois, as well as in the Midwest region and our nation. Edited and produced by Deborah Cavanaugh-Grant; layout by Stacey Thomas and designed by Kyla Kruse.

University of Illinois Extension is the flagship outreach effort of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, offering educational programs to residents of all of Illinois' 102 counties—and far beyond.

Through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work, U of I Extension's programs are aimed at making life better, healthier, safer and more profitable for individuals and their communities.