



DELAWARE
HIGHLANDS
CONSERVANCY

Roots & Branches

WOMEN AND THEIR WOODS

Wellness in Penn's Woods

By Suzann Schiemer

Imagine taking a walk in the forest right now. You feel the earth and leaves under your feet, the snap of twigs. You listen to the birdsong and look up through the breaks in the canopy to the sky above, noticing how the light filters through to a point just further along the path. You breathe in, deeply. You smell the distinct forest aromas: moss, sap, earth and wood. You take it all in. - Y. Miyazaki

The above excerpt reads like a beautiful passage written by a naturalist expressing appreciation for the gifts bestowed by the forest. However, the passage represents much more, as Yoshifumi Miyazaki is the deputy director of Chiba University's Center for Environment, Health and Field Sciences in Japan. Miyazaki has spent years conducting research on the wellness practice of forest therapy. Through this research Miyazaki has documented the physiological effects on health and well-being from time spent in nature. The findings are welcome news for those of us who love spending time in Penn's Woods.



Forest bathing is a wellness practice with a host of physical and mental benefits.

Far from the forests of Japan, here in the United States we are learning about forest therapy and the research findings related to spending time in nature as a wellness practice. A variety of health and wellness related publications have featured articles addressing nature-based wellness under an assortment of titles such as forest therapy, Shinrin-yoku, forest bathing, nature therapy, ecotherapy and green exercise.

The body of knowledge related to nature-based wellness is robust. Often cited is data from the 14+ years of research conducted by Japanese researcher Dr. Qing Li. Dr. Li

continued on page 6...



DelawareHighlands.org/watw

The Women and Their Woods program is administered by the Delaware Highlands Conservancy and the Center for Private Forests at Penn State with support from the US Forest Service at Grey Towers, Pennsylvania Forest Stewardship Program, and the William Penn Foundation.

For additional information, please contact:

Amanda Subjin
Delaware Highlands Conservancy
(570) 226-3164 x2
amanda@delawarehighlands.org

Allyson Muth
Center for Private Forests
at Penn State
(814) 865-3208
abm173@psu.edu



William Penn
WILLIAM PENN
FOUNDATION

Women and Their Woods

Throughout our region, women are increasingly responsible for the stewardship of private forestlands. To be good forest stewards, landowners require accurate information and relevant knowledge about available options for managing their properties.

The Women and Their Woods initiative provides landowners with the support, knowledge, and confidence to effectively care for their lands with an emphasis on conservation and the value of intact forestlands. In addition to receiving resources such as this newsletter, participants are invited to become a part of this peer-learning network by attending field tours, hands-on workshops and the popular biennial Educational Retreat.

We encourage you to share this newsletter with other landowners. If you have a story to share about your forest, a resource that has helped you or suggestions for future information or workshops, please let us know!

Learn more and join the mailing list at
DelawareHighlands.org/watw.



We Need Your Email Address!

As conservation-centered organizations, we want to conserve resources by communicating with you through email.

Please send your email to amanda@delawarehighlands.org and specify if you would like to receive our mailings electronically or continue to receive hard copies in the mail.

No Bleach, Please: How to Treat Poison Ivy

By Jamie Harms, M.D.

Does this scenario sound familiar? You're out in your yard, cleaning up vines and weeds. Two or three days later, you develop an itchy rash on your arms. Two days after that, the rash is on your legs and face. The rash swells and oozes, but it's the itching that makes you so uncomfortable. Poison ivy season is here.



Remember - leaves of three, leave them be!

Most children and adults are sensitive to poison ivy to some degree. Poison ivy grows vigorously in this part of the country. It grows as a low ground cover or climbs as a vine, using trees and poles to support it. The leaves, stems, and roots of the plant contain the clear, odorless oil, called urushiol, that causes the skin reaction. When you brush by the leaves or break the vine, the oil comes in contact with your skin.

You scratch your elbow, wipe the sweat from your face, roll up your sleeves, and each time, you move a little bit of poison ivy oil around your body. Imagine how your arms and hands look after checking the oil in your car—that oil is dark, so you can see where it's smeared on your skin. Poison ivy oil spreads around the same way. Ultimately, you wash the oil off your skin, but often not before your body has noticed the urushiol and starts sending immune cells to fight it.

A couple of days later, your skin begins to itch, and you notice some small blisters filled with clear fluid. And here is where some common myths about poison ivy begin.

Myth 1: You can spread poison ivy to other places on your body or to other people by touching the rash, especially the fluid inside the blisters. In fact, that fluid is made of cells from your own body's immune cells, not the urushiol that causes the rash. The rash itself is not contagious at all. People often notice the rash "spreading," but this is because the rash emerges over several days. It comes out first in places where the skin is thin, like the undersides of the wrists and between the fingers. Later, it comes out in places where the skin is thicker.

Myth 2: A little bleach on the rash will dry it right up. A poison ivy rash is a break in the skin. Any caustic material, such as bleach or rubbing alcohol, can damage your tissues and make it harder for a wound to heal. Keep the rash clean with soap and water. Cover it with a bandage if it's oozing to help prevent bacteria from getting into the wound.

Some cortisone cream will help reduce your poison ivy rash. Keep cool—you'll itch more if you're warm. An antihistamine such as Benadryl can help with the itch. If your poison ivy is widespread, or involves the skin around your eyes, make sure to see your doctor.

Dr. Harms is a Maryland Primary Care Physicians, LLC partner and is certified by the American Board of Family Medicine. She received her medical degree from University of Maryland School of Medicine in 1989 and completed her residency program in Family Practice at University of Maryland Medical Center in 1992.

SPRING WORKSHOP

Chainsaw Safety and Habitat Improvement

On Saturday, May 4, twenty-five participants attended the 2019 Women and Their Woods Spring Workshop in Lake Ariel, Pennsylvania. The workshop entailed lessons on chainsaw safety with Dave Sienko, Vice President of the Northern Tier Hardwoods Association and former instructor of Soren Eriksson's Game of Logging, in addition to wildlife habitat improvement methods with Paul Reining, landowner and former President of the NTHA and Tim Latz, Service Forester with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) Bureau of Forestry.

Lessons on chainsaw safety included those on personal protective equipment, chainsaw safety features, reactive forces, bore cutting and pre-planning the fell. As for wildlife habitat improvements, attendees learned about the Reining's goals for their property. These goals have included creating early successional habitat in a mostly closed-canopy forest.



Participants assess the lean of a tree.

Early successional habitat provides nesting and breeding areas for golden-winged warblers (a migratory bird with near-threatened status) in addition to many other flora and fauna that require a younger-aged forest.



Learning about newly created early successional habitat with DCNR Forester Tim Latz.

Discussions also included cost share assistance as provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service to conduct the project including methods to control invasive species and competing vegetation species and a demonstration of control equipment.

Participants traveled from three counties, some from over four hours away, to attend this program. The Women and Their Woods initiative offers a biennial four-day educational retreat and an annual spring workshop. The next Educational Retreat will be held in Fall 2020. Stayed tuned for details!

Special thanks to the presenters, to Sarah Hall-Bagdonas of the Northern Tier Hardwoods Association for help with coordinating the event, and to Penny and Paul Reining for hosting.

Funding to support this event was provided in part by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council's Pocono Forests & Waters Conservation Landscape Mini-Grant Program.

Visit www.delawarehighlands.org/watw to see the online photo album of the event.



Dave reviews the details of a proper notch.

This year, the Women and Their Woods initiative was financed in part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program Environmental Stewardship Fund under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation administered through the Pennsylvania Environmental Council's Pocono Forests & Waters Conservation Landscape Mini-Grant Program.



UPCOMING EVENT

Game of Logging for Women

Sunday, June 23rd | 8am-3pm, R Ranch, Lake Ariel, PA

In this Level 1 class, participants will be introduced to open face felling and safety techniques. Topics covered include personal protective equipment, chainsaw safety features, chainsaw reactive forces, bore cutting, pre-planning the fell, and understanding hinge wood strength.

This event is hosted by the Northern Tier Hardwoods Association. Space is limited and advance registration is required; visit nthardwoods.org to register.



...continued from page 1

is the Chairman of the Japanese Society for Forest Medicine, a professor at the Nippon Medical School in Tokyo and one of the world's leading experts on forest bathing. Dr. Li's research data has shown the following benefits from practicing Shinrin-yoku: reduced blood pressure, lowered stress, improved cardiovascular and metabolic health, lower blood-sugar levels, improved concentration and memory, improved mood, improved pain thresholds, improved energy, boosted immune system, and weight loss.



According to Dr. Li, "When you connect to nature through all five of your senses, you begin to draw on the vast array of benefits the natural world provides." When practicing Shinrin-yoku, you will walk at a gentle pace for two or more hours through the forest. Engagement of your senses supports your ability to take in the forest atmosphere. As you walk, notice the environment around you through your senses.

Notice what you are seeing; studies have found that shades of blues and greens lower arousal and anxiety. Notice the sounds of the forest; listen closely to the pleasant sounds of singing birds and murmuring water. Soothing sounds such as these have been cited for their ability to produce brain waves that help us relax. Notice the subtle and not so subtle aromas of the forest through your sense of smell. Take a few deep breaths inhaling the plant aromas; the scent of the white pines, the blossoming trees. Natural oils in forest plants are called phytoncides, and exciting research has provided evidence that our body's immune system responds favorably to exposure to certain phytoncides in forested areas.

Notice what you touch and what is touching you. Feel the air current on your skin; come in direct contact with the trees. Studies have shown that physical contact with wood can induce physiological relaxation. Go ahead, hug that tree. Take a fresh, healthy snack with you to eat when you feel hungry and notice how it tastes. If you are interested in developing a personal practice of nature-based wellness, consider the following:

1. *Select a natural area. Remember to look for a natural water element, a tree canopy with a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees, diverse ecosystems and a quiet area for a Sit Spot (see below).*
2. *The trail should be easy to walk; supporting a slow and gentle pace. You need not walk far or fast.*
3. *Select a Sit Spot Area. A sit spot area is a pleasant and comfortable spot in a natural area where you can sit and rest in quiet awareness.*
4. *Take a healthy and natural snack and water.*
5. *Give yourself permission to turn off the electronics during your time in nature.*
6. *Dress in layers for the weather conditions. It is difficult to relax and restore when you are too cold or hot.*

This article has been edited for length. Suzanne Schiemer is a certified Forest Therapy Guide with the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides and Programs. Formerly a teacher at the Bloomsburg Area School District for 36 years, Suzanne also works on educational initiatives for the PA Department of Education.

Forest Landowners Conference

Thanks to all who supported the Women and Their Woods initiative during the Forest Landowners Conference held at the Penn Stater Conference Center this past March 22-23.

We were pleased to see many of you sporting your Women and Their Woods gear, chatting with members and future members at our exhibit booth, and joining us at two programs focused on women's forestland ownership. Overall, our friends at PSU put together a very ambitious and successful event and we're delighted to have been a part of it! We're looking forward to the 5th biennial conference in 2021.



Women landowners participate in a group cognitive mapping exercise during a session led by Women and Their Woods member and co-coordinator, Nancy Baker.



Participants learn about forestry tools designed for use by women. The group cognitive map from the previous session is displayed in the background.

FREE WEBINAR

Glyphosate: The World's Most Controversial Herbicide

Presented by J. Ferrell, the Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants at the University of Florida

Learn the science behind the herbicide glyphosate's various safety ratings and it's infamy, and you decide—friend or foe? Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3q907TkYkw>

WomenOwningWoodlands.net



You'll find stories from other landowners, information applicable to your forest landownership and find ways to connect through nearby events for women landowners.



Save the Dates!

August 24: Firefly Picnic

Lemons Brook Farm, Bethel, NY, 3pm-6pm

Join the Delaware Highlands Conservancy for our annual community picnic for our members and friends and enjoy a delicious catered meal, a Live Birds of Prey presentation, a guided trail walk, crafts, and much more! Fun for all ages. Tickets are \$10 for members, \$25 for non-members, and free for children under 12.

October 6: Walk in Penn's Woods at Stairway Ridge

Westfall Township, Pike County, PA

Join the Conservancy and PA DCNR Bureau of Forestry for a guided fall hike on this protected property and the adjacent Stairway Wild Area in. Remember to wear hiking shoes, dress for the weather, and bring water for this moderately strenuous trail. This event is free and open to the public, but registration is required.

Learn more and register for these events and others at DelawareHighlands.org.

FOREST LANDOWNER PERSPECTIVE

This newsletter is YOUR space!

Share your connections to the forest with other WaTW newsletter readers. Send an email to amanda@delawarehighlands.org with your photos, journal entries, drawings, other artwork, or stories, and we'll share it here. **We're looking forward to hearing from you!**

SERVING NEW YORK AND PENNSYLVANIA

- Wellness in Penn's Woods
- No Bleach, Please: How to Treat Poison Ivy
- Chainsaw Safety and Habitat Improvement
- Glyphosate: The World's Most Controversial Herbicide

INSIDE

PO Box 218 Hawley, PA 18428-0218

WOMEN AND THEIR WOODS

Roots & Branches



Non-Profit Org.
Hawley, PA
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 42

Printed on recycled paper.