Recipe for Birch Tea
Sabrina Szeto MF ’16

My little black birch tree
thin as a spindle.

A desire for tea
Do you now kindle.

Your branches I snip,
They snap like a whip!

Green leaves I strip,
Bare twigs I grip,
And steep them in water
by the light of the moon.

A little black birch tea,
Soon, oh so soon.

Recipe for Birch Tea

Sabrina Szeto
MF ’16

Photo: Joshua Morse  MESc ‘17

News from the
QUIET CORNER
Brought to You by the Yale Forests

About the
QUIET CORNER
INITIATIVE

The Quiet Corner Initiative (QCI) supports local livelihoods, sustainable forest management, and rural economic development by building relationships between local landowners, conservation and forestry professionals, and the students and faculty of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies.

A note from the
FOREST MANAGER

Spring greetings!

This winter was a bustling one. Students in Mark Ashton’s Management Plans course worked hard to finish forest management plans for six new properties—which together amounted to approximately 650 acres—in the Bigelow Brook subwatershed. This brings the total number of completed management plans to 26, with the accrual students have walked, inventoried and written plans for coming in at over 2,600 acres.

We’ve included a brief survey with this newsletter, and would greatly appreciate your help in reflecting on these last years. We hope you’ll take a few minutes to fill out the mail-in survey and send it back to us. Your responses will help guide our future workshops and programming so we can better meet your needs.

In addition to the well-attended and very successful mushroom log inoculation workshop, which you’ll read about in this newsletter, we also co-hosted a Forest Management Cost Share workshop in November with the New England Forest Foundation. Panels from CT DEEP, NRCS, and American Farmland Trust were there to provide landowners with information on available funding to support their land management goals.

After an overview inside the classroom we relocated outside, where a table set with drillbits waited for us to begin. Everyone quickly grabbed a log and entered into production mode. A campfire kept the sealing wax melted.

One workshop attendee, Devan Parker, said she got to use her newfound skills the following week to help a friend who was adding a log grown mushroom operation to her farm. Another participant, Alan Paskewich, said that he liked the friendly, hands-on nature of the workshop: “It was like a picnic with a campfire — life does not get better than that to me!”

Perhaps we’ll see a few mushroom dishes at next year’s Harvest Fest.

Growing Gourmet Mushrooms
Eli Roberts MF ’16
Sara Rose Tannenbaum MEM ’16

Mushrooms are a culinary treat that you can harvest on your own. All it takes are some freshly-felled logs and tiny bits of micelium, called spawn. At a workshop in March, assistant forest manager Eli Roberts taught over 50 people three ways to grow mushrooms: plug, sawdust and totem.

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METHOD 1 OF 3:
Plug Spawn

WHAT YOU NEED:
• 1 Bag of Plug Spawn
• 1 Hammer
• Hot Wax & Brush
• 1-6 Oak or Sugar Maple Logs, ~30 in. long
• 3/16 inch Drill Bit
• Labels

WHAT TO DO:
1. Drill holes in a four-inch ‘diamond’ pattern along the sides of the log.
2. Place a ‘plug’ in each hole, and hit it in with the hammer.
3. Cover each plugged hole with a layer of hot wax.
4. Label log with date, tree species, mushroom species.
5. Place in a shady, sheltered spot for 6-12 months.
6. Wait for rain, or soak the log for 24 hours, and enjoy mushrooms a few days later!
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management practices.
a hike to learn about past land use and current
played an interactive game that illustrated tree
ecology through hands-on activities. Students
learning about forest management and
the Eastford and Ashford school districts
Last October, 30 sixth-grade students from
During a thinning operation, a forwarder unloads pine logs harvested to leave space for our best trees to grow.
Kassie Urban-Mead MESc ’16, seals mushroom log with wax.
\[ \text{Photo: Sara Rose Tannenbaum} \]

Environmental Education at the Forest
Rebecca Terry MF ’17
Last October, 30 sixth-grade students from the Eastford and Ashford school districts spent a morning in the Yale-Myers’ woods learning about forest management and ecology through hands-on activities. Students played an interactive game that illustrated tree competition in the forest ecosystem and took a hike to learn about past land use and current management practices.
Upon arriving, one student commented that Yale-Myers, "is practically in my backyard, but I’ve never been here before." A vision for ongoing environmental education activities at Yale-Myers is in the works to change that.
We hope that in the near future every generation of students in the Quiet Corner area will be able to visit and experience Yale-Myers as an outdoor classroom.
These students are already fortunate to have grown up near the woods and according to their teacher already make good use of the outdoors. Our goal is to continue to connect them to this special corner of Southeastern New England. Engaging kids with the outdoors and emphasizing the importance of forests will help instill in them a lifelong appreciation for the environment. It is often said that education is the key to action.

The Quiet Corner Initiative is supporting the school districts of Eastford, Ashford, Union and Windsor as they explore an environmental education curriculum aligned with Connecticut’s Next Generation Science Standards. The program will seek to adapt lessons from Project Learning Tree, a nationally recognized and award-winning environmental education program for children from preschool through grade twelve, to fit the schools’ needs.

Get a Management Plan for Your Land
Thinking of stepping up your game in your woodland? Curious to learn about the ecology and history of your woods? Consider working with Yale F&ES forestry students to have a management plan prepared for your property.
Getting a management plan is an opportunity to crystallize your land management and conservation goals, and get free professional-grade advice on ways to achieve them. It is also a chance for Yale F&ES foresters to put their educations into practice.
INTERESTED, OR HAVE QUESTIONS?
Please contact the Yale School Forests Manager, Julius Pasay, at julius.pasay@yale.edu.

Moose on the Loose
Joshua Morse MF ’17
Q3C members are always keen to share news of their wildlife sightings, and it has been my observation that there is a certain art to doing so in an nonchalant a fashion as possible. Thus, at the close of a recent conversation about large scale conservation with a Union resident, I was tickled pink to be alerted to the presence of a very special critter in our neck of the woods. As part of a casually-created plan for the afternoon this Union resident said, “Well, I’ll just be heading out to track the moose”.

A moose in eastern CT? Just a few hours north into western Massachusetts or Vermont, moose are not so uncommon. But moose – a looming presence among the ranks of North America’s large, charismatic wildlife – require forested landscapes on a scale suited to their rather impressive size. That one has turned up in the Quiet Corner towns is a testament to the regional importance of the expansive, interconnected forests surrounding Yale-Myers.

Whether or not moose are native to Connecticut is up for debate. Most authorities agree that if the species existed here before European settlement, it was probably not in great numbers. Up until the mid 20th century, moose were absent from the state, with the first official record of a Connecticut moose dating back to 1956, in Ashford.

Interestingly, this spring’s Quiet Corner moose may reflect a species-wide trend. With the moose population in northern New England expanding and moving south, moose have established a permanent presence of about 100 individuals in Connecticut. As the New England moose population continues to grow – and deals with threats like increasing habitat fragmentation, and break-outs of winter parasites emblazoned by our increasingly mild winters—large, intact forested landscapes are going to be essential bastions for the species.

Despite their size, moose can be elusive creatures. So, how can you help the Q3C keep tabs on our mysterious visitor? If you see sign of moose, snap a photo and let us know where you took it! Like deer, moose rub their antlers on the bark of stripped maple and other smooth saplings during the spring… but look for these rubs at maple and ash, as well, or in an old field. Moose may reflect a species-wide trend.

If you come across any of these signs, we’d love to hear your story — especially if you can tell us with the ‘torn-up’ calm of a true Quiet Corner neighbor.

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For more information about the Yale School Forests’ Quiet Corner Initiative, please visit our website at:

environment.yale.edu/forests
Or follow us on facebook at: “Yale School Forests”