



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Iowa DNR News

Conservation and Recreation

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Rugged and remote, Tubaugh Wildlife Area packs a lot into its 533 acres



Tubaugh Wildlife Area is 533 acres of hilly timber adjacent to the Unionville Unit of Stephens State Forest, in northeast Appanoose County. Photo courtesy of the Iowa DNR.

Three wild turkeys disappeared quietly into the edge of the timber as Shane Frevert pulled his truck into the northeast parking lot at the Tubaugh Wildlife Area.

Tubaugh Wildlife Area is a rugged, 533 acres of hilly timber adjacent to the Unionville Unit of Stephens State Forest, eight miles east of Moravia, in northeast Appanoose County.

“The term ‘off the beaten path’ has changed with all of our technology, but if you hike back in here, it can be a solitary experience, with spotty cell service,” said

Frevert, wildlife technician with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources Rathbun Wildlife Unit.

This is deer and turkey country and the management philosophy at the Tubaugh Wildlife Area emphasizes oaks and hickories to benefit the wildlife.

“We’ve completed more than 475 acres of timber stand improvement to release the hard mast producing trees – the oaks, hickories and walnuts - from the less desirable or more shade tolerant species, and we did some thinning in the overstory to stimulate forb growth and early succession cutting,” Frevert said.

“We’re working toward the goal of using prescribed fire in the timber, a low-intensity burn, once every five years or so, which should allow the leaf litter to build to carry the fire during the dormant season.”

With much of the timber stand improvement completed, Frevert said the trees will have around a decade to respond before they reevaluate and discuss any additional management.

Given its size and location, Tubaugh draws attention and Frevert gets the phone calls from curious hunters.

“I don’t shy away from sending hunters here – residents or nonresidents,” he said. “It gets hunted, but it’s not overrun by hunters.”

Navigating along the firebreaks leads to a series of small sorghum, soybean and hay fields planted on the flatter areas and ridge tops. The access lane heads southeast through a soybean field where two turkeys’ hotfoot it away along the field edge.

A neighbor that is part of the beginning farmer program has the haying and crop lease. He leaves 10 percent of the crop as a winter food plot.

A small stream flows east and then north feeding a pond on the east edge toward the middle of the area.

Media Contact: Shane Frevert, Wildlife Technician, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 641-217-1058.

DNR State Forest Nursery seedling orders start Sept. 1

AMES - The DNR State Forest Nursery is gearing up for fall 2023 and spring 2024 seedling orders.

Seedlings can be ordered Sept. 1 - May 30. The bare-root (no container, soil root ball or moss included) seedlings are packaged in bundles of 25 inside sealed and labeled plastic bags.

Tree varieties include 23 species of native hardwoods, eight evergreen species and 15 smaller trees and shrubs. Prices range from \$.80 to \$1.20 per seedling. Seedlings are sold in three age classifications, and range in size from 10-30 inches depending on the species.

Evergreens and a few other species are only available for spring delivery; all other species are available both spring and fall. Fall delivery is in November and spring delivery is in April and May. Customers can choose to have their order shipped or they can pick it up at the State Forest Nursery in Ames.

“Planting trees and shrubs can help landowners reach a variety of goals,” said Pat Griffin, DNR State Forest Nursery manager. “Native, affordable seedlings are available to help you make your planting successful.”

The DNR State Forest Nursery sells approximately 1 million seedlings per year, and 3-5 million seedlings are grown on-site at any given time. Located on 98 acres just south of Highway 30 in Ames, the nursery was established by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, and has operated continuously ever since.

For more information, visit the online sales site at <http://nursery.iowadnr.gov/> or call 1-800-865-2477 during regular business hours, Monday – Friday. DNR’s expert nursery staff can assist with species selection and answer questions about your tree needs and nursery offerings.

Late summer cattail and floating-leaved plant control for ponds

Have the cattails in your pond taken over your favorite fishing spot or crowded you from one side of the dock or swimming area?

Late summer or early fall is the best time to manage cattails, America Lotus, water lilies and other emergent or floating-leaved plants that are on the pond’s edge or are above the water. Spraying certain herbicides this time of year will eliminate the whole plant, and it will not regrow next spring. There is little risk of depleting the oxygen in the pond with treating these plants; they die-back every year at this time and decompose slowly over the coming months.

Starting in late summer, these plants move food to their roots to survive the winter, making systemic herbicides most effective. The most common active ingredient to use is glyphosate (a few brand names with labels for aquatic use include Aqua Neat, Aqua Pro, Aquamaster, GlyphoMate 41, Rodeo, and RoundUp Custom). Find these at local hardware, farm supply or garden stores or try an online search for “aquatic glyphosate.”

A surfactant or spreader-sticker must be added to many of these herbicides to allow it to stick to the plant's leaves. Read the label and check with your local or online retailer to select a surfactant that you can use in ponds. Spray the above-water part of the plant until just wet (not dripping) and follow instructions on the product label.

When you compare product brands, consider the amount of active ingredient, if a surfactant is needed, and size of the container. A product with a higher amount of active ingredient or one that does not need a surfactant added may provide a better value. The convenience of a ready-to-use (RTU) product that you do not have to mix or add a surfactant may outweigh price considerations.

Be careful to:

- Read and follow the product label for application instructions and precautions.
- Spray when calm, or when winds are low and out of a favorable direction to avoid accidentally spraying other plants valuable to landscaping. Increase the droplet size of the spray to reduce drift.
- Spray plants early in the day with full sunlight after the morning dew has dried to get the best results.
- Obey State law. Shoreline owners on public waters in Iowa may not use herbicides to control aquatic vegetation without a permit. Contact the Iowa DNR fisheries office near you for rules and instructions for removing aquatic plants from public waters.

Learn more about aquatic plants in ponds at www.iowadnr.gov/pondplants.