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ON THE COVER

Entrance to  
Carl Alwin Schenck Grove

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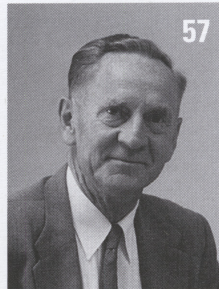


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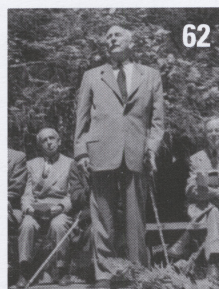
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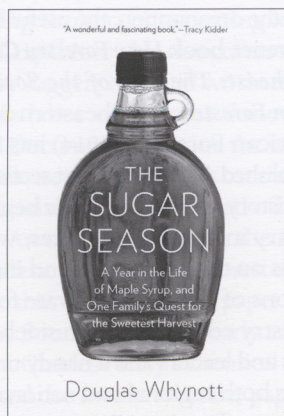
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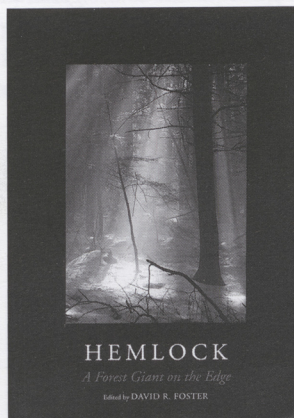
## BOOKS AND FILMS OF INTEREST

by Eben Lehman and James G. Lewis



Late in 2012, the maple syrup industry made worldwide news headlines when suspects were arrested for stealing more than 545,000 gallons of syrup—worth \$18 million wholesale, or 13 times the price of crude oil—from a warehouse in Quebec. The “Great Canadian Maple Syrup Heist,” as the news media christened it, revealed just how big the maple syrup business had become. One of North America’s oldest craft industries—still associated with horses, sleds, and wooden buckets in the public’s mind—was suddenly being directly compared to OPEC and drug cartels on the evening news. In *Sugar Season: A Year in the Life of Maple Syrup, and One Family’s Quest for the Sweetest Harvest* (Da Capo Press, 2014), Douglas Whynott provides us with an intimate look at life in the modern-day maple sugar industry by shadowing a maple syrup entrepreneur, Bruce Bascom, through the 2011–2012 winter season. Bascom’s Maple Farm, in New Hampshire, is no small operation, and producing maple syrup is big business. Family owned and operated for generations, the farm is one of the largest maple sugar producers in the region. With Bascom as his guide, Whynott follows the entire syrup-making process from production through distribution and sale. The hanging sap buckets of old are gone; new technological advances allow for piping that runs the sap directly from trees into sugarhouses for processing. To understand how this is possible, Whynott explains how the species’ unique biology allows for sap production

and how sap ultimately becomes sugar. Even though technological advances and economic consolidation have transformed the maple sugar industry, this book is still very much about the importance of tradition. Whynott reveals the camaraderie that still exists within the industry as well as in the communities that produce maple sugar. He also reveals a business with an uncertain future. The effects of climate change were felt in the 2011–2012 season, one of the warmest winters ever recorded. This, combined with the politics of the industry—and the role played by Canadian producers and their “global strategic reserve” of syrup—raises questions about the future of the maple sugar industry. Whynott’s book, while something of a cautionary tale about climate change, also clearly demonstrates the importance of maintaining one of America’s iconic and traditional forest product industries. (EL)



“No other tree species in our eastern landscape exerts such a widespread and profound influence on the environment and other organisms, including ourselves.” This is how David Foster, director of the Harvard Forest, describes the threatened eastern hemlock. Edited by Foster, *Hemlock: A Forest Giant on the Edge* (Yale University Press, 2014) explores the past, present, and future of this tree species using knowledge drawn from a century of long-term studies at the Harvard Forest. (Excerpts from the book appear in the previous issue of *Forest History Today* and else-

where in this issue.) Although it is a tale of scientific research conducted at Harvard Forest, the book is an engrossing read for nonscientists, showing what is special about hemlock woods and why humans have been so attracted to them throughout history. The ecological history of the hemlock is remarkable because of how adaptive the tree has been, and how important the species is to eastern forests. The significance of the hemlock tree lies in its function as a foundation species, one that Foster says can “create, define, and maintain entire ecological systems,” and its imminent loss has implications for numerous other plants and animals. The species is currently under grave threat from the hemlock woolly adelgid. This pest, shipped to the United States on a Japanese hemlock in 1951, spread quickly during the second half of the twentieth century and now infests native hemlocks from Maine to Georgia. Foster details the various research studies on the hemlock’s decline 5,500 years ago, like that of paleoecologist Margaret Davis and her discovery that it was caused by a biological agent and not climate change, and what they mean for the hemlock today. In sum, the future of the hemlock now looks increasingly bleak. As Foster notes, it is especially distressing because of the foundational role hemlock plays in northeastern forests as a whole. The book is not a eulogy, however, and it offers lessons for the future—especially, how we can apply our knowledge of the hemlock to other threatened species. (EL)

The management of forests around the world is the subject of *Forests in Our Changing World: New Principles for Conservation and Management*, by Joe Landsberg and Richard Waring (Island Press, 2014). The book examines forest policy within the context of a rapidly changing global climate. Landsberg and Waring, both experienced researchers and forest scientists, believe that the public needs a better understanding of how climate and weather affect tree physiology and forests. Although they provide valuable information on forest