

Northeast Timber Growing Contest - 2017 Contest Results

Dean Faklis and Peter Smallidge

The Northeast Timber Growing Contest (NETGC) is designed to help improve the long-term productivity and health of small private woodlands in the northeastern forest through the engagement of landowners and forestry professionals in a process that includes education, research, technology transfer, and friendly competition. The NETGC was founded in 2013 and it grew from a recognition that many forest owners take pride and see value in growing the best quality trees possible on their property. Growing quality timber is one component of restoring the northeastern forest because it reflects success in controlling deer impacts, reducing interfering vegetation, and practicing good silviculture. While all of the current contestants are from NY and are NYFOA members, the contest is open to all eligible landowners in the northeastern forest. The contest's website is full of great information and resources (www.TimberContest.com). *It's free and takes only four hours per year to begin to grow high quality timber!*

We'd love to help you and your family get started. For example, in the most popular contest category, sample areas are identified in the woodlot and measurements are taken of tree diameter for all trees in that sample plot. Those trees are numbered and measured annually so that annual growth can be ascertained for each tree. Based on the data, thinning decisions can be made and growth can then be focused on your best trees. It's fun (and profitable!) to grow great trees so check out the contest website for the details.

We're proud to present the 2017 summary and results for the contest. 2017 marks the end of the fourth full growing season and the fourth set of adjudicated results. Here is a list of contest participants:

Del Allen	Milo, Yates, NY
Blough Family Forest	Ontario, Wayne, NY
John and Jason Dewey	Unadilla, Otsego, NY
Doolittle Family Woodlot	York, Livingston, NY
Kurt and Kristie Edwards	Mayfield, Fulton, NY
Chris Howard	Wheeler, Steuben, NY
Jeannine and Stacey Kazacos	Lisbon, Otsego, NY
Jerry Michael	Triangle, Broome, NY
Gerald Palmer	Guilford, Chenango, NY
Ronald Pedersen	Sanford, Broome, NY
Piestrak Forest Lands	Lindley, Steuben, NY
Dale and Eileen Schaefer	Canadice, Ontario, NY
Schlafer Family Forest	Hector, Schuyler, NY
Team Smallidge	Crown Point, Essex, NY
Spreutels Family Forest	Guilford, Chenango, NY
Team Springwater	Springwater, Livingston, NY
Charles and Sarah Stackhouse	Bluff Point, Yates, NY
Walton's Woods	Knox, Albany, NY
David and Kathryn Williams	Guilford, Chenango, NY
Todd Williams Family	Barton, Tioga, NY
Winkler Tree Farm	Andes, Delaware, NY

We have a school team, Cassadaga Valley School, under the excellent direction of Cheryl Burns. They won a NY Forest Owners Association Woodlands Mini Grant and will enter the results of their first growing season in 2018.

There were four races in 2017; Hardwood – Board Foot Volume, Hardwood – Basal Area Increment, Conifer – Basal Area Increment, and Hardwood - Seedling Height Growth. The Hardwood – BA category received entries from 15 teams and was the most popular category. All of the entries were normalized by the site index (an estimate of the height of a 50-year old tree on a particular soil type) to help create a level playing field. Sites with lower site index receive a beneficial handicap.

All competitors submitted their entry materials on time and in good order. The judges met during January 2018 to review the results and make the necessary computations. The rules that govern the measuring, scoring and judging processes can be found at www.TimberContest.com.

Here are the **2017 Northeast Timber Growing Contest Results**, with high score in **bold**:

Hardwood – BA

Jeannine and Stacey Kazacos	0.0647
David and Kathryn Williams	0.0564
Gerald Palmer	0.0519
Team Smallidge	0.0465
Kurt and Kristie Edwards	0.0452
Dale and Eileen Schaefer	0.0365
Team Springwater	0.0337
Del Allen	0.0312
Ronald Pedersen	0.0304
John and Jason Dewey	0.0282
Walton's Woods	0.0225
Charles and Sarah Stackhouse	0.0214
Doolittle Family Woodlot	0.0209
Chris Howard	0.0184
Todd Williams Family	0.0147

Hardwood – Board Foot Volume

David and Kathryn Williams	0.0657
Kurt and Kristie Edwards	0.0614
Team Springwater	0.0595
Del Allen	0.0364

Conifer – BA

Ronald Pedersen	0.0250
Team Springwater	0.0212

Hardwood - Seedling Height Growth

Jerry Michael	0.2929
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All results were normalized by site index, so they are a bit difficult to compare using the typical units for board feet and basal area. To give a better understanding, here is some background on the raw data for the Top 5 in the Basal Area categories, with their site index in parentheses:

Hardwood – BA – Growth (average sq.ft. per acre)	sq. ft.	% Growth
Jeannine and Stacey Kazacos (69.75)	4.6	4.51
David and Kathryn Williams (68.83)	3.3	3.88
Gerald Palmer (69.33)	3.3	3.59
Team Smallidge (59.22)	2.4	2.75
Kurt and Kristie Edwards (60.63)	1.8	2.74

Conifer – BA – Growth (average sq.ft. per acre)	sq. ft.	% Growth
Ronald Pedersen (71.80)	2.7	1.79
Team Springwater (67.23)	2.9	1.43

Please note that growth of just one square foot of basal area is like adding a fresh new 14” diameter tree to your woodlot! Jeannine and Stacey grew 4.6 such trees in one year! With proper silviculture, you can choose what this “new tree” is....wood on high quality sugar maple sawlogs or red maple firewood! The contest framework helps you put the growth on your best trees and use your lower quality material for projects or heat. Let the winning trees get all the light, water and nutrients.

For 2018, the word of the year for timber testers is again... *thinning*. The available growth will then be placed on the best growing trees and there will be fewer trees in the sample plots. This causes the *percent growth* to shoot up! Properly thinning out the slow growers is a key component of the contest and a key to the competitiveness within your forest. When trees are culled from the plots, their place is kept in the tally sheets, but their data is omitted in the computations. This way, the amount of timber harvested from the plots can be tracked over time but the culled trees do not contribute to the annual contest scores. Here is some more growth data for comparison:

Hardwood – Board Foot Volume – Growth on 20 Trees	bd. ft.	% Growth
David and Kathryn Williams (68.83)	271.7	4.52
Kurt and Kristie Edwards (60.63)	94.4	3.73
Team Springwater (70.00)	277.1	4.17
Del Allen (69.51)	121.3	2.53

Dave and Kathy's high-quality trees might be valued at \$1 per board foot on the stump. That's \$272 in value growth on just those 20 trees. Contest participants become *Timber Beasts* when they accumulate normalized scores that total at least 1.0 across all categories. Here's the Top 5 Timber Beast standings:

Timber Beast Scores (Sum of all team scores across all categories)

Team Springwater	0.5191
Kurt and Kristie Edwards	0.3954
Jerry Michael	0.2929
Team Smallidge	0.2098
David and Kathryn Williams	0.2003

If your forestry organization is interested in holding a timber contest workshop, there are free workshop materials available. The workshop will teach tips and tricks to get you started. The timber contest is

loads of fun and brings the family together in the woodlot. There are several contestants that span three generations and seeing Grandma, Grandpa and the little ones hard at work measuring trees is a delightful sight! There is still time to enter your team and your woodlands for 2018 and it only takes about four hours or less.

Any questions or if anyone needs help measuring trees, email: dfaklis@frontiernet.net. Also, check out the timber contest website at: www.TimberContest.com. *Thanks and Congratulations to All!*

Dean Faklis is a tree farmer in NY. Dr. Peter Smallidge is the NY State Extension Forester, Cornell University.