

## Preface

I was raised on a family farm in Michigan. Our Father had planted a row of black walnut trees when he came home from World War 1. We had some other black walnut trees in fence rows where we collected nuts. Those nuts ended up in a barrel in the blacksmith's shop. Our mother would send us to crack a few nuts on the anvil when she was planning to make cookies.

In the 1960s, I was teaching at a small college in West Virginia. One of my students and I decided to get married. I thought, if we were going to have a family, of course, we needed to have a farm. We bought a farm. In 1970 I planted black walnut seeds in an area that flooded annually by the Kanawha River. I won't bother you with the long string of failures, but I never gave up. I continued to plant black walnut seeds or seedlings every year.



Around the year 2000, I discovered The Walnut Council organization. Among many field trips and programs were two impressive presentations. Carl Young and Bruce Wakeland told of their success growing black walnut trees using other tree species as "trainers". Both used white pines as the training species. Carl recommended giving the white pines a 5-year head start.

In 2004 I had a chance to try their method. I planted 4 black walnut seeds around each stump where 12-year-old Christmas trees had been cut. There were plenty of Christmas trees left to be trainers. Then my work took me away for several years, so the new walnut trees were left on "auto". When I finally crawled in to check, there were beautiful tall straight black walnut stems, growing at full speed with zero attention. This more-or-less accidental experience is the inspiration for writing this book.

I still crack a few black walnuts and give them to grey-haired ladies, hoping for cookies.

It is assumed throughout this book, that the reader's intention is to grow black walnut trees as an agricultural crop with an eventual harvest. Black walnut trees can make a beautiful park. If your objective is a park or a return to an untouched virtual-virgin forest setting, that's good. You'll find this book instructive, but probably often annoying.