

The Scrivener Family Farm: A Maryland Century Farm Prince Frederick, Maryland

Bob and Carol Ann Scrivener own a 56-acre family farm in Prince Frederick, Maryland. Bob's great-grandfather purchased the farm in 1903, to grow southern Maryland's most famous crop, tobacco. Bob and Carol Ann are the fourth-generation farmers and the proud recipients of the "Maryland Century Farm" award for 100 years of family farm ownership and operation. This article highlights Bob and Carol Ann and the many farm activities keeping them busy.

Bob and Carol Ann

Bob and Carol Ann are very kind, welcoming, and generous people. Married for 43 years, Bob worked for C&P telephone for many years, while Carol Ann managed their day-care service, Kountry Kids. Now both retired from these jobs, they are enjoying their grandchildren and life on the farm. Bob is a Member Emeritus of the Calvert County Forestry Board, having served on the board for almost 20 years. For many of those years Bob was Chairman. Bob loves to talk about trees, and their large Osage-orange is a popular stop on the Calvert County Big Tree Tour. The Scriveners also have hosted a Calvert County Forestry Board Tree Cutting and Chainsaw Workshop on their farm.

The Family Farm

Their farm is more than trees. Following the traditions on the farm, the Scriveners started growing tobacco in 1963, but gave it up in 1989 because of the unpredictable pricing. Currently, they raise about 10 beef cattle and grow hay for the cattle. They have a large vegetable garden and raise several hogs for their own use. In addition, they always have a good supply of fresh eggs from chickens on the farm. The Scriveners' house is heated entirely by wood from the farm. Bob has an exterior wood boiler, which consumes about eight cords of firewood from the farm each year. Now that's a sustainable, alternative fuel!



Bob talking about Osage-orange wood during a Calvert County Big Tree Tour

Photograph by K. Uunila, courtesy Calvert County Department of Planning and Zoning



The Maryland Century Farm Program was established in 1994. It recognizes farms that have been in the same family for at least 100 consecutive years, contain part of the original parcel, and produce an annual gross income from the sale of farm products.

The Family Forest

Their farm has 41 acres in trees. The Scriveners have a forest stewardship plan for these woodlands, which addresses long-term sustainability of their forest. The dominant forest type, northern and southern red oak and beech, comprise 29 acres. There is also a 10-acre forest consisting of tulip poplar and sweetgum trees. The Scriveners have about 2 acres in Christmas trees. Their woodlands were commercially harvested in 1989. The harvest was selective in nature, removing only a portion of the forest. The timber sale was administered by a local consultant forester. Bob also harvests about 10 cords of firewood annually from his woodlands. Although this sounds like a lot, he obtains all this firewood by culling dead trees around his field edges. From what he does not use for firewood, Bob makes into brush piles for wildlife. The Scriveners also practice wildlife management by allowing family members to hunt deer on the farm.



Christmas Trees

The Scriveners started growing Christmas trees in the mid 1990s based on the advice from Mr. Bob Cory (also a previous member of the Calvert County Forestry Board). The trees were planted in an old alfalfa field, which Bob believes helped them grow fast the first few years from the nitrogen in the soil. They first offered trees for sale in 2002. The majority of their Christmas trees are [Douglas-fir](#), although they have some [Eastern white pine](#). Their choose-and-cut sales season begins on the first Saturday after Thanksgiving and runs every Saturday afternoon until the trees run out. His family helps out during the Christmas tree sales. Each tree is priced the same no matter the size or species. “It’s a lot of work,” says Bob.

A typical year consists of planting new trees in the winter, mowing all the paths during the spring and summer, shearing the trees in the summer, and then preparations for the sale season in late fall and early winter. Shearing is a way of pruning the tree to the desired Christmas tree shape. Some of the tools Bob uses to get all this work done include a 36-inch riding lawnmower, post-hole digger (for planting trees), and a new mechanical shearing tool his family purchased for him several years ago. Even his grandchildren help by riding along in the small utility vehicle they use to haul trees from the field to the customer’s car. Bob says he really enjoys seeing folks choose and cut their own tree. For many families, visiting the Scriveners’ farm at holiday time has become a tradition. The Scriveners plan to keep planting and selling Christmas trees for the joy it brings working with the land and the people who come to buy them.

The story of the Scriveners’ farm evolving from a tobacco-growing enterprise over a century ago through four generations to a sustainable 21st-century family farm is a story of

survival and renewal. The family has built upon the efforts of the family members preceding them and has produced a remarkable farm based on forest and wildlife management, Christmas tree culture and sales, self-sufficient heating from the land, and a steady supply of livestock and produce. We are pleased to feature the Scriveners and their fabulous farm!



Clockwise from top:

1. The Scrivener Christmas trees with new and older trees, in the sheared style
2. Bob Scrivener standing next to one of his white pine Christmas trees
3. Bob's son-in-law Terry Cox (driving) and grandson Kolby Cox transporting trees