

Notes to Consider...

Man-at-Arms: Low Profile Small Arms of the Global War on Terror (GWOT), M14 Battle Rifle

By G.S. Morris — 29 October 2018



Allow me to say with this introductory article, I detest the label “Global War on Terror.” Terrorism is a tactic, not an enemy. Our current two decade-plus war is most accurately described as being against Islamists. As a comparison, using the George W. Bush line of reasoning, World War II should have been referred to as the “War Against Blitzkrieg.” Somewhat picky, but worth pointing out. Regardless, GWOT has (sadly) been accepted into common usage.

An interest of mine since prior to joining the service has been “timeless” weapons designs and military facts which pass “under the radar” of the public at large. A US Military small arm which checks both those blocks is the M14 Battle Rifle.

A gas operated, semi-automatic (some versions select-fire capable), chambered for caliber 7.62x51 NATO (in essence a .30-06 Short), the M14 officially went into service in the late 1950s and was “officially” removed from active service in the mid-1960s. The M14 replaced the iconic M1 Garand (the M14 is essentially a box magazine fed M1) which had first gone into service in the mid-1930s. However, the US Military has done an exceptional job of keeping out of the public eye the fact the M14 has continued to remain in service (sometimes sporadically) from its supposed “exit” from active duty during the early days of the Vietnam War to our current day.

Limited numbers of M14s have served continuously from the time of the M16s official adoption (regardless of Pentagon title, the M16 has never been a “battle rifle”; it should instead be considered an outstanding replacement for the original Personal Defense Weapon (PDW), the M1 Carbine). It became clear during the early battles in Afghanistan there should be at least one true battle rifle with each infantry or cavalry squad for the Designated Marksman (DM) given the fact engagements with the enemy regularly occurred outside the roughly 500 meter (more realistically 350 meters in average hands) maximum effective range of the M4 Carbine in caliber 5.56x45.

Since my exit from the service in late 2007, multiple other medium caliber semi-automatic rifles have been adopted for sniper and DM use with our military (Mk 11, M110, SSR Mk 20, etc.). We may finally bear witness in the near future to our last blued steel and walnut-stocked battle rifle being turned-in for good. When that day arrives, it will mark the end of an era which began with the issue of the US Model 1803 Rifle. Something to ponder.

Next Week: Mossberg M500 Shotgun

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Inspirational Thoughts Into God’s Word

By Lynetta Hunter

(Mt. 5:14) The words of Jesus were underestimated by the simple men who devoted their life to following Him. They were often in the spotlight of being Jesus’ disciples, but normally it was when others had a complaint or the religious leaders wanted to use them to ridicule Jesus. This time though, Jesus explained to them how they were a light in the best kind of way, an illumination of Him that couldn’t be hid or denied because of its heavenly brightness and spiritual power.

(Mt. 6:22) Jesus later told them that the light of the body is the eye, and if the eye be distinctly on God, then the whole body will be full of light. He wasn’t speaking of what the physical eye sees, for it can be deceived, but rather what is inwardly perceived by what is seen. The eye is an entrance to the heart, mind, and soul, so whatever is believably perceived will bring forth similar thoughts, actions and words. The disciples’ Christian faith illuminated the words and works that came from their body, making a way for others to see and, as a result, also believe.

Psalms 119:18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.

Yards to Paradise Landscaping

Want Lovely Fall Color?

By Max Phelps

Rainfall aplenty has made for lots of tree leaves that will be flying around before we know it. That same abundant rainfall, along with hot weather until a couple weeks ago, has kept the foliage verdant and green. But, color is coming to a yard or woodsy area near you. And cool weather, so long as there isn’t a hard freeze for a few more days and weeks, will give some gorgeous views for the leaf peepers. A hard freeze will cut it short, but absent that, a late fall can be a gorgeous fall filled with color galore.

Some of us see a glorious tree with awesome color, and immediately want one like it. If that is you, then some observations by a landscaper and farmer and beekeeper for much of the past half century should be useful, I hope.

Red maples are everywhere, having been planted by builders and homeowners alike in almost every yard along most city streets and public shopping areas. Sizes, shapes, colors have been selected over the years resulting in many identical clones of patented cultivars, or your still can transplant a seedling tree. What some ask are questions such as “why doesn’t my tree look like the one up on Main Street in town” or “how come those I saw driving in the mountains look so much prettier than mine”? There are far too many variables to give a one paragraph statement that answers those questions. Let’s just say, a few degrees difference in temperature, a little more fertility in the soil, can be part of the answer. Also, fast growing trees in a yard that has good soil (a rare thing with new housing construction), will not color up as nicely as one that is mature or growing slower, even if the two trees are identical varieties.

For sparkling color, what else might you choose besides a red maple? Sweet gum, black gum, sourwood, Japanese maples, and sumac come to mind if you want gorgeous red colors. Itea (sweetspire), oakleaf hydrangeas, and nandina give nice red color in a flowering shrub. For orange, there is sugar maple, sassafras, fothersgilla, red foliated crab apples, and pistache tree. Crape Myrtle can be lovely some years.

It’s hard to improve on the yellow fall color of a ginkgo tree. Perhaps a shagbark hickory would give a gold just as nice. Some years tulip poplar trees have good lemon yellow color in the fall, but frequently they turn brown or blow away instead. Sweet birch produce a nice gold in fall, too. (They are called sweet birch because their sap is high in sugar content, like a sugar maple.)

Other plants that often color nicely include blueberries, katsura tree, cypress, dawn redwood, larch or tamarack, scarlet oak, chestnut oak, Oriental persimmon, and kousa dogwoods. Some seasons white oak, Bradford pears and sweet gum turn nice shades of purple or burgundy. Serviceberry, redbud, smoke tree sometimes are impressive.

Having evergreen trees in the background of colorful trees is part of what makes for a lovely view. This is often why the views along the tops of hills and mountains of Appalachia are so photogenic. The same could be said for other mountains, so long as they aren’t so tall that little grows near their tops.

Observation of what works well in the yards of other homes in your area can be the inspiration to come up with a plan for dressing up the eye appeal of your own yard, this fall or anytime. Even if you have a lovely yard, or you don’t even have a yard, I know a leisurely walk or drive to admire fall foliage is apt to be something you’d enjoy. And if your place needs some help, may you be inspired to work on improving the look between now and next fall.

The author is a landscaper. Contact Max at (606) 416-3911. www.rockcastles.net

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Paid for by John Tompkins.