Year 2003 Progress Report of Activities

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Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center

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Who We Are

The Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center (PMC) is a branch of the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. It is one of 26 plant materials centers located throughout the United States. The Center is located on the Northwest corner of Americus in Southwestern Georgia and is approximately 40 miles North of Albany. Areas served include Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina and parts of Tennessee and Florida.

What We Do

It is our mission to use plant materials and state-of-the-art plant science technology to solve natural resource problems and meet the objectives of environmental programs. Our program emphasizes using native plants. We develop, test and release superior adapted plants to commercial growers along with production and management technology. Our mission addresses three major objectives:

- Native Grasses for grazing lands that support sustainable agriculture
- Native plants for water quality (riparian forests, conservation buffers, filter strips, constructed wetlands, and streambanks)
- Conservation tillage (green manure, organic gardening, carbon sequestration, and winter cover)

A brief summary of year 2003 accomplishments follows. For a complete account of all activities, Request the 2003 Technical Report of Activities at the above address.

RELEASE OF KINCHAFOONEE VIRGINIA WILDRYE

Kinchafoonee Virginia Wildrye Selected Class of Natural Germplasm is a native perennial cool season grass. It is a robust grass, which produces an attractive seed head in late spring. Virginia wildrye commonly occurs in low shaded woods however it also does well in full sunlight. Virginia wildrye has very long persistent awns and will not pass through conventional planting equipment unless the seed is debearded. Even after seed is debearded seed will require native grass drill or broadcast spreader. Virginia wildrye is one of the few native cool season grasses useful in soil conservation work. Conservation uses can include field borders, logging roads, critical areas, restoration and cool season cover.

Kinchafoonee Production Field

Grazing Lands Specialist Explaining Silvo-Pasture Study

PMC Manager and Assistant Manager Reviewing Native Mixed Grass Pasture

SOUTHEAST PLANT MATERIALS CONFERENCE JUNE 24-26 2003 JIMMY CARTER PMC

DEVELOPING AND TRANSFERRING PLANT TECHNOLOGY-PUTTING THE 2002 FARM BILL INTO ACTION FOR NRCS, PARTNERS AND CUSTOMERS In the summer of 2003 the Jimmy Carter PMC hosted the first Southeast Plant Materials Conference. Southeastern representatives from plant materials centers, NRCS state office staffs, USFS, USCOE, college and universities, business and private land owners attended the conference. The following is a select list of topics covered at the meeting: regional plant material program technology development, highlights of southeastern plant materials centers, outreach initiatives, wildlife habitat improvement, plant materials in grazing lands, plant materials and field office tech guides, plant materials for coastal area stabilization, USFS partnership, plant material and nurseries, plant material and crop improvement associations, native American partnerships, conservation buffers, stormwater control and use of constructed wetlands. Breakout sessions were held ; agronomists, biologists, grazing lands coordinators,foresters,university personnel, partners and plant material personnel discussed their special interest and concerns with plant material work. A tour of the Jimmy Cater PMC was conducted to display some of the work at the center supporting the **FARM BILL**

Grazing management of native warm season grass was demonstrated using eastern gamagrass, switchgrass, indiangrass, big bluestem and little bluestem. Rotational grazing was emphasized utilizing portable watering systems and electric fencing. Grazing specialists discussed the use of silvopasture systems to utilize grass, trees and cattle on the same acreage. The importance of burning to maintain the native grass pastures was covered at the PMC burn study. Plant materials for wildlife habitat improvement was a popular stop on the tour Alternative crops for small farmers and conservation tillage cover crops were demonstrated and discussed by plant material staff. A constructed wetland planting provided the backdrop for an informative talk on plants for water purification

Regional Plant Materials Specialist Discusses Plants for Constructed Wetlands Use

Outdoor Classroom for Southwest Georgia Schools

Several years ago a “Classroom without Walls” or an “Outdoor Classroom” was established in Early Co for Southwest Georgia schools. The Flint River S&WCD sponsored the classroom and Tommy Davis of Arlington provided the land. The classroom contains a boardwalk through a pond cypress- black gum savannah wetland typical of Southwest Georgia. The property also contains transitional upland sites. This diversity in flora and fauna allows the classroom to encompass and teach principles of several environmental science disciplines. Partners from state and federal agencies have provided personnel to instruct the students in botany, ecology , water quality, zoology, soils, forestry and general environmental science. Participating agencies are NRCS (PMC&Field Offices), Army Corps of Engineers, Georgia DNR, Georgia Forestry Commission, and the Georgia Soil and Water Conservation Commission.
In April 2003 the PMC made seven presentations to the school systems of Early Co, Calhoun Co., and Deerfield Windsor Academy of Albany. The PMC manager covered plant identification, plant ecology, plant/animal relationships and wetland structure. In November 2003 the classroom was moved to the Parks of Chehaw in Albany. Four presentations were made to the Miller Co school system. This time the topics were selected to fit into the teacher QCC structure.

Jimmy Carter PMC Manager Explains Importance of Plants in Wetlands

New presentations concentrated on liverworts, moss, ferns, pine trees and flowering plants. The morphology and reproductive methods of these plants were explained with charts and live specimens.

Georgia DNR Biologist Shows Students Wetland and Upland Animals

Plans are being made to continue the program at the Arlington site and also the new location at Chehaw parks of Albany.

Alternative Crops for Small Farmers

A new study at the Jimmy Carter PMC will assemble, grow, increase and demonstrate new and different crops for small farmers. The PMC along with Dr. Brad Morris of the USDA-ARS in Watkinsville GA. are growing various legumes for possible use in medicine, food, and conservation. Dr. Morris has found that many legumes can be used for pharmaceutical purposes. One example is velvetbean which contains L-DOPA used to treat Parkinson's disease. Legumes have been used by farmers for food, green manure and conservation for many years. This new study will display some new alternative legumes which could fit into a new market for farmers and also provide new solutions for important medical and agricultural questions.

Production and Demonstration Field of Alternative Crops at PMC

Conferences and Training Conducted at Jimmy Carter PMC in 2003

Nineteen conference and training sessions were held at the Jimmy Carter PMC in 2003.The new year started with the National Plant Material Advisory Committee meeting at the PMC on Jan 14-16 2004.The PMC conference room, grounds, facilities and study areas were utilized during these meetings. The training and conference sessions were conducted by Area staff, state staff, as well as plant material personnel. Topics included area staff meetings, scims, civil rights training, tsp training, pmc regional conference and workshop, toolkit training, NRCS administrative training, time keeping training, on line crop assistance training, and PMC tours.

PMC Increases Material for New Release

Americus Indiangrass Production Field

Americus indiangrass was increased at the PMC for Sharpe Brothers, the exclusive grower of this new native warm season grass release

About this Publication

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