



Rose Lake Plant Materials Center Summer Newsletter

Ash Seed Collection Project

Due to the devastating invasion of the introduced pest Emerald Ash Borer, Ash Trees, *Fraxinus*, spp., in the Great lakes Region of the United States and Canada are disappearing in record numbers and potentially from the landscape as we know it. Because of this potential disaster, a non-funded Cooperative Agreement has been entered into between the United State Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Research Service, and the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Rose Lake Plant Materials Center.

Through this agreement, Ash seed collected from across the Great Lakes Region and Canada will be stored at the National Genetic Resource Preservation Center in Ft. Collins, CO. The goal of this project is to secure seed over the next several years through voluntary seed collections. The Rose Lake Plant Materials Center is enlisting volunteers from across the Great Lakes Region and Canada to identify and mark Ash trees during the spring and summer months and then return in the fall to collect seed. The following are the four Ash Species in jeopardy throughout this region: **Black Ash**, *Fraxinus nigra* Marsh, **Blue Ash**, *Fraxinus quadrangulata*, **Green Ash**, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* Marsh, and **White Ash**, *Fraxinus Americana* L.. Ash tree ID information, seed collection instructions, and collection forms are available at www.mi.nrcvs.usda.gov/programs/pmc.html.

When the Ash Seed Collection Project hit the AP wires, local and National news channels converged on the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center along with newspaper reporters from several states and Canada, interviewing John Leif (PMC Manager), and Dave Burgdorf (Plant Materials Specialist). The Rose Lake PMC is working closely with surrounding states and several Provinces of Canada to notify and enlist volunteers for the project.



Black Ash



Blue Ash



Green Ash



White Ash



Apostle Islands National Park, Outer Island Lighthouse Project



Eroded slope, subsurface seepage on Outer Island



New rock revetment, drain tile from top of slope cutoff trench, on Outer Island



Established crib wall on Outer Island

The Apostle Island National Park is comprised of several islands located in Lake Superior near Bayfield, Wisconsin. Several of the islands have historic lighthouses that once guided mariners through the cold waters of Lake Superior. Several of these historic lighthouse facilities are in jeopardy atop their lofty domains due to continuous erosion of the steep slopes. Outer Island, in particular, and its lighthouse facility was determined by the Park Service to be in jeopardy. The Park Service enlisted the assistance of their Denver Service Center and the NRCS Plant Materials Program. The Service Center engineers designed a rock revetment to protect the interface of the water and the toe of the steep slope. Once the slope toe was stabilized then the steep slope could be addressed.

The Park Service entered into several reimbursable agreements with NRCS and the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center to provide technical assistance and assist with the collection and growing of native plants. The PMC has grown several thousand native plants that have been reintroduced to the islands.

Dave Burgdorf, Plant Materials Specialist has and is training the Apostle Island National Park employees on several slope stabilization techniques. In April the park staff constructed their first vegetative crib wall on Raspberry Island under the direction of the Plant Materials Specialist. They also received direction and guidance on the installation of a vegetative crib wall and slope grid system for Outer Island. The Park staff immediately began assembling materials and transporting them to Outer Island. In June the park staff had completed several feet of vegetative crib wall construction on Outer Island. Dave Burgdorf, has provided direction and guidance on future crib wall construction and where to begin the vegetative slope grids. Several hundred live stakes were placed on the graded slope for plant diversity and stabilization.

Over the next year the park staff will mobilize and install more crib wall and slope grids on the steep slopes in front of the lighthouse. The Rose Lake PMC will grow several more plants and Dave Burgdorf will provide technical assistance for the installation of the soil bioengineering techniques. The project is expected to be completed in 2006.



Newly constructed crib wall on Raspberry Island



Live stakes on newly graded, netted, steep slope on Outer Island



Crib wall on Raspberry Island starting to grow and establish

Prairie View Indiana Germplasm Releases

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (INDNR) Division of Fish and Wildlife announce the release of the following selected ecotypes for the Midwest and Great Lakes region:

Prairie View Indiana Germplasm Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans* (L.)Nash)

Prairie View Indiana Germplasm Big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii* Vitman)

Prairie View Indiana Germplasm Little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium* (Michx)

Original seed for each species was collected from native populations from several counties in Indiana, then combined and planted into single crossing blocks. These crossing blocks produced the source seed for each of the releases. These releases have undergone no purposeful selection therefore they should not differ in rate of spread, seed production, vigor nor behavior from naturally occurring native grasses of Indiangrass, Big bluestem or Little bluestem. Seeds from the source fields were planted in nine field plantings in central Indiana and were evaluated for adaptability, potential for invasiveness, and usefulness in conservation plantings. All field plantings demonstrated good establishment, excellent plant vigor and desired wildlife habitat characteristics.

The principal uses for these releases are for wildlife habitat enhancement, erosion control, and filter strips where Indiana source genotype seeds are desired. Seed from these releases are available to commercial growers for seed increase and demonstration plantings. Seed can be requested through Dave Burgdorf, NRCS Plant Materials Specialist, at 517-641-7821 or by emailing him at: dave.burgdorf@mi.usda.gov.

Field Office Technical Guide

The Rose Lake Plant Materials Center now have their brochures, publications and the Ash Seed Collection information electronically on line in the Michigan Field Office Technical Guide. The PMC is working with Indiana, Ohio and Wisconsin to include this information in their respective eFOTGs.

Biology of Trees and Shrubs

“Biology of Trees and Shrubs Useful for Soil and Water Conservation” was the formal title of training completed by PMC Agronomist John Durling in mid-July. The week-long course was held on the campus of North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University in Greensboro and sponsored by the National Plant Materials Program.

Presenters were from universities, NRCS, and the plant industry. Subjects included biology, physiology, and anatomy; resource problems and concerns; how woody plants impact conservation; and propagation and selection. Field trips to local nurseries, a group assignment on plant characteristics to address conservation needs, and interaction with other PMC staff linked the classroom instruction with real world application.

USDA-NRCS

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The mission of the NRCS Plant Materials Program is to develop, test, and transfer effective state-of-the-art plant science technology to meet customer and resource needs. NRCS PM activities are consistent with the objectives of the current USDA and NRCS Strategic Plans, namely to provide timely and effective vegetative solutions for identified resource needs.

The purpose of the NRCS Plant Materials Program is to:

- Assemble, test, and release plant materials for conservation use*
- Determine techniques for successful use and management of conservation species.*
- Facilitate the commercial increase of conservation species*
- Provide for the timely development and transfer of effective state-of-the-art applied plant science technology to solve conservation problems.*
- Promote the use of plant science technology to meet the goals and objectives of the USDA and NRCS Strategic Plans.*

Recent Visitors to the PMC



A Blanding Turtle paid a visit to the PMC

A Michigan white tail deer thought one of our observation beds made a nice nursery for her little one.

