

PLANT MATERIALS MIDSOUTH

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PMC Welcomes New Manager

by: Scott Edwards

The staff at the Jamie L. Whitten PMC would like to welcome our new manager, Joel L. Douglas. Many of you have worked with Joel over the past four years as Plant Materials Specialist (PMS) for Mississippi, Tennessee, and Arkansas.

After graduating from Tarleton State University with a B. S. in Agronomy, Joel began his career with NRCS in 1987 as a Plant Materials Trainee. He worked two years at the Knox City PMC, before transferring to the East Texas PMC as assistant manager. While in Nacogdoches, Joel obtained his M. S. in Soil Fertility from Stephen F. Austin State University. He served as assistant manager for three years before moving to Mississippi as PMS.

During the interim period, both Joel and Herby Bloodworth did an outstanding job as acting manager. Joel officially becomes the new manager April 28.

Wildflower Seed Update

by: Janet Grabowski

The distribution of wildflower and wildlife seed has begun. Don Underwood is the person at MSWCC that is overseeing this program. He sent out a list of available seed to all districts and he should have also sent out copies of planting guides for each species listed. We have already had a few orders from some districts, although there is no need to rush because most of these wildflowers are best if you wait to late summer to plant. Minimum orders are a pound of seed. If smaller plantings are planned, the districts will have to divide the seed up into smaller planting packets. I talked with Lynn Porter in Hinds Co. and

she would like to see planting packets developed for this purpose that will also serve to advertise the district. A wildflower slide set that contains pictures of these and several other species taken by B. B. Billingsley is in the final stages of preparation and should be available in the near future.

Each seed shipment will include planting guides for each species and germination and purity data will be listed on each seed bag. Please be patient with us and allow at least two weeks to ship the seed. We have to fit this in around our other activities. Also, we prefer to ship the seed early in the week so that it does not sit in a hot warehouse somewhere over the weekend. At this time, we still have seed of all species, however, supplies of some species may be depleted fairly quickly. You will be informed if this happens and given the opportunity to amend your order if desired. In future years, we hope to add to the number of species produced. If you have any questions or comments, contact me or Don Underwood.

Equipment Maintenance Records

by: Jeff Tillman

Spring is the "tax season" or the time of the year when Americans file income tax returns. It is also the time of year when most of us are reminded once again of the value of comprehensive financial records and when we wish we had done a more thorough job of record keeping. The PMC has just acquired new Gateway computers that will enable us to keep accurate records on recommended maintenance procedures. It allows quick and easy updates on maintenance performed. Using and immediately updating daily calendars of maintenance for each piece of equipment saves time and money by avoiding downtime and eliminating guesswork on operations vital to the life of the costly machinery. Remember, "The life of anything is in the maintenance."

Conservation Tilled Sweetpotato

by: Herby Bloodworth

Previously, we have reported successful results using conservation tillage for sweetpotato production. Using a cover crop in addition to conservation tillage significantly reduced soil loss and maintained high yields. A follow up study, scheduled to be completed this year, has supported our earlier results.

In the current study, we are comparing four conservation tillage management systems with conventional tillage. The four management systems are no-till, paratill plowing four weeks prior to planting, transplanter modification (PM), and PM + cultivation. Planter modification consists of a shank with a 6" sweep in front of the sword opener.

Two years of data have already been analyzed. Results indicate no significant differences between the conservation and conventional tillage systems for sweet potato yield. No differences were noted for plant growth and development in any management system.

Wildlife Plants Released

by: Joel Douglas

In April the NRCS, Jamie L. Whitten PMC in cooperation with the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries at Mississippi State University released two wildlife conservation plants, Lark selection partridge pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*) and Hopefield selection trailing wildbean (*Strophostyles helvula*). Both plants are native, annual, warm-season legumes that mature seed in late fall making it available for bobwhite quail and turkey over winter.

Lark selection partridge pea and Hopefield selection trailing wildbean were selected from large collections of partridge pea and trailing wildbean collected in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana by field office staff. Lark selection was collected from a native stand near Marianna, Arkansas and Hopefield selection originated from a native stand near Marion, Arkansas. Both of these cities are located in the Arkansas Delta.

Although they have not been field tested for climate and soil adaptation, it is anticipated that Lark

selection and Hopefield selection will grow on most soils in the Southeast Region.

Efforts are underway to see that seed of these plants are commercially available next spring. If you know of someone who may be interested in producing these plants commercially, contact the PMC.

1996 Publications

by: Herby Bloodworth

Reports published in 1996 have been reprinted and combined into a 91-page booklet. These reports of course cover more detail and more studies than can be mentioned in newsletters of a year's time. Last year, fourteen reports were written by PMC staff. These studies included propagating wildflowers, biotechnical erosion control, conservation tillage systems C-factors for cotton, peanut, and sweetpotato; grass hedges, and controlling perennial weeds in CRP fields prior to contract expiration.

Extra copies of these booklets are available upon request. As time allows, we will place these reports on our website. Also, we are currently trying to place active and past studies on the USDA's CRIS reports site. More on this at a later date.

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