

PLANT MATERIALS TODAY

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Montana-Wyoming Plant Materials Program

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This is a quarterly field office newsletter to transfer plant materials technology, services, and needs. The plant materials personnel will be featuring short articles on project results, new cultivar releases and establishment techniques, seed collection, and field planting needs, etc. All offices are encouraged to submit articles about plant material-related activities relative to plant performance, adaptation, cultural and management techniques, etc.

Pay-Dirt

The Forb Initial Evaluation Planting (IEP) was finalized late last year and four selections were made of two species - common yarrow *Achillea millefolium* and dotted gayfeather *Liatris punctata*. The common yarrow collections originated in Flathead (1988 accession 90579012) and Garfield (1993 accession 9075993) Counties, Montana. Joyce Lapp, from Glacier National Park, and Sue Fitzgerald, from the Jordan Field Office, were the respective collectors. Notable runners-up include Robin Fuson and Sam Short.

The dotted gayfeather collections originated from Phillips (1989 accession 9058079) and Wibaux (1993 accession 9076006) Counties, Montana. Dan Bloedel, when he was at the Malta Field Office, and Rick Caquelin, when he was at the Baker Field Office, were the respective collectors. Notable runners-up include Lynnel Hoffman and Connie Reynolds.

Congratulations to the original collectors and supporting field offices. Many thanks to all Plant Materials supporters and keep on collecting!

Susan R. Winslow

Seed and Plant Collection Time

As mentioned above, collection efforts do eventually pay off, and now is the time to get involved! The Seed and Plant Collection Bulletin was sent to Montana and Wyoming Field Offices the week of June 10,

1998. Collection assistance efforts are targeted as "team specific" so that a representative sample of the species range of distribution may be obtained. Two forb and one legume species are on this year's list. The wildflowers are: silverleaf phacelia *Phacelia hastata* and scarlet globemallow *Sphaeralcea coccinea*. The legume species is American vetch *Vicea americana*. A detailed plant description and line drawing of each species was included in the Bulletin. The description includes scientific and common name, life form and growth habit, vegetation and flower characteristics, approximate seed maturity dates, and general habitat type. Send along with your **large** seed collection, a fully completed Collection Information form (SCS-PM-580). Please feel free to call (406-662-3579) with questions or comments about this collection reminder. All collections will be added to the IEP that was installed at the Center last November.

Susan R. Winslow

Change is in the Wind

Hello friends! My name is **Julie Burger** and I'm the new gal at the Plant Materials Center. I'm an NRCS coop student from the University of Wyoming and am enjoying my summer here in Bridger. Currently, I'm assisting the PMC staff with their projects by doing everything from forage clipping to data entry, and writing articles for the annual technical report. The main projects I've assisted with are a forage quality study and a study on acid-tolerant plants. I'm learning a lot and am enjoying the company.

The NRCS Co-operative Education Program has been very beneficial to me. In 1996, I was located at the Cheyenne field office where not only did I get to meet a lot of great people, I had the opportunity of working on a 71,000-acre wildlife habitat rehabilitation project. In 1997, I was stationed at the Sundance field office. I've also had the opportunity to help out with various range days and camps for Wyoming and Montana youth. I will graduate in December with my bachelor's degree in Rangeland Ecology and Watershed Management. After that, I am planning on attending graduate school for my master's degree; interests include desertification, soils, and the development of Third

World Countries. I am very grateful for the opportunity to work here at the PMC and hope to contribute enthusiasm and a helping hand to the PMC team.

Hi! My name is **Larry Sticka** and I was hired on June 22, as a biological technician temporary employee, to help with the workload associated with the retirement of Bruce Thompson. I graduated from Belfry High School, in Carbon County, Montana, and grew up on a farm just north of Belfry. After graduation, I farmed with my Dad and have more recently worked farming for other producers here in the Clark's Fork Valley. I am looking forward to learning about plant materials and working with the staff at the Center.

Effective July 3, after 20 years at the PMC, **Bruce Thompson** retired. Bruce, as a biological technician, had played an integral role in the operation of the Center. He carried out a myriad of farming duties, seed cleaning, and the assembly and shipment of seed orders. He may now finally have the time to enjoy his family and menagerie of domestic animals and exotic birds.

Leslie Marty was chosen as the new leader for the Development of Acid and Heavy-metal Tolerant Cultivar project (DATC) and will begin work on July 6. This is a 2-year renewal and continuation of the state grant-funded study that began in 1995. Most recently, Leslie was employed in the GIS shop at the NRCS State Office in Bozeman. She has a BS in Soils from Montana State University and experience with the US Forest Service in forestry and range, in plant propagation at the Arnold Arboretum in Massachusetts, and as a hydrological technician/researcher in Idaho and Montana. Leslie is an employee of the Deer Lodge Valley Conservation District stationed at the PMC. She will continue with plant selection, seed increase, and the much-needed development of technology associated with successful plant establishment on those affected sites.

Let's Demonstrate!

Since the 1985 Farm Bill, the NRCS FO employees' workloads have not allowed them time to assist with a thorough, systematic performance/adaptation evaluation of selected plant materials on Montana and Wyoming farms and ranches. The number of requests for

field plantings has dropped even more dramatically since the 1990 Farm Bill. As a result, the plant materials program is now taking an active role in facilitating the establishment of larger, more complex plantings in key geographic locations in cooperation with innovative FO employees and Conservation District Cooperators.

Demonstration plantings are a great educational tool to help customers observe first hand new plants and technologies that help solve local conservation problems. Field plantings can also be used as demonstration plantings or for local tours. Field and demonstration plantings provide valuable information to local producers, while at the same time, generate information that can be used to update recommendations in NRCS technical guide vegetative practices. The plant materials program obtains valuable performance/adaptation data for new plant materials and transfers the latest technology. Plant materials are available from the Bridger PMC for demonstration plantings. Specifics on plan development, site preparation and maintenance, and species candidates can be discussed with the Bridger PMC staff or Larry Holzworth, PMS.

There are numerous opportunities for conservation districts and their cooperators to demonstrate plants and techniques applicable to solving local conservation problems. For example, greater emphasis is being placed on preserving or improving water quality. Vegetative buffers prevent pollutants from entering water bodies, reduce wind and water erosion, or provide protection for wildlife. A variety of vegetative buffer types could be designed and used as field and/or demonstration plantings.

Summer is a good time to look for field planting or demonstration opportunities while working and talking to farmers and ranchers. Look for cooperators who are interested in trying something new and who will provide site preparation, planting and long-term maintenance. Work directly with state office and Team Specialists, FO personnel, District Cooperators, Bridger and Meeker PMC's, local universities, and the ARS to plan on-farm research and demonstration plantings.

Larry K. Holzworth

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