
GREAT LAKES PLANT SOLUTIONS

A PUBLICATION OF THE NRCS ROSE LAKE PLANT MATERIALS CENTER

Volume 1, Issue 1

September 2002

Greetings

This is the first quarterly newsletter from the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center. We look forward to furnishing you with important information about the center's activities. We also welcome contributions from you to publish in the newsletter. Please feel free to contact us.



2002 Southlow Michigan Germplasm
Switchgrass harvest

Forty-five Years of Partnership

In the spring of 1957, the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center was established in partnership with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). The center is located on 40 acres of more than 3000 acres that make up the Rose Lake Wildlife Research Area. Many changes have taken place through those years. Today, however, the partnership is stronger than ever. NRCS field plantings still occur throughout the research area.

The MDNR has partnered in many of the releases made from the PMC, but has recently taken a large role in the management of the production fields for the Southlow Michigan Germplasm Indiangrass, Switchgrass, Big bluestem and Little bluestem. The partnership is allowing the center to increase the number of studies and releases in the coming years. The Michigan genotype seed was released to commercial growers in 2002. We expect that it will be available for purchase from these growers beginning in the fall of 2004. In conservation, we can do more together than we can accomplish alone.

Unsung Heroes

The Rose Lake Plant Materials Center recognizes Darrel McGriff, retired NRCS Conservationist, for maintenance of and data collection from the big bluestem forage plots in southern Indiana. Darrel along with a crew from the Pigeon River Fish and Wildlife Area clipped, weighed, chopped, dried, and

bagged 36 plots of Big bluestem. This important data will be used in the release of a big bluestem forage variety. The data from all big bluestem plots are very encouraging. Our accessions have been consistently out performing commercially available varieties. We want to continue to recognize those who give the extra effort in supporting the Plant Materials Program. If you know of a group or individual who should be mentioned in future articles, please contact the PMC Staff.

Soil Bioengineering NEDC Training Courses

David Burgdorf, Plant Materials Specialist and Frank Cousin, Engineer served as co-course coordinators and trainers for the National Employee Development Center's Soil Bioengineering Training Course in FY2002. Two courses were held in FY 02, one in Puerto Rico and the other in Dearborn, MI. Over forty NRCS employees attended the weeklong courses. As would be expected, plants and conditions were considerably different in Puerto Rico compared to Michigan, but the soil bioengineering techniques were still the same or similar. Three courses, in Puerto Rico, Wisconsin and New York respectively, are tentatively planned by NEDC for FY03. You are encouraged to include this training in your training plan.



Leelanau Germplasm highbush cranberry

Ongoing Plant Collections

The Rose Lake PMC is asking that NRCS employees and partners help with the collection of the following cool season grass species: *Bromus pubescens*-Canada brome; *Calamagrostis canadensis*- Canada Bluejoint; *Danthonia spicata*- Common wild oat grass and *Koeleria cristata*-Junegrass.

Any of the above collected material would be appreciated. Please contact the center to obtain more information about these plants. Collection information form (ecs-580) must accompany the collection when sent to the center.



Landscape of Isle Royale National Park

Isle Royale National Park

The Rose Lake Plant Materials Center has been working via an Interagency Agreement with the Isle Royale National Park in their efforts to control and manage non-native species. Isle Royale is relatively untouched by direct outside influences and serves as a living laboratory and United States Biosphere Reserve. Areas of the park, however, receive significant human impact from park operations and visitor use. These disturbed areas range from many old to recent structure developments. These areas are prime locations for non-native plant infestations and are subject to on-going or potential erosion.

In 2001 the NRCS-Rose Lake Plant Materials Center entered into an Interagency Agreement with Isle Royale. Three areas of importance were identified to carry out this agreement. **First**, obtain Isle Royale-specific native plant sources to restore disturbed lands within the park. All plants must originate from seed and cuttings obtained from Isle Royale, specifically from respective locations on the island and returned to these locations. **Second**, initiate a lateral root development study to evaluate and select plants and planting techniques for the shallow soils located on the east-end of the island. An innovative shallow lateral root development box was constructed in a size of 2'x2' using 1"x 6" boards, plastic, cocoa fiber blanket and plants from the island. The study involved a plot layout and planting of 2'x2' sods of native plants. Plants were selected considering growth habit, location, root development and species mix. The plot was planted FY 2002 and has been evaluated this growing season. Invasive species were very aggressive in the plot.

Third, the PMC will prepare a Techniques Guide consisting of species information for park revegetation. The park will use this guide to continue restoration efforts. To date, plant materials have been collected from the park, transferred to the PMC, grown and returned to the island and planted in evaluation plots. Data is being collected and will continue for the next several years.

Agronomist Promoted

Tony Bush, PMC Agronomist, has accepted a promotion as NRCS Tribal Conservationist to the Oneida Nation near Green Bay, Wisconsin. He started his new position in Wisconsin on September 23, 2002. Tony had been the agronomist at the center since July 21, 1996. He played a major role in the six releases made during his tenure at the PMC and demonstrated superior competence in setting up scientific studies and evaluating data. We will miss Tony. The Agronomist position will be announced in the near future.

Web sites:

<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

<http://plants.usda.gov>

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