

Manhattan Plant Materials Center

Manhattan, Kansas



A newsletter in support of the Plant Materials Program for Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska

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Plains and Prairie Forestry Association Annual Meeting

The second annual meeting of the Plains and Prairie Forestry Association (PPFA) was held June 25 to 27 in Rapid City, South Dakota. The meeting consisted of a day of formal presentations by experts in woody vegetation from South Dakota State University, US Forest Service, Colorado Forest Service, Nebraska Forest Service, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. A tour the second day provided good examples of living snow fences and the damage they can sustain protecting highways and other man made structures. The tour also made stops at the National Grasslands Visitor Center and viewed grazing management of wooded draws on the Buffalo Gap National Grassland. Tour participants also gained insight into the black-footed ferret reintroduction program ongoing at Buffalo Gap National Grassland and Badlands National Park.

The Tree Improvement Committee met separately from the main PPFA group one evening to discuss the future of tree improvement in the plains region of North America. The committee expressed concern that USDA had reduced emphasis on tree improvement as a priority for the Forest Service and the Agricultural Research Service. It will thus be left up to the Agriculture Experiment Stations, Agriculture Canada, State and Province Agencies, and the Plant Materials Program to maintain or increase emphasis on tree improvement. Representatives from the North Dakota, Montana, and Kansas Plant Materials

Programs were represented at the meeting. A report from the 3 detailing tree improvement projects was submitted to the group for discussion. State agency personnel and a representative from the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, Shelterbelt Centre in Saskatchewan reported on their tree improvement activities.

Tribune Woody Field Evaluation Update

Tribune, Kansas is the site of a woody field evaluation planting trial. The purpose of the trial is to evaluate the adaptability and performance of different woody species for use in Major Land Resource Areas (MLRA'S) 67, 69, and 72. The initial planting in 1993 consisted of 16 different woody species and varieties with subsequent plantings made in 1995 (8 species) and 1996 (6 species). All plantings will be evaluated for a minimum of five years with quantitative information on survival, height, and width being collected. Qualitative data on plant vigor, disease resistance, drought resistance, winter damage, and insect damage will also be recorded.

Of all species planted since 1993, caragana (Siberian peashrub), fourwing saltbush, big sagebrush, chokecherry, 'Midwest' crabapple, white oak, 'Boomer' bur oak, 'Jemez' New Mexico forestiera, Russian almond, Arnold hawthorn, and 'McDermant' Ussurian pear have

had 100 percent survival. For more information on varieties used, survival and growth rates of all planted species, contact me at (785)823-4541.

Terry Conway

Russian Almond Release

‘Regal’ Russian almond has been released by the Bismarck Plant Materials Center for use in multi-row windbreaks, wildlife and recreational type plantings. ‘Regal’ has been evaluated throughout the northern and central plains for performance and adaptation. The results indicate that the plant is adapted for use in Nebraska, Kansas, northeast Colorado, and the eastern 1/3 of Wyoming. However, it is not adapted to areas of high rainfall and humidity. These conditions will result in a lack of vigor, which makes the seedling susceptible to foliar and stem diseases.

Russian almond, also known as dwarf almond, is native to western Asia and eastern Siberia. It produces abundant pink to rosy flowers in early spring. The fruit is an ovoid nut with a very hard hairy shell, approximately 3/4 inch across. It is a densely suckering shrub which may reach a height of 6 feet. Plant width will generally exceed plant height in about 10 years due to its aggressive suckering habit. The recommended within row spacing is 3 to 4 feet. It is not highly desirable for landscape purposes because its suckering habit makes it difficult to control. However, the dense thicket formed provides excellent wildlife escape and loafing cover and food.

‘Regal’ has performed well on most soil types, but prefers loamy soils (NRCS WSG 1,3,4). It performs satisfactory on sandy loam soils (WSG 5), but annual growth and performance will be reduced. For more information on availability and use contact me at (785)823-4541 or the Bismarck PMC at (701)223-8536.

Terry Conway

Plant Materials Program Going ‘Electronic’

The Manhattan PMC recently became net capable, being able to access the Internet utilizing a USDA server computer in Kansas City. This set up currently has no e-mail capability so basically it can be used to search web sites and acquire information available on the Internet. John Scheetz, Plant Materials IT Coordinator, is working with the National Plant Center in Beltsville, Maryland to coordinate setting up a home page for the PM Program and each Center individually. Centers have been supplying information on personnel, mission statements, objectives, releases, and other background information to the National Center for inclusion on individual home pages. Hopefully, soon the home page for individual Centers will contain electronic information such as plant guides, release brochures, annual reports, center brochures, and technical papers of interest to our customers. These first tentative steps into the electronic medium should prove exciting and should increase access to information for the Centers and their customers.

The PMC Newsletter is now being produced at the PMC for the first time with this July edition. Should you have any comments, questions, or criticisms, about the newsletter, please address them to Rich Wynia at the PMC (785)539-8761 or Terry Conway at the Kansas State Office. Reader inputs and comments are important to the value and effectiveness of this newsletter.

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