

ETPMC News

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SFASU Environmental Science and Forestry Students Learn about Plant Materials



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Address:

East Texas Plant Materials Center
6598 FM 2782
Nacogdoches, TX
75964

Phone:
(936) 564-4873

Fax:
(936) 552-7924

On November 3-5, students from the Arthur Temple School of Forestry at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) learned about the Plant Materials Program. A total of 48 students toured the Plant Materials Center during the three afternoons. The students watched a DVD about the National Plant Materials program and toured the evaluation and seed production fields.



At left: Alan Shadow speaks to students about developing a switchgrass release.

Staff Members Give Presentations at the Sixth Eastern Native Grass Symposium in Columbia, SC

On Wednesday, October 8th, Melinda Brakie gave a poster presentation entitled "Comparison of Pure Live Seeding Rates for Establishment of Florida paspalum." The poster is based upon a seeding rate study of Harrison germplasm Florida paspalum. From study results there appears to be no significant difference in percent cover between seeding rates.



At left: Melinda Brakie converses with a symposium participant.

Alan Shadow gave his presentation, "Seed Production of Three Eastern Gamagrasses in East Texas" on Friday, October 10th. This study is comparing the difference in seed production between 'Jackson', 'Medina', and accession #9043629. Preliminary results of the study indicate #9043629 is producing significantly more seed per acre than the other two cultivars.

Texas Society of Range Management (SRM) Holds Annual Meeting in Nacogdoches

October the 9th, Jim Stevens gave a presentation to the Society on “Plant Releases for Ecosystem Restoration”. Jim discussed the locations of the 27 national plant materials centers which are strategically located to serve ecological regions. The evaluation process of plant species and selection process by desirable plant attributes was explained. The different categories of plant releases, source identified, selected, tested, cultivar/variety, and what they mean as to known performance level. On October 10th, 140 members of the SRM were given a tour of the ETPMC by Jim. The tour highlighted current studies at the ETPMC. The SRM membership consists of professional range managers, landowners, and others interested in the betterment of range management.

East Texas Plant Materials Center Host Regional Wildlife Clinic

On October 29th, a regional wildlife clinic was held at the US Forest Service Stephen F. Austin Experimental Forest, home of the ETPMC. Approximately 300 high school students from east Texas participated in the event. Topics included wildlife habitat, plant identification, wildlife techniques and land navigation. The clinic is sponsored by the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of East Texas. Jim Rogers, Zone 4 wildlife biologist, and numerous district and soil conservationist setup and conducted the clinic. The clinic gives the students an opportunity to show their knowledge of wildlife management techniques.

Plant Materials Center Still Needs Collections

The Center relies on NRCS Field Office staff for help in the collection of plants from the field. Once a collection is received at the Center a unique number is assigned to that collection for tracking and future reference. The plant collections are assembled together for evaluation and comparison. The East Texas PMC is still assembling the following species: **Big bluestem, black-eyed Susan, swamp sunflower, and purple prairie coneflower**. The larger the assembly of a species the better we can screen for desirable plant attributes. Field Office Staff assistance is greatly needed and appreciated. If you need further information on the species and collection information go to: http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/pmc/collection_guide.html. You also can contact the Center for any questions you might have.

Featured Plant

Rhizoma (perennial) Peanut

Earlier this year, the ETPMC received inquiries from NRCS field office personnel concerning perennial peanut for use as livestock forage. In response, ETPMC personnel planted observation blocks of 'Florigraze' and 'Arbrook' with vegetative materials provided by the Brooksville, Florida Plant Materials Center.



Rhizoma perennial peanut (*Arachis glabrata* Benth.) is a vegetatively propagated forage adapted to the extreme southern United States. Its uses include hay, pasture, silage, conservation cover and wildlife. This long-lived plant develops an extensive system of rhizomes and roots which concentrate in a 2-3" thick mat located below the soil surface. Since perennial peanut is a legume it does not require applications of nitrogen fertilizer. This plant is tolerant to drought, plant and soil pests. Perennial peanut is generally recommended for sandy soils with pH ranging from 5.8 to 6.5. Stands are established by planting rhizomes. When compared to other forages, establishment costs are more expensive; however the higher cost is off-set by the lower production costs during the life of the stand. In Florida, per acre yields of 'Florigraze' and 'Arbrook' range from 3 to 6 tons depending on soil type and available moisture. A perennial peanut adapted to Texas and southern Oklahoma is scheduled to be released this year by Texas Agrilife Research and Extension Service.

Notable Quote:

Too many people have lost sight of the fact that productive soil is essential to the production of food. – Huah Hammond Bennett

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