



Americus, Georgia  
April 2008

# Year 2007 Progress Report of Activities

## Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center

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### Who We Are

The Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center (PMC) is a branch of the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service. It is one of 27 plant materials centers located throughout the United States. The Center is located on the Northwest corner of Americus in Southwestern Georgia and is approximately 40 miles North of Albany. Areas served include Georgia, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina and parts of Tennessee and Florida.

### What We Do

It is our mission to use plant materials and state-of-the-art plant science technology to solve natural resource problems and meet the objectives of environmental programs. Our program emphasizes using native plants. We develop, test and release superior adapted plants to commercial growers along with production and management technology. Our mission addresses three major objectives:

- Native Grasses for grazing lands that support sustainable agriculture and wildlife habitat.
- Native plants for water quality (riparian forests, conservation buffers, filter strips, constructed wetlands, and streambanks)
- Conservation tillage (green manure, organic gardening, carbon sequestration, and winter cover)

A brief summary of year 2007 accomplishments follows. For a complete account of all activities,

Request the 2007 Technical Report of Activities at the above address.

### **HISTORIC TRAIL OF TEARS CORN GROWN AT THE JIMMY CARTER PLANT MATERIALS CENTER**

In 1830 the Congress of the United States passed a bill called the "Indian Removal Act". The Cherokee fought removal legally by challenging the removal law in the Supreme Court of the United States. The Cherokee challenged the law as an independent Cherokee Nation. Cherokee Nation v. Georgia the Court refused to hear a case extending Georgia's laws concerning the Cherokee because they did not represent a sovereign nation. However, in 1832 the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Cherokee on the same issue in Worcester v. Georgia. In this case Chief Justice John Marshall ruled the Cherokee Nation was sovereign. This ruling made the removal law invalid. Due to many factors the Cherokee Nation in 1835 was politically divided. A minority of Cherokee supported the removal and signed the Treaty of New Echota. This treaty validated the removal act. Therefore, in 1838 the United States government forcibly removed more than 16,000 Cherokee, Choctaw and Creek Indians from their homelands in Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, and Georgia. They were sent during the severe winter of 1838-1839 to Indian Territory in present day Oklahoma. Hundreds of Indians died during their trip west, and thousands perished from relocation. This tragic chapter in American history was known as the Trail of Tears. The Cherokee brought provisions to

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sustain them during the relocation. These included corn for planting in Oklahoma. Some of the corn survived and was given the name 'White Eagle'. This corn is highly revered by descendents of the Trail of Tears March. Debbie Henry of the NRCS is the American Indian/ Alaskan Native Special Emphasis Program Manager and American Indian Tribal Liaison for Georgia. In 2007 she requested the Jimmy Carter Plant Materials Center (PMC) grow production seed of 'White Eagle' for education and remembrance of the Trail of Tears March to Oklahoma. Debbie provided the corn to the PMC for spring 2007 planting. Personnel from Area 3 of the NRCS and PMC harvested 1,100 pounds of clean high quality corn on August 23, 2007. Packets of this corn are being sent to interested parties in the Southeastern United States.



**Corn Harvest with Area 3**

## **ECOLOGICAL SITE DESCRIPTIONS IN SOUTH CAROLINA**

In 2007, the Jimmy Carter PMC manager, Grazing lands specialist for Georgia, Grazing lands specialist from the East National Technology Support Center, and the forester from the Support Center started to compile data concerning ecological site descriptions. Ecological site descriptions of various plant communities are used by the NRCS to assist landowners and government officials manage livestock, wildlife, forestry, and recreational uses of the land based on data taken from specific plant community sites. The first site descriptions will come from longleaf pine savanna-flatwoods around Ridgeland South Carolina. Data documented for the sites will include MLRA, soil type, soil description, physiographic features, climate, and plant community characteristics. One of the main characteristics will include historic climax plant community determination. The sites in South Carolina were determined to be longleaf pine savanna-flatwoods.



**Corn Picking**

Other plant community characteristics determined are tree, shrub and herbaceous plant identification. Data on percent composition and production for each plant community level was collected. 50 different kinds of plants have been identified with corresponding composition and production data taken for this plant community site. When all the information has been gathered it will be analyzed and entered into the NRCS data base for reference by private landowners and government land management personnel. When the South Carolina sites are completed the ecological site description team plans to obtain data from longleaf pine sites across Georgia.



**Transect data being collected from herbaceous level**



**Estimation of woody species production**

## **NEW PUBLICATIONS FOR NRCS FIELD OFFICE USE**

In 2007 The Jimmy Carter PMC in cooperation with the Area 2 resource soil scientist and state biologist produced two new publications for field office use entitled Georgia NRCS Wetland Plant Identification Guide and Georgia Native Plant Material Guide for Longleaf Pine Understory. The first publication contains pictures of plants commonly encountered in wetland sites of Georgia and surrounding states. It can be used for education purposes and especially for wetland delineation determinations. The identification of wetland plants has been a limiting factor regarding wetland delineation for most NRCS field offices. This publication should improve the accuracy of the wetland plant identification during these delineations.



**Swamp Cyrilla**



**Orange Milkwort**

The second publication contains pictures, line drawings, and descriptions of plants occurring as longleaf pine understory. This plant identification reference can be used to identify important wildlife plants in longleaf pine areas. However the primary use will be understory plant identification for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) practice CP 36. This new program was created to restore longleaf pine habitat as well as restore the understory plant community. The plants listed in the publication can occur naturally and some can be planted to restore the understory community.



**Hairy Lespedeza**



**Slender lespedeza**



**Goat's Rue**