

Marsh Notes

Finding Vegetative
Solutions for
Conservation
Problems



USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service - Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center

PMC LENDS ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL TRIBE

In April of 2010, the Golden Meadow Plant Materials Center worked in conjunction with both NRCS Franklin field office staff and the Chitimacha tribe's cultural director, Kim Walden, to harvest River Cane initially planted in the a 2001 project. The variety of River Cane consisted of *Arundinaria gigantia*. Kim facilitated the team as to which stalks would be ideal for basket weaving, a historic cultural tradition of the tribe. After flagging and identifying the respective species, the stalks were excavated, broken down to smaller root masses and then transported back to the Chitimacha reservation. The planting and re-establishment of the River Cane was a success for the tribe with a survival rate of nearly 90 percent.



SPRING ISSUE 2011

GREEN FACTS

A notch in a tree will remain the same distance from the ground as the tree grows.
sophia.smith.edu/badseeds/plantfacts.html



Just recently, in March of 2011, the Louisiana Plant Materials Staff traveled to the Chitimacha reservation for a two day River Cane Project, which consisted of harvesting and further re-establishing River Cane populations. The entire PMC staff, several volunteers and members of the Chitimacha tribe worked diligently together to harvest the *Arundinaria tecta* variety from a site located in St. Mary parish. The site was located on a slope of a levee so no heavy duty

mechanical equipment was able to be used in the harvest. The PMC staff dedicated an entire day to manually harvest River Cane shoots for planting the following day. Once the harvest was complete, the River Cane shoots were loaded into a pickup truck and transported to the Chitimacha reservation for planting. The PMC staff dedicated the next day to planting. This planting was conducted in areas near wooded edges adjacent to the previous year's planting to insure easy monitoring. PMC's labor and plant expertise resulted in successful populations of nearly 100 clumps of both River Cane varieties. The stands and colonies of River Cane will be both conducive to and will insure that the historical basket weaving traditions of the tribe be readily available and will live on to the tribe's next generations to come.

PMC staff will continue to persevere with this project each year until the Chitimacha can once again harvest River Cane on ten year rotational schedules and pass on their great tradition of creating unique and alluring baskets incessantly.



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PMC VEG QUIZ

Can you identify this native species?



Answer in next publication

Answer to Winter 2011 PMC Veg Quiz:
American beautyberry *Callicarpa americana*

The Mission of the NRCS Plant Materials Program:

We develop and transfer plant materials and plant technology for the conservation of natural resources. In working with a broad range of plant species, including grasses, forbs, trees, and shrubs, the program seeks to address priority needs of field offices and land managers in both public and private sectors. Emphasis is focused on using native plants as a sustainable way to solve conservation problems and protect ecosystems.



If you would like more information call us at (985) 475-5280 or visit our web site at <http://www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/lapmc>

SPRING BRINGS FIELD WORK TO THE PMC

With weather temperatures climbing into the eighties in South Louisiana and field conditions beginning to shape up you can bet to sniff a unique aroma in the air. Yes, diesel fuel burning from the engines of our assiduous tractors. Like most farms at this time of the season, cultivation, roto-tilling, pesticide applications and bush hogging are taking precedence at the PMC, in preparation that Mother Nature has great intentions for the growing season. 2011 PMC objectives are to establish initial evaluation plantings of *Distichlis spicata* and increase production of Vermilion Smooth Cordgrass in addition to planting rice in fallow ponds in order to enhance wildlife habitat and food supply. Cover crop trials consisting of Sunn Hemp are other projects on the PMC's vegetative agenda.



2011 PMC PEOPLE'S GARDEN

The 14 X 16 foot People's Garden will house a variety of pollinator friendly native species here at the PMC. Species such as Black Eyed Susan, Purple Coneflower, Rattlesnake Master and Ashy Sunflower are just to name a few. Our objective is to correctly pair respective species flower color to respective pollinator species in order to attract everything from bees, humming birds, grasshoppers and even bats. All plant species were propagated here at the PMC from seed. The plants these pollinator species will utilize are currently in the greenhouse and growing vigorously now that spring has alighted in South Louisiana. Tentative planting date is anticipated for middle to late April of 2011.



Plant Materials Specialist Corner

VEGETATIVE PROPAGATION FOR 2011 GROWER DISTRIBUTION

Thousands of vegetatively propagated Brazoria Seashore Paspalum plants are becoming established in order to reinforce the stock of plant materials here at the PMC. The propagation technique consists of simply clipping the stems at soil level on pre-existing vegetative stocks. Immediately thereafter, cuttings are inserted two nodes deep into containers to insure sufficient rooting, curtailing time needed to become successfully established. Containers are then housed into temperature controlled greenhouses where they receive water every two hours. In addition to Brazoria Seashore Paspalum, Timbalier Gulf Bluestem is currently being pampered and propagated in a similar fashion.



PLANT ALLOCATIONS TO COMMERCIAL GROWERS

Each spring plant varieties released from the PMC are allocated to commercial nurseries to establish production fields for further increase and eventual sale to the general public. In order for a grower to be eligible to receive plants from the PM Program, commercial nurseries need to be; 1) Licensed in the state of operation as a commercial plant nursery; 2) Have an updated copy of your state nursery license on file at the PMC; and 3) Provide evidence to your ability to adequately grow and propagate the varieties that you have requested. Once these factors have been met plants will be allocated based on anticipated production numbers at the PMC. Commercial growers are only eligible to receive PMC released varieties one time every 3 to 5 years.

We're on the Web!

www.plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov