



Rose Lake Plant Materials Program

Spring 2013 Newsletter



Rose Lake PMC Welcomes New Earth Team Volunteer

The Rose Lake PMC welcomed Tom Topham as an Earth Team Volunteer, providing assistance with greenhouse and field operations as well as equipment and facilities maintenance. Tom is a retired educator and businessman from the Kalamazoo, Michigan area. Tom served as placement coordinator and area director of Education for Employment for the last 15 years of his career.

Tom is a Michigan native, growing up in the “Thumb” of the Lower Peninsula. He earned a Bachelor of Business Administration at Eastern Michigan University and a Master of Arts in Educational Administration from Central Michigan University.

Tom and his wife recently moved to the Lansing area to be near their children and grandchildren.

Tom started work at the PMC on March 25. His first project was to help establish a wildflower herbicide screening experiment which included seed counting and planting, soil preparation, and container labeling. He has also worked on switchgrass planting, equipment maintenance, and a variety of other tasks at the Center. We are very pleased to have Tom working with us at the PMC.



Earth Team volunteer Tom Topham counts seeds for wildflower herbicide experiment. Administrative Assistant Elaine Gerona prepares greenhouse labels.

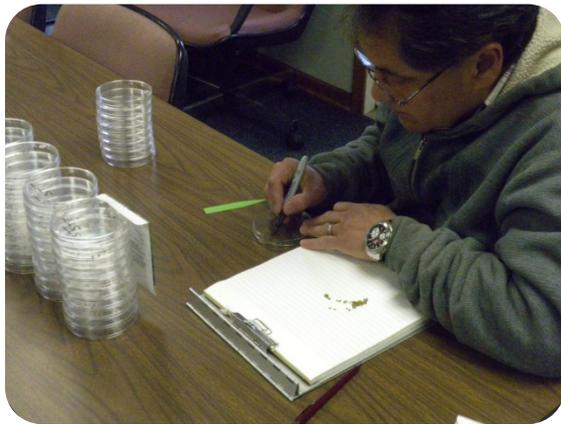
Wildflower Herbicide Tolerance Trial Underway

Michigan NRCS has several Conservation Practice Standards that allow for the planting of wildflowers and forbs. The purposes of those plant species vary by Practice Standard but most species are used for improved wildlife habitat and pollinator habitat. However, weed competition is a major reason that those species do not establish well in conservation plantings. Few herbicides have labels for their use in wildflower plantings, although anecdotal evidence suggests that some wildflowers are tolerant to various herbicides.

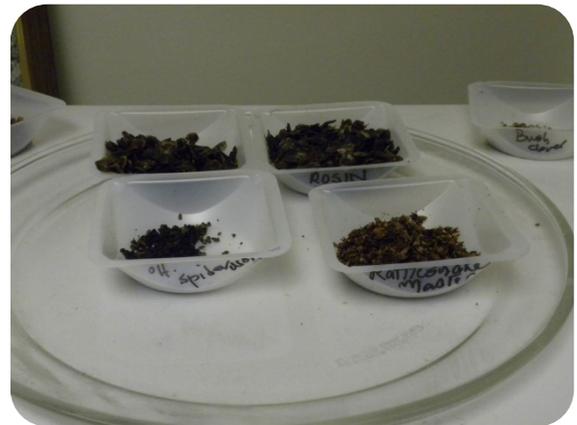
The Rose Lake PMC recently started a herbicide screening trail to evaluate the tolerance of 20 wildflower species to 10 preemergence and 10 post emergence herbicides. The wildflower species were selected based on the Michigan CRP-SAFE eligible wildflowers list. Herbicides were selected based on conversations with Dr. Christy Sprague, Michigan State University Weed Scientist. Dr. Sprague also provided small samples of many of the herbicides being evaluated.

Ten seeds of each species were planted in separate greenhouse pots. Preemergence herbicide treatments were applied using a backpack sprayer after planting but before the pots were watered. The pots will be maintained in the greenhouse for the duration of the experiment. Post emergence treatments will be applied when the wildflowers are 4 – 6 inches tall. Data will be taken at 14, 28, and 42 days after treatment on plant numbers, plant height, and any visual herbicide symptoms that are observed.

The NRCS does not make herbicide recommendations to the public. Michigan State University Weed Science is interested in using this data in an informational bulletin that can be distributed through the MSU Extension system.



Biological Sciences Technician Sergio Perez counts wildflower seeds for herbicide tolerance experiment.



Seeds of various wildflowers removed from stratification and ready for planting.



Wild bergamot seeds planted in greenhouse containers

PMC Staff Participate in Several NRCS Training Events

The Rose Lake PMC Staff has been involved in several training presentations over the last few months. The Shiawassee County Soil and Water Conservation District asked for our involvement in a soil health and cover crop workshop in February. Research Agronomist John Durling presented information on on-going cover crop research projects that the PMC is conducting in Shiawassee County. Manager John Leif presented information on considerations when selecting cover crops and Biological Sciences Technician Sergio Perez demonstrated the on-line cover crop selection tool that was developed by the Midwest Cover Crop Council. The meeting was attended by NRCS and CD staff and 25 landowners from the county.

Research Agronomist John Durling provided soil health training at the NRCS Basic Conservation Assistance training for Soil Conservationists. John also provided training on soil health and fertilizer considerations at the NRCS Nutrient Management training for District Conservationists and Soil Conservationists. Twenty five students were present at each of those trainings.



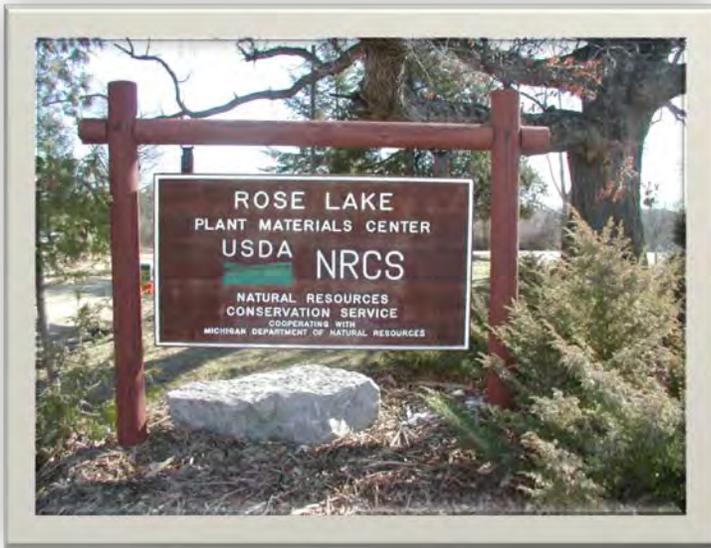
Research Agronomist John Durling and Biological Sciences Technician Sergio Perez present cover crop information.



Biological Sciences Technician Sergio Perez demonstrating the on-line cover crop selection tool.



The PMC display at the cover crop workshop



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