



United States Department of Agriculture

Winter Newsletter

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Major Ice Storm Impacts Rose Lake PMC



On December 21, 2013 a major ice storm hit the Lansing, MI area as well as other parts of mid-Michigan. Over an inch of ice coated roads, parking lots, trees, and power lines throughout the area. Power outages in Lansing lasted up to 3 weeks.



The Rose Lake PMC was affected by the ice storm as well. Electrical power was off for eight days. The Plant Materials Center has a backup generator that supplied power to the facility during those eight days so the Center was able to remain open. Several snow storms in January have left over two feet of snow around the PMC. That snow cover has made it difficult to clear ice and provide access to storage buildings.



A number of trees and shrubs around the Center sustained some damage. The PMC staff has worked to clear broken branches as weather and ground conditions allow. Cleanup will continue through early spring after some of the snow has melted. It doesn't appear that any trees will be lost due to the storm, but many trees will require pruning and branch clearing to make the area around them safe.



Rose Lake PMC Staff makes Presentation at Shiawassee Conservation District Soil Health Workshop

The Rose Lake Plant Materials Center has worked on cover crop and soil health projects with the Shiawassee Conservation District for the last two years. We established cover crop plots in 2012 and 2013, evaluating growth parameters and determining effect of cover crops on the yield of subsequent cash crops.

On February 25 Sergio Perez, John Durling, and John Leif presented various aspects of that research as well as provided information on cover crop selection. Those presentations were coordinated with a presentation by Victoria Ackroyd, Michigan State University Ph.D. candidate and NRCS Earth Team Volunteer.

About 25 people attended the workshop including landowners, growers, and conservation professionals. The Plant Materials Center is currently planning the 2014-15 cover crop research and demonstration plots for Shiawassee County. We have talked to farmer cooperator Larry Lee about his objectives for this plot and are in conversation with the Shiawassee NRCS/CD staff to include treatments that meet their objectives.



Victoria Ackroyd- MSU



Tina Tuller- Shiawassee NRCS



John Durling- PMC



John Leif- PMC



Sergio Perez- PMC and Tom Wert- Shiawassee CD

Upcoming Events and Training

The Rose Lake Plant Materials Center staff will be participating in several special events and training sessions in 2014. The NRCS signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians in 2012. That MOA allows NRCS to provide technical assistance to the tribe through a formal government to government relationship. A task agreement with the tribe was recently signed that outlines a series of training events to help tribal members establish sweetgrass on their tribal properties. The plan is to work with tribal members in April or May to establish sweetgrass in raised beds. Those plants will be used as stock material to out-plant into tribal lands in the future. Another session will be conducted in September or October to help tribal members establish potted material that they can grow in their home during the winter. Those plants can be separated and out-planted in the spring of 2015.



The PMC will be hosting the Plant Materials Program Introduction and Implementation training module for NRCS and CD employees on August 13 – 14. The training will introduce participants to the National Plant Materials Program and the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center. There will be several hands-on activities to help participants learn to evaluate



Sweetgrass stems and rhizomes

PM field plantings, design and establish experiments, and understand the process of working with the Plant Materials Program.

Raised bed

In addition to the formal training events listed above the PMC staff has been asked to be presenters during other NRCS training modules. Those include presentations for the Nutrient Management module and as co-instructor for forage ID and inventory. The PMC will be the host location for Forest Stand Improvement training as well.



2009 PM Program introduction participants evaluating seed placement.

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