

Pollinator Planting at Illinois Elementary School

This past winter a teacher from the Brussels School District located in Brussels, Illinois contacted the Elsberry Plant Material Center (PMC) about what plants to use for a school beautification project they had planned. We presented them with the idea of doing a pollinator garden that would not only work for the beautification project, but also as a learning tool for all grade levels. Seeds of 18 native perennial forbs and legumes from our inventory and seeds donated from the Manhattan, Kansas PMC were started in our greenhouse. We also planted big bluestem, which is the state grass of Illinois, and little bluestem. Species that were selected are ones that would provide flowering from early spring to late fall.



High School student from the Brussels High School Environmental Science Club helps elementary students plant native species for the pollinator planting in front of their school.

On April 23, Nick Adams and Allen Casey from the PMC delivered the plants and talked with the students about what our goal was, and why we selected the plants that we did. The Environmental Science Club from the Brussels High School was a big help in guiding the elementary school kids on the planting process. We had 65 kids ranging from Kindergarten through 6th grade planting the plants that were started in the PMC greenhouse. Each kid had an opportunity take pride in planting something for their school. The school district's other concern was afternoon shade for the class rooms on the west side of the building, so we also planted two White Flowering Dogwoods and two Red Bud trees. To finish off the planting site we used a buffalograss and blue grama mix as a low growing living mulch to minimize future weed maintenance in the planting.

Field Day

The PMC had its annual field day on June 20, 2012. A brief introduction to the PMC was followed by tours of the facilities and fields of the PMC. A major tour stop consisted of the study using goats to control invasive honeysuckle and buckthorn, in which Dr. Charlotte Clifford-Rathert of Lincoln University had a lengthy discussion about the study's goals and the health of the goats. The tour also included stops at the cover crop termination with a roller crimper study. Here participants were able to see how the timing of termination affected each of the species of cover crops in the study. Another stop included a cover crop study that compares the effectiveness of aerial (broadcast) seeding before soybean leaf drop to drilling of cover crops after soybean harvest. There were 40 NRCS personnel and 11 participants from partnering agencies that toured the PMC.

2012 Missouri Tree Farm Conference

On Saturday June 2nd Jerry Kaiser, Plant Materials Specialist, presented displays for approximately 200 landowners who attended the 2012 Missouri Tree Farm Conference. The host site was John and Stacy Heckmann tree farm located north of Hermann Missouri, in Montgomery County.

The Elsberry Plant Materials Program provided information on current plant releases and the mission of the program. Landowners had the opportunity to obtain donated container material of woody releases of Sun Harvest Hazelnut and Mid-West Premium American Plum.



Participants at the Tree Farm Conference looking at the PMC Booth.

Volunteers Conduct Butterfly Count

On July 8, 2012 the Plant Materials Center (PMC) hosted an Annual North American Butterfly Association (NABA) butterfly count. This was the first year for the event which centered at the Elsberry PMC and straddled the Mississippi River, to include part of Illinois. Allen Casey worked with the St. Louis Chapter of NABA to organize this event. There were 10 participants including members of the public, the St. Louis Chapter of NABA, the Kansas Native Plant Society, and NRCS. The count area included public land areas such as the Clarence Cannon National Wildlife Refuge, BK Leach Memorial Conservation Area, and the PMC.

The volunteers counted 2 dark colored swallowtails, 2 pipevine swallowtails, 5 black swallowtails, 2 tiger swallowtails, 2 spicebush swallowtails, 6 cabbage whites, 10 clouded sulfurs, 5 orange sulfurs, 30 cloudless sulfurs, 37 little yellows, 5 sleepy oranges, 23 dainty sulfurs, 3 gray hairstreaks, 20 Eastern-tailed blues, 4 summer azures, 1 American snout, 4 Variegated fritillaries, 2 Great Spangled fritillaries, 25 pearl crescents, 3 red admirals, 7 common buckeyes, 1 hackberry emperor, 6 Hayhurst's scallopwings, 16 common checkered-skippers, and 9 Fiery skippers.

The butterfly count is a citizen scientist survey where volunteers around North America conduct a one-day census of all of the butterflies observed in a count circle 15 miles in diameter. The count program is intended to promote interest in butterflies and provide scientific monitoring of this fascinating group of insects. Comparisons of the results over the years show changes in butterfly populations and can reveal the effects of weather and habitat on the different butterfly species. For more information on the NABA or the count program, consult NABA's website at www.naba.org.

The PMC staff would like to extend a special thanks to the St. Louis Chapter of NABA, for help in organizing and preparing for the butterfly count. Thanks to all of the participants and we hope to see you again next year!



A spicebush swallowtail butterfly visits thickspike gayfeather at the PMC

Summer Intern – Saebyul (Christina) Choe

Saebyul (Christina) Choe is the 2012 STEP intern at the Plant Materials Center in Elsberry, MO. She is originally from South Korea, but her family moved to the United States when she was 6 and she now lives in Flushing, Queens, New York. Saebyul is going into her junior year at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, majoring in Geology. On campus she is involved in the Bates College Outing Club, a hiking, climbing and other outdoor activities club established in 1920. Saebyul is also the Co-President of the Environmental Coalition, which is an environmental education and awareness club on campus. She is an Annual Entering Student Outdoor Program (AESOP) leader at Bates College's student lead pre-orientation program. After graduating she hopes to pursue a Master's degree in Geology or Environmental Sciences at a school in the western U.S. While at the PMC, Saebyul has been in charge of the high tunnel demonstration, operated a combine, built fence for the biological control study, harvested Giant Miscanthus, hoed weeds out of plots, and helped set up irrigation.



Saebyul Choe feeding carrots to the PMC donkey. The donkey acts as a guard animal for the goats in the biological control study.

Staff and Contact Information

Jerry U. Kaiser- Plant Materials Specialist
Ronald L. Cordsiemon- PMC Manager
Allen Casey- Asst. Mgr./Soil Conservationist
Nick Adams- Biological Technician
Garry Stewart- WAE
Ronnie Vaughn- WAE
Saebyul (Christina) Choe- STEP Intern (summer)

2803 N. Hwy. 79
 Elsberry, Missouri 63343
 Phone: 573-898-2012
 Fax: 573-898-5019
 Web: <http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/mopmc>