Upcoming Events

Bridger Plant Materials Center
Field Day 2017!

When: Wednesday June 14, 2017
Where: 98 South River Road – Bridger
Start: 9:30 AM
Lunch: BBQ – Please RSVP ASAP (this is important)
By calling 406-662-3579 X 100

The bi-annual Bridger Plant Materials Center Field Day will be held Wednesday, June 14, beginning at 9:30 AM. This year BPMC staff and collaborators will again offer 15-minute concurrent sessions in the morning covering a variety of topics such as pollinator habitat enhancement, soil health, cover crops, conservation plants, seed certification, seed processing, and equipment. Lunch is provided courtesy of the Soil and Water Conservation Districts of Montana (MACD). An afternoon tour will feature current BPMC studies, and seed and plant production. This is a great opportunity to see the vegetative component of NRCS conservation activities, and to interact with staff. Hope to see you all there!

Please RSVP to 406-662-3579 X 100 as soon as possible if you plan to attend.

Feature

2017 National Plant Materials Cover Crop Study Installed at Bridger

Robert, Darren, Ross, and Monica wasted no time this spring installing Montana’s portion of a national, multi-center, cover crop study. The BPMC study tests 53 varieties of eight species including black oats, Austrian winter pea, Daikon radish, cereal rye, crimson clover, Balansa clover, red clover, and hairy vetch. The goal of the study is to determine the growth characteristics and production attributes of commercially available varieties of select cover crop species. Although soil health enhancement with cover crops is an increasingly popular practice, actual data on species and variety performance, especially in the western US, is difficult to find. The
coordination of testing of these cover crops across broad areas of the US allows Plant Materials to project ranges of adaption and use

Robert Kilian, Rangeland Specialist, packaging cover crop seed for the national study.

The fully replicated study will be evaluated at fixed intervals for various plant growth parameters including germination and establishment, canopy cover, plant height, bloom and anthesis date, above ground biomass, nitrogen content, and disease resistance.

Monica, Ross, and Darren installing test plots.

Darren calibrating the push seeder.

Joe LeFebvre evaluating the Mill Creek study.

After 22 continuous years, the DATR/DATC project has come to a close. Initiated in 1995 as a collaborative effort between the Deer Lodge Valley Conservation District, NRCS, and the state of Montana, Natural Resource Damage Program, the DATR project formally ended on March 21,
2017 with the projects expiration and the retirement of Joe LeFebvre, project leader. The overall goal of the project was to collect, test, select, and release native plants collected in the Butte-Anaconda area demonstrating tolerance to acid and heavy metal contaminated soil. To date, five selections have been released, and a sixth (silverleaf phacelia) is pending.

Joe LeFebvre weeding a silverleaf phacelia increase field at the Bridger Plant Materials Center.

Joe, a retired science teacher from Red Lodge, Montana, began as project leader in August 2013. His highly organized and analytical approach to the project resulted in the completion of numerous excellent documents and studies. Much of Joe’s research was related to the propagation and production of silverleaf phacelia. His fastidious maintenance of Foundation fields of DATR releases has become the gold standard for seed production at the center. An outstanding researcher, writer, project manager, and a truly exceptional person, Joe will be missed by the entire BPMC staff. Best wishes Joe! Our additional thanks to Susie Johnson and John Hollenback of the Deer Lodge Valley Conservation District, and Greg Mullen of the Natural Resource Damage Program for their steadfast support and assistance.

Outreach

Special K Project Reaches Year 5

The BPMC staff, with the assistance of Levi McKim from the Special K Ranch, and germplasm collector Marty Flanagan, prepared and stuck another 1,004 dormant hardwood cuttings of 7 species from 12 different sources in support of our Special K Ranch project supporting special needs adults. To date, over 4,700 cuttings have been stuck at the BPMC. This collaborative effort was started in 2013, and its goal is preserving some of Montana’s champion and historic trees. Rooted cuttings are returned to the Special K Ranch, transplanted to larger pots, and then cultured to a finished product size. Some plants have been used to revegetate local parks while preserving these special germplasms.

Darren and Robert preparing containers for cuttings.
Ross placing prepared cuttings in the mist bed.

Joe Scianna - BPMC Manager/Horticulturist

**Website News**

**Montana NRCS and Plant Materials Website Reorganization**

Did you know the Montana-Wyoming Plant Materials Program has over 220 publications on grasses, forbs, plantings technologies, invasive plant management, and more? We have reorganized Plant Materials publications in pdf documents for ease of searching for relevant materials. They are available on the updated [Plant Materials](#) and [Invasive Species](#) websites. The [National MTPMC](#) contains additional Plant Materials publications. If you need information on a topic not written, please submit requests to [Monica Pokorny](#). Your requests will help guide activities and needs of Montana-Wyoming Plant Materials program.

Plant material webinars, developed by the Western Plant Materials Consortium for improving seeding in the intermountain west, are now posted on the updated [Plant Materials](#) website. The webinar series are meant to be used as a unit; information may be referenced between webinars. Webinar topics include: 1. Planning a Seeding, 2. Seed Quality, 3. Developing Seed Mixes, 4. Seeding Calculations, 5. Seedbed preparation and Planting, and 6. Seeding Evaluation and Maintenance.

Monica Pokorny, MT-WY Plant Materials Specialist

**New Publications**

**Recent BPMC Publications**

BPMC staff strives to keep documents and technical resources current for NRCS field staff, commercial seed growers, producers, and the general public. As new information becomes available through research, testing, trials, and anecdotal feedback, documents are updated. A popular BPMC product is the release brochure, a handy, concise summary of the conservation benefits and anticipated performance of our conservation plant selections. Each plant selection has a release brochure posted on the Montana NRCS and Plant Materials websites.

Two brochures have already been updated in 2017. Bridger-Select Germplasm Rocky Mountain juniper and Ekalaka Germplasm bur oak brochures have been revised with the latest information and posted to our websites. These
are handy publications for field staff to provide producers, in this case, when they are developing windbreak and shelterbelt systems, riparian forest buffers, and similar practices.

Bridger-Select Germplasm Rocky Mountain juniper seed orchard.

The Plant Materials Program worked with Pat Hensleigh, State Agronomist, to produce a Technical Note on Palmer Amaranth. Palmer amaranth is spreading through contaminated seed, hay and feed purchases, and custom combining or other mobile farm equipment. It was a known contaminant in Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) seed mixes but pollinator, wildlife habitat and cover crop plantings may also been contaminated. Producers with recent conservation plantings should check their fields to ensure this invasive weed is not present.

Palmer amaranth mature plant. Photo by Ross Recker, University of Wisconsin.

‘Rosana’ western wheatgrass and ‘Critana’ thickspike wheatgrass brochures are also in the process of being updated, and a new release brochure has been developed and will become available for silverleaf phacelia as soon as this selection is formally released. Please consider using these popular publications to help landowners achieve their desired conservation goals.

Ekalaka Germplasm bur oak seed orchard.

Another popular document is the Bridger Plant Materials Center Annual Progress Report of Activities. This publication provides a good
overview of the BPMC and Montana-Wyoming Plant Materials programs, including studies, activities, and publications. It works well as both an informational and marketing tool. Have questions? Call the Plant Materials Specialist or BPMC staff.