

Plant Chat

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The Bismarck Plant Materials Center (PMC) is looking for conservation partners interested in establishing and promoting selected plant materials for special/demonstration plantings in 2016. The three types are listed below. Though the deadline has passed, the PMC will also continue acceptance of field planting requests. Available field planting materials include Virginia wildrye (*Elymus virginicus*), foxtail dalea (*Dalea leporina*), and Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii* var. *glauca*).

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Prairie Cordgrass Transplants on Saline Sites (Special Planting)

The PMC would like to evaluate establishment and saline tolerance of prairie cordgrass (*Spartina pectinata*) transplants. Containerized and rhizome transplants from two different origins will be compared. There has been limited success in establishing prairie cordgrass from seed in saline soils, but establishment from transplants appears to be much more successful. The PMC will provide the transplants and assist in planting recommendations and evaluations. Partners/cooperators will be responsible for locating the site, planting, and annual evaluation for three years.



Prairie cordgrass planting in South Dakota

Cupplant (Special Planting)

The PMC is currently evaluating a cupplant (*Silphium perfoliatum*) selection for possible future release.

Cupplant is a native, perennial species of the tall grass prairie region. It grows well in sandy, moist bottomlands, floodplains, near stream beds, and in/or adjacent to open woodlands. It has a central taproot and shallow rhizomes and is able to form dense colonies good for wildlife habitat. Cupplant is 3-8 feet tall. It is attractive to pollinating insects, an excellent food source for livestock and wildlife and popular as a tall landscape plant.

In the Dakota's it is found naturally only in the extreme eastern portion of each state. In Minnesota it is found primarily in the southern half of the state. The PMC would like to evaluate cupplant in a diversity of plantings to evaluate its potential uses. The PMC will provide seed and will assist in evaluation.



Cupplant at the Plant Materials Center

Cover Crop (Demonstration Planting)

There is considerable interest in using cover crops in conservation and grazing practices. Cover crops can be an effective management tool to reduce erosion, improve soil health and water quality and provide high-quality grazing and habitat for livestock and wildlife. In 2015, the PMC assisted two conservation districts with establishment of cover crop demonstrations. The PMC provided the seed and planted the sites. The plantings provided hands on education and training for producers through self-guided tours and one-day field events.

The PMC would like to offer cover crop demonstrations again, in 2016, for two locations in Minnesota, one location in South Dakota, and one location in North Dakota. The PMC will provide the seed if possible and seed each location using a small no-till plot drill. Plantings can include individual species and/or mixed species plots. The PMC is available to assist cooperators with species selection, plot design, seed calibration, and maintenance and management considerations.



Cover crop demonstration planting in Rolette County, North Dakota