

Your NRCS source for plant materials technology in the southeast

A publication from the Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi Plant Materials Centers

Volume 1, Issue 1: March 2015



Inside this Issue

- New PMC targeted resource concerns
- Cover crop species spotlight
- Meet your PMC team
- Feature article: How late can you plant winter cover crops?

There are three PMCs in the Southeastern (SE) region that serve NRCS field staff in Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, and South Carolina (Figure 1). Coverage largely overlaps in order to treat similar resource concerns in surrounding states.

What we can do for you

Each PMC addresses plant materials needs identified by state, area, and local NRCS staff members who work with landowners in the southeast. Plant Materials Centers:

- Provide direct assistance to field staff for vegetative conservation planning for Farm Bill programs.
- Develop fact sheets, technical notes, etc. for the eFOTG.
- Host hands-on conservation planning training and workshops for NRCS staff and landowners.
- Evaluate conservation solutions for identified resource concerns using both on and off-farm studies.
- Collaborate with field staff to highlight and promote innovative NRCS vegetation conservation practices on working farms in their area.

How Can the Plant Materials Program Help NRCS Staff?

History of the program

The plant materials program has been the in-house vegetative experts for conservationists and landowners since 1935, and provided plant materials to help end the Dust Bowl.

Our Mission: NEW!

In 2014, each of the 25 Plant Materials Centers (PMCs) were realigned to focus on vegetation solutions for targeted resource concerns.



Americus, GA
Jimmy Carter
PMC

Brooksville, FL
Brooksville PMC

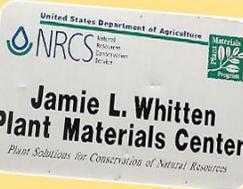
Coffeerville, MS
Jamie L.
Whitten PMC

Figure 1: There are three PMCs located in the Southeast.

Join the **SE Plant News NOW** email list today!
Contact Alayna Jacobs at alayna.jacobs@ms.usda.gov

Southeastern PMCs and New Targeted Resource Concerns

Each PMC will continue to address priority plant materials needs, but will specialize in addressing one or two priority resource concerns. Field staff throughout the Southeast can call any PMC to find out about vegetative practices. Field staff are especially encouraged to call PMC staff if you have landowners who are interested in trying new or innovative conservation practices.

	<p>Florida Plant Materials Center Targeted Resource Concern: Soil Health Targeted Land Uses: Cropland and Grazing Land</p>
	<p>Georgia Plant Materials Center Targeted Resource Concerns: Soil Health Grazing Land Health Targeted Land Uses: Cropland and Grazing Land</p>
	<p>Mississippi Plant Materials Center Targeted Resource Concern: Water Quality Targeted Land Use: Cropland</p>

Cover Crop Species Spotlight

Different cover crop plant species can solve specific resource concerns on working cropland. One of the physical characteristics of healthy soil is adequate soil pore space. Pores allow water to quickly soak into soil instead of carrying sediment or chemicals off-site in runoff.

One winter cover crop species that is capable of solving these concerns is oilseed radish (diakon radish; Figure 2, Table 1). The radish taproot creates pore space for faster water infiltration. Visit the

Table 1: Oilseed radish cover crop facts

Oilseed Radish Plant Facts	Cool-season broad-leaf plant in the Mustard (Brassica) family
Planting date	After harvest of soybean, corn, or cotton in the fall or pre-harvest aerial seeding
Seeding rate	Varies; in general 6-10 lb PLS/acre for pure stand, reduced for mixes
Termination date	Varies in the southeast; crops must be terminated as plants will not naturally winter-kill
Mixes well with	Cool-season grasses like cereal rye

PLANTS database cover crop page to learn more about oilseed radish and other cover crop species: <http://plants.usda.gov/java/coverCrops>.



Figure 2: Radish growth in January in Mississippi

Meet Your PMC Team

Janet, Richard, Alayna and their teams are your in-house experts for vegetative conservation technology.

Florida PMC

Janet Grabowski
Manager



- Manager there since 2005
- Began career as intern and agronomist at the Jamie L. Whitten PMC in MS
- Background in Horticulture (B.S. and M.S. from the University of IL)
- Janet enjoys working in the yard, watching new and old movies, and caring for her three cats

Mary Anne Gonter
Biol. Sci. Technician



- Technician there since 1982
- Spent the past 33 years pairing her extensive equipment knowledge with PMC study goals
- Mary Ann enjoys swimming, macramé, growing plants and spending time with her grandchildren

Jonathan Connolly
Gardener



- Gardener there since 2009
- Began career at the University of Florida at the ARS/UF Subtropical Agricultural Research Station
- Enjoys fishing and playing baseball with his eight year-old son

Georgia PMC

Richard Barrett
Manager



- New manager (November 2014)
- Began career as soil, district, and resource conservationists in GA and NC field and area offices
- Background in Agronomy (B.S. from the University of Georgia)
- Richard enjoys vegetable production and learning how to grow new plants

Larry Vanzant
Biol. Sci. Technician



- Technician there since 1996
- Larry enjoys deer hunting

Dock Price
WAE Gardener



- Gardener there since 2012
- Background in cotton, vegetable, and cattle production on the working family farm
- Dock enjoys hunting, camping and with his wife and children

Lane Kimbrough
Gardener



- New gardener (March 2015)
- Background in Extension Agriculture (B.S. from MS State University)
- Began career as soil and district conservationists in MS field offices
- Lane enjoys birding and hunting with his son

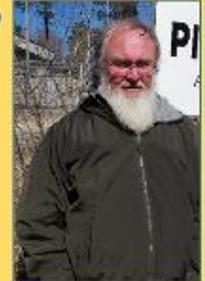
Mississippi PMC

Alayna Jacobs
Manager



- New manager (December 2014)
- Began career in AZ and AR field offices and PMCs
- Background in Rangeland Science (B.S.) and Agronomy (M.S.) Universities of AZ and AR
- Alayna enjoys running, cooking everything with NM green chile, and camping with her husband and golden retriever

Tommy Moss
Agronomist



- Agronomist there since 2006
- Began career in landscape design and nursery plant production
- Background in Horticulture (B.S. and M.S. from MS State University)
- Tommy enjoys tending blueberries for the Farmer's Market and spending time with his children, wife, and pets

Jon Allison,
Gardener



- Gardener there since 2002
- Background in row crop production on the working family farm
- Jon enjoys spending time with his two children and wife, leading church youth group, coaching baseball, and hunting

Feature Article: How Late Can Cover Crops Be Planted?

Since producer goals revolve around cash crop planting and harvest times, plants used as cover crop species must have flexible planting dates to accommodate unique situations. The Florida PMC in Brooksville is studying how late planting dates affect different species of cover crops (Table 2). The recommended planting time for winter cover crops in Brooksville, FL, is October 1 through November 15. Janet and her staff planted different species on December 3, 2014 and January 14, 2015.

Preliminary results show that a good stand of cereal rye can be achieved by late January (Figure 3), but that species selection is very important. Plots of oat cover crops did not achieve a good stand by the end of January because a flock of male turkeys ate much of the oat seed after planting (Figure 3). This study is an example of why the full 9-step planning process should be discussed with landowners prior to cover crop establishment, as alternative species recommended should consider surrounding habitat challenges.

The Florida PMC will measure final canopy cover and biomass production for all cover crop species this spring. Please contact Janet Grabowski at (352) 796-9600 for more information about this study.

Table 2: Cover crop species planted.

Small grain cover crop species
•'Trical 342' triticale
•'FL 401' rye
•'Elbon' rye
•'Kelly Grazer' rye
•'Ram' oat
•'Horizon 201' oat

Legume cover crop species
•'Southern Belle' red clover
•Balansa clover
•'Merit' hairy vetch
•'Dixie' crimson clover
•'Devine' little burr medic
•'Bigbee' berseem clover

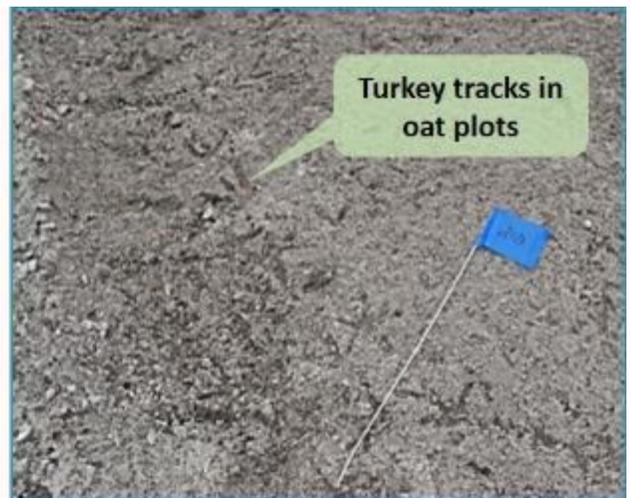
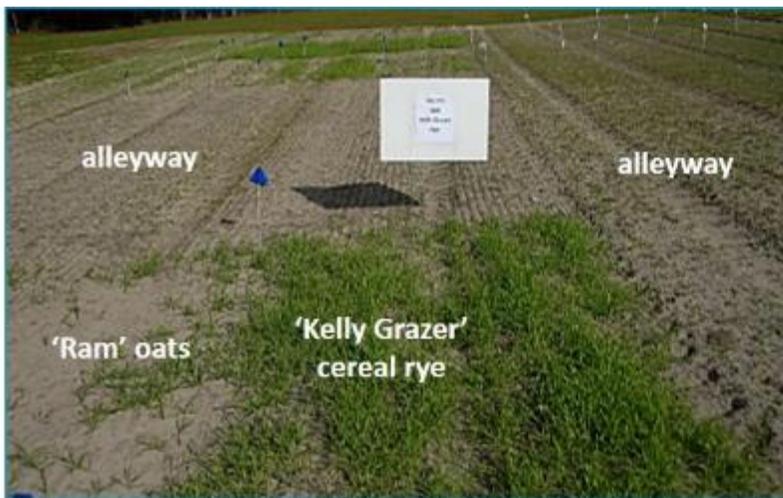


Figure 3: Study plots at the Brooksville PMC show 'Kelly Grazer' cereal rye growth in January (left). Turkeys preferred oat cover crop plots (right), but did graze other cover crop plant species.

Contact Us!

- Brooksville PMC (Florida) (352) 796-9600
- Jimmy Carter PMC (Georgia) (229) 924-0042
- Jamie L. Whitten PMC (Mississippi) (662) 675-2588
- National PMC website <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/plantmaterials/pmc/>

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer