

The Dirt

News from MCSWCD

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2010 TREE & SHRUB PROGRAM BEGINS

The Conservation District’s annual tree and shrub seedling sale is here! We will again offer a variety of bare root evergreen and deciduous seedlings to be used for conservation purposes. These seedlings provide homeowners with economical conservation materials to establish windbreaks, reforest land, prevent soil erosion and create suitable wildlife habitats. Trees and shrubs can also add value to your home while improving environmental health to your property.

Wildflower Plant Pack, Perennial Plant Pack and a custom Suburban Conservation Pack with the largest stock we’ve ever offered.

Orders must be received by March 17th for distribution on April 22nd and 23rd from 9 am to 6 pm. Overstock sale will be held on April 24th from 10:00 a.m.– 1:00 p.m. or until we sell out.



View our Tree & Shrub Program Catalog on the web!

www.monroecountyswcd.org

Please call the district if you would like a hard copy sent to you.

New this year are the: Balsam Fir, Northern Red Pine, Darrow Blackberry, American Chestnut, White Oak and several variety packets. There are now nine multi-packs offered by the District. New selections include: Songbird Tree & Shrub Pack,

American Chestnut Tree now offered by the District

The District would like to profile an interesting tree that will be making its début in the spring 2010 Tree and Shrub sale. The American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) is a large, deciduous tree from the Beech family that is native to eastern North America. At one time the American chestnut was one of the most prolific and important hardwood timber and cash crop trees in it’s historical range. In the early 1900’s the species was devastated by the chestnut blight, a fungal disease caused by an Asian bark fungus that was introduced into North America on imported Asiatic chestnut trees. Now the American chestnut, a tree that once spread across 200 million acres of the Appalachian region and made up around 25% of the central range forest cover, is now nearly nonexistent in its native territory.

The American chestnut trees that we are offering through our Tree and Shrub Program have been attained through the American Chestnut Foundation (www.acf.org), a not-for profit-organization that through research and breeding, seeks to restore the American chestnut tree to its native range. The American Chestnut Foundation breeds surviving American chestnuts, which have shown some native resistance to blight, in an attempt to create a strain of blight-resistant chestnut trees. The 2-year old trees that we will be offering in our sale are 8-14” seedlings and are not blight resistant since there is not yet a blight resistant American chestnut seed or tree available to the public. Ideally, your seedling will mature to produce abundant delicious nuts for people and wildlife in 7-10 years, and will possibly live on for another 10-30 years before becoming blighted. It is also possible that the tree will succumb to blight at a much earlier age. With proper care and maintenance, you can grow a nut bearing American chestnut tree up to 30 feet in height and 5-6” in diameter. Planting this tree will be help preserve the pure genetic strain of American chestnut and may also help this species reproduce enough to adapt and evolve to eventually become blight resistant.

District Deadlines:

- Feb. 22** - Deadline for Soil Group Worksheet Requests
- March 17** - Tree & Shrub Order Forms due
- April 22 & 23**– Pick-up for ordered trees
- April 24th** - Tree and Shrub Overstock Sale from 10:00am-1:00pm

Save a Tree! Get your newsletter Electronically!

The ‘Electronic’ Dirt

Sign up to receive an email link to each new issue, rather than a hardcopy in the mail. By becoming a “paper-free” subscriber, you will conserve natural resources and lower the District’s operating expenses. Send us an email with “Newsletter” as the subject.

Newsletter@monroecountyswcd.org
Please include your name and Email address in your message.

NEW 2010 TREE AND SHRUB SPECIES OFFERINGS

Each year the District receives many comments and requests for additional species to be offered in our annual tree and shrub program. This year the District has added several new native species in response to these request. We have added two very popular conifers: Balsam Fir and Red Pine; two small fruiting shrubs: Darrow Blackberry and American Witch-hazel; two hardwoods: American Chestnut and White Oak; and four new plant packs: the Perennial Plant Pack, the Songbird Tree & Shrub Pack, the Suburban Conservation Tree & Shrub Pack, and the Wildflower Plant Pack. The new tree and shrub species offered this year are:

American Chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) has a rapid growth rate, up to 115 feet and prefers sandy, acidic soils with full sunlight. This species once covered over 200 million acres of the east coast, but has been devastated by American chestnut blight. See the front page of this newsletter for more information.

Balsam fir (*Abies balsamea*) is a slow growing conifer, up to 60 feet tall and is primarily used for Christmas trees, lumber, and wildlife habitat. This native species, grows in most soils and is shade tolerant.

Red Pine (*Pinus resinosa*) grows very rapidly, up to 80 feet tall. This species is primarily used for lumber, but is also used for Christmas trees, wildlife habitat and windbreaks. This native species prefers well drained, dry, highly acidic, sandy soils with full sun.

Darrow Blackberry (*Rubus darrow*) is a fruiting shrub with a moderate growth rate, up to 5 feet. This native species prefers moist to well-drained, sandy loam soils with full sun. It produces large blackberries, some over 1 inch in diameter that are very tasty for both wildlife and human consumption.

American Witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) has a slow growth rate, up to 20 feet. This shrub makes a great windbreak and provides habitat for wildlife. This native species prefers moist soils and partial shade to full sun, and will tolerate brief drought conditions.

White Oak (*Quercus alba*) has a slow growth rate, up to 100 feet and prefers deep, moist, well-drained, slightly acidic soils with partial to full sunlight. This native species produces oval acorns, which are an important food resource for wildlife.

NEW 2010 Plant Packs

The Plant Packs are composed of five different species of trees, shrubs, and/or wildflowers, offering the customer a variety of plants. Plant packs contain 10 plants with two of each species, and are great for those customers who may not want 10 plants of a single species. More information on the Plant Packs being offered this year can be found in our Tree and Shrub Catalog at the web address at the bottom of this page. The new plant packs offered this year are:

The Songbird Tree & Shrub Pack includes trees and shrubs that bear fruit that backyard birds and songbirds commonly consume. This plant pack includes **American Cranberry** (*Viburnum trilobum*), **American Bittersweet** (*Celastrus scandens*), **Elderberry** (*Sambucus canadensis*), **Sassafras** (*Sassafras albidum*), and **American Witch-hazel** (*Hamamelis virginiana*). All of these native trees and shrubs bear fruit in the fall.

The Suburban Conservation Tree & Shrub Pack is the largest sized plants ever offered by the District; all species are 24-36 inches in height. This pack will provide an instant landscape for the suburban conservationist aiming to attract wildlife to their yard. This variety pack includes **Douglas Fir** (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), **Northern Red Oak** (*Quercus rubra*), **White Flowering Dogwood** (*Cornus florida*), **Spicebush** (*Lindera benzoin*), and **Ninebark** (*Physocarpus opulifolius*). All of these species are native.

The Perennial Plant Pack contains a variety of daylilies, irises, and sedums. Included are: **Alice in Wonderland Daylily** (*Hemerocallis*), **Christmas Carol Daylily** (*Hemerocallis*), **Blue King Iris** (*Iridaceae iris sibirica*), **Snow Queen Iris** (*Iridaceae iris sibirica*), **Autumn Joy Sedum** (*Sedum spectabile*)

The Wildflower Plant Pack contains a variety of wildflowers which include: **Black-Eyed Susan** (*Rudbeckia hirta*), **Blazing Star** (*Liatris spicata*), **Bluebells** (*Mertensia virginica*), **Red Trillium** (*Trillium erectum*), and **False Solomon's Seal** (*Smilacina racemosa*)

Please see our online catalog for more information: www.monroecountyswcd.org

DISTRICT RECEIVES GRANT AWARD FOR STREAM WORK

The Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded \$30,000 in grant funds from the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control to stabilize 125 feet of streambank on Black Creek in the Town of Chili. The District will partner with the Town of Chili Highway Department to complete the project which includes a geomorphic assessment, permit applications, and construction oversight during implementation. It is estimated that the site loses approximately 27 tons of soil per year due to streambank erosion which is a known pollutant source impairing aquatic life and has stressed Black Creek for aesthetics and recreation. The severe erosion is also causing a significant threat to the adjacent roadway. Soft armoring techniques will be used to stabilize the bank and will provide protection for the roadway and reduce sediment loss to the Black Creek and ultimately to the Genesee River Watershed.



DISTRICT WELCOMES NEW TECHNICIAN



The District would like to welcome its newest staff member, Tucker Kautz. Tucker received a B.S. degree in Geography from SUNY Oneonta in the spring of 2008. Upon graduation, he moved to Massachusetts to work as a Dig Safe Field Technician. Tucker grew up on a dairy farm in Schuyler County, and will be putting his agricultural and environmental background to work administering the District's Agricultural Environmental Management program, as well as offering other planning and technical assistance to the farmers in Monroe County.

2009 CONSERVATION FIELD DAYS EVENT A SUCCESS

The Conservation District hosted the 21st annual Conservation Field Days event in Ellison Park on September 22nd, 23rd and 24th. Fifteen area schools registered for the event with approximately 1400 students in attendance.

The Conservation Field Days concept is simple; bring together a student's excitement for the outdoors, environmental professionals willing to share their expertise, and a casual "fair-like" structure for them to share information. The goal of this event is to teach students about important environmental issues while having fun in one of our most beautiful area parks.

Guest presenters included: the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, General Motors, League of Women Voters, Monroe County Farm Bureau, the Monroe County Parks Department, the Monroe County Department of Environmental Services, the Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, Broccoli Tree and Lawn Care, Friends of Ganondagan,

Green Village Consulting, the University of Rochester and staff from the Soil & Water Conservation District. The District appreciates the continued support we've received from the Monroe County Parks Dept. and Wegmans to help keep this program available to our area schools.



Reduce, Reuse, Recycle presented by
Monroe County Department of Environmental Services

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The **2010 Envirothon** competition will be May 13th, 2010. Please call our office if you are interested in volunteering!


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This newsletter is published quarterly by the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District and is available at no cost to interested landowners, land users, and to the general public. If you would like to receive our newsletter, call us with your mailing address or view it online at www.monroecountyswcd.org. Programs and services offered through the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District are made possible through the financial support of the USDA NRCS, County of Monroe, State of New York, specialized grant opportunities, and fundraising programs. All NRCS & SWCD programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, political beliefs, religion, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. Our Board of Director meetings are open to the public; please call for information.

2010 Stormwater Trainings Available

The MCSWCD will be offering several NYS DEC endorsed 4 hour contractor/developer trainings in 2010 to satisfy the New SPDES General Permit for Construction Activity. Training is for Qualified Inspectors and Trained Individuals. Please check the district website for upcoming trainings! www.monroecountyswcd.org

Agricultural Assessments

What is an Agricultural Assessment? NYS law provides a local mechanism for protecting and promoting availability of land for farming purposes, and provides tax benefits by limiting farmland assessment values. By applying and qualifying for an agricultural assessment, farmers can receive a reduction in land taxes.

- Generally, the property must be 10+ acres (<7 acres must earn \$50,000+)
- Land must be used for the production of crops within last two years
- Annual gross sales of agricultural products must average \$10,000+
- Equine: must be 10+ acres, board 10+ horses, and generate \$10,000+ in boarding fees

What is the process? Landowner's should contact their Town Assessor or the Soil and Water Conservation District to discuss eligibility requirements. If the property appears to qualify, a Soil Group Worksheet Request form per assessment should be submitted to the district by **February 22nd**. The cost is \$35.00.

****More information and Ag Assessment Request Form available @**
www.monroecountyswcd.org