

THE CONSERVATION CONNECTION

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

District's Annual Tree & Shrub Program Begins!

Winter is here and so is the start of the Conservation District's annual tree and shrub sale! It's time to think of what species of trees, shrubs, groundcovers, and other plants you'd like to plant this spring! The District's tree and shrub program has sold hundreds of thousands of bare root seedlings over the years and this year the program is back with three new species and a new variety pack.

The District sells bare root tree and shrub seedlings to homeowners at a very low price and offers coniferous and deciduous trees, shrubs and many different variety packs. The variety packs provide the suburban homeowner with five different species of plants, two per species, perfect for an ecologically diverse ecosystem in your yard! The District's Tree and Shrub Catalog has a detailed description of each species that is offered. To view the catalog visit our website at www.monroecountyswcd.org or call us at (585)473-2120 x3 to have a hard copy mailed to you.

By planting these trees and shrubs homeowners can experience the many conservation benefits from erosion

prevention to air quality improvement. These trees and shrubs are also aesthetically pleasing and, for the nature lover, many produce flowers, fruits or nuts that can provide food for birds, insects and mammals alike.



The three new additions to the program this year include: blueberry bush, black gum and ninebark. These three species are detailed further in our featured species section on page two!

The order form for the tree and shrub program is enclosed on page 3 & 4. Order forms must be received by March 18th. Distribution will occur on April 14th and 15th from 9 am to 6 pm. The overstock sale will be on April 16th from 10 am to 1 pm. Some species might not be available at the overstock sale, therefore to ensure your preferential species is available, you must pre-order. Plant a tree for tomorrow!!!

Rain Barrels Available!!!



Rain barrels collect and store rain water from your roof so that it can be re-used during the summer months. Did you know that a rain barrel will save most homeowners about 1,300 gallons of water during the peak summer months? Collecting and using rain water protects the environment and helps save money and energy by decreasing the demand for treated tap water.

Rain barrels are easy to maintain too! The first few rain events might wash a fair amount of roof sediments, pebbles and leaves off the roof and into the rain barrel. You may need to clean off the screen to remove the pebbles, leaves, and sediments after the first few rain events. In preparation for winter, empty the rain barrel and disconnect from the gutter system to ensure that the barrel will not crack! No other maintenance is required! The 55 gallon recycled barrel has a spigot and downspout connection and is only \$43.20 Assembly is required and instructions are provided. See the District Tree and Shrub Order Form inside or call the office to order your rain barrel today!

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2011 District Deadlines & Dates

- 2-1-2011**—Design of Filtering & Infiltration SMP's Workshop
- 2-18-2011**—Soil Group Request Worksheet Deadline
- 3-1-2011**—Stormwater Design on Redevelopment Projects Workshop
- 3-18-2011**—Tree & Shrub Order forms Due
- 3-23-2011**— Annual Banquet at Glendoveer's
- 3-29-2011**—Stormwater Retrofit Planning & Design Workshop
- 4-9-2011**—Pick up the Parks Project. For information email: rloysen@monroecounty.gov
- 4-14/15-2011**— Tree and Shrub Distribution
- 5-5-2011**—Monroe County Envirothon at RIT

New Featured Tree & Shrub Species

Each year the District receives many comments and requests for additional species to be added in our annual tree and shrub program. This year the District has added several new native species in response to these requests.



* **Black Gum** (*Nyssa sylvatica*) is a native tree species with a moderate growth rate, up to 95 feet in height. This species is shade tolerant species and is primarily used for wildlife and ornamental purposes. A variety of mammals eat the fruit and its shapely crown and attractive fire red autumn foliage make this species a perfect fit in suburban areas. The seedlings are 20-40" in height! Price: \$15/10 pack; \$63/50.

* **Blueberry** (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) is a native shrub species with a moderate growth rate, up to 12 feet in height. This species is a shade tolerant and primarily used for fruit production, ornamental, and wildlife purposes. White-pinkish flowers bloom from February to June and 1/2 inch blue berries fruit from April to October. Packaged in rooted clumps, the plant should vigorously sprout new growth in the first year. Price: \$45/10 pack; \$190/50 pack

* **Ninebark** (*Physocarpus opulifolius*) is a native shrub species with a slow growth rate, up to 10 feet in height. This species prefers full sun and is primarily used for habitat & food resource for wildlife. Flowers are an excellent source of nectar, and fruits are eaten by many species of birds. Fruit is shiny, red at maturity, and in clusters of 3-5 per flower. Seedlings are 12-24" in height and are priced at \$11/10 pack; \$38/50 pack.

The District has also added a new variety pack this year, the **Ornamental Flowering Pack**. The Plant Variety Packs are composed of five different species of trees, shrubs, wildflowers and/or ferns, 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. The **Ornamental Flowering Pack** adds a variety of flowering shrubs perfect for the suburban homeowner looking to create a more aesthetically pleasing lawn. Seedlings in the pack are 18-24" in height and is the pack is priced at \$18.00 per pack. The pack contains **Forsythia** (*Forsythia x intermedia Zabel*), **Lilac** (*Syringa vulgaris*), **Serviceberry** (*Amelanchier alnifolia*), **American Cranberry** (*Viburnum opulus*), **Sargent Crabapple** (*Malus sargentii*).

For more information on these species or others that you see on the order form, please visit the Tree and Shrub Catalog on the Conservation District at www.monroecountyswcd.org or call the District at (585) 473-2120 x3 to request a hardcopy be mailed to you.

Black Creek Geomorphic Assessment Completed in August 2010



Great Lakes Basin
Program for
Soil Erosion and
Sediment Control
www.glc.org/basin

With grant funds received in 2009 by the Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control for the Genesee River Watershed Soil Erosion Control Project, the District plans to stabilize 125 feet of streambank on Black Creek in the Town of Chili in order to reduce approximately 27 tons of soil loss

per year. Sediment is listed as a known pollutant source by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation that has impaired aquatic life and stressed Black Creek for aesthetics and recreation. As part of the grant funds received, field data was collected and analyzed to understand the variables which shape the dimension, pattern, and profile of the creek. This process is known as a Geomorphic Assessment. Two major watershed areas totaling 11,000 acres were analyzed within the project area and evaluated by cover type, land use, and by soil type using aerial photography. Field data was collected at the site such as conducting a pebble count to verify streambed features, using a total station to survey the streambank and bed along several cross-sections of the project area to determine the creek width to depth ratio, using a total station to survey a longitudinal profile to establish the gradient of the creek, and conducting a bank erosion hazard index (BEHI) survey. BEHI is used to quantify the potential for the bank to further erode by looking at the bank height ratio, bank angle, vegetation root depth and density, bank protection present, and bank materials. All data collected was analyzed to evaluate the existing channel conditions to provide a basis for choosing a best management practice to implement on the site.



District Technicians Bob Kiley (left) and Tucker Kautz (right) conducting a total station survey on Black Creek

BMP Spotlight — Winter Cover Cropping

Winter Cover cropping is an efficient way for farmers to protect and enhance the soil health of their cropland over the winter months while also protecting the local natural resource base. Row crops and vegetables have the potential to leave a significant amount of soil exposed after harvest. Once the ground cover has been removed, and the root mass that has held the soil in place dies off, the topsoil becomes highly susceptible to erosion; Late fall and early spring rain events, as well as winter thaws, have the potential to wash valuable topsoil off of the exposed cropland, depleting the soil of nutrients and potentially adding pollutants to the local watershed. Planting a cover crop immediately after the harvest of the row crops and vegetables allows a farmer to effectively stabilize the soil. Cover crops can actually improve soil structure by promoting year round biological activity in your topsoil, adding organic matter as they are incorporated into the soil, and improving soil aggregation. Cover crops can also reduce compaction and improve water infiltration in cropland.

Benefits of Cover Cropping

- *Protecting topsoil from erosion
- *Improving soil aggregate stability
- *Reducing compaction
- *Adding active organic matter to soil
- *Fixing nitrogen
- *Suppressing soil diseases and pests



Tillage radishes being used as a Winter Cover Crop

The optimum time period to plant most winter cover crops is between early September and mid October. After October 15, it is unlikely that the crop will establish an effective biomass groundcover. Common winter cover crops used in the northeast include winter wheat, ryegrass, and more recently, forage radishes. Forage radishes are not a particularly winter hardy cover crop, but when planted in the fall they do create an effective biomass groundcover even after they die off, and the large roots do a great job of breaking up compacted soil.



Corn Fields leave a large portion of soil exposed after harvest leading to the potential for severe soil erosion.



AGRICULTURAL ASSESSMENTS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is an Agricultural Assessment? A local mechanism that provides reduced property tax bills for land in agricultural production by reducing the assessment of such lands based on the soil's agricultural assessment value.

What Land is Considered "Agricultural Land"? Land that is considered agricultural lands include: croplands, farm woodlands, pastures, orchards, vineyards, sugarbush, support lands, and crop acreage either set aside or retired under Federal supply management or soil conservation programs.

Can Rented Land Qualify? Yes! Land rented for agricultural purposes may receive an assessment if eligible.

Are Horse Boarding Operations eligible? Yes if the operation is: supported by not less than 7 acres, in the preceding two years has produced annual gross receipts of \$10,000 or more, and boards at least ten horses regardless of ownership, and is not primarily used for horse racing.

What is the process? Landowner's should contact their Town Assessor or the District to discuss eligibility. If the property appears to qualify, a Soil Group Worksheet Request form per assessment should be submitted to the District by **February 18, 2011**. The cost is \$40.00. Worksheet forms can be obtained at:

http://www.monroecountyswd.org/Soil_%20Group_%20Request_%20Form.pdf

NYS-DEC ENDORSED EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL TRAININGS IN 2011

Monroe County Soil and Water Conservation District will be offering the NYS-DEC Endorsed 4 Hour Erosion and Sediment Control Training in February and March of 2011. This training is required for all contractors involved in soil disturbing activities and was required by May of 2010.



Date	Time	Location
February 27th, 2011	12:30PM-4:30PM	Penfield Town Hall, Main Auditorium located at 3100 Atlantic Ave. Penfield, NY 14526
March 10th, 2011	12:30PM-4:30PM	Brighton Town Hall, Main Auditorium located at 2300 Elmwood Ave. Rochester, NY 14618

Monroe County Soil & Water

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District to Offer Review Courses and Exams for CPESC, CPSWQ, and CMS4s in 2011

The District will be holding exam review courses for all three stormwater program related certifications below. **The exams for all three courses will be held on 7-12-2011.** For more information please contact the District.

CPESC Exam Review Course—6-3-2011— A Certified Professional in Erosion and Sediment Control is recognized by NYS-DEC as being a Qualified Professional in the General Permit GP-0-10-001, Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activity. This designation allows an individual to design erosion and sediment control plans as part of the stormwater pollutant prevention plan and conduct the weekly SPDES compliance inspection for the permittee as required by the permit. Please refer to the exam website for more information. <http://cpesc.org>

CMS4s Exam Review Course—6-15-2011— The Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System programs are getting increasingly more complex in their administrative and technical responsibilities. The Certified MS4 Specialist is expected to be knowledgeable on rules and regulations, pollutants in water resources, the six minimum measures required under the federal baseline general permit, and program management and documentation. Other responsibilities often include audits and evaluation. Please refer to the exam website for more information. www.cms4s.org

CPSWQ Exam Review Course—6-28-2011— A Certified Professional in Stormwater Quality is expected to have knowledge of water resources, have the ability to assess the impacts of urbanization and pollutants on those resources, have the knowledge of watershed planning and stream corridor management concepts, and have the skill to utilize common runoff estimation techniques to evaluate water quality and quantity impacts from land use changes. Please refer to the exam website for more information. www.cpswq.org