Tree of the Quarter: Golden Currant (*Ribes aureum*) is a native shrub found throughout most of the United States. A deciduous plant, the Golden Currant will grow from 6 to 9 feet tall, becoming leggy with age. While the plant will thrive in full sun, it will also grow well in up to 50% shade, making it a good choice for filling out existing tree rows or in a shady yard. Leaves have 3 or 5 lobes, and turn a wonderful shade of red in the autumn. In the spring, clusters of beautiful golden yellow flowers form, and emit a fragrance similar to that of cloves or vanilla. Golden Currants often produce copious amounts of fruit, which turn black when ripe. They are delicious eaten fresh, and can also be processed into jams, jelly or wine. Golden Currant grows well in all areas of Cass County, and are a particularly good choice for drier upland sites. If fruit production is desired, late winter pruning of older branches will stimulate new growth and fruit production. While not a huge concern in Cass County, Golden Currant are an alternative host to White Pine Blister Rust. In areas containing White Pine, it is not advised to plant Golden Currant.

Ladies Ag Night 2018

The District held its annual Ladies Ag Night on March 15th at the Fargo Air Museum. We hold the annual event to help celebrate the area’s women’s role in agriculture. Dr. Adnan Akyuz, North Dakota State Climatologist, was the keynote speaker. He gave a rollicking talk on the climate of North Dakota. Over 140 people attended the event, which was catered by One-on-One Catering of Fargo. LeAnn Strittmatter of Valley City made four delicious flavors of cupcakes. Centerpieces of hand-crafted goat’s milk soap from Glimpse of the Prairie added a touch of homespun whimsy to each table. As always, the raffle items were a hit, and the lucky winners went home with beautiful baskets. We would like to thank everyone who attended, and are already looking forward to next year!

Tree Planting Season is Here!

Spring is here! That means the District will be receiving our tree order from the nurseries. Our equipment and crews are ready to go, so we request planting customers have their site prepped and ready to be planted. Cultivating the site is imperative to a successful planting, as an adequate seedbed allows for good soil-to-root contact. Work on the front end of the planting goes a long way in ensuring a long lasting, beautiful planting.

The District would like to thank Dan Iwen and Barry Rupprecht for returning for their 14th planting season and Adam Breske for his third season. Their hard work contributes to our success every year.
Gardening with Fabric

Planting and tending a garden is a relaxing and rewarding endeavor. However, we all have busy lives, and it’s demoralizing to be away from a garden for a few days and discover that weeds have completely taken over the plot. During dry spells, it seems like the weeds thrive while the crops wilt. The use of landscape fabric can help alleviate these concerns. When planting individual plants such as tomatoes or peppers, a hole can be cut in the fabric to plant each vegetable. For row crops such as spinach or lettuce, the rows can be cut in the fabric and the seed placed in the soil. The fabric will suppress weed growth and also help conserve moisture. Fresh vegetables from the garden on a beautiful summer day are hard to beat, and with the use of landscape fabric, even today’s harried homeowner can enjoy a garden. Rolls of high quality, long-lasting fabric 6 feet wide by 500 feet long are available from the SCD, as well as steel landscape staples.

Prairie Planter

We are excited to announce a partnership between the Cass County SCD and the United Prairie Foundation. Not everyone has access to acres of land to plant native grasses and forbs, but still want to appreciate the beauty of native plants. A Prairie Planter is an easy-to-establish container that contains beautiful prairie grasses and forbs. The Prairie Planter will lend a splash of native prairie beauty to any home or business, as well as helping to educate our friends and neighbors on the importance of native prairie. Order forms can be found on our website, the online Tree Store or by calling 701-282-2157 ext. 3.

Conservation Quote of the Quarter:

“One swallow does not make a summer, but one skein of geese, cleaving the murk of March thaw, is the SPRING.”

Aldo Leopold

Upcoming Events

March 27th—Pollinator Workshop: Moorhead, MN
April 17th—Board Meeting: Fargo Field Office
April 24th, May 9th, May 21—Make a Rain Barrel Workshop: Various Locations
May 1st, 16th, 31st—Make a Compost Tumbler Workshop: Various Locations
May 15th—Board Meeting: Fargo Field Office,
May 28th—Memorial Day: Office Closed
June 19th—Board Meeting: Fargo Field Office

http://cassscd.org

Check us out on Facebook!
**Living Ag Classroom 2018**

The SCD participated in the annual Living Ag Classroom at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds. Nearly 2,400 fourth grade students from around Cass County attended over 4 days. District staff demonstrated wind and water erosion by using containers of cover crop. The cover crop was grown in the office over the winter. With a growing number of children lacking the exposure to agriculture and the environment, events like the Living Ag Classroom allow them to gain hands-on experience and knowledge of our ag heritage. We always enjoy educating youth on the importance of conservation in our modern world.

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**Conservation Farming Workshop**

We hosted a Conservation Farming Workshop on February 28th at Hagge’s Bar in Mapleton. Nick Vinje, a Cass County farmer, spoke on his experiences with no-till systems, cover crops and grazing. Jeremy Wilson, a farmer from Stutsman County, discussed his extensive experience in interseeding cover crops. Scott Davis, salesman from Agassiz Seed & Supply, lent his expert advice on cover crop species and varieties. Over 50 people attended the event, and listened in rapt attention as they digested the large volume of information presented. Conservation farming is not an exact science, and the sharing of information by farmers is the best way to learn how to implement these practices on any operation.

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**New Seeding Rates!**

Demand for custom seeding is increasing, and we have responded! By trading off our 15’ Great Plains No-Till drill for a 30’ Great Plains No-Till drill, we’ve doubled our ability to seed grass, cover crops, alfalfa, and pasture mixes. In addition, for plantings over 80 acres in size, the price has been reduced to $10 per acre! This price includes tractor, driver, drill and fuel. The only other cost is seed. Give us a call today to schedule your planting!

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**District Staff**

Jeffrey Miller—Operations Coordinator  
Tony Peterson—District Technician  
Eric Dahl—Watershed Coordinator  
Amy Cole—District Clerk  
Ashley Fisk—Urban Conservationist

**NRCS Staff**

Josh Monson—District Conservationist  
Matt Shappell—Soil Conservationist  
Lucas Schmiesing—Soil Conservationist  
Matt Waclawik—Wetlands Specialist  
Blake Johnson—Agriculture Engineer

**District Supervisors**

Terry Hoffmann—Wheatland  
Brad Kellerman—West Fargo  
Curt Knutson—Page  
Brooks Whitmore—Page  
Warren Solberg—Horace
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