Tree of the Quarter: Scotch Pine (Pinus sylvestris L.) is a coniferous tree native to Eurasia. It grows to over 100 feet tall in its native habitat, but 50 feet tall is more common in North Dakota. The bark is thick and scaly, with a dark brown color near the bottom of the tree, thinning out near the top. The bark becomes orange and flaky up the tree towards the top. Needles are generally 1 to 2 inches long and green, but can be twice as long on vigorous young trees. Scotch Pine provide good thermal habitat for wildlife and act as excellent snow catches in living snow fences. In the heavier soils of Cass County, the Scotch Pine is doing the best of all conifers in tree plantings. Bundles in increments of 5 can be purchased from the online tree store.

Mark your Calendars!

The annual Cass County Soil Conservation District’s Ladies Ag night will be held on Thursday, March 9th at Hagge’s Bar and Grill in Mapleton, North Dakota. Join us for a fun and exciting night celebrating women in agriculture. We are bringing back the Raffle Baskets, along with door prizes. A delicious meal will be served, along with cupcakes for dessert. Our speakers for the evening will be Greg and Lisa Cook, owners of 4e Winery near Casselton. They will discuss grape growing and wine making. In addition, there will be some wine sampling, for those who wish to have a taste of some wonderful local wine. It will be a great evening to celebrate women in agriculture. Please RSVP by calling 701-282-2157 ext 3 or by emailing Amy at amy.cole@nd.nacdnet.net. We hope to see you there!

CRP Signup

Are you a producer or landowner thinking of enrolling in the Conservation Reserve Program? If you are, you need to visit the office as soon as possible. Nationally, the acreage cap is close to being met. Stop by soon to complete an application.

http://cassscd.org

Check us out on Facebook!
The District worked closely with our partners NRCS and FSA in setting up CRP, EQIP, and CSP contracts that involved either tree plantings or grass plantings. We would like to thank all the cooperators in the county for giving the District the opportunity to apply conservation to their land. The District assisted these cooperators in planting 240,000 LF of trees and installed 201,000 LF of weed barrier. Almost 61,000 trees were planted in Cass County in 2016.

Our Eco-Ed outdoor educational program was held at Brewer Lake in September. 71 students from Maple Valley School and Oak Grove Lutheran School enjoyed the beautiful weather while rotating through the five stations: Water Quality, Woodlands, Prairie, Wetlands, and Soils. The Red River Zoo gave a presentation with a snake, hawk and porcupine.

Maple River Watershed Project Phase II (Buffalo Creek) is open for sign-up and we are continuously accepting cost-share applications for management practices in the Buffalo Creek Watershed. Practices include livestock management, cover crop, grass and tree establishment, septic system renovations, and more. The Buffalo Creek Watershed Project is off to a good start and several producers have been signing up and showing interest in the project. Other new developments include a large scale no-till demonstration farm located near Gardner, and a cover crop demonstration plot near Embden. These demo plots are sponsored by the 319 Watershed Project and the Cass County SCD. We will be holding field tours again at both sites in 2017 and hope to see you there!

The Urban Conservation program has been expanding this year. We took on many great projects throughout our community and held several community educational workshops including the construction of rain barrels and compost tumblers, pallet gardens and straw bale gardens. The Pocket Prairie Initiative has generated a lot of interest, and will continue to expand in 2017. Many events were attended throughout summer including the Fargo Police Picnic, Midwest Kidfest, and the 4th grade Water Festival.

In celebration of Arbor Day and Earth Week, the District, with its many community partners including Fargo Forestry, Fargo Park District, and River Keepers, hosted two community events. The “Plant it For the Planet” was held at the Red River Zoo. The “Reforest the Red” event allowed community residents to participate in tree planting along the Red River to enhance the riparian forest. Both events were well attended and are planned again for 2017.

In March, the District held the annual Ladies Ag Night at St. Leo’s Church in Casselton. The event featured Dr. Val Farmer as the keynote speaker. Ladies Ag Night is a special event to show appreciation for all the ladies that are involved with agriculture in Cass County.

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The District participated in the Ag in the Classroom program which was held at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds. This event educates approximately 2000 Cass County 4th graders on various agriculture and conservation practices.

We had a booth at the Home and Garden Show at the Fargodome. During this event, we get a chance to meet new people and tell them about the many services the District has to offer.

We had a booth at the Big Iron Farm Show. Big Iron gives us a great opportunity to discuss soil conservation with the producers that stop by the booth. During the show we also displayed our tree planting equipment at our shop, which is located on the Red River Valley Fairgrounds.

The District was featured on Prairie Public’s Main Street radio show in January. Staff discussed the Urban Conservation program with host Doug Hamilton.

All in all, it was a very productive and busy year. We look forward to working with producers and organizations to help Cass County continue to make strides in conservation!

“If a healthy soil is full of death, it is also full of life: worms, fungi, microorganisms of all kinds ... Given only the health of the soil, nothing that dies is dead for very long.”  Wendell Berry
**Conservation Quote of the Quarter:**

“A prosperous and enduring agriculture depends on an adequate supply of productive land, properly used and so protected from erosion that it will remain permanently productive.”

*Hugh Hammond Bennett, founder of the Soil Conservation Service*

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**Eco-Ed 2017**

The Cass County SCD hosted 71 students from Oak Grove and Maple Valley at the Brewer Lake Campground on September 29th. We were lucky to have a beautiful autumn day. Enthusiastic 7th and 8th graders were treated to informative demonstrations from Josh Monson (Prairie), Keith Anderson (Soils), and Paul Flahave (Wetlands) from the NRCS and Tony Peterson (Trees) and Eric Dahl (Water Quality) from the SCD. A delicious lunch was enjoyed, followed by a presentation by the Red River Zoo’s Erica Prokrym and Wendy Trottier. They brought a porcupine, snake, and a hawk. The crowd loved it! Everyone had a great time, and we are already looking forward to 2017!

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**Coffee House Tour**

The Cass County SCD is excited to announce a Conservation Coffee House Tour. We will be attending cafes and restaurants all over Cass County throughout the winter to help facilitate direct discussions with interested producers about conservation on their operations. There is room for conservation on every farm, and we will be working with interested landowners to find the place for it in their operation. Keep an eye out at your local cafe, as it’s very likely we will see you there this winter.

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**Annual Spring FSA Reminders**

If your bank account information has changed, please let the NRCS office know. Incorrect information will delay your payments.

If you are adding or losing land, please contact the FSA and NRCS office so we can update our records.

If you have a new contract, please do not start any practices prior to the contract being funded.

Prior to installation of any practices that are currently in a contract, please contact the NRCS Field Office staff to make sure the design is complete.

If you have any program questions or would like more information on programs available through the NRCS office, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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**Upcoming Events**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 16th</td>
<td>Martin Luther King Day</td>
<td>Office Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 17th</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
<td>Fargo Field Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 20th</td>
<td>President’s Day</td>
<td>Office Closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 21st</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
<td>Fargo Field Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 24-26th</td>
<td>Home and Garden Show</td>
<td>Fargodome</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 28-March 3rd</td>
<td>Ag in the Classroom</td>
<td>RRVF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 21st</td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
<td>Fargo Field Office</td>
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<td>March 9th</td>
<td>Ladies Ag Night</td>
<td>Hagge’s Bar and Grill</td>
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Did you know that the Cass County SCD maintains an arboretum in the county? Located on the south side of Brewer Lake in Erie Township, the Arboretum was established in 1990 to act as an outdoor classroom for the citizens of Cass County. Thirty five species of trees and shrubs commonly planted in Cass County have been established in separate rows. In addition, an area has been planted with native prairie grasses. The SCD has been actively managing the site, including grass mowing, removing dead trees and shrubs, and replanting new tree and shrubs. In 2016, a row of dead Juneberry was removed and replaced with Black Chokeberry. A row of dead Black Ash was removed and replaced with Paper Birch. In the fall, a row of dead Harbin Pear was removed, and will be replaced with Prairie Yellow Apple in the spring of 2017.

The Brewer Lake Centennial Arboretum is sponsored by the North Dakota Game & Fish Department (NDG&F), Cass County Park Board, Cass County Soil Conservation District (CCSCD), Cass County Park board, Cass County Extension Service, Cass County Weed Board, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The Arboretum provides an excellent opportunity for producers and landowners to see what the trees and shrubs will look like as they grow and mature. It also provides a great opportunity for an outdoor classroom for local schools. The SCD can even arrange for self-guided tour information if a group would wish to learn more.

Casoron Application

How do you control the weeds on your tree plantings without fabric? How can you keep weeds from growing through the tree holes in your fabric? Weeding can be time consumptive and feel like it never ends. We offer a service for Casoron 4G granular pesticide application. Casoron is a pre-emergent chemical that will keep the area weed free for the growing season. Applications cannot occur on trees less than 8 months old, and must be applied during the winter or very early spring, as ground temperatures exceeding 50 degrees activate the chemical. If this occurs too early, the effectiveness of the pesticide is greatly reduced. If you would like to reduce the work of weeding your trees, either in the row or the weeds growing up with the trees in the fabric hole, give the Cass County SCD a call this winter and we can help. Our current rate is $15 per 100 feet of trees, which includes application and chemical.
We often get questions on the conservation grade fruit trees we sell. Below are some thoughts on each species of tree we offer for sale and plantings.

**Highbush Cranberry**—Not a true cranberry, this tall shrub grows well in moist areas. The fruit is similar in appearance and taste as true cranberries. Fall color is excellent. Highbush cranberry may fruit in 3-5 years.

**McDermont Pear**—Among the hardiest of the pears, this small tree grows well in clay loam to sandy loam soils. The fruit is hard and small, being more conducive to wildlife than human consumption. Variable fruiting rates, may have fruit in 3-8 years.

**Buffaloberry**—Will form tall, thorny thickets that are excellent for wildlife. Small berries are excellent in jams and jellies, but are only good fresh after a frost has sweetened them. Fruit may occur in 2-4 years.

**Nanking Cherry**—Relatively short statured plant, nanking cherry prefers loamy soils. Small red cherries grow in profusion and are excellent fresh or processed into jams or jellies. Nanking cherry may produce fruit in 1-2 years in good conditions.

**Sand Cherry**—Sand cherry are short shrubs that grow well in well-drained soils. The fruit is dark colored and astringent, and suitable for processing into jams and jellies. Should set fruit in 2-3 years after planting.

**Black Chokeberry**—Also known as the Aronia berry, this is a very hardy shrub with a wonderful fall color. Fruit is blueberry sized, and astringent when eaten fresh. It makes excellent jam, jelly and wine. Black chokeberry may produce fruit in 2-3 years.

**Golden Currant**—A relatively short, leggy shrub, golden currant produce beautiful yellow flowers. The fruit is relatively small, and is mild enough to eat fresh, and excellent processed into jams and jellies. Golden currant should produce fruit in 2-3 years.

**Hazelnut**—A shrub, it grows from 6-9 feet tall. Nuts should appear in 3-5 years, but they are a favorite chipmunks and other wildlife. Diligence is required to harvest any before wildlife eat them.

**Juneberry**—Juneberry fruit is excellent for fresh eating and preservation. The shrub grows from 6-15 feet, and is a slow grower. Can be difficult to grow in Cass County. Should start to fruit in 3-5 years.

**Seaberry**—Seaberry size varies widely, from 8-15 feet tall. Bright orange fruit may develop in 2-4 years. Fruit is very tart with a tough skin and requires processing for consumption.

**Prairie Yellow Apple**—Cold hardy apple tree which produces yellow, mild tasting apples. Requires another apple tree for pollination. May fruit in 2-6 years. Not grafted.

**Pin Cherry**—Deciduous tree that can grow to 30 feet tall. Very small, tart cherries that are best in jams and jellies will should develop in 2-4 years.

**Chokecherry**—This small tree or large shrub, growing from 12-25 feet tall, produces small berry-like fruits with large seeds. Astringent when fresh, processing into jams, jellies and wines is recommended. Should have fruit in 2-4 years.

**Dolgo Crabapple**—A small tree growing to 20 feet tall, the Dolgo crabapple produces the largest and best tasting fresh apples of the crab family, approximately the size of a plum. It is a very hardy tree that will should start to produce fruit in 3-5 years.

**Red Splendor, Midwest and Siberian Crabapple**—These trees are commonly planted as windbreak or landscaping trees. They produce very small apples that can be made into jams and jellies, but are better suited for their beauty during bloom in the spring and for wildlife value.

**American Plum**—Tall shrubs which may grow to 10 feet tall, American Plum forms dense thickets when mature. Plums are approximately the size of a 50 cent piece, with a stone in the middle and moderately thick skin. Sweet enough to enjoy fresh, they also make excellent jams, jellies and wine. Will fruit in 3-8 years. Requires multiple trees for pollination.

**Hardy Apricot**—A fast growing small tree, the Hardy Apricot is a beautiful tree with limited fruit. Some trees may develop fruit in 3-8 years and some never fruit. Plant for visible appeal and don’t rely on fruit.
All programs and services of the Cass County Soil Conservation District are offered on a non-discriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or handicap. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.