

Cass County Soil Conservation District Conservation News

FALL 2022

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Tree of the Quarter: Highbush Cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*) is a native deciduous large shrub growing to 15 feet tall and 10 feet wide. Not a true cranberry, they are a member of the honeysuckle family. The shrub prefers well-drained, rich and loamy soil in full sun to semi-shade.

White clusters of flowers appear in June. The inner part of the flowers are small with large, sterile flowers around the edge. Pollinated by both wind and insects, the plants are self-fertile. Leaves of the highbush cranberry look a little bit like maple leaves, being opposite, simple 3-lobed. However they are more wrinkled and have impressed venation. They change to yellow-red and purple-red in the fall.

The drupes of plant are very similar in appearance and taste to the true cranberry. The fruit is relished by wildlife, especially birds like grouse and turkeys. A single flat side is hidden inside the juicy bright red fruit. Eaten raw they are quite tart and unappealing but when cooked can be used in preserves, sauces, jellies and jams. Highbush cranberry seedlings can be purchased from the tree store.

Grass Seeding Season a Success!

Despite a wet spring, the drier late summer factored into both the 30-foot drill and the 7-foot drill seeding a significant amount of acres. The SCD was successful in seeding over **3,400 acres** of cover crop, Conservation Reserve Program, pastures, food plots and in-between tree rows. A variety of funding sources accounted for the plantings. Some producers paid on their own, others had CRP funding or Red River Basin Wildlife and Water Quality grant funding, while more were funded through the Pocket Prairie Initiative (PPI). If you are interested in having perennial grass, alfalfa, pasture, native prairie or cover crops planted in 2023, contact us today! There may be cost-share available! It's never too early to start planning for the future.





Something New Every Year

Every year and season brings something new. Nothing in nature is static, as this past spring proved. Living along the Sheyenne River, we watched the ice go off the river and it didn't even rise into flood stage. Just when it looked like we were in the clear, major snowstorms hit the upper basin. Even though we didn't get much more than some rain, the influx of moisture in the watershed caused the water to rise just over the banks. For four long weeks the river ran full, nearly 20 feet higher than it was earlier in the spring. We all breathed a sigh of relief when the floodwaters finally relented.

It wasn't long before things were back to normal, and on a calm, warm day in August, I was sitting high above the bank under the shade of a cottonwood, relaxing and watching the river flow. Growing amongst the prairie lilies were a number of nodding grasses. A patch of Riverbank Wild Rye had appeared, as if by magic!

Of course, it wasn't magic. The floodwaters must have carried the seed and it found the rich riverbank to their liking. For the first time in 5 years we've lived there, there was a new grass species on the land.

In nature, there is something new every year. While humans crave stability there is much to learn from nature about living with change.

Quote of the Quarter

"Fall has always been my favorite season. The time when everything bursts with its last beauty, as if nature had been saving up all year for the grand finale."

Lauren DeStefano

Upcoming Events

October 10th-**Indigenous People's Day**-Office Closed
October 11th-**Board Meeting**-Fargo Field Office
November 8th-**Board Meeting**-Fargo Field Office
November 20-22-**Annual Meeting**-Zoom Meetings
November 24th-**Thanksgiving Day**-Office Closed
December 13th-**Board Meeting**-Office Closed
December 26th-**Christmas Day Observed**-Office Closed

Education and Outreach Abounds!



The SCD is busy this fall bringing environmental education to a wide variety of audiences. We demonstrated the stream table at the annual Riverkeeper's Water Festival, had a booth at the NRCS All Employee meeting in Bismarck, worked with Tyler Zimmerman and Chris Walberg to put on a tour on no-till and cattle grazing, had our annual Eco-Ed at Brewer Lake, and worked with Central Cass and the Casselton Fire Department to put on a prescribed burn on the demonstration prairie near the school in Casselton.



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