

CONSERVATION MATTERS

A publication of the Montgomery Soil Conservation

Montgomery Soil Conservation District
18410 Muncaster Road
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2009 FARM TOUR AND HARVEST SALE



Montgomery County's agricultural heritage will be celebrated on Saturday July 25th and Sunday July 26th at the 20th Annual Farm Tour and Harvest Sale. The Farm Tour includes farms throughout the county that offer visitors a chance to spend the day in the country and learn about Montgomery's vibrant agricultural community. Shop for fresh fruits and vegetables at a "pick your own" farm, let the kids pet farm animals and enjoy the scenery of the Ag Reserve. For information call 301-590-2823 or visit: www.montgomerycountymd.gov/farmtour

SCHOOL REFORESTATION AT SANDY SPRING FRIENDS SCHOOL

The Montgomery Forestry Board helped Sandy Spring Friends School students, teachers, and parents to plant 50 native hardwood trees as part of their Earth Day celebration on April 16, 2009. Forestry Board members showed the children how to plant the trees and discussed the benefits that trees provide. When asked about these benefits, students mentioned everything from watershed protection and wildlife habitat to paper and wood products.

The project was a collaborative effort among Forestry Board members and their respective employers. PEPCO purchased the trees for the planting and provided mulch, while Stadler Nursery helped by pre-



digging holes in the compact soil around the school. The Department of Natural Resources provided the shovels and the Montgomery SCD assisted in teaching the kids about planting trees. After only a couple of hours, over 75 students had helped to establish a new forest on their school grounds.

EQUINE PASTURE MANAGEMENT SEMINAR



The Montgomery Soil Conservation District, Maryland Cooperative Extension, Montgomery County DED Agricultural Services Division, and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service are hosting a Pasture Management Seminar for everyone involved in the equine industry. The seminar will be held at the Central Maryland Research and Education Center, near Clarksville, Howard County. This University of Maryland facility has a new Equine Rotational Grazing Demonstration area that provides examples of pasture management, rotational grazing techniques, forage species selection, vegetative heavy use areas, and other conservation practices. The Pasture Management Seminar is scheduled for Tuesday August 11 5:30 pm-8:00 pm. Rain date is Thursday August 13th. Topics will focus on principles of pasture management, weed ID, fencing options, and heavy use areas.

For information on the seminar or to register please contact Beth Canetti with Maryland Cooperative Extension at 301-590-2825

PLANT INVADER OF THE MONTH: Wineberry (*Rubus phoenicolasius*)



Wineberry is originally from Japan, Korea, and China. It was introduced in the U.S. in 1890 and was used to create new cultivars of raspberries. It was sought after for its raspberry like fruit which are produced during the summer months. Wineberry can be found from New England to North Carolina and west to Michigan and Tennessee. It grows best along forest, field, stream, and wetland edges and in open woods. It prefers moist soils. Wineberry is a threat to native vegetation because it grows vigorously and crowds out native plants and can establish large patches.

The Wineberry plant can be identified by reddish, glandular hairs that cover all parts of the plant. Leaves are alternate along the stem and are divided into three heart-shaped leaflets with purple veins and toothed margins. Small green flowers with white petals and reddish hairs occur in the spring and are followed by bright red fruits in summer. Seeds are spread by animals and people. New plants can grow from arching canes that touch the ground and from root buds.

Prevention and control of Wineberry can be done by treating the canes with a systemic herbicide such as a glyphosate or triclopyr. Please consult the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension for specific information for controlling Wineberry and other invasive plants. Do not plant Wineberry in your yard. Some native alternatives to Wineberry are Common Blackberry (*Rubus allegheniensis*), Red or Black Chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*), Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), and Spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*)

Information provided by Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas published by the National Park Service (2004).

THE MARYLAND HORSE FORUM, WHERE THE HORSE INDUSTRY CHARGES FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE

Date: August 6, 2009 Time: 9:00 AM - 4:30 PM

Cost to Attend: Free, including lunch, thanks to generous sponsors.

Location: The Showplace Arena and Prince George's Equestrian Center in Upper Marlboro, MD

Who is Invited to Attend?: Any person who has an interest in the Maryland horse industry and wants to lead the industry toward a successful future. Individual invitations are being sent to over 400 Maryland equine organizations inviting their representatives to attend. If you do not receive an invitation, you are still welcome to attend but you must register ahead of time.

How to Register: Register online at <http://www.mdhorseforum.com/2.html>. Alternatively you can call the Maryland Horse Forum Registration Phone Line at 410-841-2785.

Why Should People Attend?: To help guide the future direction of the equine industry in Maryland, all stakeholders should consider participating in this forum. Only through a cooperative approach will the industry be able to define clear goals and strategies for the future. As one attendee at the 2004 Maryland Horse Forum stated "This forum is the best opportunity I've seen to create that "one voice" that government wants to hear."

SAVE THE DATE

The Annual 2009 Montgomery Soil Conservation District Cooperators Dinner will take place on Thursday, September 3, 2009. The event will be held on a farm in the Poolesville area. The evening will honor outstanding conservation for 2008, showcase conservation practices that are being implemented in Montgomery County, and include some fun outdoor activities. There will be wagon rides, pumpkin chunkin and great food will be served. The food menu includes fried chicken, pulled-pork, green beans, dinner rolls and deserts.





Montgomery Soil Conservation District 2008 Annual Report

With the county population nearing 1 million people, educating our citizens about conservation is one of the most important things the Montgomery Soil Conservation District (MSCD) can do to promote the future of agriculture.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS WITH AGRICULTURE

MSCD provides this learning experience for students in conjunction with Maryland Cooperative Extension. This three week program involves about 3000 fourth grade students, teachers, and parents. It represents a comprehensive agriculture experience for students from schools across the County. Many young people today are unaware of the benefits agriculture provides and of their responsibility to be good stewards of the land. Close Encounters with Agriculture creates a rare opportunity for these students to enjoy a hands-on learning experience, which can really have an impact on their lives. The children go home and teach their parents about the things they learned, increasing the benefits of the program even further.



With the assistance of the Farm Bureau, Master Gardeners, and local farmers, the students experience interactive programs in nutrition, production agriculture, and conservation. It is a fun day for everyone and the kids learn about topics not normally covered in their regular curriculum.

Tens of thousands of students have participated in Close Encounters with Agriculture over the years. Each child gains a better understanding of where their food comes from and how agriculture helps to protect our soil, water and other natural resources.

EQUINE SEMINARS – MSCD partnered with Maryland Cooperative Extension to continue the series of educational seminars being offered to the equestrian community. The goal of the seminar was to determine which combination of factors resulted in the most successful pasture seeding. Test plots were established in advance of the workshop using several different treatments. The results highlighted several important considerations for pasture planting:

- Proper pH and fertilization are vital to the success of the planting.
- Horses must be excluded from reseeded pastures for an extended period of time.
- Spring seeding of grasses is not as successful as fall seeding. But early spring is a good time to seed clover.
- Broadcast seeding without any method of incorporating seed is not a highly successful method of establishing pasture grasses.



AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

Planning and Implementation - Thirty-one new Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plans were developed for Montgomery County landowners to protect 2,543 acres of land. MSCD staff also worked with existing cooperators to revise 28 plans covering 3650 acres. The District continued to expand the availability of programs for the growing equestrian community. Providing cost-share programs and technical assistance to horse owners will continue to be a critical component of conservation efforts in Montgomery County.

Best Management Practices

Following is a list of the practices completed by MSCD Cooperators in 2008.

Crop Rotation	4100 Acres
Conservation Tillage	3891 Acres
Cover Crops	4028 Acres
Comprehensive Nutrient Mgmt Plans	4 Plans
Nutrient Management	5961 Acres
Integrated Pest Management	5736 Acres
Critical Area Planting	19.5 Acres
Residue Mgmt	330 Acres
Stream Crossing	1
Waste Storage Structure	2
Brush Management	50.4 Acres
Grassed Waterway	1.7 Acres
Filter Strip	17.7 Acres
Field Border	868 ft.
Forage Management	158.6 Acres
Fencing	9821 ft.
Trough/Tank	7
Pasture Hayland Planting	54.7 Acres
Prescribed Grazing	18.8 Acres
Forest Stand Improvement	38 Acres
Wildlife Upland Habitat Mgmt	203.5 Acres
Tree Planting	4 Acres
Roof Runoff Mgmt	2



Cost-Share Funding for Landowners

Leveraging private investments in conservation with government sponsored cost-share funding provides additional opportunities for landowners to implement practices that will improve water quality. Financial incentives represent an important link in the efforts to clean up our local streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

MSCD staff assisted Cooperators in securing approval of considerable cost-share funding in 2008:

Federal – Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)	\$101,000
State – MD Agricultural Cost-Share Program (MACS)	\$193,100
Cover Crop Program	<u>\$115,880</u>
	\$409,980

CONSERVATION EDUCATION PROGRAMS-The MSCD provides a variety of educational opportunities for landowners, students, and the general public. Educating the citizens of Montgomery County about agriculture and conservation is one of our most important initiatives. Some of our educational programs for 2008 are listed below:

- Envirothon-The MSCD has one of the largest county Envirothon Competitions in the state, with over 16 teams (102 students) participating in the 2008 program.



- Homeowners Drainage Issues-MSCD staff visit homeowners throughout the county that are experiencing drainage and water problems on their property. In 2008 the staff made over 59 homeowner visits to provide technical advice.
- Workshops, Fairs, and Expos-The MSCD staff also contacted thousands of constituents through their participation in the County and State Fairs, Horse Expo, the Flower and Garden Show, Arbor Day and Earth Day Events.
- Newsletter-MSCD published an issue of our Conservation Matters Newsletter, which has a circulation of about 1000. The newsletter is sent to all local and state legislators.
- Cooperators Dinner-The purpose of the MSCD Cooperators Dinner is to recognize members of the agricultural community for their contributions to conservation, and to inform legislators about conservation practices being implemented in Montgomery County. Approximately 130 people attended the event.



- MSCD Staff serve on a variety of Workgroups - Forestry Board, Horse Council, Mid Potomac Tributary Team, Montgomery Water Quality Advisory Group, Patuxent Reservoirs Watershed Protection Group, Montgomery County Conservation Corps, Regional Agricultural Workgroup, and Forest Conservation Advisory Committee.

Outreach to the Equine Community

- Collaborated on Survey of Equine Operations with UM Cooperative Extension and Montgomery County Agencies. The survey, which was mailed to over 800 horse owners, provides valuable insight into the future need for conservation and education programs.
- Conducted a survey of 950 potential horse owners in the Patuxent Watershed in conjunction with the Howard SCD. Results have led to several grant applications designed to address conservation opportunities that exist among these landowners.
- Developed and administered an Equine Fall Pasture Renovation Incentive Program to help provide assistance for horse farmers whose pastures were impacted by the 2007 drought. The funding for this program was made possible by a grant from NRCS.
- Helped coordinate an Equine Seminar focusing on Pasture Management and Renovation. Provided attendees with examples of different pasture planting techniques.

TREE PLANTING OPPORTUNITY FOR MONTGOMERY RESIDENTS

There are two tree purchase rebate programs available to Montgomery County residents that can dramatically reduce the costs associated with buying landscape trees. When combined, these two programs provide a combined \$50 rebate on a \$75 trees. There are no limits on the number of trees that can be purchased, so a landowner could buy several \$75 trees for \$25 each!

The “Leaves for Neighborhoods” program, offered by the Montgomery County Planning Department, provides a \$25 coupon when you buy a tree with a retail value of \$75 or more from a participating nursery. The goal of this program is to increase the County’s tree canopy on residential property. Details about this program are available at www.montgomeryplanning.org/leaves/

The second program, “Marylanders Plant Tree,” is administered by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. This coupon offer is part of Governor O’Malley’s Smart, Green, and Growing campaign which has a goal of planting 1 million trees by 2011. Through the Marylanders Plant Trees effort the state hopes that residents will plant 50,000 trees by 2010. This coupon is worth \$25 off the purchase of a tree with retail value of \$50 or more at participating nurseries. Information on this offer can be found at www.trees.maryland.gov/pdfs/coupon.pdf

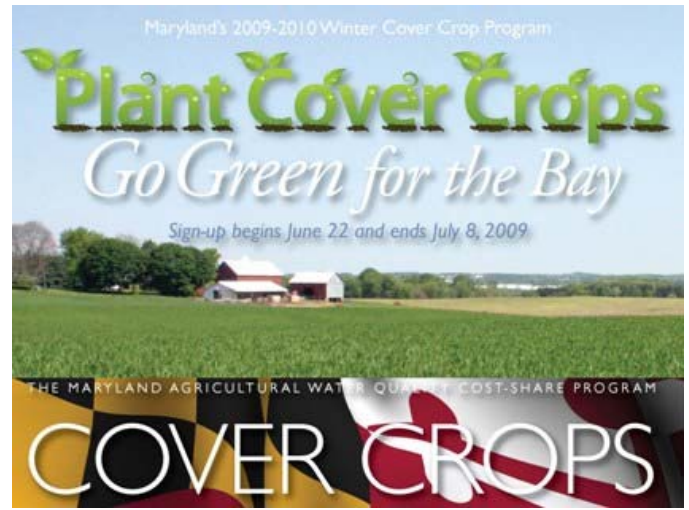
Each tree purchased requires that a separate coupon be filled out for each program. By using the county coupon then the state coupon, a Montgomery County resident can purchase \$75 trees for \$25. There has never been a better opportunity to beautify your yard or community landscape with trees.

CREP INFORMATION

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) has been revised to include more incentives for farmers to establish conservation cover along streams, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas. CREP has a cost-share component that reimburses a participant for most of the costs of establishing a practice, and the program also includes an annual rental payment for the land taken out of production. This program offers an excellent opportunity to establish forested or grass buffers along streams to protect the water quality in the Chesapeake Bay.

Information about CREP is available on the MDA website at www.mda.state.md.us.

2009/2010 COVER CROP



The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) Cover Crop program sign-up goes through July 8th. Cover crops are one of the most effective practices for removing nutrients from the Chesapeake Bay, and MDA has increased funding for this program in recent years. “This funding will allow farmers to plant nearly 290,000 acres in protective cover crops on their fields this fall”, said MDA Secretary Earl “Buddy” Hance. “That translates to an estimated annual savings of 1.5 million pounds of nitrogen and 58,000 pounds of phosphorus.”

The program includes a number of changes designed to increase participation. Here are a few highlights of the 2009-2010 Cover Crop Program:

- There is a 750 acre limit or cap on the acreage that can be enrolled per applicant/operation. Of these acres, a maximum of 250 acres may be declared as commodity cover crop acres.
- Applicants can wait until spring to designate their commodity acres.
- Incentive payments will be offered based on planting method, planting dates, previous crop, type of cover crop planted, and other factors.
- A partial fall payment of \$25/acre may be requested for acres enrolled with MDA.
- Nutrients other than animal waste cannot be applied on any cover crop acres before March 1, 2010. There are bonus payments for applying farm generated manure in accordance with a nutrient management plan.

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(Please tri-fold, seal and return)

Let Us Know If We Can Help You!

The Montgomery Soil Conservation District provides technical assistance for a variety of conservation practices free of charge. In addition, the Maryland Agricultural Cost-Share Program (MACS) may pay up to 87.5% of the installation cost of these practices for qualifying landowners:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waste Storage | <input type="checkbox"/> Grassed Waterway |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Riparian Buffer | <input type="checkbox"/> Winter Cover Crop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diversion | <input type="checkbox"/> Field Border |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy Use Area Protection | <input type="checkbox"/> Filter Strip |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Roof Runoff Mgt System | <input type="checkbox"/> Stream Fencing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trough or Tank | <input type="checkbox"/> Strip Cropping |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nutrient Mgt Consultant | <input type="checkbox"/> Stream Crossing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Critical Area Planting |

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If you would like to see if you qualify for cost share, want more information on these or other conservation practices, need help with developing a conservation plan for your property or updating an old plan, please mail or fax this form to us and we will contact you.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Fax to 301-590-2849

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AUGUST 6TH HORSE FORUM
AUGUST 11TH EQUINE SEMINAR INFORMATION INSIDE!!!!

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