

## SCS proposes Delmarva wind erosion plan

COLLEGE PARK, Md. — The U.S. Soil Conservation Service is seeking to launch a campaign against critical cropland wind erosion problems on the Delmarva Peninsula.

SCS state conservationists from Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia have asked their national

headquarters to consider 14 counties as a target area for critical erosion control. If approved, the agency would accelerate technical help to Delmarva landowners for solving wind erosion problems.

Wind erosion is becoming a major problem on the peninsula.

It's most severe when there's been a dry spring. Winds sweep across the large, open fields, kicking up the sandy soil and depositing it in ditches, along roadsides, and in yards.

According to Gerald R. Calhoun, state conservationist, about 217,000 acres on the Delmarva Peninsula

are already losing topsoil twice as fast as nature can replace it. That figure will increase by about 44,000 acres in the next five years, says Calhoun, if current farming trends continue.

Agriculture on the peninsula loses about \$15 million a year to wind erosion just in the loss of topsoil, nutrients, and chemicals. That doesn't include the costs associated with replanting, crop damage, or harvest delays. Nor does it take into account sediment damage to roads and lawns and personal and property damages from vehicle accidents.

Contributing to the wind erosion problem, he said, are the trend toward monoculture and the removal of wind barriers such as trees and hedgerows.

Farmers who take out hedgerows and windbreaks may be able to run their large equipment over the fields more efficiently, said Calhoun. But, they are also risking damage from wind erosion,

especially if they don't plant a cover crop.

According to Calhoun, wind erosion is more likely to occur on vegetable or soybean fields where the crop doesn't provide much cover. For example, soybeans produce less crop residues than corn and contribute 60 percent less organic matter to the soil. Soils that are low in organic matter have less moisture holding capacity and are more likely to blow.

If their application is approved, SCS conservationists will step up efforts to encourage farmers to use conservation practices to increase organic matter, retain moisture, and hold the soil in place. "We need more research on ways for farmers to farm efficiently while at the same time protecting their basic resources," Calhoun said. "Meanwhile, we know what practices do work. We need to convince the landowners that they'll pay off in the long run."

## Dauphin Co. Conservation district announces tree seedling sale

HARRISBURG — Value and beauty best describe the tree seedlings available for sale from the Dauphin County Conservation District. Each year this county agency sponsors a seedling sale to improve and beautify Dauphin County's environment. The district's sale promotes "backyard conservation" by offering landowners an inexpensive source of seedling stock. During the past eight years, 218,000 bareroot seedlings were sold for "backyard conservation."

Seedlings must be purchased by placing a prepaid order. Individuals interested can call the conservation district's 24-hour "EVERGREEN LINE" at 652-7073 or write to the Dauphin County Conservation District, 75 S. Houcks Road, Suite 305, Harrisburg, Pa. 17109, to request an order form with prices and seedling information. The deadline to order seedlings is April 1.

Hardwood species available for sale this year are: Eastern Red Bud, Thornless honey locust, Russian olive, Black walnut and white flowering dogwood.

Evergreen available are: Douglas fir, Scotch pine, blue spruce, white pine and concolor fir. The size of these three and four-year-old bareroot seedlings are 18-24" for the hardwoods, and 8-16"

for the evergreens.

Planting trees provide needed habitat for wildlife. Russian olive, eastern red bud and white flowering dogwood are song bird attractors with their tasty berries and abound with blossom beauty. Evergreens also benefit birds for the protective nesting sites they offer. Black walnut not only

produces valuable timber, but a flavorful nut found in two places, black walnut cake and a squirrel's winter den.

Knock those cold winter winds out of old man winter's sails by planting evergreens for windbreaks, and let this backyard conservation practice reduce your heating bills.



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