



Shiawassee Conservation District

Your Natural Resource, *Resource!*

1900 S. Morrice Road • Owosso, MI 48867 • (989) 723-8263, Ext. 3

Fall 2008

Please join us for the *2008 Annual Field Day*

Zmitko Farms will be hosting
Shiawassee Conservation District's
Annual Field Day on
Thursday, August 14, 2008
from 9:00 am to 4:30 pm.

An impressive line up of speakers and topics are planned for this very informative day including Busting the Myths of Ethanol, Animal Welfare, Farmland Preservation and Mid-Contract Management for Conservation Practices. This event is offered at **no charge** and a hog roast lunch will be provided. Field days are essential to both our rural and urban landowners as they are a great way to inform and educate the public on current agricultural and environmental issues.

**For more information and to RSVP
please contact the Shiawassee
Conservation District by August 11
at 989-723-8263, ext 3.**

New Federal Program to Develop Wildlife Habitat in Shiawassee County

A new federal farm program designed to convert agricultural lands to grassland habitat within the Conservation Reserve Program is accepting 7,500 acres in Michigan.

State Acres For Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) is targeting 18 counties in southern Michigan to enroll wildlife corridors of at least 10 acres, or blocks of habitat of at least 30 acres. The program, which was the result of an agreement between wildlife management agencies and conservation groups -- such as Conservation Districts, Pheasants Forever and The Nature Conservancy -- was announced in January. Wildlife plantings will include short prairie grasses and oak plantings and may include tall grass plantings.

This is a great opportunity for landowners to develop wildlife habitat on their land for species such as pheasants, turkeys, bobolinks and deer.

Program funding includes 50% cost share and a 40% incentive payment for landowners that are enrolled. Funds have been made available by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Eligible counties include Barry, Branch, Calhoun, Clinton, Eaton, Genesee, Hillsdale, Ingham, Ionia, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Monroe, Shiawassee, St. Joseph and Washtenaw.

Enrollment began July 1. Contact the USDA Farm Service Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or Conservation District at (989) 723-8263 for details.

Please Don't Feed the Wildlife

By Josh Shields, AmeriCorps Environmental Educator

Feeding the wildlife in community parks and other urban and suburban environments is a tradition that has remained prevalent for generations of people who frequent these areas. For many folks, it's a way to connect with nature, bond with family, or just spend some leisure time. However, when we feed wild animals in such a manner, we are often doing them more harm than good (even if this result is unintentional).

Over-concentrated animal populations, increased disease transmission, altered migration and feeding patterns, nutritional deficiencies, overly aggressive behavior, and decreased water quality are just some examples of the harmful effects that can result. To gain some local insight on this issue, I recently interviewed Heidi Frei, Director of the Friends of the Shiawassee River, to discuss some of the problems with feeding the waterfowl in areas along the Shiawassee River right here *(Continued on page 3)*



Rain Garden Implemented at Owosso High School through the Mid-Shiawassee River Watershed Restoration Project

By Andrea Berry, Project Manager

Owosso High School and the Shiawassee Conservation District have collaborated to implement a rain garden through the Mid-Shiawassee River Watershed Restoration Project. Located at the south entrance, the rain garden encompasses 5,600 square feet filled with native flowering plants, specially mixed soils and drainage pipes. The garden will continually improve the quality of water that drains to the Shiawassee River by slowing and cleaning runoff water from roofs and sidewalks. Students from Owosso High School's Life Skills, Environmental Science and Government classes participated in planting along with volunteers from AmeriCorps Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program, Shiawassee Conservation District and Natural Resource Conservation Service staff, Friends of the Shiawassee River, and Owosso Public Schools. The Cook Family Foundation provided matching funds for the project, City of Owosso assisted with engineering of the under drain system, Wolverine Sign Co. contributed the sign, and Gilberts True Value Hardware donated sign covering. Special thanks to all those who participated in making this project a huge success!

The Shiawassee Conservation District's Mid-Shiawassee River Watershed Restoration Project is funded through the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Non-Point Source Pollution Division. The goal of the Mid-Shiawassee River Watershed Restoration Project is to move toward the restoration of fisheries and wildlife. For questions regarding rain gardens or the Shiawassee River Watershed, please contact the Shiawassee Conservation District.

CREP MID-CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

By Bill Kuechenmeister & Donna Flagg, CREP Technicians

If it has been 6 or 7 years since establishment of your CREP filter strip or wetland restoration, the time has arrived to implement "mid-contract management" measures. Mid-contract *management* differs from general *maintenance* activities that you perform to keep the area free of weeds and woody vegetation.

Mid-contract management requires taking actions to improve the CREP cover. As a cover matures it may become thick with a single type of grass or may develop a weed problem. Management activities are required to ensure the original plant diversity, wildlife benefits, and protection of soil and water resources continue over the life of the CREP contract. Included in these activities are disking, herbicides specific for the cover, inter-seeding with wildflowers, or burning conducted as a part of a prescribed burning plan. Contact the Farm Service Agency about cost share

assistance available to assist with implementation of management activities.

Now would be a good time to review your conservation plan for mid-contract management activities. In order to provide maximum environmental and wildlife habitat benefit, it is important to observe the dates when specific management activities can be performed as well as the portion of the area that can be treated in a single year.

Contact the Shiawassee Conservation District with any questions, or plan on attending the Shiawassee Conservation Field Day on August 14, 2008. The Shiawassee Conservation District and the Farm Service Agency will be presenting a session on Mid-Contract Management for Conservation Practices which will review all aspects of this important practice.



Growing Blueberries in the Home Garden

Blueberries make a good fruit crop for home gardens since they only require a small space. They begin to produce fruit in the third season and become fully productive after six years.

The highbush blueberry requires full sun for optimum yield and quality and grows best where the soil is very acidic. Soil pH should be 4 to 4.5 and have at least 4 to 7% organic matter. It is important to test soil before and after preparation to insure the proper pH, lime index, nutrient status, and organic matter content.

At planting, dig a hole 18" deep and 18" wide and fill with a mixture of peat moss and top soil until the hole is filled 4" from the top. Set the plant and cover the roots with the remaining peat-soil mix. Set plants 5' apart in rows 10' apart. Apply 4 inches of sawdust or woodchip mulch in a 2 feet wide band after planting, and maintain over the life of the planting.

Blueberries have very shallow root systems and are sensitive to water fluctuations. They need at least

1" to 2" of water per week, supplemental watering is essential during dry seasons. On loam or clay loam soils plants can be grown in raised beds, 4' wide and 9" tall for better water drainage. Such beds are not needed on sandy soils.

Blueberry plants normally do not need to be pruned for the first three years. Remove blossoms in the first and second year of planting to stimulate growth. During the fourth year, the dormant plant should be pruned in mid-March. Remove dead and weak branches and thin terminal wood with small buds. Prune interior crossing branches to admit light to the center of the plant. In subsequent years, thin out older branches to force new growth. Blueberry bushes tend to produce smaller berries when they are overloaded with fruits, hence it is important to not have too many flower buds. Please contact the Shiawassee Conservation District for more information.



(Please Don't Feed the Wildlife, continued from page 1)

in Owosso. Here is what she had to say:

So what problem have you observed? There are certain areas along the Shiawassee River where people are feeding mallards and Canada geese.

What are some of the direct impacts on the waterfowl being fed? People are feeding these waterfowl so consistently that these animals are being trained to rely on humans to supply them with the food they need to survive. In other words, these ducks and geese are shifting to unnatural feeding patterns. Also, the food that people are feeding them (e.g., bread, popcorn, fast food scraps) are an unhealthy substitute for their natural diet so many individuals in these animal populations may not be getting the nutrients they need. There is also an issue with having so many waterfowl concentrated in such a small area. Because they are competing over food scraps being handed out by people instead of foraging on their own, these ducks and geese may start to become overly aggressive towards each other and to humans. This high concentration also means that the animals are more likely to spread diseases to one another.

Are there other impacts that might be more indirect? Yes. The high concentration of waterfowl feces in such a small area and the close proximity of this material to the Shiawassee River can lead to excessive amounts of nutrients and bacteria in and surrounding the water body. The result of this is a degraded habitat. Also, these high levels of fecal matter in the recreational areas present unsanitary and visually displeasing conditions for many people who wish to enjoy the scenic beauty of the Shiawassee River.

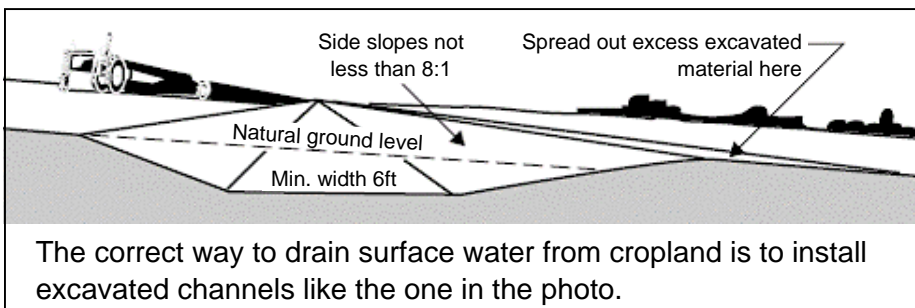
For those folks who truly connect with nature by feeding these animals, what alternative activities would you suggest? There are many ways to connect with nature that are far less invasive. You could visit DeVries Nature Conservancy or another natural area and check out the plants, watch some birds, or enjoy some other aspect of the ecosystem. Or you can take a canoe down the Shiawassee and explore the area that way. As far as waterfowl, if you resist feeding them then you may have the privilege of watching their natural feeding behavior, which can be very entertaining.

Surface Drains

In order for crops to reach their maximum yield potential, receiving enough water during the growing season is a necessity. However, too much water standing in a field for too long can cause crop damage. That is why the use of surface drains, commonly called v-ditches or furrows, is a widespread practice among many farmers. These surface drains direct excess water from low lying areas in the field and carry it to an outlet.

There are many different types of tools used to make surface drains, with one of the most common being a v-ditcher. The v-ditcher creates a trench roughly 1 foot deep with a 2' to 3' top width and a very narrow bottom width. The problem with this type of channel is that there can be significant erosion due to the concentrated flow of water in a small area.

Another option for removing surface water is to make a wider and shallower channel for the water to flow through, with a minimum width of 6' and side slopes at approximately an 8:1 ratio. This will allow the water to spread out and flow through a wider area, consequently causing less erosion. The wider, shallower channel is



also easier to drive through than a typical v-ditch when conducting field operations. Contact the Shiawassee Conservation District for additional information or plan on attending the District's Annual Field Day on August 14, 2008. One of the presentations will be focused on surface drains.

X-Disease

X-Disease has been primarily reported in the Great Lakes states and can affect peach, nectarine, sweet cherry, and sour cherry trees. Symptoms on cherry and peach may vary depending on the environment. However, the general symptoms are identifiable.

The disease is most easily identified on peach. Symptoms are predominantly foliar, but the fruits may also be affected. Midsummer leaves on isolated braches curl inward and develop yellow to reddish or purple spots. The spots soon drop out, leaving a shothole effect and tattered leaves. Leaves fall off prematurely, eventually leaving only a tuft of leaves at the tips of infected shoots. Two to three years after initial infection, most branches will show symptoms. Fruit on infected trees may appear normal at first, but will usually drop prematurely.

Cherry trees react in two major ways to X-disease, depending on the rootstock. Cherries on mahaleb rootstock are killed suddenly in midsummer. Trees on mazzard rootstock decline slowly. Sweet cherries may not show decline for many years. Often times, recognizable symptoms can only be diagnosed by observing the fruit. Scattered fruits are small and pink at harvest and have a bitter flavor. Sour cherries may be more seriously affected in that dieback and decline are associated with the disease.

X-disease is caused by small parasitic organisms that can be spread by leafhoppers. These leafhoppers acquire the X-disease pathogen while sucking juices from infected chokecherries. Leafhoppers can spread the disease from infected sweet and sour cherries as well. Although the possibility of spread from peach to peach has been investigated, this appears to be of minor importance.

Control measures aimed at eradicating chokecherries near fruit orchards help to control X-disease. Chokecherry bushes are commonly found in hedges, open woods and in overgrown meadows and abandoned fields. Chokecherry is often confused with wild black cherry and wild pin or fire cherry. Unlike black and pin cherry, which grow as trees, chokecherries are shrubs that grow up to 15 feet tall and are usually found in clumps. The fruit is produced along a central stem, is black when mature, and it ripens before black cherry. Also, chokecherry leaves are wider and broader than black cherry or pin cherry leaves and serrations along the margins of the leaves are more prominent and spreading than those of the other two species. For more information about X-disease, contact the Shiawassee Conservation District.

	Variety	Height	Light Tolerance	Soils	Notes
Transplant	Colorado Blue Spruce	75-100'	Shade tolerant	Prefers upland dry soils	Winter cover for wildlife
	Balsam Fir 🌲 Michigan Native	50-75'	Highly shade tolerant	Grows on poorly drained swamps to well drained uplands	Aromatic needles
	White Spruce 🌲 Michigan Native	50-60'	Shade tolerant	Prefers moist, sandy loam soils	Winter cover for wildlife
	White Pine 🌲 Michigan Native	60-100'	Moderately shade tolerant	Prefers sandy loam soils, avoid clay-wet soils	Great for Windbreaks; A preferred deer food

	Variety	Description
Berry Bush	Apache Blackberry	Thornless erect; high quality; flavorful fruit; high production; disease resistant; canes strong to support large fruits; large fruit-approximately 9.5 grams each.
	Anne Yellow Raspberry	Large deep golden fruits, the sweetness of this raspberry is like eating candy; fruits are full of mild raspberry flavor and juicy aromas; plants grow vigorously and are resistant to diseases; large yields; harvest from August till October.
	Blue Crop Blueberry	Highbush type cultivar; Ripens in mid-July; Yield is consistent, ranging from 10-20 lbs per plant; Large fruit size with 65 berries per cup; Berry quality is firm, picking scar is small, and berries are bright blue; Hardy and drought resistant.
	Blue Ray Blueberry	Highbush type cultivar; Ripens in mid-July; Yield is consistent, ranging from 10-20 lbs per plant; Large fruit size with 60 berries per cup; Berry quality is firm, picking scar is small, and color is bright blue.
	Heritage Red Raspberry	Very vigorous, hardy, erect, sturdy and suckers prolifically. Fruit size is medium, red, attractive, very firm for good shipping, very good flavor and excellent quality. Matures late August, early September.
	Jewell Black Raspberry	Vigorous grower with high yield; Glossy black high quality, early ripening, large berries; sweet and flavorful; Resistant to most raspberry diseases.

	Variety	Height	Description
Flower Bulb	Ballerina Lily Flowering Tulip	22"	Blooms in May; stunning reddish orange petals deepening to copper red; long lasting elegant flowers with outward pointed petals on tall stems.
	Candy Club Tall Bunch Flowering Tulip	20"	Blooms in May; multiple flowers on one stem; ivory white petals flushed and outlined with violet.
	Crème Upstar Double Late Tulip	14"	Blooms in May; tall peony-like flowers; petals are buttery yellow and cream, blushed with rose pink edges.
	Flaming Coquette Single Early Tulip	14"	Blooms in April, egg-shaped creamy white blooms with a yellow base; long sturdy stemmed tulip will stand up to severe early spring weather.
	Flower Drift Double Daffodil	16"	Blooms end of March - end of April; does not have a cup - has a filled center; white petals highlighted with rich orange center petals and a hint of gold behind the doubling.
	Full House Triumph Tulip	20"	Blooms in late April-Early May; Angular shaped white and red flowers on sturdy stem; long lasting flowers.

Additional Items Available for Purchase						
Plantskydd Repellent	1 lb Granular Container <i>(covers 600 sq ft)</i>	\$15.00	Solid Tree Protector	\$1.75	Blue Bird House Pine	\$10.50
	3 lb Granular Shaker Bag <i>(covers 1800 sq ft)</i>	\$30.00	Mesh Tree Guard	2/\$1.50	Blue Bird House Cedar	\$15.50
	1 lb Package <i>(treats 200-400 plants)</i>	\$25.00	Tree Collars	\$1.75	Bat House	\$18.00
	1 qt Pre-Mixed Spray <i>(treats 80-100 plants)</i>	\$22.00	Tree Flag	\$0.10	Fruit Wrap	\$2.00
	5 qt Pre-Mixed Spray <i>(treats 400-600 plants)</i>	\$55.00	Trees Planted or Deep Water Sign	\$1.50	Various Reference Books in District Office	

Fall 2008 Tree & Berry Bush Fundraiser Ordering Information & Guidelines

1. Return the completed order form with full payment to: **Shiawassee Conservation District
1900 S. Morrice Rd; Owosso, MI 48867**
2. The final date to order is **Friday, September 26, 2008.**
3. All returned checks will be subject to a \$35 fee.
4. After orders are placed there will be a \$25 service charge for any substitutions or cancellations. There will be no charge when only additions are made to an existing order.
5. We do not guarantee survival. Our liability ceases when seedlings are picked up. It is unlawful for these trees, shrubs and other plants to be resold with the roots attached in accordance with the Insect Pest and Plant Disease Act. PA 189 of 1931 as amended.
6. Orders not picked up will not be refunded.
7. No refunds on orders canceled after September 26, 2008.
8. The Shiawassee Conservation District reserves the right to cancel orders and refund payments due to reasons beyond their control.
9. Substitutions made by the nurseries are beyond the District's control.
10. Add orders carefully. Any errors \$10 and under will be considered a donation to the District.
11. All donations will be deposited into the Shiawassee Conservation District general fund.
12. Pictures and descriptions of all trees are available in the District office.
13. Orders can be picked up at the **Shiawassee Conservation District, 1900 S Morrice Road; Owosso**
14. Pick up dates and times are all follows: **Thursday, October 16, 2008 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM**
Friday, October 17, 2008 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Conservation Programs Available

With the passage of the 2008 Farm Bill, total spending on conservation programs has been increased. There are many conservation programs available to landowners and there is sometimes confusion about what each program is designed to accomplish. The following guide lists some of the conservation programs that are available with a brief description of each.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) – removes marginal croplands from production and encourages environmental enhancement on those lands. Continuous CRP (CCRP), State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE), and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) are components of CRP.

Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) – a voluntary, non-regulatory, incentive-based program that helps private landowners, farmers and ranchers protect and restore wetlands on their property.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) – offers financial and technical help to assist farmers and ranchers with installing or implementing conservation practices on eligible agricultural land to protect water, air and soil quality as well as wildlife habitat.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) – helps landowners develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land.

Please contact the Shiawassee Conservation District for further information on conservation programs available through the 2008 Farm Bill.

Friends of the Shiawassee River *Winetasting Fundraiser*

Friday September 5, 2008
DeVries Nature Conservancy
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Join the Friends of the Shiawassee River (FOSR) for an evening of sampling wine along the Shiawassee River. All proceeds benefit the conservation activities of the FOSR. Cost is \$25/person for members, \$30/person for non-members.

Contact Heidi Frei,
FOSR Executive Director
for information or to make reservations
at 989-723-9062.

www.shiawasseeiver.org/winetastingfundraiser.html

FALL 2008 TREE & BERRY BUSH FUNDRAISER

SHIAWASSEE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Name _____
 Address / City / Zip _____
 Phone-Day _____ Evening _____
 Email _____

Office Use Only	
Order Number	_____
Date	_____
Initials	_____

TRANSPLANTS	Size	5	10	25	50	100	QUANTITY	TOTAL
Balsam Fir	15-24"	\$15.00	\$25.00	\$50.00	\$90.00	\$150.00		
White Pine	15-24"	\$15.00	\$25.00	\$50.00	\$90.00	\$150.00		
Colorado Blue Spruce	15-24"	\$15.00	\$25.00	\$50.00	\$90.00	\$150.00		
White Spruce	15-24"	\$15.00	\$25.00	\$50.00	\$90.00	\$150.00		
BERRY BUSH		5						
Anne Yellow Raspberry	4" pot	\$16.50						
Heritage Red Raspberry	4" pot	\$16.50						
Jewell Black Raspberry	4" pot	\$16.50						
Apache Blackberry	2.5" pot	\$16.50						
Blue Crop Blueberry	10" - 18"	\$27.00						
Blue Ray Blueberry	10" - 18"	\$27.00						
FLOWER BULBS		5	10					
Ballerina Lily Flowering Tulip		\$4.25	\$7.50					
Candy Club Tall Bunch Flowering Tulip		\$4.25	\$7.50					
Crème Upstar Double Late Tulip		\$4.25	\$7.50					
Flaming Coquette Single Early Tulip		\$4.25	\$7.50					
Full House Triumph Tulip		\$4.25	\$7.50					
Flower Drift Double Daffodil		\$4.25	\$7.50					
MISCELLANEOUS						Each		
Tree Collar						\$1.75		
Solid Tree Protector						\$1.75		
Mesh Tree Guards						2/\$1.50		
Plantskydd 1lb granular						\$15.00		
Plantskydd 1qt pre-mixed spray						\$22.00		
Plantskydd 1 lb Package						\$25.00		
Plantskydd 3 lb granular shake bag						\$30.00		
Plantskydd 5 qt pre-mixed spray						\$55.00		



 Check One Visa MC Cash Check # _____

Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Name how it appears on Card _____ Security Code _____

Authorization Signature _____

Address / City / Zip _____

Subtotal	
6% Sales Tax	
Handling Fee	\$1.00
Donation	
Total	

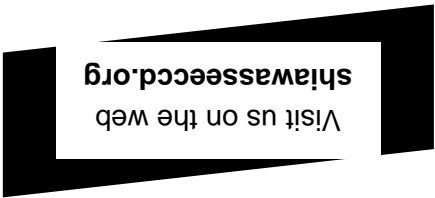
Deadline to Order
Friday September 26, 2008

Shiawassee Conservation District
1900 S. Morrice Road
Owosso, MI 48867

Nonprofit
Organization
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Owosso, MI
Permit No. 87

Fall Tree and Berry Bush Fundraiser Details Inside Shiawassee Conservation District, Your Natural Resource, *Resource!*

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Office hours are:
Monday - Friday
8:00 am - 4:30 pm

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