SEEDLING SALE…

Order forms are now available for the 2014 Seedling Sale. We have a large variety of seedlings available for this year, but get your order in quickly as all our seedlings are available on a first come basis until we run out of that variety.

This year also check out our new packaged special. Get 2 seedlings of every variety for a discounted price! This is a great way to spruce up your landscape with native varieties.

Species available this year include:
Baldcypress, Black Cherry, Black Walnut, Eastern Redbud, Flowering Dogwood, Persimmon, Scarlet Oak, Water Oak, White Pine, and Yellow Popular.

Please visit www.hendersoncountync.org/soil or stop by the office to pick up your order form.
FARM CITY DAY SUCCESS

From staff reports

October 5th 2013

Henderson County SWCD staff participated in the annual Henderson County Farm City Day. Farm City Day is an annual event that highlights the dependency of farm people and city people on each other for products and services essential to modern living. The Farm City program was designed to encourage the exchange of ideas and development of shared activities creating a feeling of mutual understanding and good will.

The weather was great and many people stopped by our booth. We had a corn box for the kids to play in, which was a big hit! We also cows for the kids to color and put out in our “pasture”, and a number of brochures and posters available to take home.

We increased our outreach by adding over 50 participants to our newsletter mailing list. Many educators stopped by pick up materials for preschools, primary and secondary schools, and home schools, ensuring that Soil and Water Conservation is not just a one-day event!

NRCS

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program has a continuous sign-up period. EQIP offers contracts that provide incentive payments and cost-shares to implement conservation practices. EQIP offers both financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices. Persons who are engaged in livestock or agricultural production on eligible land may participate in the EQIP program. Come in today to find out how we can help you!

Are you interested in becoming a sponsor? Our newsletter goes out to hundreds of recipients each quarter. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor for the 2014 year please call our office today at 828.697.4949 to find out more!
Agriculture Districts

GIS

Did you know that you can go to the Henderson County GIS webpage and activate/turn-on the Agriculture Districts and Agriculture Districts Buffers layers?


This is part of the public notification portion of the Voluntary Agricultural District Program. Folks buying property can find out they are near or adjacent to agricultural operations. They should not be surprised then when someone cranks up a tractor or when a cow does what a cow does, right next door. If you are not in a Voluntary Ag District currently, new neighbors may not fully understand what it may mean to live adjacent to an ag operation and the result can end up being unhappy neighbors and lawsuits. Learn about the many positives for having farmland near you! Being a fully informed land buyer makes for good neighboring.

Joining

If you would like to check on, update or join a Voluntary Ag District, please contact Laurie Brokaw, 828-697-4949 laurie.brokaw@nc.nacdnet.net.

Town of Mills River

In reviewing our ordinance several years ago all properties in ag districting that were within the Town of Mills River municipal boundaries could no longer be a part of the Henderson County VAD program. They were all removed. Just recently, there have been discussions between the Town of Mills River, Henderson County Soil & Water Conservation District staff and the Henderson County Agricultural Advisory Board about how to overcome this problem. The District offered to manage the Towns VAD program for them. The Town did not have a VAD ordinance, so they had to do that first. That was recently completed and we are currently discussing the possibility of administering that program. We all look forward to a long and positive working relationship and can’t wait to get those Mills River farmlands protected.

Soil Sampling is Changing...

Peak-season soil-test fee coming this fall/winter

The 2013 Appropriations Act passed by the General Assembly approved a $4 fee for soil samples analyzed by the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for the period from December through March. The fee is an attempt to lessen the backlog associated with the busy season when the lab is routinely inundated with tens of thousands of samples. The rest of the year — April through November — NCDA&CS will continue to analyze soil samples without a fee.

In fiscal year 2013, the NCDA&CS Agronomic Division analyzed nearly 368,000 soil samples. About 60 percent of these arrived at the lab during the peak season of December through March, slowing processing turnaround time to nine weeks at one point. At other times of the year, processing can easily be completed in two to four weeks, depending on sample volume.

The new peak-season fee should accomplish two goals. First of all, it will encourage more growers to submit samples earlier, thereby fostering a more balanced sample load throughout the year. Secondly, the fee will enhance sustainability of the soil-testing program because receipts generated in fiscal years 2014 and 2015 are earmarked for improvements such as automated equipment, additional peak-season personnel and computer-programming enhancements.

The vast majority of soil samples analyzed during the winter months are from farms in preparation for spring planting. Most of these samples can be collected and submitted well before December 1st, thus avoiding the fee. Nearly all soil samples associated with home and garden and landscaping projects can be collected and submitted from April through November.

Soil samples received during the peak season will be processed in the order received without any guarantees regarding turnaround time. However, clients can purchase NCDA&CS expedited shippers to receive a guaranteed turnaround time of 10 business days. This year, 525 shippers will be sold. The anticipated 2013-14 price for a 36-sample shipper is $200.

During peak season, the sample receiving process will change. Sample drop-offs at the Eaddy Building in Raleigh must take place during business hours (6 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday). A locked gate will prevent access after hours and on weekends. This procedure will increase the security of samples and improve client access to Agronomic Division personnel.

By late fall 2013, clients will have the convenience of entering sample and payment (credit card) information online via the PALS website. Cash and checks will be accepted for peak-season samples only if deposited in advance in an escrow account. Payment should never be placed inside shippers.

This year, December 1st falls on a Sunday and is preceded by the Thanksgiving holidays. Wednesday, November 27th, will be the last business day of the month for the soil-testing lab. Any soil samples arriving after 6 p.m. on November 27th will be subject to the peak-season fee because they will not be logged in and processed until December 2nd.

Contact the NCDA&CS Agronomic Division office at 919-733-2655 if you have any questions regarding the new peak-season soil-testing fee or the purchase of expedited shippers.