

# Conservation Connections



## Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Telephone: (716) 652-8480 Fax: (716) 652-8506  
www.ecswcd.org

Semi-Annual District Newsletter

Winter, 2007

## Conservation District Receives Grant for Tonawanda Creek Ag:

In the summer of 2006, the Erie County Soil and Water Conservation District submitted a grant application to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets under the NYS Agricultural Non-point Source Abatement and Control Program. The District received official notification that this application, *The Tonawanda Creek Agricultural Implementation Project*, was successful. This project will provide a total of \$129,430 in state cost-share funding to five landowners in the Tonawanda Creek watershed to implement agricultural best management practices (BMPs) on their farms. BMPs scheduled for implementation include: barnyard runoff management, silage leachate control, milkhouse waste control, fencing along streams and access road improvements.



These practices were identified and prioritized through a tiered planning process called Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM). Tier I assessments, which include a summary of current farm activities, existing conservation practices, and potential environmental concerns were completed by 110 landowners. Subsequently,

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### 2007 NYS Envirothon Raffle

**\*\*PRIZE\*\***

### 2007 RED PONTIAC SOLSTICE



\$10.00 or 3/\$25.00 Donation to raise money for the NYS Envirothon Scholarship Fund. Need not be present to win. Drawing to be held at the 2007 NYS Envirothon at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY, Friday, August 3, 2007. Contact the District for details.

## Got Trees?

### Order Bare-Root Seedlings and Transplants with the Enclosed 2007 District Tree and Shrub Conservation Seedling Program Order Form

Do you want to create wildlife food and habitat, protect water quality, reduce heating and cooling bills, establish windbreaks and snow fences, reduce air pollution, and stabilize erodible land? Then think about planting trees and shrubs from our 2007 order form inside this newsletter. Highlights for the 2007 Program include:

After an absence from the program, Sawtooth Oak is back by popular demand - a small fast growing Oak tree that can produce acorns in 5-8 years. The acorns are an excellent source of food for wildlife during the fall and winter and are eaten by squirrels, deer, grouse, bobwhite quail and turkeys.

Hemlock transplants are available this year in the evergreen transplant selection. A transplant combination pack is also available for landowners who want to try a sampling of evergreen transplants.

"What is a transplant?" you ask.

Transplants are produced from seedlings that were removed from their seedbed and transplanted to a larger bed for additional growth. Evergreen seedlings are generally 2-to-3 year old plants that have been harvested from the same seedbed they were originally planted in. Evergreen transplants are typically grown one to two years beyond the seedling age. Transplants may not be any taller than seedlings but their root growth is superior, branching is more developed, and the trunk is thicker. Transplants establish quicker than seedlings but require more care when planting.

Check-out our seedling combination packs which offer a sampling of seedlings chosen for various habitat themes. This year the choices are Native New York Wildlife, Bird and Butterfly Pack, Nut Tree Pack and a Homeowner Tree Pack that offers a selection of common yard trees. These sampler packs are great for backyard habitat projects.



.... continued on page 2

## Tonawanda Creek Ag:...continued from page 1

13 farmers completed the Tier II assessment which includes an on-site visit by the District to document environmental stewardship and to determine areas for potential improvement. The final step before preparing the grant application was the development of conservation plans (Tier IIIA) on 5 priority farms in the watershed.

Next spring, the District and participating farmers will begin the Tier IV implementation phase which is being made possible by the *Tonawanda Creek Ag Implementation Project*. The District will perform topographical surveys of the areas to be improved by BMP implementation, and prepare designs and construction specifications. The District will also assist landowners in securing bids and inspecting construction activities. It is anticipated that construction will take place in the 2008 and 2009 construction seasons.



The final phase of the project (Tier V) will evaluate the results of our AEM conservation efforts to protect the environment and sustain the viability of the farm business. "Participation in this program has been very good", stated Francis Gernatt, District Board Chairman, "The farmers in the Tonawanda Creek Watershed are to be commended for their voluntary participation in this program to preserve and protect soil and water resources."

This project will build upon Federal Farm Bill Program BMP implementation efforts that are underway in this watershed. The USDA, NRCS is working towards completion of FY 2005 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts on priority farm operations and a number of farms in this watershed have also been approved for EQIP assistance under FY 2006 contracts. In order to help additional farm operations that did not receive EQIP funding and to maximize the environmental benefits of the Farm Bill Programs in this watershed, the District is providing this cost-sharing opportunity to implement additional BMPs on the five farm operations in this project.

For agricultural operations in Erie County interested in AEM please call the District Office at 652-8480 to begin the process. Remember, AEM is an opportunity that is voluntary, free and confidential. With the rapidly changing character of our rural areas this is a good time to think about conservation planning on your farm operation.

## Got Trees?

...continued from page 1

Wildflower seed mixes continue to be a popular addition to homeowner landscapes. Wildflowers are a good planting for those areas where you want to reduce mowing and yard maintenance. A wildflower plot provides permanent color, habitat, and fresh flowers for your home.

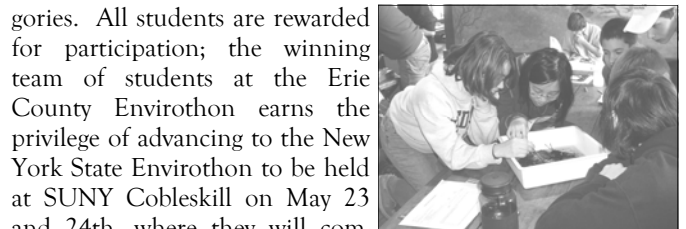
Seedlings, combo packs and wildflower seed mixes make great springtime gifts. Growing trees from seedlings is a continued family tradition to mark the passing of time with our children and provides lessons in nurturing and respecting the environment and community. So pull out that order form and see what we are bringing to you from the seedling farms. The District Tree and Shrub Conservation Seedling Program is "first come, first serve," so don't delay ordering your conservation plants. All program and seedling/transplant information is included in the order form. Please visit our website at [www.ecswcd.org](http://www.ecswcd.org) for more information about species selection, planting techniques, wildflower plots and other helpful information.

## High School Students & Teachers: Sign Up Now for the 2007 Erie County Envirothon!



If you are an Erie County high school student interested in the outdoors or environmental science, the Envirothon is an ideal opportunity for you! Coordinated by the District, the Erie County Envirothon is an annual, hands-on environmental studies competition that brings students from throughout the county together for a unique and rewarding outdoor experience.

Participants in the Envirothon learn about and are challenged in the subjects of forestry, wildlife, aquatics, soils, and a current issue topic. This year's current issue topic is "Alternate/Renewable Energy". To prepare for the Envirothon, students study the various Envirothon topics with help from local natural resource field professionals such as ecologists, conservationists, biologists, foresters, soil scientists and field technicians from local environmental agencies. During the competition, students work as a team to achieve the highest score in the Envirothon test categories. All students are rewarded for participation; the winning team of students at the Erie County Envirothon earns the privilege of advancing to the New York State Envirothon to be held at SUNY Cobleskill on May 23 and 24th, where they will compete against local Envirothon winners from counties throughout the state. The winning team at the



2006 Envirothon participants identify macro-invertebrates

New York State Envirothon qualifies for the Canon National Envirothon – North America's largest environmental competition. At both the State and National levels, top-scoring teams have the opportunity to win college scholarships.



Participants are educated in the Wildlife workshop at Chestnut Ridge Park

Not only is the Envirothon a unique chance for students to spend a day enjoying the outdoors while working as a team, it is an excellent opportunity to interact with and learn firsthand from local field professionals. The Envirothon is a helpful supplement to environmental or natural science curriculum, and fosters the development of students' research, teamwork, and professional skills. It is an internationally recognized program, and complements students' college applications and resumes. Past Envirothon participants have described the program as a "rewarding and fun" learning experience with "unique field experiences that allow students to use teamwork to achieve a common goal in the environment."

We hope that you will join us for this year's Envirothon to be held at Chestnut Ridge Park on April 19th and May 10th. For more information or to register for the 2007 Erie County Envirothon, please contact the District office at 652-8480 or visit the District's website at [www.ecswcd.org](http://www.ecswcd.org). Further information on the New York State Envirothon is available at [www.nysenvirothon.org](http://www.nysenvirothon.org).

# 2007 CONSERVATION TREE & SHRUB SEEDLING PROGRAM

**ORDER BY MARCH 16, 2007.** Seedling orders are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. As we have no control over the weather or your choice of planting sites, times or techniques, the Erie County SWCD will not be responsible for your trees and shrubs after they leave our distribution center. A fee will be applied for returned checks. No refunds will be offered for orders not picked-up. **Keep this section for your records. Return only the order form.**

<b>GROWTH RATE:</b> ↑ Fast → Moderate ↓ Slow	<b>LIGHT PREFERENCE:</b> ☀ Full Sun ☾ Partial Sun ● Shade
--	---

<b>ADAPTATIONS / BEST USES:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☹ Wetlands</li> <li>🌲 Christmas Trees</li> <li>E Erosion Control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🌿 Windbreak</li> <li>W Wood Products</li> <li>🐾 Wildlife Food and Cover</li> </ul>

<b>HOW TO READ SEEDLING ORDER CHARTS:</b>					
VARIETY	GROWTH RATE	MATURE HEIGHT	SOIL PREFERENCE	LIGHT PREFERENCE	ADAPTATIONS/ BEST USES
Blue Spruce	↓	30 - 60'	Rich, moist	☀ ☾	☹ 🌲

## WILDLIFE ATTRACTING SEEDLING PACKS

		QTY	COST
<b>Native NY Wildlife:</b>	2 each - White Pine, Black Cherry, White Spruce, Serviceberry, Hazelnut	\$12	
<b>Homeowner Pack:</b>	2 each - Blue Spruce, Douglas Fir, Sugar Maple, Paper (White) Birch, Pin Oak	\$12	
<b>Nut Tree Pack:</b>	2 each - Black Walnut, Red Oak, Hazelnut, American Beech, Sawtooth Oak	\$12	
<b>Bird and Butterfly:</b>	2 each - Chokecherry, Butterfly Bush, Common Lilac, American Elderberry, Highbush Blueberry - Jersey (Mid-Summer Fruiting)	\$14	

## EVERGREEN TRANSPLANTS

		QTY	COST
<b>American Arborvitae</b>	↓ 20 - 30' Deep, moist, sandy ☀ ☹ 🌿 🐾		
<b>White Pine</b>	↑ 50 - 80' Fertile, moist, well-drained ☀ ☹ 🌿 🌲 W 🐾		
<b>Blue Spruce</b>	↓ 30 - 60' Rich, moist ☀ ☾ 🌿 🌲		
<b>Norway Spruce</b>	↑ 40 - 60' Acid, sandy, moist, well-drained ☀ ☾ 🌿 🌲		
<b>White Spruce</b>	→ 40 - 60' Moist loam, alluvial, tolerant ☀ ☾ 🌿 🌲 W 🐾		
<b>Douglas Fir</b>	→ 40 - 80' Moist, well-drained, slightly acid ☀ 🌲		
<b>Fraser Fir</b>	↓ 30-40' Cool, moist, well-drained Loam ☀ ☾ 🌿 🐾		
<b>Hemlock</b>	→ 40-70' Moist well-drained, acid ☀ ☾ ● W 🐾		

## TRANSPLANT COMBO PACK

	QTY	COST
2 each - Canaan Fir, Douglas Fir, White Pine, Blue Spruce, White Spruce	\$20	

## EVERGREEN/CONIFER SEEDLINGS

	10 for \$8	30 for \$21	100 for \$60	500 for \$250	QTY	COST
<b>Austrian Pine</b>	→ 50 - 60'	Tolerates many soils	☀ ☾ 🌿 🌲 🐾			
<b>Red Pine</b>	→ 50 - 80'	Dry, acid, sandy, gravelly	☀ ☹ 🌿 W			
<b>Scotch Pine</b>	→ 30 - 60'	Acidic, well-drained	☀ 🌲			
<b>White Pine</b>	↑ 50 - 80'	Fertile, moist, well-drained	☀ ☹ 🌿 🌲 W 🐾			
<b>Blue Spruce</b>	↓ 30 - 60'	Rich, moist	☀ ☾ 🌿 🌲			
<b>Norway Spruce</b>	→ 40 - 60'	Acid, sandy, moist, well-drained	☀ ☾ 🌿 🌲 W 🐾			
<b>White Spruce</b>	→ 40 - 60'	Moist loam, alluvial,	☀ ☾ 🌿 🌲 🐾			
<b>Balsam Fir</b>	↓ 45 - 75'	Moist, well-drained, slightly acid	☀ ☾ 🌲			
<b>Concolor Fir</b>	↓ 30 - 50'	Deep, rich, gravelly/sandy loam	☀ 🌲 W			
<b>Douglas Fir</b>	→ 40 - 80'	Moist, well-drained, slightly acid	☀ 🌲			
<b>Fraser Fir</b>	↓ 30 - 40'	Cool, moist, well-drained loam	☀ ☾ 🌿 🐾			
<b>Hemlock</b>	→ 40 - 70'	Moist, well-drained, acid	☀ ☾ ● W 🐾			
<b>Japanese Larch</b>	↑ 70 - 90'	Moist, well-drained	☀ ☹ W 🐾			

## CONSERVATION SHRUBS SEEDLINGS

	10 for \$9	30 for \$24	50 for \$35	QTY	COST
<b>Sargent Crabapple</b>	→ 6 - 8'	Well-drained	☀ 🐾		
<b>Red Osier Dogwood</b>	↑ 7 - 9'	Moist soils	☀ ☾ 🌿 E 🐾		
<b>American Elderberry</b>	↑ 5 - 12'	Moist soils, adaptable	☀ ☾ 🌿 🐾		
<b>American Filbert (Hazelnut)</b>	→ 8 - 18'	Well-drained, loam, pH tolerant	☀ ☾ 🌿		
<b>Rugosa Rose</b>	↑ 4 - 6'	Fertile, slightly acid loam, salt tolerant	☀ E		
<b>Shadblow Serviceberry</b>	→ 6 - 20'	Moist, well-drained	☀ ☾ 🌿 🐾		
<b>Streamco Willow</b>	↑ 12 - 15'	Moist, slightly acid	☀ ☾ ● 🌿 E		

## BROADLEAF DECIDUOUS SEEDLINGS

	10 for \$9	30 for \$24	50 for \$35	QTY	COST
<b>Paper (White) Birch</b>	↑ 50 - 70'	Moist, acid, well-drained loam	☀ W 🐾		
<b>River Birch</b>	↑ 40 - 70'	Moist, acid	☀ ☾ 🌿 🐾		
<b>Black Cherry</b>	→ 50 - 60'	Deep, moist, fertile	☀ W 🐾		
<b>Red Maple</b>	→ 40 - 60'	Moist, slightly acid, tolerant	☀ ☾ 🌿 W 🐾		
<b>Sugar Maple</b>	↓ 60 - 75'	Well-drained, fertile	☀ ☾ W		
<b>Northern Red Oak</b>	↑ 60 - 75'	Well-drained/sandy, slightly acid	☀ W 🐾		
<b>Sawtooth Oak</b>	→ 35 - 45'	Well-drained, acid, adaptable	☀ 🐾		
<b>White Oak</b>	↓ 50 - 80'	Deep, well-drained, moist, acid	☀ W 🐾		
<b>Hybrid Poplar</b>	↑ 80' +	Moist, silty or loamy	☀ 🌿 🐾		
<b>Sycamore</b>	↑ 75 - 100'	Deep, moist, rich soils	☀ ☾ 🌿		
<b>Tuliptree</b>	↑ 70 - 90'	Deep, moist, well-drained loam	☀ W 🐾		
<b>Black Walnut</b>	↑ 50 - 75'	Deep, moist, rich soils	☀ W 🐾		

## AMERICAN CHESTNUT SEEDLINGS

	10 for \$20	QTY	COST
<b>American Chestnut</b>	→ 70 - 90'	Moist, sandy loam	☀ ☾ W 🐾



# Central & Western New York Stormwater Conference and Tradeshow



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## Agricultural Assessment Program

Land in agricultural production may be eligible for a reduction in property taxes if your town assessor determines that the following requirements are met:

Land owned and worked by you or rented to an operator, must consist of 7 or more acres in a single operation that was used in the preceding two years for the production for sale of crops, livestock, or livestock products. Horse-boarding operations may qualify with certain eligibility requirements.

Proceeds from sales of agricultural products in a single operation must average \$10,000 or more for the preceding two years.

The agricultural assessment is based on the productivity of the soils. The District provides the soils information for the agricultural assessment application through a "soil group worksheet."

*Please determine eligibility with your assessor first.*

## NYS Conservation Easement Tax Credit



Starting in 2007, the New York State Conservation Easement Tax Credit will be available to landowners with property enrolled in a conservation easement. This new tax credit will provide for an annual refund of 25% of the property taxes paid on that land, up to \$5,000 per year. It is available to all owners of easement-restricted land, regardless of when the easement was created, provided that the easement was wholly or partially donated to a land trust or a governmental agency. The Conservation Tax Credit will create a huge incentive for conservation all across the state and will not reduce local property tax revenues, so there is no negative impact on town and county budgets. Information can be found at the Land Trust Alliance's web site at <http://www.1ta.org>.



## HOLIDAY TREES *Beneficial to the Environment*

Traditional farm-grown trees are a natural air purifier. This agricultural crop helps to cycle gases in our portion of the earth's atmosphere and provide other year-round environmental and community benefits, including:

- Trees remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere
- For every pound of carbon stored by a tree, 2.7 pounds of oxygen are released to the atmosphere.
- Young trees remove more carbon than old trees; by the nature of the business, plantations maintain a younger crop of trees.
- Trees can be chipped to provide economical landscape mulch which can provide nutrients to the soil, moisture retention, weed control, and protection for plants.
- Tree plantations are managed crops which provide an alternative to taking trees from natural areas and preserve green space and wildlife habitat.
- Trees cool the air through evaporation.
- Tree plantations help to sustain a healthier environment and may have a role in reducing global warming.
- Discarded trees have been used to stabilize soil and in shoreline barriers to reduce erosion.
- Discarded trees can be placed into ponds to provide fish habitat and hiding places for aquatic wildlife.
- Visiting a "cut-your-own" tree farm can help people to understand the importance of the environment and agriculture, and the experience can be enjoyable and beneficial for personal health.

### Let the wildlife use your holiday tree!

Winter is a difficult time for many wild animals. During the winter months food is scarce and shelter is minimized. When you are finished enjoying your tree indoors redecorate it in the outdoors to provide food and shelter for birds, squirrels and other wild critters that live near your home. Redecorating your used holiday tree, or any tree growing on your land, makes a great winter's day project for the family, especially the kids.

Pine cones dipped in melted suet or smeared with peanut butter, or orange skin halves filled with suet and seeds can be hung from branches. Popcorn, raisins, peanuts, and cranberries can be strung and draped around the tree. These treats will attract songbirds. The boughs on the tree provide shelter from the snow and wind for all animals, especially during winter storms. A good place to locate the tree is near a feeder.

After the tree loses its needles, some feeding should be continued through the winter. Feeding wildlife creates an artificial concentration of animals in an area that would not be naturally able to support them. Cutting off the food source could result in stress for some of the animals that had come to rely on it.

This article was produced from information and excerpts from previous issues of the Erie County Cooperative Extension's *Extension Line Lookout* and *Horticulture Lookout*.

Visit us online at [www.ecswcd.org](http://www.ecswcd.org)

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 Michael Shinnick, Area I Ag. Engineer  
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District Board meetings are held at 9:00 AM on the second Tuesday of each month.

**Office Hours:**  
 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM Monday through Thursday  
 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM Friday

\* The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U. S. Department of Agriculture, does not endorse the products or services advertised in this publication. Views and opinions expressed are not those of NRCS, USDA or the Federal Government.

**2007 Conservation Tree & Shrub Seedling Program Order Form Inside**

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