

Clearwater

SWCD Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 3

Fall 2010



2011 platbook cover photo contest

In June, the Clearwater Soil & Water Conservation District invited photographers to enter photos that they deemed worthy into a photography competition vying for the cover picture of the updated platbooks.

The conservation district believes that in addition to conserving soil and waters, keeping our rural and city areas beautiful are important and worthy of being encouraged and acknowledged. So we asked for photos representing the diversity of life, environment and culture of Clearwater County and you delivered! The requirements were that the images be original and within in our county's lines. This could be anything along the lines of lands, waters, plants, animals or people. The contest was open to all ages and we separated the images into youth and adult categories.

Receiving 24 pictures in all for both categories, we displayed the photos at our booth at the county fair and fairgoers voted on their favorites. After 4 days of voting, Tammy Godwin's photo of "sunset at fair time" took the winner status in the adult division and Kaci Cooper's photo of "Lake Lomond on the Fourth of July" was voted the winner in the youth division.

We'd like to thank all of you who submitted a photo for the contest and encourage you to try again for the next platbook update.

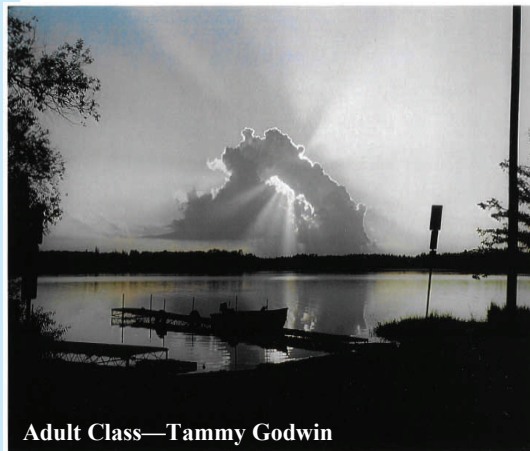
Special points of interest:

- A picturesque beginning
- Bug ~~OFF~~ ON!
- Oh deer!
- Sharing the cost
- Who says competition didn't hurt anything?
- A climb to the top

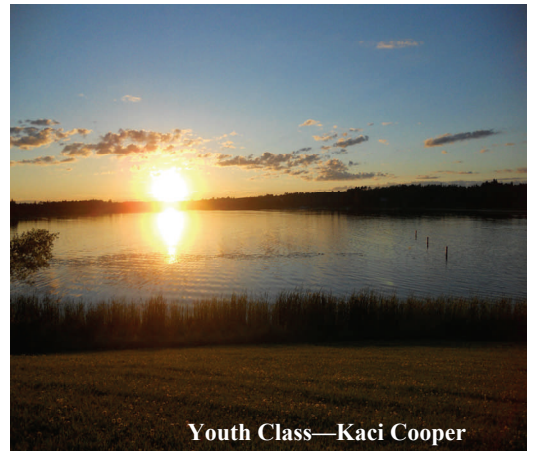
After a visit to the beach, it's hard to believe that we live in such a material world.
~Pam Shaw

Inside this issue:

Biological Weed Control	2
NRCS	3
State Cost Share	4
"Downtime" for one of our supervisors	4



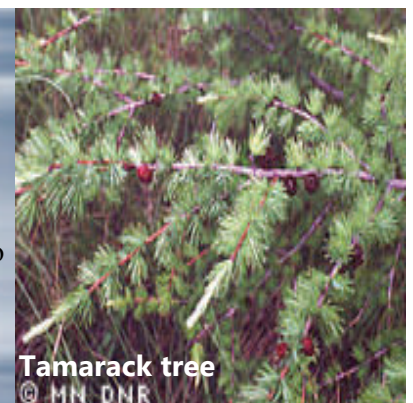
Adult Class—Tammy Godwin



Youth Class—Kaci Cooper

Spring Tree Sales

The Clearwater SWCD will be again selling a variety of trees and shrubs at a low cost during the spring of 2011. Watch for our order form in the December 6th or 13th edition of the Clearwater Shopper or on our website www.clearwaterswcd.org. It's a great time to be thinking about future conservation strategies for reducing heating and cooling costs.



Tamarack tree
© MN DNR

Noxious weeds and Biological control

Natural enemies are probably the most important and readily available biological control practice available to homeowners, gardeners and conservationists alike for controlling noxious weeds. Natural enemies occur in all areas, from the private garden to the open field. They are adapted to the habitat and to the target pest, and their use is generally simple and cost-effective. Lacewings, lady beetles, hover fly larvae, and parasitized aphid mummies are almost always present in aphid colonies. These naturally occurring biological controls are often susceptible to the same pesticides used to target other pests. Preventing the accidental eradication of natural enemies is termed "simple conservation" and can be avoided if the proper steps are taken.

Knapweed

Biological control is one method to reduce spotted knapweed infestations. Spotted knapweed proliferated in North America unchecked because the insects and diseases that control the plants in its native range were not in North America. The practice of spotted knapweed biological control reunites specialized insects with their host plant, spotted knapweed. These insects were tested extensively by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to ensure that they will not harm any plants other than knapweeds. The goal of biological control is not to eradicate the weed but to reduce the infestation to an acceptable level of control. It can take several years before a knapweed infestation is visibly reduced.

In Minnesota, the predominant biological control agents used include seedhead flies, seedhead weevils and root boring weevils. These three bioagents work in conjunction to control spotted knapweed. Seedhead flies are no longer actively collected and released in Minnesota because they are commonly recovered at infestations making new releases unnecessary. Seedhead weevils and root bearing weevils are collected from established sites and released at new sites.



LEAFY SPURGE

Biological control of leafy spurge in Minnesota

Since leafy spurge is native to Eurasia, it lacks the insects and diseases in North America that keep it in check in its native range. Biological control reunites the target plant with its natural insect and disease controls. The bioagents used for controlling leafy spurge were tested extensively to ensure that they will feed on the target weeds. Adult leafy spurge beetles feed on the leaves and lay their eggs at the base of the spurge plants. The eggs hatch and larvae feed on the roots over the winter until they pupate and emerge as adults the following summer. Most damage to the spurge plants is caused by the larvae feeding on the plant roots. It can take several years before a leafy spurge infestation is visibly reduced. Biological control is a cost effective, long term sustainable strategy to control leafy spurge.

Aphthona lacertosa adult.



USDA-ARIS



USDA-APHIS

Aphthona nigricutis adult.





Excessive deer browsing can cause damage to trees by creating double or multiple leaders, increase susceptibility to frost damage, weakens branches, creates poor form, provides a path for diseases or insect infestation, suppresses seedling height and increases mortality. What can you do?

Deer predation is nothing new. There are several products to deter deer from newly planted trees. They include physical barriers such as bud caps, fencing or individual tree shelters and chemical deterrents. Not one method that is completely effective and 50% reduction is considered successful.

Methods of Deterrents:

Replanting- if you have the resources, time and patience this may or may not work. Things to consider, try to plant a less desirable tree species along with a food plot to draw the deer from the tree planting area. Another strategy is to “hide” trees within undesirable tree species to create a visual and physical barrier.

Enclosures- Enclosures are physical barriers that keep deer out and away from the newly planting. Enclosures may fence out the area or may protect an individual plant or the terminal leader of the plant. Fence is the most effective enclosure method however they are expensive to install and require regular maintenance. Bud caps are effective where deer browsing is light but persistent. Bud caps are applied only on conifers (i.e. white pines) and basically a 4”x6” sheet of paper stapled to the tallest branch or terminal leader. The idea behind this is the deer will leave the terminal leader alone which is responsible for the year’s growth. Bud caps are installed in the fall prior to freeze up. Another type of enclosure is tree tubes or shelters. They are plastic tubes that enclose individual hardwoods. They serve 2 benefits: 1 is the tubes protect the trees from browse damage and the other is the tubes acts like a mini greenhouse for each tree. The drawbacks to the tree tubes are they are labor intensive to install, require some maintenance and not very esthetic.

Avoidance/Undesirability- Avoidance techniques use scare tactics to deter deer from browsing plants. Deer learn from negative feedback when trying to browse protected plants. Avoidance includes bad tasting chemicals, noise, and lights. Chemicals such as Deer Away Big Game Repellent and Plantskydd work well however they need to be reapplied every 2-3 months. Chemicals are typically applied in the spring and fall. They are more effective in smaller tree plantings rather than larger tree plantings. Noise and lights may work for a very short time but are not effective for a persistent problem because deer will get use to the noise and lights.

For more information please contact your local NRCS and SWCD office.

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Protect those new plantings, pick up the Plantskydd!



Plantskydd is an animal repellent developed in Sweden – now made in USA from 100% natural ingredients. The 'active' ingredient is dried blood (porcine and/or bovine) – recognized by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as an environmentally safe ingredient and is exempt from EPA federal pesticide registration.

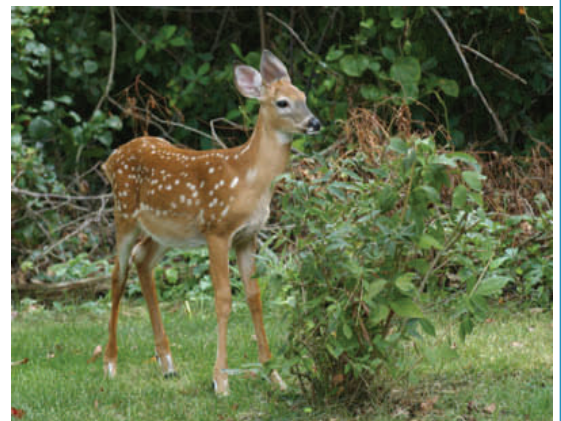
Is Plantskydd safe to use?

Plantskydd contains no synthetic additives, is non-toxic and is not harmful to animals or the environment when used as directed. Caution: wash hands after use; wash fruit and veggies before eating; do not ingest powder or liquid solution. Keep out of

reach of children and pets.

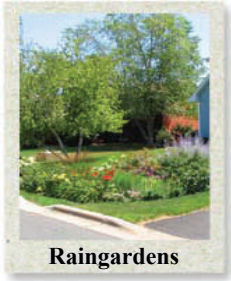
How does it work?

Animals avoid plants before they bite – not after! Plantskydd repels by emitting an odor that browsing animals associate with predator activity. The odor is not unpleasant to applicators or planters. Proven effective in extensive field trials against deer, elk, moose, rabbits, and opossum.





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Raingardens

MINNESOTA STATE COST-SHARE PROGRAM

Through the State Cost-Share program, landowners or occupiers can request financial and technical assistance from the Clearwater SWCD to implement state-approved conservation practices. The program, which was originally approved by the Minnesota Legislature in 1977, provides up to 75% of the total eligible costs per practice.

Grant funds are available annually to the SWCD's at the beginning of the state's fiscal year. In order for SWCD's to receive these grants, they must have on file at BWSR and approved annual plan of work, an annual report and a comprehensive plan or resolution to adopt the county's comprehensive local water management plan.

The projects are selected by local SWCD's that identify high priority erosion and water quality problems.

Eligible approved conservation practices projects are: critical area stabilization, diversions, field windbreaks, shelterbelts, grassed waterways, wastewater and feedlot runoff control, filter strips, sediment basins/raingardens, streambank, shore land and roadside protection, strip cropping, terraces and unused well sealing.

Contact the Clearwater SWCD for more information and applications.



Thousands of young trees, planted with care, expense and enthusiasm, die each year from the lack of just a few minutes of TLC. So time, money and efforts are wasted. Since bird nesting is done for the year, now is the time that trees need just a bit of attention.

Competition from other vegetation can be a problem and can severely restrict a young tree's growth. Use mulches around the tree to reduce soil temperature, especially if planted in full sun. The spreading of organic materials such as leaves, grass clippings or straw under and around trees will effectively control grass and weeds, yet still have an attractive appearance. Not only will mulching with organic materials prevent grass competition, it will also conserve moisture for tree roots using and stabilizing soil temperatures (since roots don't like extremely hot or cold soils). Young trees should be surrounded with at least three feet of thick mulch (3 to 4 inches deep) that is maintained throughout the growing season, but never piled on the trunk of the tree.

Keep the grass cleared from the base of the newly planted tree as long as possible. When summer rainfall is low and less than adequate, watering begins and the competition for water imposed by weeds or grass turf can substantially reduce tree growth. When competition from grass is eliminated, tree roots are more evenly distributed, root numbers are higher, and they utilize a larger volume of soil. Effective utilization of soil by a larger root system will mean that any added fertilizer will be utilized more fully.

Never pass up an opportunity to climb to the top!



This year at the Clearwater County Fair, the District 4 supervisor, Leonard Stinar made it to the top of the rock climbing wall. This is no easy task for a man without full use of his right hand to scale a steep wall with a variety of limited hand holds — but he did it. Stinar made it to the top of the wall and back down without any trouble. This is a tradition for Leonard with a goal to give it a whirl every year at the fair. We thought it was noteworthy because Leonard celebrated his 80th birthday a few weeks prior. Way to go Leonard! Photos taken by Tammy Godwin.



Stinar, beginning his climb



Almost there!



Now... it's just to get down...



Not bad for 80, huh??