



CONSERVATIONNews

Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District

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2011

Spring Garden Workshop

By Beth D'Aquila, Editor

The Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District recently held a, "Spring Garden Workshop". We appreciate the City of Gulfport for use of the Handsboro Community Center, and were delighted that Mayor George Schloegel was able to attend, and share a gardening story with us; we are certain he must be a master gardener.

The 60 participants particularly enjoyed featured speaker John Monroe, Lamar County SWCD. John gave an impressive presentation on "Vegetable Gardening in Containers". Most of the photos shown were taken in his backyard, and let me tell you, I wish he lived in Harrison County with the bumper crop that he grows. His backyard garden is beautifully landscaped with gardening containers, making it easier to garden. We appreciate John for sharing his knowledge on container gardening, and for also providing a blueprint for what he calls a "Go Garden". We have featured the "Go Garden" in our newsletter before, and it's very useful at schools and assisted-living facilities, as it is raised for easy access.

Mozart Dedeaux, Pascagoula River Audubon, wowed the audience with Vermicomposting. They really enjoyed his presentation, and especially enjoyed his portable Vermicomposting container that he used to show participants "hands-on" how to get started.

Dr. Chris Boyd, MSU Coastal Research & Extension and ETV, gave a presentation on soil testing. We have landowners who come in to request the MSU Extension Service-sponsored soil testing boxes, and everyone appreciated the demonstration to do it correctly.

Our very own Liz Cox, NRCS ACES and Earth Team Volunteer, kept the workshop going and shared useful information on this outreach program. Liz is an avid organic gardener and member of the Native Plant Society.

Special thanks to Martha Boyce, founder of the MS Renaissance Garden, who donated bags of spring flower bulbs, which were given to each participant. For more information, go to www.msrengarden.org.



Liz Cox shared her passion for gardening at the Spring Garden Workshop. Thanks also to WLOX and The Sun Herald for the great coverage.



Featured speakers Mozart Dedeaux, Dr. Chris Boyd, and John Monroe shared a wealth of knowledge on gardening with participants.



Earth Team Volunteers Jackye Ballard and Chris Williams-White show off their free bulbs from MS Renaissance Garden with Tyree Harrington.



Mozart Dedeaux gives hands-on instructions to Flowers White, Chris Williams-White, and others at the Spring Garden Workshop.

Project WILD Teacher Workshop

- When:** June 24, 2011 9:00am - 3:30pm
(lunch provided)
- Where:** Harrison County School District Office,
11072 Hwy. 49 North, Gulfport
- What:** Project WILD capitalizes on the natural interest that children and adults have in wildlife by providing hands-on activities that enhance student learning in all subject and skill areas K-12.
- Who:** Teachers of all subject and grade levels, scout leaders, camp leaders
- Contact** Beth D'Aquila, District Coordinator
Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District
12238 Ashley Drive, Gulfport, MS 39503
831-1647 or beth.daquila@ms.nacdn.net
- Workshop fee paid for by grant through Coastal Plains RC&D
 - Registration deadline is June 17, 2011.
 - Workshop requires 6 contact hours
 - Participants can earn .6 CEUs from Mississippi College
 - Send name, phone, email and school organization

In the end we will conserve only what we love, love only what we understand, and understand only what we are taught.

NWTF/NRCS LONGLEAF PINE CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT

WOULD YOU ...

- > **LIKE A FREE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PLAN**
written for your land for timber and wildlife?
- > **LIKE TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**
to restore Longleaf Pine to your land?
- > **LIKE TO HAVE WILD TURKEY**
brood or nesting cover on your land like this?
- > **LIKE TO ENCOURAGE MORE**
pollinator insects like butterflies on your land?
- > **LIKE TO ENHANCE YOUR LONGLEAF PINE**
plant community as a natural food plot through the use of prescribed fire?

Contact
Matthew Brock
MS NWTF Project Biologist
601-402-1172
mbrock@nwtf.net



Out and About the County

by Dan Longino, Field Technician

With memories of Robert Frost...two log-trucks emerged from the clear-cut wood and, wishing I could follow both, long I stood. One took the open and wider road and the other a less-traveled route, and I, I followed the less-traveled road and that made all the difference.

Forest landowners make major decisions about their property and do so only once or twice in their lives or every twenty-five years or so. Loggers deal with such landowners dozens or hundreds of times during their working years .

Years ago, working for the state forestry commission, I had to spend many bug-bitten hours in the woods waiting to follow a logger who had a state contract to cut 16th section pine timber but was suspected of illegally cutting large hardwood trees also. The suspicions were true. The logger was administered a brisk tap on the wrist and my public timber detective days were over.

Two neighbors, Mr. Willie Prophet and Ms. Betty Wont had 40-acre mature timber tracts to sell. Ms. Betty hired a certified forester who marketed her timber to the highest bidder after spending days in the woods to estimate the value of the standing trees, plan access and replanting and locate best local timber mills. Mr. Willie called several

folks with log trucks and said he wanted to sell his trees. One logger came over for a cup of coffee and dumped from a brown paper bag, 150 hundred dollar bills on the kitchen table all nicely crumpled together. A deal was soon struck. Both forty acre tracts were soon cut. Ms. Betty, after paying her caretaker forester and prying various government tax leeches off her limbs, banked over thirty thousand dollars for her forty acres. Mr. Willie went to the Bassmaster State Fair and was hooking up his brand new \$ 12,000 wave-runner when an IRS man showed him a badge and asked Mr. Willie where he got \$12,000 cash. (All did not go completely bad for Mr. Willie as he turned in his logger to the IRS for a 15% snitching fee. Except for vandalism, erosion and yearly wildfires, his forty acre tract is in pretty good shape.) Ms. Betty, or her grateful heirs, will have a fine piece of property to pass on to future stewards of the land. Folks, hire a certified forester.

We all have opportunities to have an impact on our environment. A major local problem is invasive weeds such as Cogongrass, which has been covering most of our highways and many pastures with "Spring snow" seeds and continues to ruin lawns and lower property value. Contact our office for forms to fill out for free chemicals provided by Coastal Plains RC&D and MS Department of Agriculture.

7L Farms Field Day - Fun and Educational

By Beth D'Aquila, Editor

Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District's Farm Field Day was a fun hands-on learning experience for the 200 1st and 2nd grade students of Quarles Elementary. The Farm Field Day was held at 7L Farms in Wiggins, which is owned by Jimmy Levens. 7L Farms was an ideal site for the students to learn about such topics as: water cycle, wildlife, veggie relay, livestock, aquatics, water pollution prevention, and soils.

The District really appreciates the assistance of Earth Team Volunteers Chelsea Harrington and Darnita Harrington, Billy Davis, Lance Middleton and John Henry Anderson with MSWCC, Brad Jones with

MSU Extension Service, recent retiree Chris Lagarde, Dr. Chris Boyd with MSU Coastal Research & Extension (and Earth Team Volunteer), Amanda Gaskin with Coastal Plains RC&D, and Melissa Russell, Tyree Harrington, and Dan Longino with NRCS.

Special thanks to Jimmy Levens and the crew at 7L Farms for accommodating us. For more information on this impressive farm, go to www.7LFarms.com. The students wrote thank you notes to 7L Farms, but I especially enjoyed the drawings. The students particularly liked the horse, cows, king snake, and snapping turtle. How's that for a fun farm field day?



Brad Jones demonstrates the proper way to handle a horse to some of the 200 Quarles Elementary students.



Dr. Chris Boyd demonstrates to Quarles Elementary students how to prevent water pollution.



Tyree Harrington teaches students the importance of soils along with Earth Team Volunteer Chelsea Harrington.



Chris Lagarde teaches students about aquatics at the Farm Field Day held at 7L Farms in Wiggins.

MSU Extension Service Lunch and Learn Gardening

The MSU Extension Service in Harrison County, located at 2315 17th St. in Gulfport, will be hosting a "Lunch & Learn" Series on the 3rd Thursday of each month through November from noon till 1 p.m. These programs are presented by Dr. Wayne Porter via interactive video. Please call 865-4227 to reserve a seat.

June 16 - "What's Eating My Garden" Basic identification and control of common insect pests in the vegetable garden.

July 21 - "Rain Barrel Basics, Free Water for the Taking" How to construct and use a rain barrel.

August 18 - "Cool-season Gardening, Now...You've Got to be Kidding!" Planning and planting your fall garden.

September 15 - "Wildflowers for Mississippi Landscapes" Best wildflowers and how to grow them.

October 20 - "Chase Away the Winter Blues" The basics of houseplants and their care.

November 17 - "So...You Want a Home Orchard?" Basics of growing tree fruit at home.

Arbor Day A Community Success

Harrison County Soil & Water Conservation District's Arbor Day Tree Giveaway was a success, thanks to our Commissioners, Staff and Earth Team Volunteers! Together, we distributed 4,000 hardwood seedlings, 300 3-gallon live oaks, and 1,500 Southern Magnolias, free to the landowners of Harrison County.



Earth Team Volunteer Babe Buckley (and Joe Buckley-not shown) assisted the District in distributing free tree seedlings on Arbor Day.



Earth Team Volunteer Chris Williams-White distributes free tree seedlings to military personnel on Arbor Day.



Dan Batson, owner of GreenForest Nursery in Perkinston, with a couple of the 1,500 Southern Magnolia he donated for Arbor Day.



Commissioner Greg Crochet helps a landowner select one of the 3-gallon live oaks the District distributed on Arbor Day.

Invasive Species Cost Billions Each Year

By Tyree Harrington, NRCS District Conservationist

It's not something most people think about every day, but the problem of invasive species has a huge economic impact on the United States. One report cited in the national management plan for control of invasives estimates about \$140 billion in damages to U.S. crops, industry, the environment, and public health.

Invasive plant or animal species are "alien" or non-native to a particular ecosystem; their introduction can cause serious environmental harm or harm to human health. And they are everywhere. Some examples:

1. The Formosan termite causes \$300 million in property damage annually in New Orleans alone.
2. Zebra mussels invaded the Great Lakes through ship ballast water, and now clog water intake pipes to many industries.

3. The nutria, a large rodent native to South America originally imported for a private zoo, is now devastating large wetland areas in the wild.
4. The Asian long-horned beetle, which likely arrived in solid wood pallets made in China, is causing the destruction of valuable trees.
5. Purple loosestrife has beautiful purple flowers, but it's choking out native plants in wetlands and waterfowl habitats. Each plant produces more than a million seeds.
6. The West Nile virus, transmitted to humans by mosquitoes that fed on the blood of infected animals, is a growing health problem in the U.S.

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Stewardship Poster Contest - Forests for People

By Beth D'Aquila, Editor

The District recently held their Stewardship Poster Contest, with nearly 400 entries in two categories. The national theme this year was, "Forests for People", which encouraged understanding the importance of forests in our daily lives; as forests play a critical role in providing clean water, healthy wildlife habitat, and products we use every day.

Special thanks to Earth Team Volunteers Darnita Harrington, Calvinia Switzer, and Wilda Switzer, along with NRCS Melissa Russell, who sorted, judged, and made certificates for each student. It was a huge undertaking, and I was grateful for the assistance.

Each student received a "Forests for People" certificate and bookmark. Winners in each category are listed below, and received the following:

1st Place - \$25; 2nd Place - \$20; 3rd Place - \$15.

2nd/3rd Grade Category:

- 1st Place Ellie Diaz, St. Vincent de Paul
- 2nd Place Leigha Nicole West, St. Vincent de Paul
- 3rd Place Kelsie Frederick, St. Vincent de Paul

4th–6th Grade Category:

- 1st Place Gary Nguyen, D'Iberville Middle School
- 2nd Place Anthony McKay, Bayou View Middle School
- 3rd Place Miles Daniels, Bayou View Middle School



4th-6th Grade Winners: 2nd Place Anthony McKay and 3rd Place Miles Daniels with their teacher at Bayou View Middle School.



2nd/3rd Grade Winners: Ellie Diaz, Leigha Nicole West, and Kelsie Frederick. Ellie Diaz also won 1st at the South Area level-congratulations!



4th-6th Grade 1st Place Winner Gary Nguyen with his teachers at D'Iberville Middle School.



Earth Team Volunteers Calvinia Switzer and Wilda Switzer work on the poster contest. ETV Darnita Harrington (not shown) worked as well.

Invasive Species continued from page 4

- 7. Imported red fire ants give painful and potentially deadly stings to humans, livestock and pets in the southern U.S.
- 8. Invading cheatgrass has increased the fire cycle in the West by 20-fold.

Invasive species often have few natural enemies in their new environment, and out-compete existing species. They have had a

negative impact and contributed to the listing of a third to half of the native species on the Federal Endangered Species list. For example, the brown tree snake arrived in Guam in the 1940's aboard military planes. An aggressive predator, it has driven nine of Guam's eleven native land bird species to extinction. A federal council now coordinates prevention and early control methods of invasives.

Gardening Tips for Parents and Grandparents

Want to share your love of wildlife gardening with your kids or grandkids? Here are some tips for making gardening with kids an educational, safe and enjoyable experience for the entire family:

1. Visit places where plants thrive.
2. Survey the natural treasures in your own backyard.
3. Identify a spot on your property for a children's garden.
4. Have your soil tested for lead as children are highly susceptible to poisoning.
5. Sow fast-germinating seeds or introduce transplants that are quick to flower or fruit.
6. Choose plants that will excite the senses.
7. Woo wildlife, which will wow your kids, by focusing on perennials that are native to your region.
8. Add other wildlife-attracting elements to your habitat: water, shelter and places to raise young.

9. Provide kid-sized tools and teach young gardeners how to use them safely.
10. Eliminate use of toxic chemical fertilizers, weed killers and pesticides. When necessary, use natural alternatives instead.
11. Practice good hygiene. When it comes to gardening, getting dirty is half the fun for children.
12. Encourage children to do a share of all the garden chores but be mindful of their limits. Give help as needed.
13. Visit the garden with your kids every day to make sure you don't miss its rewards.
14. Take advantage of teaching moments.
15. Encourage children to share their garden with friends and family.
16. Invite reflections of each day's gardening experiences: on, what was seen and so on.

Adapted from "Plant a Garden, Help a Child Grow" by Kelly L. Senser.

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Published by

**The Harrison County Soil & Water
Conservation District**

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The Harrison County Soil and Water Conservation District holds a regular monthly board meeting on the first Thursday of each month.

This meeting is open to the public and held at the District Office, 12238 Ashley Dr., Gulfport, at 11:30 a.m. This board meets to administer the program of soil and water conservation in Harrison County. An equal opportunity employer.

Visit the Harrison County
Soil and Water Conservation
District website at

<http://hcswcd.co.harrison.ms.us>

Squash Supreme

2 cups yellow squash

2 eggs (beaten)

3/4 cup mayonnaise

1 cup cheddar cheese (grated)

1 Vidalia onion (chopped)

1/2 stick butter

1/2 cup Ritz crackers (crushed)

Cook squash until done; drain and mash. Saute chopped onion in butter until tender. Mix together remaining ingredients except crackers and add onions and squash. Pour mixture into buttered pan and top with cracker crumbs. Preheat oven to 400 degrees and bake for 30 minutes.

Cogongrass Sprayer

A 20-gallon cogongrass sprayer is available to Harrison County landowners. To lease the sprayer, a lease agreement and refundable equipment deposit must be in the District office prior to use. Rental fee is \$5 per day. Please contact the District office for more details, schedule use or to report infestations of cogongrass, at 831-1647.

Seed Grain Drill

A 7-foot seed grain drill is available to Harrison County Landowners. To lease the grain drill, a lease agreement and refundable equipment deposit must be in the District office prior to use. Rental fee is \$5 per acre based on acre meter reading plus \$10 per day. Please contact the District office at 831-1647 for further details and to schedule use.