



Shore Conserver

Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District • *promoting locally led conservation*
22545 Center Parkway • Accomac, VA 23301 • (757)787-0918 • www.esswcd.org

November 2014

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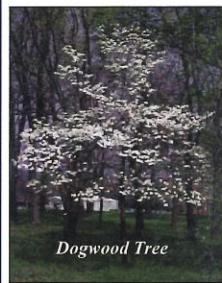
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Little Bluestem grass

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Dogwood Tree

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Female Cardinal on a Juniper

When it's snowing or there's fresh snow on the ground, your yard can seem like a winter wonderland; otherwise, your yard in the winter months may seem drab and lifeless. But you can have lots of color in your yard if you plant trees that flower in winter, shrubs that produce colorful berries after the fall, and vibrant cool season grasses that flourish in cold weather.

Of course the first thing you think is, there are no flowers in winter. Well, Pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*) blooms purple flowers up to December and are great for rain gardens. If you like unique looking plants, Witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) may be what you are looking for to add color to your yard.

The flowers bloom yellow or orange until December and the plant stays green into winter. Trees, shrubs and tall grasses provide food, shelter and areas for nesting for birds. Witch hazel attracts cardinals, bluebirds and other animals which will indirectly add color and life to your yard. Crabapple trees (*Malus spp.*) have



Two Witch hazel trees

beautiful flowers in early June; however, in the winter, it is the fruit that will give your yard that touch of color. The color of the petite tart apples can range from red to yellow. Many crabapple varieties can be quite attractive due to the picturesque contorted twisting of the branches. The trees attract robins, woodpeckers and cedar waxwings to your yard with the edible crabapples. It's good to have birds visit your yard because of the mosquitoes and tons of insects they eat. Over 90 species of birds eat the berries on Dogwood trees (*Cornus florida*). Dogwoods are good to plant at the edge of your woods or in your yard. They give a striking contrast from the darker grays and browns of winter with their white leaves that greatly resemble flowers.

Possumhaw (*Viburnum medium*) and Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*) shrubs provide an abundance of color in winter with their bright red and orange berries. They show up really well, because their leaves drop off exposing the remaining berries. Bluebirds especially like these berries.

Beautiful ornamental grasses can add vibrant color to your landscaping. Little Bluestem grass (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) is an excellent native grass that is bluish-green and grows in tall clumps. It is good for erosion control and is deer resistant. It turns a striking red-orange in the fall. It blooms a fluffy silver seed head in early fall and is ornamental through winter. It makes a great accent in your yard or in a rock garden for instance.



Winterberry

Even green can add to the colorfulness of your yard in the middle of winter when the deciduous trees have lost their leaves and their bark is a dull dormant gray. Evergreens like Junipers (*Juniperus virginiana*), Southern Waxmyrtles or Bayberry (*Morella cerifera*) and Christmas ferns (*Polystichum acrostichoides*) are great to keep green color around your yard all year. Evergreens provide shelter for birds year-round. Waxmyrtles and Junipers both produce blue/silver berries on the female plant year round that warblers and cardinals eat. You'll need two waxmyrtles or two junipers, a male and a female to pollinate the female to produce berries.

Continued on page 6...

Cover Crop Planting Reports due to the District as soon as planting is complete

Conservation Awards 2014

Page 2



Clean Water Farm Award

The DCR 2014 Clean Water Farm Award awarded to VA farmers who are exemplary in their protection of soil and water resources was awarded to Richard F. Hall, III. Rick attended the University of Florida's College of Agriculture receiving a degree in Food and Resource Economics. He has been farming for 37 years and owns Loblolly Farms in Accomac, VA. These days he farms 3200 acres in a corn/wheat/beans crop rotation with various cover crops.

Through the VA Best Management Program administered by the District, he has participated in all available cover crop programs since 1996 as well as kept current nutrient management plans since 1995. The last two years Rick has enhanced his nutrient management by using the GreenSeeker to precisely apply nitrogen at variable rates totaling over 2,000 acres of his cropland. Through the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Rick worked with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Services Agency (FSA) in 2001 to install riparian buffers. Rick took 17+ acres of his cropland out of production to create this riparian buffer of hardwood trees and herbaceous cover around his fields to filter sediment and nutrients for at over 15 years. He has expanded irrigation storage and improved irrigation efficiency to reduce dependency on the Shore's limited groundwater resources. His buffers of warm season grasses and forbs capture nutrients and sediment runoff as well as provide habitat and food for wildlife such as quail. He grows all of his soybeans and almost 100% of his corn in continuous no-till.



Conservation Teacher Awards

The Conservation Teacher Awards were presented to Chicki Jo Jester and Fred Gers who have incorporated natural resources and conservation practices to help prepare today's student as tomorrow's leader. **Chicki Jo Jester** was born and raised on the Eastern Shore. After graduating from Central High School, Mrs. Jester attended Virginia Wesleyan College and earned a BS in Art. She returned to the Eastern Shore where she taught for 35 years, retiring at the end of this past school year. Mrs. Jester and her students have participated in the annual Conservation Poster Contest for 30 years. At least one of her students has always placed at the local level. Using Art to teach conservation is a great way for students to really see the natural world around them. By getting her students involved in the poster contest, Chicki Jo was inspiring artists and environmental stewards.



Fred Gers started in the environmental field because he enjoyed the outdoors growing up on the Eastern Shore. Hunting, fishing and water sports gave him an early appreciation for the environment. This appreciation led him to Virginia Tech, where the choice of environmental science as a major seemed a perfect fit. Mr. Gers graduated from Virginia Tech with a BS in Environmental Science and received his masters in Geoscience from Mississippi State University. Mr. Gers has supported District's Envirothon competition for over 16 years as an Envirothon Coach. He got involved with the Envirothon program because he believes the Envirothon program gives students authentic insights into the world of science. Students see how science is used in many different fields and gain a respect for the business of agriculture.



Conservation Farmer Award

The District's 2014 Conservation Farmer Award presented to **Kemper Goffigon IV**. Mr. Goffigon is a 13th generation farmer in lower Northampton County. The Goffigons have been farming this area since 1621. His operation, "Farmer's Delight", is a 375-acre operation in a primarily corn/wheat/beans rotation. However, he always tries to keep one vegetable crop planted annually. Farmer's Delight has seen a wide variety of crop production over the years including potatoes, cucumbers, onions, can-tomatoes and butter beans. Kemper began farming in 1980 and had also been a waterman harvesting seaside clams in the early 2000s at Wise Point. He enrolls his farm in best management practices with the District including nutrient management planning and the annual cover crop program. Mr. Goffigon also works with NRCS to use irrigation water management for the pivot installed through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) in 2011. He performs several voluntary methods of conservation including maintaining thick hedgerows to separate his field blocks which reduce wind erosion and sediment transportation and maintains a thick buffer around his irrigation ponds. The abundant vegetation provides a natural filter from runoff entering the water.

Forestry Conservationist Award

Robbie Lewis, Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) Area Forester, nominated **Clarence Lewis** (not pictured) for the 2014 Forestry Conservationist Award. For years, VDOF has worked with Mr. Lewis on his wooded properties concentrated mostly in Accomack County conducting traditional forest management practices for timber production, wildlife habitat enhancement, and soil and water conservation. Clarence leaves edges of tracts alone to create early successional habitat needed by quail and has a mix of planted and natural loblolly pine stands which enhance habitat for turkeys and deer. Mr. Lewis has worked with VDOF to rearrange cover as wildlife travel corridors and food patches for wildlife along the edges of timber harvests bordering wetlands. Buffer strips and patches of early successional forest cover serve as storm water and shallow ground water filters, prevent sediment movement, and act as wind breaks.



Student of the Year

The District recognized **Kristina Dedicatoria** with the 2014 Conservation Student Award. Kristina Dedicatoria graduated from Arcadia in June and is attending Coastal Carolina University where she is enrolled in the Marine Science program. Kristina received 1st place in Environmental Awards in the Annual Science Fair her junior and senior year. She was a member of the Arcadia Envirothon Team her junior and senior years. The Arcadia Envirothon Team placed 1st at the local competition and traveled to compete at the State level both years Kristina was on the team. Kristina is actively involved with Waste Watchers.



Scholarships

This year, the District's Endowment Committee awarded two W. Foster Fletcher Scholarships in the amount of \$500 each to **Charlotte Olmsted** of Nandua High School who is attending Virginia Tech majoring in Environmental Engineering; and **Zuri Gagnon** (not pictured) of Northampton High School who is attending George Mason University majoring in Environmental and Conservation Biology.



THE XERCES SOCIETY
FOR INVERTEBRATE CONSERVATION

Pollinator Conservation Short Course

Thursday, November 20
9am—4pm

Eastern Shore Community
College Workforce Development
Center

Cost:

First 60 registrants: \$25
then \$45/person

After November 5: \$50/person

For more information
and to
register, please visit
www.xerces.org/event
or contact

Jenny Templeton, NRCS:
(757) 787-0918 x124
jennifer.templeton@va.usda.gov

Learn how to attract native pollinators to your orchard, farm, or garden!

This full-day training will provide you with the latest science-based approaches to increasing pollinator populations for improved pollination and crop production. You will leave with the tools necessary to assess, create, protect, and manage habitat for these vital insects.

Topics include:

Principles of pollinator biology

Economics of insect pollination

Basic bee field identification

Evaluating pollinator habitat

Selection of plants for pollinator enhancement sites

Land management practices for pollinator protection

Financial and technical resources

Registrants will receive the Xerces Society's Pollinator Conservation Toolkit, which includes the Xerces' latest book, *Attracting Native Pollinators: Protecting North America's Bees and Butterflies*, as well as habitat management guidelines and relevant USDA-NRCS and extension publications.

Intended Audience: The content of this course is tailored to the needs of farmers, landowners, NRCS, SWCD, Cooperative Extension, and state department of agriculture, as well as crop consultants, natural resource specialists, and non-governmental conservation organization staff.



PARTNERS



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service



FARM CREDIT

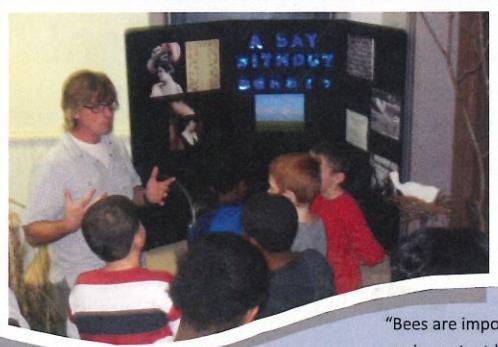


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Snapshots of the Watershed Festival 2014

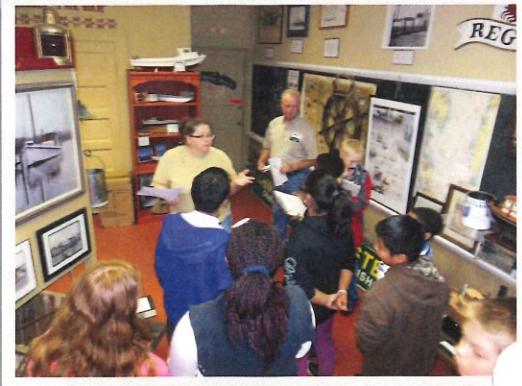
Watershed Festival 2014

For the first time, the Eastern Shore Environmental Education Council partnered with Accomack County Schools and Shore Christian Academy to bring all of their sixth graders to the Watershed Festival. The Watershed Festival was funded by the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District. There were over 365 sixth graders. The students learned about the Watershed of the 1800s compared to the Watershed of today. Students visited different exhibitors where they learned about pollinators, groundwater, reptiles, water quality, water usage, horseshoe crabs, water pollution, egrets, cholera, oyster castles, oysters, and much more. The sixth graders also got to visit the Watermen's Museum which is located within the Historic Onancock School. This Watershed Festival is part of a three part program called a MWEE which is a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience. The first part, the students were given a lesson in the classroom of what a watershed is and learned their watershed addresses. The actual Festival was the second stage of the MWEE. The third stage was a reflection where the students viewed a documentary "Watermen" produced by the Barrier Island Center. Students also wrote about the Watershed Festival. Snapshots and quotes can be seen in this publication following this article. A big thank you to the Master Gardener volunteer group leaders and all 17 exhibitors who were instrumental in bringing the information to the students.

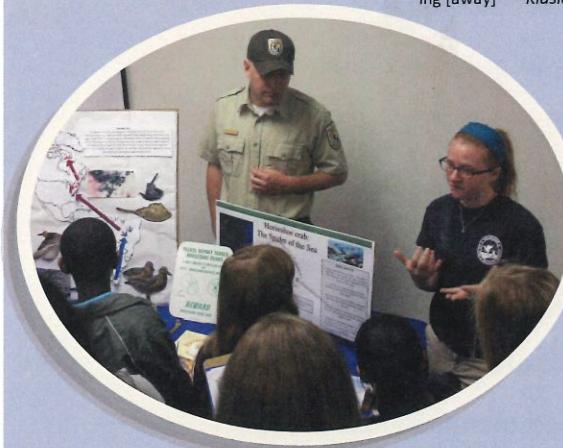


"I have learned that there are six states that make up the Chesapeake Watershed. The states are NY, PA, VA, MD, DE and WV. ...People want the bay and beaches clean. If we want to help, we should stop throwing our trash outside the car window." —Karen, Arcadia Middle School

"Bees are important because they pollinate and plants are important because they prevent the soil from washing [away]" —Kiasia Lyons, Arcadia Middle School



"So we need to reduce, reuse and recycle." —Jacob Hall



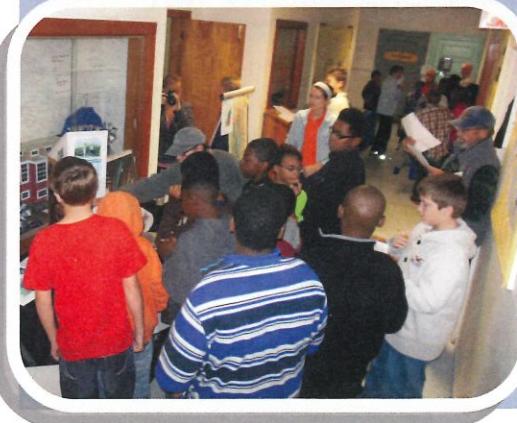
"Thomas Jefferson's dad was a map writer. ...we only [can] drink one percent of rain water that falls." —Finn Bull, Arcadia Middle School



"Oysters filter to make our water cleaner." —Lashuan G., Arcadia Middle School

"Captain John Smith's map was used for 60 years."

—Armonte' Dickerson, Arcadia Middle School



"...rich people back in the 1800s wore big feathery hats. That means they had to kill birds for the hats. That is what I learned today." —Alanna J. Woods, Arcadia Middle School



"I [have] never been... up close to a bee before...the queen bee...she was beautiful."

—Bonnie Kellam of Arcadia Middle School

"A new fact that I learned is that distilled water does not have any minerals." —Miguel, Arcadia Middle School

Snapshots of Watershed Festival



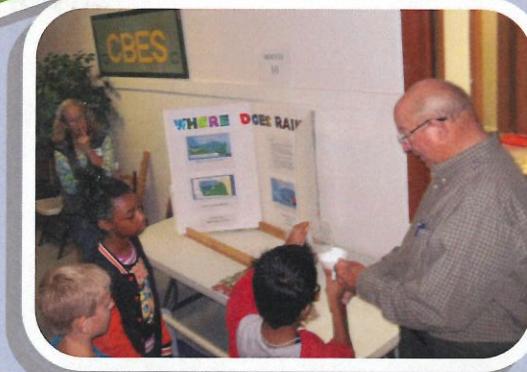
"I learned that dirt is a type of pollution (sediment pollution)." —Kamryn Tripp, Arcadia Middle School

"Did you know oysters filter our water, and if we pollute our water too much, then oysters can't survive. I learned that [one] oyster filters more than 50 gallons of water [a day]. I also learned that since there is so much pollution in the water that there isn't as many fish, and that means there are less watermen out there." —Kaylynne Napoleone, Arcadia Middle School



"What I found out about the watershed is...to not throw trash out of the window and if I see trash on the ground, I will pick it up and throw it away so it will not flow [into] the Bay." —Dayanara Velazquez, Arcadia Middle School

"I learned that we have polluted the Bay so much that it's dirty and killed off lots of fish. The Bay used to be clean and fish were plentiful, but we have hurt it...." —Anthony Brown, Arcadia Middle School



"Did you know from the 1800s to now we have used over four million horseshoe crabs? People also use the horseshoe crab's blood for medicine. Also the horseshoe crab has blue blood." —Robbie, Arcadia Middle School

"In the 1800s they threw away paper. Animals get hurt by trash, so that's why we need to recycle. Trash can be made into new things." —Shadonna, Arcadia Middle School



"I learned that there are many pollinators like bees, hummingbirds, beetles, bats and lots of others..." —Ashley Collins, Arcadia High School



New NRCS District Conservationist



Tina Jerome (pictured left) is leaving Virginia NRCS at the end of October. She has accepted the NRCS State Resource Conservationist position in Athens, Georgia. Tina has been working in the NRCS Accomac branch since 2007. She will be missed. Jane Corson-Lassiter (pictured on right) is replacing Tina Jerome as District Conservationist. Jane has worked for NRCS since 2009 as the Resource Conservation & Development Coordinator and subsequently the Farm Pilot Project Coordination Regional Director. Though Jane is not new to the area or NRCS, we would like to welcome her into her new role as District Conservationist.

22nd Annual Birding Festival

The Wildlife Birding Festival is a three day



Painting by Taylor Lilliston of Nandua High

internationally recognized festival beginning on the first Friday of October each year. The Birding Festival celebrates the arrival of migratory birds to the Shore

with tours, trips, exhibitors and vendors. The District has a booth with hands-on activities every year. There were over 225 registered attendees, over 500 people attended the Cape Charles Fire Hall Exhibitors, over 100 people visited Kiptopeke State Park and 101 children participated in the Passport Program! The Flight of the Raptor visited the Cape Charles Christian School and Occohannock Elementary School on Friday, October 10, 2014.

Coastal Zone Management of DEQ sponsors a poster contest in the local high schools on the Shore and the winning artwork is the Birding Festival's yearlong signature logo. **Taylor Lilliston** of Nandua H.S. was this year's winner. She painted a tri-colored heron in the marsh.

Colorful Winter... *Continued from page 1....**Christmas fern*

Just keep in mind—native plants are adapted to the region's climate, handle drought better, and are more resistant to insect pests in this area. Thriving plants are better able to resist diseases. All the plants mentioned in this article are native to Virginia. When looking for these plants, be sure to look for the scientific name. Planting native and planting for color do not have to be exclusive. So you have two good reasons for adding these plants and more to your yard, planting native and creating a colorful winter after all.■

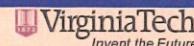
Youth Conservation Camp

The Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) has hosted the Youth Conservation Camp located on the campus of Virginia Tech annually for 38 years. Partnering with Ye Accawmacke Garden Club, the District sponsored **Brittnae' Patterson** (pictured in orange shirt), a homeschooler from Exmore, VA for the 2014 Conservation Camp held in July. Campers experience amazing activities condensed into a weeklong adventure learning about VA's natural resources from conservation professionals and faculty from Tech including a hike to the famous Cascades Waterfalls, a trip to Claytor Lake State Park, a canoe trip on the New River and activities about shoreline erosion and water quality. For more information on Youth Conservation Camp, contact the District at (757)787-0918.

The Shore Conserver is published quarterly by the Eastern Shore SWCD to provide information to land users. The District customarily meets monthly on the second Wednesday of the month at 5:00pm at the USDA Service Center in Accomac, VA. The public is welcome to attend. To be added to the mailing list, please contact the District office at 757-787-0918 x101.

The Commonwealth of Virginia supports the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District through financial and administrative assistance provided by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

All programs and services of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District and the Natural Resources Conservation Service are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.

**SAVE THE DATE**

For the:

Eastern Shore Agricultural Conference & Trade Show

On:

February 10 - 11, 2015

At the:

**Eastern Shore Community College
Workforce Development Center
29300 Lankford Highway
Melfa, VA 23410**

For more information contact:

Ursula Deitch
Northampton County VCE
757-607-6133 or utankard@vt.edu

or

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757-709-2342 or tmjlong@vt.edu



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