

January 2014

Issue 8



Cheshire County Conservation District

# Conservation Connections

Working with Landowners and Communities of Cheshire County to promote the conservation and sustainable use of our natural resources.

## 2014 Conservation Plant Sale

*Support Conservation Efforts while Enhancing the Wildlife Habitat and Edible Landscape on Your Property !*

The Cheshire County Conservation District is currently holding its annual Conservation Plant Sale. We are offering a variety of top quality evergreen and deciduous trees, wildlife and landscaping shrubs, perennials, ornamentals as well as berries and fruit trees.

Many of the species we offer are native. For this reason they are healthy, hardy plants adapted to our local growing conditions. Once established they require less watering, fertilizers, and pesticides. Plants are selected for environmental benefits such as, refor-

estation, wind protection, shade, bank



stabilization, and wildlife food and cover.

This year we are working with Fedco to bring you top quality plants and Wichland Woods to bring you mushrooms for your

backyard.

All of the proceeds from the sale will benefit conservation efforts in Cheshire County. Thus, in addition to improving your landscape you are helping fund conservation projects in your local community. For more information or to receive additional order forms, contact the Conservation District office at 756-2988 ext. 116 or [info@cheshireconservation.org](mailto:info@cheshireconservation.org)

**Deadline for orders is: Wednesday, March 12<sup>th</sup>.**

**Pick up is Sat. April 26<sup>th</sup> from 9am-1pm at Alyson's Orchard.**

Look Inside for Order Form and Plant Descriptions.

***Reasons to Buy Your Plants from the Conservation District:***

- Native species
- Hearty & Healthy Northern Grown Varieties
- Supports small-scale agriculture and a responsible cooperative business model

***Also Available:***

- Mushrooms from Wichland Woods

## Join the CCCD Email List

If you would like to stay updated on events and opportunities related to natural resources conservation, farms, and/or forestry please consider joining the CCCD e-news contact list. Please send an email to

**[info@cheshireconservation.org](mailto:info@cheshireconservation.org)**

And let us know you would like our e-news updates. Thanks!

## Do you own or manage a farm?

## Do you have forestland?

If yes, give us a call to find out more about how you could benefit from Farm Bill Conservation Programs with the Natural Resources Conservation Service 756-2988 ext.116.

**9:30am Getting Started with Fruit Trees and Shrubs Workshop**

**11:00am Backyard Mushroom Demonstration**



## *Upcoming Workshops on April 26th at Alyson's Orchard: Planting and Pest Management and Backyard Mushroom Demonstration*

### **Getting Started with Fruit Trees and Shrubs Workshop**

Are you interested in learning more about how to take care of the fruit trees and bushes on your property? Carl Majewski, **UNH Cooperative Extension** Agricultural Resources Educator, will demonstrate planting and pest management techniques and discuss site considerations. Carl is always willing to answer your questions and supply helpful fact sheets. Feel free to join us at this

informal, but informational workshop.

### **Backyard Mushroom Demonstration**

Here is a great opportunity to learn more about how to add mushrooms to your garden. Dave & Jenny Wichland, owners of

**Wichland Woods**, will take you through the process of inoculating a log and answer all your questions about backyard mushrooming. Wichland Woods is a unique, local myco-business located in the Monadnock Region of N.H.

**To register please contact the CCCD.**

**Interested in growing mushrooms?**

**Get started by ordering some today!**

**Wichland Woods Mushrooms are now available in the CCCD Conservation Plant Sale. By filling out the enclosed order form you can add a new twist to your garden and diversify the life in your backyard!**

## *Making the Best Plant Choices*



Whenever I get a plant catalog in the mail, I feel like a kid in a candy store – so many plants all with unique beauty and benefits - I want them all (Just look at the Plants offered by the CCCD!) As I gaze out of my window at my snow-covered gardens, it seems the possibilities are endless and I can get carried away. Do I have room to tuck a new shrub

between the Pagoda Dogwood and the Blueberry? Can I possibly force a few more monardas into my overcrowded perennial beds? There must be room for some native columbine and trilliums in my woodland garden. Can I create an edible garden with shadbush and hazelnut? A butterfly garden with asters? An herb and medicinal garden with lavender? Maybe a rain garden with elderberries and ferns at the end of the driveway to capture and filter runoff. I try to incorporate conservation values into my gardens by selecting plants that are native to the northeast to maximize benefits to wildlife and the environment and are adapted to the site conditions to minimize water consumption, inputs and labor.

I need to consider the soil, sun, moisture and space requirements of an individual plant before I order anything. Unfortunately (or fortunately), my choices are limited by the size and site conditions of my tiny yard. I have sandy soils that are high and dry with a persistent westerly wind. My full sun gardens are full (pun intended) so that just leaves my shade gardens with room for additions. I need to search for plants that are drought resistant with low light and fertility requirements – this narrows my possibilities considerably. Add to these criteria a preference for species that are native to the northeast (preferable with a wildlife value) and I have what I would call a “manageable list”.

Now that I know my site conditions, I can eliminate plants not suited to my site before I get my heart set on them by reviewing the plant requirements. I have learned the hard way that additions of compost and soil amendments can improve site conditions to some extent, but a plant that requires a rich deep humus and moist conditions will not survive long in excessively drained sand without continuous inputs of water and amendments – not a good conservation choice for me.

Next, I ask – is it invasive? I prefer to plant native plants and there are many native options and cultivars that can satisfy the aesthetic requirements of yard and garden plantings. If I cannot find a native plant that suits my needs, I make sure it is not on an invasive or noxious weed list. Invasive plants readily escape from gardens and manicured landscapes in a variety of ways and wreak havoc on the natural landscape. Why take the risk in planting these when there are so many native and non-invasive alternatives out there?

I can take this process a step further by looking for plants that satisfy other criteria. Is it beneficial to wildlife (provides nectar, pollen, fruit, nuts or nesting and cover) or is it just taking up space? I like to support local agriculture and businesses - how and where the stock was collected? I can plant a species native to NH but it could have been dug from the wild in Wisconsin and shipped here (can you find three concerns here?).

So before I get out my checkbook and place my order I ask myself – What are my site conditions? What are the characteristics I want or benefits the plant provides? What are the native options? What is their origin and can I find them locally? I can't always say yes to everything on this list whenever I buy a new plant for my cramped gardens. However, by going through this process I feel better about the choices I make.

- Wendy Ward

**NRCS Soil Conservation Technician**

# Planning and Planting Tips for Your 2014 Plant Sale Order

## Choosing a Site for Fruit Trees and Berries

The best sites for fruit crops have well-drained fertile soils, protection from wind, good air drainage, and full sun. A gentle slope and six to eight hours of full sun per day is ideal. Good air flow will moderate frosts and fungal disease. If possible, avoid “frost pockets.”

Sunny south- or west-facing slopes are not advisable for less hardy varieties. These slopes tend to warm up before the danger of frost has passed. Trees may flower prematurely and then be damaged by frost, causing loss of fruit. South and west slopes may also have widely fluctuating early spring temperatures that can damage less hardy trees.

Soil pH for fruit trees should be between 5.5 and 8.0, towards the lower end for apples, the higher end for peaches, and in the middle for others. Fruit species have optimal space requirements. See chart below.

Plant Spacing of Fruit Trees and Berries	between plants	between rows
Apples, Semi-dwarf	15'	15'
Apples, Standard	25-30'	25-30'
Asparagus	1-2'	4'
Blackberries	3-4'	6-12'
Blueberries, highbush	3-6'	8-10'
Blueberries, lowbush	1'	1'
Filazel	4'	hedge
Grapes	8'	8-10'
Kiwis	10'	10'
Nut trees - orchard	35'	35'
Nut trees - forest	20'	20'
Pears, Asian Pears	20'	20'
Raspberries	2'	6-12'
Stone Fruit	15-20'	15-20'
Strawberries	12-24"	3'
Sweet Cherries	25'	25'



## General Planting Directions for Trees and Shrubs

Dig a large hole, at least twice as wide and about as deep as the root system. Most roots grow laterally and need plenty of room to spread out. Your trees will benefit if the hole is at least 3' wide. Loosen up the soil at the bottom of the hole and especially around the sides. For fruit trees you may add a 3-pound bag of Fedco planting mix or well-aged compost and mineral fertilizers such as rock phosphate, but not manure or other nitrogen sources. We add about a coffee-can of rock phosphate for each fruit tree. You may also add a handful of azomite at this time. Replace the top-soil around the roots where it will do the most good. If you situate non-fruit trees according to their requirements, there is no need to add any supplements to your soil. This is the best way to ensure that your plants will thrive for many years.

For best results plant on cool cloudy days in the early morning or late afternoon. Soak deciduous trees and shrubs for up to 24 hours before planting. Keep the roots from drying out. Even a few minutes in the sun and breeze can kill a tree or shrub. Keep them in a bucket of water as you plant. Generally you should plant trees and shrubs at the same depth that they grew in the nursery. Plant semi-dwarf or dwarf fruit trees with the graft 2" above ground level. Spread the roots out as you set the trees in the holes. Make a mound at the bottom of the hole over which to spread the roots. Give your trees plenty of water to “puddle in” as you plant. Wiggle the trunk as the water seeps in to ensure that the roots are settled in with no air pockets. Leave a berm around each tree so that water will seep in and not run off. Keep them well watered throughout the first summer. They require the equivalent of 1–2" rain per week. A good soaking is effective; sprinkling is not.

### When you get your order:

#### Immediate Care

When your new trees and plants arrive they are breaking dormancy and need to be planted as soon as possible. The longer they remain unplanted, the more stressed they become and the longer their recovery will take.

#### DO NOT ALLOW ROOTS TO DRY OUT AT ALL!!!

#### If You Intend To Plant Trees & Shrubs Within 48 Hours:

**Hours:** Leave the plastic wrapping around the root ball. Add some water to remoisten the packing material and store your trees/plants in a cool shaded place like a shed, barn or cellar. Avoid heat and sunlight.

#### If You Cannot Plant Your Trees Within 48 Hours:

You may keep plants for a week or two by following one of two temporary measures and continuing to water trees when they need it.

- 1) Remove the plastic wrap around the root ball. Store plants in a cool shaded place. Wrap the roots in wet shredded newspaper or sawdust, packing firmly to eliminate air pockets. Water thoroughly.
- 2) “Heel in” your plants. Dig a trench or turn back an appropriate amount of earth and bury roots; tamp firmly to remove air pockets. Water thoroughly.

#### Asparagus

Open up asparagus roots and store dry and uncovered in a cool shaded place.

#### Strawberries

Refrigerate strawberry plants until you are ready to plant them.

#### Perennials

Open bags and check the stock immediately. Roots and crowns should be firm and pliable, not squishy or brittle. If they are slightly dry, add a little water or, if they are going to be potted up soon, soak the roots. Generally, a little surface mold is harmless and will not affect the plant’s future performance. If you cannot pot them up immediately, store them in a cool (35-40°) location for a short time.

# Cheshire County Conservation District

11 Industrial Park Dr  
Walpole NH 03608

Phone: 603.756.2988 ext.116

Fax: 603.756.2978

E-mail: [info@cheshireconservation.org](mailto:info@cheshireconservation.org)

Website: [www.cheshireconservation.org](http://www.cheshireconservation.org)

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Dedicated to Conservation Education and the  
Responsible Use of Our Natural Resources.



## Cheshire County Conservation District

*Our mission is to promote the conservation and sustainable use of our natural resources for the people of Cheshire County by sharing financial, technical, and educational resources.*

### Supervisors

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Lisa Davidson Grashow - Keene  
Bill Fosher, Vice Chair - Westmoreland  
Richard Mellor—Rindge  
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John Baybutt- Roxbury, Nelson  
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Amy Bodwell, Roxbury  
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Pete Throop, - Keene

### CCCDC Staff

Sharlene Beaudry, Administrative Coordinator  
Amanda Costello, District Manager  
Emerald Levick, MFCC Coordinator

### NRCS Staff

Mary Ellen Cannon - Soil Conservationist  
Heidi Konesko -Soil Conservationist  
Steve Pytlik - District Conservationist  
Wendy Ward - Soil Conservationist

### Board Meetings

4th Thursday of the Month  
9:00am-11:30am

USDA Service Center  
11 Industrial Park Dr  
Walpole NH

Public is Welcome!

Interested in joining the  
team? Contact the District  
Office for more information.

