



South Douglas News

South Douglas Conservation District

Spring 2019

Assisting cooperators to adopt, implement and promote conservation practices which encourage good land stewardship and the protection of natural resources.

SPRING CHIPPING DAY

We are planning a FREE chipping day, late May. This project helps promote community wildfire protection and is funded by a Bureau of Land Management Grant and the Washington Conservation Commission.

Go to the South Douglas website to see the requirements. Click on the Chipping Days tab. Let us know if you are interested. Call 509-745-9160.

We have chipped from Waterville over Badger Mountain to Rock Island. This will be the fifth chipping day. We can chip in northern Douglas County as well, if enough landowners sign up.



ARE YOU FIREWISE?

Summer is coming and wildfire season will soon be here. One of the programs South Douglas has been developing is the Firewise Program. With the population growing, the trend has been housing in traditional natural areas. This wildland/urban interface has put lives, property and natural resources at risk for wildfire. Once a fire starts it can be hard to stop. Neighborhoods develop Firewise Communities to practice fire preparedness and prevention. In Douglas County, this can also be individuals practicing Firewise principles. Watch this newsletter and website for more information on workshops that may be coming to your area. If you are interested in forming a Firewise Community, let us know and we can meet with you. We have fire experts and others already involved in Firewise ready to help.



LOCAL
POSTAL CUSTOMER

Free Firewise Assessments

We can come to your property and evaluate your fire risks and strengths. The 15-30 minute review can alert you to simple things you can do to reduce fire hazards. Call us and we can schedule an appointment.

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU PLANT.....

Carolyn Kelly, South Douglas CD Associate Supervisor

Now's the time! It's warming up outside, and everyone is itching to plant their gardens - especially their flower gardens! After all of the snow, and mud, and brown, it's exciting to plan for color!

However, there are a few things to consider while making sowing and planting decisions and purchases, especially if you don't want your yard to be a center for invasive species, noxious weeds, or just plain plants out of place.

♦ Know what you are buying

There are lots of good deals on the market, especially from seed catalogues and discount centers. However, it is important to know exactly what you are buying. An example is wildflower seed mix packets. What may be a nice mix in another state can contain weeds considered noxious here in Douglas County. The same is true for mail order shrubs and perennial flowers. Local nurseries and plant suppliers do a good job of selecting plants, but out of county or out of state sources will not always know what is a noxious or invasive plant for our location.

♦ Free is not always the best deal

See a plant by the side of the road that looks beautiful and so tempting to glean and transplant in your garden? Think before you dig! Many noxious and invasive weeds are clever imposters for typical garden plants! They can be almost identical in appearance to a plant found in a garden center, because they might originally have started out from the same plant family. If you are not absolutely positively one hundred percent certain of what you are gathering – leave it be! The same can also be said for a plant that you had where you lived at another time and place. What might be ok plant in another county or state, could be a problem here in Douglas County.



This is a Dalmatian Toadflax (*Linaria dalmatica*) originally brought America by Europeans for their garden. It has quickly spread to thousand of acres all across the United States. It has no value as food, and crowds out valuable forage.



Before—this beautiful yellow snap dragon would look great

After—oh, my, what have I done?

There are folks who can help:

Douglas County has many resources available to you at no cost if you have questions about seeds and plants so you can have a beautiful garden and be a good neighbor at the same time!

South Douglas Conservation District southdouglasscd.org

Foster Creek Conservation District fostercreekcd.org

WSU Extension douglascountywa.net/departments/wsue-extension/weed-management

WSU Master Gardeners <http://mastergardener.wsu.edu/>

Happy planting!

COST SHARE PROJECTS

South Douglas CD receives funding from the Washington Conservation Commission. Over 70% of our funding is used for cost share projects. We have helped get conservation on the ground by providing technical assistance and funding for windbreaks, cattle guards, erosion control, fuels reduction and Firewise program, orchard irrigation upgrades and fencing. The projects need to meet Best Management Practices, as determined by the Natural Resource Conservation Service, but most conservation practices can fit within a category. Our projects are normally funded at 50-75% cost share and are not usually over \$10,000 total or cost share amount. If you have a project you have been thinking about, now may be the time to contact us.

WHAT ABOUT PLASTIC???

EILEEN BONE, SOUTH DOUGLAS CD SUPERVISOR



Recent news articles have recounted numerous problems with recycling plastic. What happens to plastic after it goes into the recycling bin and why is it such a problem? We have all seen pictures of turtles encased in plastic 'garbage' that has gotten into the ocean. Islands of plastic bottles, straws, bags can be found by typing in "plastic islands." China, until recently the destination for many recyclables, has increased their standards for reduced contamination to levels that are currently unattainable. The reasoning was to prevent the importation of "foreign garbage."

How does recycle become garbage? When separating the contaminants becomes more expensive than the value of the recycled commodity. Food on cardboard, dried milk in a milk jug [HDPE#2] or tobacco in a water bottle [PETE#1] equals garbage. Recycle centers are becoming very stringent about only accepting commodities that are CLEAN AND DRY. This applies not only to plastic but to cardboard and paper products as well.

Recently, Michelsens' in Wenatchee announced they would no longer accept plastic bottles or jugs for recycling. It has become too expensive to process the tons of plastic that they receive from recycling centers in Douglas County and from the drop off site in Wenatchee. We, as the public, have become used to comingling our recyclables or assuming if it is plastic it must be recyclable. The triangle on the product surrounds a number which indicates the type of plastic used to create the bottle or jug. Each type of plastic requires unique handling to create a new product from the old bottle. The bottom line: CLEAN AND DRY.

The Wenatchee World on February 21, 2019 ran an article on sea squirts, a rubbery sea creature being studied as a way to assess plastic pollution in the ocean. According to this article, "Plastic never disappears. It breaks down to microplastics ranging in size from a grain of rice on down. When eaten by wildlife, they become part of the food chain." The researcher found sea squirts filled with microplastics, invisible to the naked eye. She commented, "We as human invented a material that can last for hundreds, thousands of years, and then we use it as a single-use product. It's quite a paradox."

Costco Connection, March 2019 edition had an article about turning plastic into lumber. POLYWOOD manufactured from milk jugs turns post-use plastic into high quality low maintenance outdoor furniture. The article went on to say, the company in Syracuse, Indiana, processes about 30,000 plastic milk jugs an hour and a new piece of furniture is produced every 28 seconds. Buying furniture made from recycled products is the key.

Bottom line for plastics. It is harder and harder to recycle plastic of any kind. We have to do better to increase the quality of our recycling. CLEAN AND DRY is a must. And WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT. If you aren't sure, please use the 'green' bins and not the blue bin. Recycling is important. We just have to do it right.

RUSSIAN KNAPWEED BIOCONTROL

Russian Knapweed (*Rhaponticum repens*) is a Class B noxious weed. (Containment of Class B weeds is the primary goal so that they do not spread into un-infested regions.) It is an aggressive invader of pastures, non-crop areas, grain fields and other cultivated fields. In addition, the plant is poisonous to horses, causing chewing disease (equine nigropallidal encephalomalacia). It is abundant along Douglas Creek from Douglas down to Palisades and other places as well. It can grow in areas not easily controlled by mechanical or chemical means. A gall forming midge, *Jaapiella ivannikovi*, is now available for bio control. While it will not eliminate the knapweed, it can help control it by weakening the plant so it cannot reproduce so readily. This insect lays its eggs and the process forms galls on the plants which stunts and slows the growth. We are investigating the success of this biocontrol and the possibility of developing a "nursery" to rear these bugs for future control.

Galls inhibit growth



Russian knapweed south of Douglas





MONARCH BUTTERFLY CRYISIS

Michelle Mires, NRCS—Waterville

I don't know about you but when I was a kid I loved to see the beautiful orange and black or yellow and black Monarch Butterflies fluttering and flitting around from flower to flower. It was a huge part of summer.... they were everywhere. Then last year I was sitting outside, and a monarch butterfly flew by and I realized that I had only seen a couple of Monarchs in the last few summers. Was I just imaging things? Then a few days later I read an article that said the Monarch Butterfly population has hit an all-time low of just 1% of the population we had in the 1980's. ONE PERCENT!!! What happened?? Boy, I wasn't just imagining things, there really are fewer Monarch butterflies but not just fewer.... they are almost GONE. The symbol of summer, - GONE!! Well Almost! I guess there really isn't time to ask why but ask what can I do? How do I help before it really is too late? Before we lose our symbol of summer altogether!

- A first call to action is for each one of us to plant one or two Native Milkweeds (they are not really a weed) in our yards, flower beds and pots or in your garden along with other bee and butterfly friendly flowers. They really are a quite beautiful flower. (South Douglas CD had them at their tree and shrub sale- and will for 2020.)
- Second, on a larger grander scheme The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) would like to partner with farmers and ranchers through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other Farm Bill programs to offer technical and financial assistance to establish plantings that would provide nectar for fuel, food and breeding habitat for the Monarch Butterfly. These plants are native to Washington and bloom from early spring to late fall and are needed to aid the Monarch Butterfly in migration south to California. The monarch caterpillar only eats Native Milkweeds, and needs high nectar flowers to drink along its migration, so it is critical to rebuild a steady supply of native milkweeds and butterfly friendly flowers to aid the Monarch population to expand or at least hold steady.

Here are two excellent inks to get you started:

<https://www.farmers.gov/media/blog/2019/02/05/farms-and-ranches-can-provide-needed-sanctuary-struggling-western-monarchs>

https://xerces.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/2018-003_01_Monarch-Nectar-Plants-for-Conservation-Plantings_web.pdf

Planting for monarch butterflies can support a large diversity of wildlife, including bees, butterflies and other beneficial insects such as wasps and beetles. Spring and summer birds will feed on the caterpillars to their young and those caterpillars need native plants to eat. Hummingbirds will use the same plants the monarchs depend on for nectar. Fall flowering species like asters, goldenrods and blazing stars are also vital for pre-hibernation of bumble bee queens.

South Douglas Conservation District

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Please Remember to Recycle

How do we get the word out? You may know a veteran who is looking for work. You may be a farmer, looking to semi retire. Maybe your farm mechanic has more work than he can complete alone and needs help.

The Vets on the Farm program works to pair farmers who need help with veterans who are looking for work, designed for veterans transitioning back into civilian life. Areas of interest include but are not limited to small scale production agriculture, livestock management, equipment maintenance and custom farm work.

South Douglas Conservation District is starting a new program in Douglas County. Spokane CD has a strong growing program. All Conservation Districts in Washington State hope to develop the program. Look for information on our website.

