



Summer 2016

2016 Tree Planting Season Review

With the early spring, we were able to get planting a little sooner. The year started out great, we had enough help, and everything went smoothly, until the end of May when we had rain for a week. We had almost 3x as much trees and fabric to lay, the rain wasn't very welcoming to us, but we will never turn down rain. A big thanks to our seasonal tree crew for their hard work. Also thanks to everyone we planted trees for this year for being patient and understanding. As always, if you have any questions feel free to call us.



With the 2016 tree planting done, we are already planning for 2017 tree plantings. Outdoor Heritage Fund applications were due July 15th, however you may still plan for trees with EQIP, and CRP applications.

Tree of the Quarter: Tatarian Maple



Tatarian Maple is widespread throughout central and southeastern Europe, but is also in Asia, Austria, Turkey, Japan, and the far eastern part of Russia. It is also known as the Tartar Maple.

Tatarian Maple is a spreading shrub/small tree, growing 13-39 feet tall. It has a small trunk (7.9- 19.7 inches in diameter) . Flowers are whitish-green, and the fruit is a paired reddish samara that matures in late summer to early fall.

FUTURE BOARD MEETINGS

- August 9th
- September 13th
- October 11th

Meetings are at 8:30 a.m. and are held in the USDA conference room and are open to the public.

District Staff
Michelle Lowman
-District Technician -
Kodi Harmel
-District Clerk-

SCD Board Supervisors
Kevin Heilman
Dan B Brossart
Deb Hauser
Curtis Roerick
James Teigen

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NRCS Update

EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentive Program) is available to help manage saline and alkali areas. Saline and alkali areas in our region occur due to excess subsurface water, often coming from sloughs and road ditches. The excess subsurface water dissolves the naturally occurring salts in the subsoil and transports them to the topsoil and surface. The water evaporates and deposits the salts. Tillage will only make the problems worse, as it will increase evaporation and allow the water table to come closer to the surface. The most practical solution to preventing and shrinking these areas is to always have high water using vegetation growing in these areas. This vegetation will help shade the soil surface, preventing evaporation and the subsequent deposition of salts and will also help to lower the water table so the subsurface water is not able to reach the surface in the first place. Season long high water use vegetation could just mean planting high water use crops followed by a high water use cover crop, or could mean planting the affected areas to salt tolerant, high water use grasses and alfalfa. Season long high water use plants can help stop the spread of these saline areas, and eventually work to shrink them. If interested contact your local NRCS office.

With the early spring and it looks like an early harvest you might want to consider planting a cover crop into your cash crop stubble. Cover crops have many uses for both producers with cattle and those without cattle. We can help you design your cover crop mix to meet your needs and goals. Cover crop mixes can be designed to do things such as; scavenge deep nutrients which are too deep for the primary crop to utilize; promote biological nitrogen fixation, allowing less nitrogen fertilizer to be applied for the primary crop; use up excess subsurface water, helping to prevent salinity and allow greater ease of planting the primary crop; reduce soil compaction, allowing for better crop root growth and water increased infiltration rate; increase soil organic matter, allowing for better nutrient retention and greater soil water capacity; and help reduce wind and water erosion. Cover crops can also be hayed or grazed, for those with cattle, providing the opportunity for later fall grazing, less manure to haul, and less time spent feeding after removal from pastures.

Backyard Conservation: No-Till Gardening

NO-TILL GARDENING INCREASES GARDENING SUCCESS

Gardens have long provided people with a means of fresh, healthy produce while providing an opportunity to connect with the earth. Success and failure in growing abundant gardens is mostly in the soil, the foundation of the garden. Soil is a living, complex system made up of 25 percent air, 25 percent water, 45 percent minerals, and 5 percent organic matter. Organic matter is the fraction of the soil composed of anything that once lived. Soil organic matter includes plant and animal remains in various stages of decomposition, cells and tissues of soil organisms, and substances from plant roots and soil microbes. Well-decomposed organic matter forms humus, a dark brown, porous, spongy material that has a pleasant, earthy smell. Even though in most soils, the organic matter accounts for less than 5 percent of the volume, this fraction serves as an important component in the soil and for soil health. Healthy soil is important for a healthy garden and the produce it provides.

To Till or Not to Till

Soil Structure is negatively impacted by tillage. Soil structure is important for a healthy, productive substrate for plant growth and vegetable production. Soil structure refers to the arrangement of clay, silt, sand particles, and organic matter. Soils that have a more granular structure will have adequate pores, allowing space for air, water, soil organisms, and plant nutrients to move into and through the soil easily. Soils that have been tilled, typically, will have the following characteristics:

Compacted with fewer and smaller pore spaces, which hinders water and air movement in and out of the soil

Higher evaporation rates, or loss of soil moisture

Higher surface soil temperatures

Lower organic matter content

Negatively impacted soil biological communities

Weed pressure, due to weed seeds being brought to the soil surface. By not tilling the soil, soil organic matter can be built up allowing for improved stability of soil aggregates, reduced soil crusting, and increased rate of water infiltration into the soil, reduced runoff, lower soil surface temperatures and soil moisture evaporation rates, and easier penetration of plant roots. It also provides a favorable habitat and food source for soil organisms living in the soil. No tillage of the garden soil is important for building and maintaining soil health for a more productive garden.





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[www.facebook/piercecountyscd](https://www.facebook.com/piercecountyscd)

Upcoming Events/ Dates To Remember

August 9th: Next Board Meeting

September 5th: Labor Day— Office is Closed

September— Date TBD— Eco Ed Day

October 1st: Deadline to Signup for EQIP

October— Date TBD— Women's Ag Night— More Info to Come!