

Plant Materials



Tom Helm, a seed grower near Toston, Montana, alternates strips of 'Trailhead' basin wildrye and Rocky Mountain juniper to provide upland game bird habitat. Helm uses 'Trailhead' basin wildrye foundation seed released from the NRCS plant materials program "because they are the only ones that are supplying a source for seed producers." Helm plans to harvest seed from 350 acres. "Trailhead' basin wildrye is a wonderful, underutilized grass that provides good habitat for pheasants and Hungarian partridges."

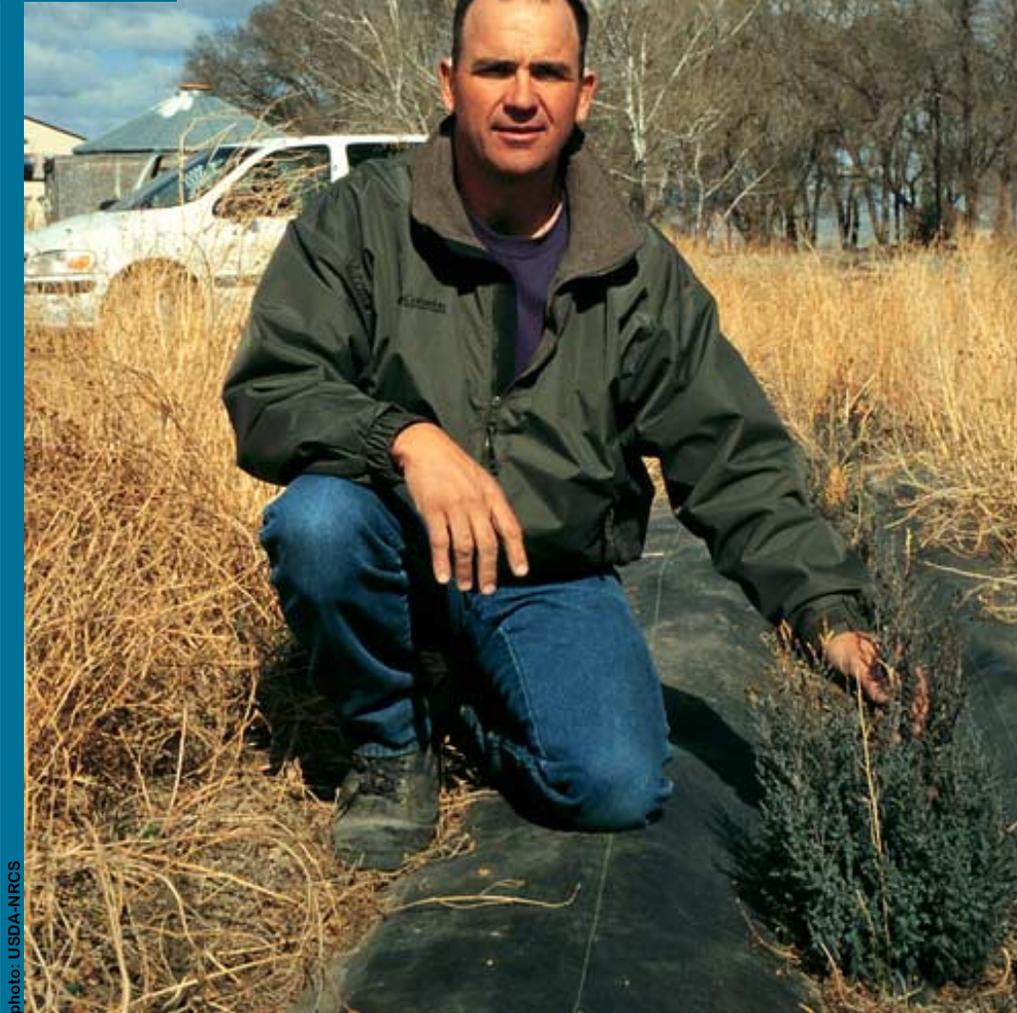


photo: USDA-NRCS

The Bridger Plant Materials Center was involved in the release of six plants in 2000:

- Antelope germplasm slender white prairie clover
- High Plains germplasm Sandberg bluegrass
- Garnet germplasm mountain brome grass
- Dupuyer streambank germplasm silverberry
- Pondera floodplain germplasm silverberry
- 'Shaw' alfalfa

The Antelope slender white prairie clover and High Plains Sandberg bluegrass are natives to be used in seed mixtures for the Conservation Reserve Program, reclamation, and range seeding in the Great Plains. The white prairie clover is a cooperative release with the Bismarck, North Dakota, Plant Materials Center. The High

Plains Sandberg collections have been studied since 1980 in the Arid Lands Project resulting in a release consisting of three top performing accessions.

The Garnet mountain brome grass will be used for erosion control, stabilization, and revegetation in the northern Rocky Mountain foothills. The mountain brome grass was collected near Garnet, Montana, and has been studied since 1977. It is a cooperative release with



photo: USDA-NRCS

Pondera floodplain silverberry



photo: USDA-NRCS

Slender white prairie clover



photo: USDA-NRCS

Garnet mountain brome grass

the Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Center at Meeker, Colorado.

Foundation seed for the Antelope slender white prairie clover, High Plains Sandberg bluegrass, and Garnet mountain brome grass is being grown at the Bridger Plant Materials Center and the Upper Colorado Environmental Plant Center and is being distributed to commercial seed growers for seed production. Commercial seed could be available as early as the fall of 2001.

The two silverberries will be used in streambank and riparian revegetation. These silverberry releases are source identified releases from native plants in Pondera County, Montana. Seed and plant propagules will be available from the collection site through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Collections can then be grown for commercial sale.

NRCS also cooperated with Montana State University on the release of 'Shaw' alfalfa. It is a crown type, drought tolerant alfalfa with a winter hardiness rating of two. It will be used for pasture and hay plantings.

Program Background

Plant materials is a national program within NRCS that selects plants and develops revegetation technologies to assist land owners in protecting their natural resources.

On average, more than 4,000 pounds of foundation seed of 15 Bridger releases are distributed annually to commercial growers in the Pacific Northwest, north central Great Plains, and Intermountain west. The annual commercial retail value of Bridger releases is approximately \$7 million.

The Bridger Plant Materials Center is addressing the following resource concerns identified by local conservation districts and other partners in Montana and Wyoming:

- rangeland revegetation
- forestland erosion control
- extend green grazing periods
- shelterbelts and windbreaks
- invasive weed competition
- buffers for sediment, nutrient and pesticide filters
- saline soil reclamation
- wildlife annual food plots
- riparian and wetland restoration

For more information:

USDA-NRCS Plant Materials Center
Route 2, Box 1189
Bridger, Montana 59014
TEL: 406-662-3579 FAX: 406-662-3428
<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

Or visit your local office of the
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service



photo: USDA-NRCS

Six Chinese scientists learned about conservation plant seed production, conditioning, and storage technologies at the Aberdeen, Idaho, and Bridger, Montana, Plant Materials Centers. The Bridger PMC was host to 55 visitors in 2000.



photo: USDA-NRCS

The Bridger PMC distributed approximately 4,000 pounds of foundation seed to commercial seed growers in 2000. Foundation seed of Garnet germplasm mountain brome grass became available for commercial use in the spring of 2000.

