

La Semilla, The Seed, Volume 7, Issue 1

A Newsletter for the Tucson Plant Materials Center ☀ Spring 2011

Greetings from Tucson!

Spring has sprung in the Sonoran Desert and along with the greening and blooming of our landscapes comes a full production season with new projects both on and off center. To help with the production season, several new employees have joined the Plant Materials Center (PMC) staff since our last newsletter. In addition to staffing changes, a portion of PMC land has changed hands and is now owned by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT). We expect an exciting summer as ADOT begins construction on Prince Road and the Interstate 10 off ramp!

Sincerely, The Tucson PMC Staff



PMC Releases

'Loetta' Arizona cottontop
(*Digitaria californica*)

Saltillo germplasm
Cane beardgrass
(*Bothriochloa barbinodis*)

'Stevan' Plains bristle grass
(*Setaria leucopila*)

Cochise germplasm Spike dropseed
(*Sporobolus contractus*)

Pima germplasm Whiplash pappusgrass
(*Pappaphorum vaginatum*)

Vegas germplasm Alkali sacaton
(*Sporobolus airoides*)

Moapa germplasm Scratchgrass
(*Muhlenbergia asperifolia*)

Batamote germplasm Desert zinnia
(*Zinnia acerosa*)

NEW in 2010!!

Bonita germplasm Plains lovegrass
(*Eragrostis intermedia*)

Farm Developments

Late last fall, several new species were established at the PMC including purple three awn (*Aristida purpurea*) being grown for Canyon de Chelly National Monument and three forbs, Virgin River brittlebush (*Encelia virginensis*), Globemallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), and buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) under study for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The establishment of these species will assist in generating information and technology for restoration projects throughout our service area.

In March, the PMC was visited by the national review team for

a two-day program review.

In April, PMC staff traveled to Needles, California to plant five acres of the PMC release Moapa germplasm scratchgrass (*Muhlenbergia asperifolia*) in continuation of a project started in collaboration with the



PMC program review participants. Back row L-R: Bruce Munda, Joel Douglas, David Forestieri, Jason Allen, Steve Barker. Front row L-R: John Englert, Manuel Rosales, Leslie Glass, Heather Dial. Photo taken by Jim Briggs.

BLM to encourage production of Mojave Desert releases in the Mojave. The planting and its sister planting of Vegas germplasm Alkali sacaton are progressing well!



Figure 1PMC employees and friends planting Alkali muhly in Needles, CA

Looking for Field Trial Participants

The Plant Materials Program depends on field office staff and landowner participation to field-test new selections of grasses, forbs, and woody plants; new technology for their establishment and management; and treatment of resource concerns. A field trial typically involves an acre or less of land planted with plant materials selections. The PMC is seeking cooperation from field office staff to locate landowners interested in establishing a field planting.

To install a field planting, field office staff, with assistance from the PMC, and the land owner will first develop a detailed plan. PMC staff provides seed and on-site advice or installs the planting as required. Annual or semi-annual evaluations are conducted on the planting by plant materials and NRCS field office personnel for up to five years. Please contact the state Plant Materials Specialist or PMC staff if you're interested in field trials.

Arizona State Plant Materials Committee

The Tucson PMC will be seeking nominations of Field Office and Area Office staff in the near future to serve on the Arizona State Plant Materials Committee, chaired by the Arizona Plant Materials Specialist. Selected members will be expected to serve for a period of 2-3 years. The State Plant Materials Committee provides coordination and follow-up on the plant materials program long range plan. The Committee is critical for the integration of plant materials activities into field office operations and their needs regarding the Plant Materials Program. If you need more information about the committee member's duties or might be interested in joining the committee, please contact Bruce Munda, Arizona Plant Materials Specialist, or any of the PMC staff.

New Faces at the PMC

The staff at the PMC welcomes our new employees!



Leslie Glass, PMC Secretary and National Plant Materials Program Webmaster



Jason Allen, Biological Science Technician



Brandon Gottung, Biological Science Technician



Carrie Joseph, Student intern

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