



Year 2004



Progress Report of Activities

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Brooksville, Florida Plant Materials Center

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Mission and Objectives:

The mission of the Plant Materials Program is to provide timely and effective vegetative solutions for identified resource needs. Superior accessions of adapted plants are developed, tested and released to commercial growers. Technical assistance is then provided in regards to production and management methodologies. Plant materials and state-of-the-art plant science technology are promoted to assist in conservation of natural resources and meeting the objectives of environmental programs. The use of native plant materials is encouraged.

The following are the major objectives of the Brooksville Plant Materials Center (PMC):

- Improve and maintain water quality
- Control erosion on cropland and stabilize critical areas
- Improve forage on pastures and rangeland
- Improve wildlife habitat

The PMC is located 7 miles north of Brooksville on U.S. Highway 41, 15 miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico. Areas served include Florida, Puerto Rico, and the coastal areas of South Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama.

There are 43 acres under cultivation which are used for the evaluation and production of plant materials. The remaining 139 acres are native woodlands and planted pines. The PMC also has two greenhouses, an office building, seed processing building, laboratory for seed germination and tissue grinding, conference building, and open educational shelter. Wildlife, such as deer and wild turkey, is abundant

in the wooded areas and can be seen along the trails or around the edge of the fields.



Wildlife at the PMC

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Hurricanes:

After four of the hurricanes, it's time to start putting the pieces back together. The Plant Materials Center only sustained a little damage to one pole barn. We were without power for just a week. As for the seed crops, well let's just say "gone for this year's harvest". As for all the other areas in the state we can only offer our assistance for restoration on damaged areas.

Working With the Nurseries:

The state of Florida now has a wildflower co-op. and they are just getting things off the ground. When someone comes to the PMC we are always willing to lend a helping hand. The staff is demonstrating how to clean wildflower seed. Nursery owners are learning how to clean native wildflower seed by hands-on training conducted at the PMC.



PMC staff assisting in wildflower seed cleaning training for nursery staff.

Florida Nursery and Allied Trade Show (FNATS) Conference:

Clarence Maura (Plant Materials Manager), Sam Sanders (Plant Materials Specialist), and Mary Anne Gonter (Biological Science Technician, Plants) attended the FNATS conference in Orlando, FL, September 29 thru October 2, 2004. The Plant Materials booth was set up and manned. The booth provides public insight on functions of the Plant Materials Program. There is a wide range of information for the people to get from coastal, to mine reclamation, to range. Pauline Deavers, an Earth Team volunteer, assisted in manning the booth.



Clarence Maura (PMC Manager) and Pauline Deavers (Earth Team Volunteer).

Tampa Bay Wholesale Growers (TBWG) Spring Expo:

This Expo is just another way for the Plant Materials Center to get the word out. There were plenty of people willing to take the test to see how good they were with identifying native seeds to the plants. This is another tool we use at the PMC to teach the public about the plants we are working with and their significance to the community and the environment.



Soils Workshop at the PMC:

Each year the Natural Resource Conservation Service and South West Florida Water Management District hold a soils workshop at the Plant materials Center. Providing an area for them to learn is what it is all about. The PMC provides an excellent training facility for workshops.



Richard Ford and Howard Yamataki showing soil textures to the class.

Irene Cockrell, Earth Team Volunteer for the Plant Materials Center, helping a visitor at the booth at the TBWG Expo.

The “Cream of the Crops” to Soon Be Released:

The following will be released in the near future

Chalky Bluestem (*Andropogon glomeratus* var. *glaucus*)--

Chalky bluestem is a native warm season perennial bunch grass distributed throughout Florida, southern North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and west to east Texas. In Florida it is adapted to North and South Florida flatwoods, cutthroat seeps and the transition zones around freshwater marshes and ponds. Chalky bluestem produces very high quality forage, and is thought to be the most palatable native grass on flatwoods sites.



Chalky Bluestem (*Andropogon glomeratus* var. *glaucus*)

Lopsided Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum secundum*)

Lopsided Indiangrass is an important component of native uplands in Florida. It has good seed production and has established well in critical area plantings on reclaimed minelands.



Lopsided Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum secundum*)

White Muhly Grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaries*)--

White Muhly grass has tremendous potential in the commercial landscaping industry, especially for xeroscapes.



Muhly Grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaries*)

To learn more about these or other PMC activities request the 2004 Annual Technical Report or visit our website: <http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov>