



Plant Materials Centers Provide Vegetative Solutions

*Larry Holzworth[†] and Susan R. Winslow[‡]
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service*

Current land management practices are highly complex involving holistic approaches to achieve land health and environmental quality. Plants can be used to address today's environmental problems. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides conservation planning, program administration, and technology transfer to private landowners. Plant Material Centers (PMCs), together with a multitude of partners, develop plant materials and provide technology regarding their use. To date, there are 484 cultivars and natural germplasms of improved plants that have been released by PMCs. A large number of these releases have been successfully incorporated into the commercial seed and plant production industry. Over 114 million dollars in revenue was generated in 1999 from commercial seed sales of material that originated from PMC releases. In 2000, more than 550 studies related to plant selection, propagation, and establishment are being conducted at the 26 PMCs nationwide, including Alaska and Hawaii. More than 90% of the plants being tested are native species. Current technology development provides information for many environmental concerns, such as revegetation of disturbed areas and critical habitats; buffer strips; soil bioengineering; waste management; wetland and riparian area enhancement; windbreaks; prairie ecosystem restoration; and noxious-invasive plant control. Native American tribes are assisted with the identification of culturally significant plants for use in traditional medicine and religious and spiritual ceremonies. In 1999, PMCs released 22 new grass, grass-like, forb, and shrub cultivars/germplasms including the technology for their use on disturbed lands of the United States and potential use in other areas of the world.

[†] Plant Materials Specialist, Federal Bldg., Rm. 443, 10 East Babcock St., Bozeman, MT 59715-4704

[‡] Plant Scientist, Plant Materials Center, RR2 Box 1189, Bridger, MT 59014

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