

Edible Windbreaks

Edible landscaping is the use of food producing plants in landscape planting, usually in residential settings. So why not edible windbreaks for rural plantings?

Since 2006, the Bismarck Plant Materials Center (PMC) has released three fruit-bearing shrub selections, 'Prairie Red' hybrid plum, 'McKenzie' black chokeberry and Riverview Germplasm American black currant.



Prairie Red plum

These shrubs are well suited to windbreaks, as well as fruit production. The chokeberry, also known as Aroniaberry, and the currant fruit can be used in wine and juice production, as well as jams and jellies. Producers who raise grapes should consider establishing a row of McKenzie black chokeberry or Riverview Germplasm American black currant.

In 2006, the PMC released Prairie Red plum, a seed propagated cultivar of hybrid plum. The PMC received this plum source in 1973 from Wilfred Herman, a farmer and self taught horticulturist from Miller, SD. The fruit from this cultivar is larger on average than the fruit of common plum. Bareroot seedlings are available from Big Sioux Nursery in Watertown, SD. Limited amounts of seed of Prairie Red plum are available from the Bismarck PMC.



Prairie Red plum harvested fruit



McKenzie black chokeberry fruit

McKenzie black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*) was released in 2008 as a seed propagated cultivar for use in conservation plantings. This medium-sized shrub has become popular with fruit producers in the Midwest, who prefer to use Aroniaberry as the common name. The

fruit contains high amounts of antioxidants, even more than cranberries. McKenzie is being grown and sold by numerous nurseries in the Midwest and eastern U.S. The Midwest Aronia Association was organized in 2010. The membership is made up of growers and processors of this healthful fruit.

The organization can be contacted at www.midwestaronia.org.

American black currant (*Ribes americanum*) is native to the Midwest and eastern U.S. Riverview Germplasm originates from along the Big Sioux River, not far from the Big Sioux Nursery at Watertown, SD. The fruit, which contains Vitamin C, can be used to make jelly, wine or pie. This species is not the same as the introduced black currant (*Ribes nigrum*). Riverview Germplasm American black currant seedlings are available from Big Sioux Nursery. Seed of this species is very small and will pass through the standard window screen mesh (18x16). A limited amount of seed of Riverview Germplasm black currant is available from the Bismarck PMC.



photo credit:
Oikos Tree Crops

American black currant fruit

Mike Knudson, Forester

Mike Knudson Retires

Mike Knudson, Forester/ Assistant Manager at the Bismarck Plant Materials Center (PMC), has retired effective December 31, 2010, after 36 years of federal service. Mike began his NRCS career as a Soil Conservationist at the Wahpeton Field Office, later moving to the Lisbon Field Office as District Conservationist, and then to the PMC as Forester. The PMC will miss his knowledge and expertise, but wish him well in retirement.



Mike looks over a woody accession in an off-center evaluation planting in Minnesota

