

Conservation Tree Program— New Species

The Nebraska Conservation Tree Program has released its list of tree seedlings available for the 2001 planting season. You will notice there are a few new species included in the list this year. The false indigo, red osier dogwood, and diamond willow have been added for the increase demand for riparian buffer strip species.

All three species can tolerate high moisture conditions which are often associated with bottomland stream and river corridors. The cottonwood seedling

is in response to requests for “old river bottom” cottonwood. These are seedlings which will have both male and female trees in a bundle and will eventually produce cotton as they mature.

The 2001 tree seedling price is \$62.00 per hundred seedlings, (this does not include sales tax). Orders are being taken now through your local Natural Resources District or by contacting the Nebraska Forest Service at (402) 472-6624.

The New Species:

False Indigo : *Amorpha fruticosa* is a fine structured small shrub that at first resembles sandbar willow. False indigo is a legume with pinnately compound leaves with 11 to 25 leaflets. This shrub will

grow on a wide range of soil types and moisture conditions. It normally grows at the edge of water but can also be found on poor, dry, sandy soils. Mature plants can grow to 18 feet but more commonly 12 to 14 feet. This is an excellent plant to use in riparian buffer strips.

Red Osier Dogwood

: *Cornus stolonifera* is also known as red stemmed dogwood. The young bark is red in color year-round. It can grow in a wide range of soil types especially in wetter soils along riparian areas.

This dogwood will grow from seven to ten feet in height and can spread by ground suckers.

Seedling Cottonwood :

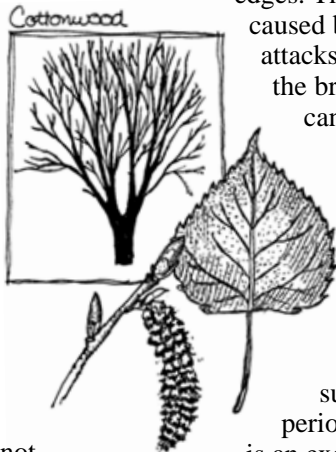
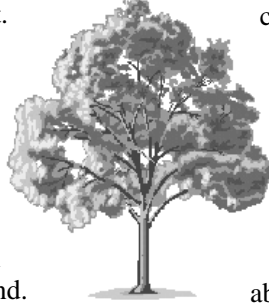
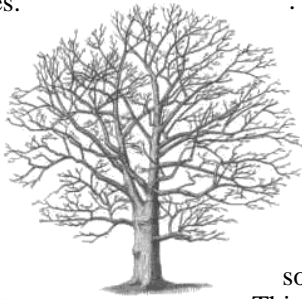
Populus deltoides are the native natural cottonwood found along Nebraska rivers and streams. The seedlings will be a mix of male and female seedlings. The female trees will produce cotton as they mature. It is not recommended to be planted close to homes because of the cotton in the spring. This is also a good selection for riparian buffer strips.

Diamond Willow : *Salix cordata* is the common name for several reported species of willow. The genus *Salix* is a very complex genera with a lot

overlapping characteristics between species. This willow is considered a small tree with a mature height of about 20 feet

and rarely over six inches in diameter. Most specimens are multi-stemmed from the base. Leaves are three to ten cm long, one to three cm wide and finely serrated around the edges. The diamonds are caused by a fungus that attacks the main stem at the branch nodes. The cankers that form at

the point of infection are sunken and roughly diamond in shape. Willow is a wetland species and can survive extended periods of flooding. It is an excellent tree to plant in riparian buffer areas and for stream bank stabilization. (DJ)



Nebraska Nuts Add Holiday Flavor

From Thanksgiving through New Year's, holiday foods traditionally include many foods native to the Americas, such as turkey, corn, cranberries, potatoes, etc. Additionally, many nuts are native to Nebraska and can enhance meals and snacks, giving them a local flavor. Here is a sampling:

Black walnuts – a delicious native nut that imparts unique flavors to dressings, sauces, and other dishes.

Northern pecans — a smaller version of the pecan we

all know and love. It is considered by many to be sweeter and richer tasting than its more southerly cousins. It works well with many dishes and desserts. This nut tree, a result of years of selection and research, produces fine nuts right here in Nebraska.

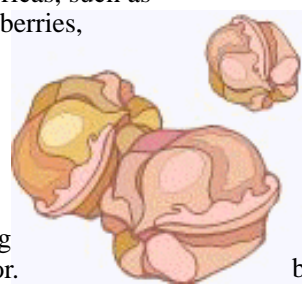
Hazelnut – its rich but mild flavor, is a wonderful addition to many foods. Chances are the in-shell hazelnuts found in the grocery are grown in the Pacific Northwest or Turkey, even though hazelnuts are native to eastern Nebraska. New hybrids that

produce larger nuts than our natives are being tested to see how well they will grow and produce in Nebraska.

Shellbark and Shagbark hickory nuts – some of the finest tasting nuts in North America and compliment any meal.

Chestnuts – wrap up your holiday evenings relaxing in front of the fireplace with your family and roasting terrific tasting chestnuts.

Most of these nuts are available from specialty food shops and over the Internet. Consider planting your own nut trees for your own fresh supply, for local marketing, or at least to feed the squirrels! (DJ)



Acreage Insights



To Prune is to Care

Fear of pruning shouldn't stop you from planting fruit trees—unless it's going to stop you from pruning them.

Young trees need pruning to develop a desirable shape; mature, bearing trees need pruning to stay healthy and productive. Pruning, in other words, is a basic part of fruit tree care and maintenance. If you keep in mind why you're pruning and what you want to accomplish, taking saw in hand doesn't have to be scary.

Young trees are pruned to encourage them to develop a strong but open branch structure that will expose leaves and fruits to sunlight and pest control materials. The two methods ordinarily used are the open center and the central leader methods.

Peach and Japanese plum trees are usually shaped by the open center method. The central upright trunk is removed and branches are selected and directed so the mature tree has a sort of wide, flat vase shape. As the name suggests, the center of the tree is open.

Apples and other fruits are trained by the central leader method. The main upright stem is retained and two or three branches are selected each year for two to three years to form the basic structure of the tree. If the tree was viewed from directly above, the lateral branches would look like spokes of a bicycle wheel.

In both cases, you select branches that form wide angles with the main stem. Sharp, V-shaped crotches are weak and prone to break under the weight of a heavy fruit crop or a load of ice or snow.

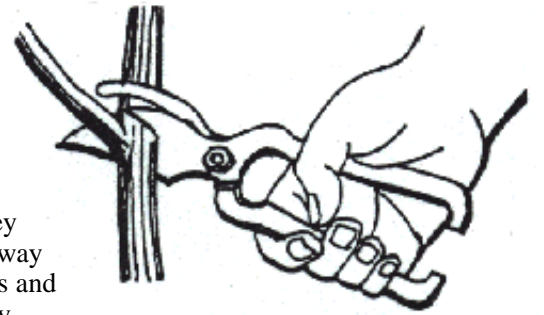
Mature, bearing trees are pruned each year during the dormant season, usually in late winter.

The first step is to remove dead, broken, or diseased branches. Cut them back to the trunk or to healthy buds. It's important to remove dead or broken branches because they can provide an entryway for disease organisms and insects. Pruning away branches infected with diseases such as black knot of plum is the main means of controlling their spread.

Next, remove large branches that have grown so vigorously they shade the lower ones, make the tree difficult to spray, or harvest. In some cases, removing large branches can correct earlier pruning mistakes. Remove large limbs where they originate or shorten them back to small, healthy, side branches.

Another goal of pruning is to remove less productive wood – i.e., overly vigorous, vertical branches such as water sprouts and suckers, and weak, downward drooping limbs.

Pruning tools should be sharp for clean cuts that will heal quickly. To remove a large branch safely and avoid tearing the bark, undercut it partway, then finish removing most of the length with a cut from the top side. A third cut removes the stub. Wounds need not be painted or sealed. (DJ)



Deforestation in United States

There is a common misconception in America that the country is being deforested. Some environmental groups show pictures of logged areas in the Pacific northwest and try to claim the forest is destroyed leaving the average person with the misconception America is rapidly being deforested. Also, natural disasters such as large wildfires and large areas of trees blown down by wind also create an image the United States is

being deforested. But the actual numbers reveal this is false.

According to the American Forests magazine, the land in forests have changed little the last 70 years despite millions of acres of logging, wildfires, and blow downs. The United States was estimated to be about 54 percent forested (1219 million acres) in 1600. Forested acres reached a low point around 1920 at 600 million acres. The latest national inventory figures from

1992 reveal 737 million acres of forest or about 32 percent of the country is forest. So, how has the amount of forested land remained the same even with logging, wildfires, and blow downs?

In the south (Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, etc.), land logged is replanted soon after logging. With the abundant rain in the south, logged areas are forested in just a few years.

In the forests of the northern

states, aspen is the dominant species. Aspen sprouts prolifically from its roots following logging or fire. In five to six years after logging, aspen forests are so thick, a person can barely walk through them.

In other types of forests, trees in adjacent woodlands provide the seed for establishing the next forest following fires or logging. As humans, we have a natural tendency to think once a forest is cut or burned, it is gone

forever. But nature is much more resilient.

In most of the United States, the woodlands have been logged once, twice, and in some places in the south, three times, yet these acres of land are still forested. As is said in forestry, cutting a tree does not lead to deforestation, but not planting a tree, can. (DJ)