

Maximilian Sunflower – a Preferred Wildlife Species

Flowers for pollinators, seed for birds, winter cover for pheasants, and browse for deer – Maximilian sunflower is a native forb for all seasons. **Medicine Creek Germplasm** is the recommended source for our area. It is a local plant collection from central South Dakota and is well adapted throughout the three-state region. Beware of southern seed sources that will not bloom in our northern climates.



Even though they tend to survive our winters, without the flowers much of the wildlife benefits are lost. Large, late maturing Maximilian sunflowers had been observed in CRP plantings in previous years. Followup showed the variety originated in Oklahoma. Varieties on the market from Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas are not recommended in our region.

The strongly rhizomatous rootstocks form patches that provide excellent escape cover for wildlife. Even though the species prefers wetter sites along grassland drainages and prairie potholes, it will also do well on fertile uplands in good rainfall years. On these sites, it increases or decreases depending on rainfall conditions. It is a favorite forage of wildlife and livestock.

This showy sunflower is also cultivated as an ornamental. Caution is advised in small areas as it will spread by seed and rhizomes. Seed has a high amount of dormancy. Dormant seed of 50 percent or more is not unusual. Dormant seeding is recommended.

Dwight Tober, Plant Materials Specialist

Announcing the Release of Riverview Germplasm American Black Currant (*Ribes americanum*)

A source identified class of American black currant was recently released cooperatively with the Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Stations.

Original seed was hand harvested from naturally occurring plants growing along the Big Sioux River near Watertown in northeast South Dakota. Plants grown by Big Sioux Nursery from this seed were tested in 25 different field planting



Mature shrubs are wider than tall.

evaluations in the three-state area. There has been no selection in the development of **Riverview Germplasm**.

The fibrous root system establishes readily. Dense, but limber branches are not injured by snow accumulation. It is recommended for use in windbreaks and wildlife plantings in this region on Conservation Tree and Shrub Groups 1, 3, 4 and 5. The best growth and fruit production occurs on moist, but well-drained sites. The shrub gets three to six feet tall, and is usually twice as wide as tall. It has pale yellow flowers and shiny, black fruit which is high in vitamins and antioxidants. Fall leaf colors are shades of red and gold. Currant species should not be planted near white pine (*Pinus strobus*) because of the potential association with the blister rust fungus. Riverview Germplasm is currently available from Big Sioux Nursery.



The fruit is high in vitamins and antioxidants.

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Prairie Harvest Hackberry Available

The wait for Prairie Harvest seedlings is over! The PMC released Prairie Harvest hackberry in 2009. This seed source originated from a native stand along the Red Lake River in Polk County, MN. This source outperformed all other seed sources in a provenance study at the USDA-ARS Northern Great Plains Research Lab, Mandan, ND. Two regional conservation nurseries will have seedlings of this new hackberry release in the spring of 2011. North Central Reforestation Inc. of Evansville, MN, (1-877-702-5579) has containerized Prairie Harvest hackberry (see photo). Lincoln-Oakes Nurseries of Bismarck, ND, (701-223-8575) will have bare root seedlings next spring. There is a limited supply, so get your order in early. Call for more information. This new hackberry has great potential. In 2010, newly planted seedlings grew out of the top of 5-foot tree shelters. Hackberry seedlings should be protected from deer browse.



Mike Knudson, Forester

2011 Plant Materials Available

(see page 2 for more information)

Available species:

- Ninebark
- White poplar (ND and SD only)
- Foundation seed
- Sweetgrass, white sage, demo plantings