

HIGH COUNTRY CONSERVATION



2017

LARAMIE RIVERS CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Winter Edition



WINTER IS THE TIME TO PLAN AND WE HAVE THE RESOURCES TO HELP

Letter from the Director , Tony Hoch

I just built a house in a very windy and snowy place. I have snow drifts where I don't want them and soil rapidly blowing away where I wish the snow was piling up. In between snow events I go out and pile up snow in some places and dig it down in others to experiment with controlling drifting patterns. It is working. I'm beginning to develop a plan for what to do this coming summer to address drifting next winter. I'm

also looking at the snow patterns in thinking where I want a small garden, having my water tested and thinking about options to control deer. I consider myself very fortunate because I work in a one stop shop of natural resource experts to help understand problems and make plans to mitigate them, and I talk to my colleagues all the time.

Trish Penny is a master gardener who specializes in vegetable gardens and can help in planning and planting raised bed gardens in time for the short growing season. Martin Curry is our "tree guy" and can help plan living snow fences; he also is an expert in rangeland grasses and productivity and is a whiz at ARC GIS who can not only help plan, but also make a very precise map of your plan, which you can download or take home a hard copy.

Laura McGinley's forte is energy efficiency and recycling and I know a little bit about water quality and streams. Along with our expertise we have cost share programs for tree planting, xeriscaping, raised bed gardens, stock water development, water analyses and more. Check out our website at www.lrcd.net, stop by, or safer yet call and make an appointment with the person you want to talk to, so you can be sure they will be here when you stop by.



The Laramie Conservation Expo started in 2007 with 37 exhibitors and grew through the years to over 50 booths, exhibitors, and presenters.

**We hope you can join us on Saturday,
April 15th, 2017
9am - 3pm**

If you or someone you know would like to reserve booth space or have a great presentation topic you would like to share, please call Laura McGinley at 307-721-0072 xt. 3269.

As always booth spaces and entrance are **FREE!**

More information @ www.lrcd.net

- Gardening
- Composting
- Beekeeping
- Native Landscapes
- Water Management
- Wildlife Conservation
- Renewable Energy
- Green Building Science
- Home Energy Efficiency
- Sustainable & Local Agriculture
- Urban/Backyard Farming
- Repurposing • Recycling • Reuse

LIVING SNOW FENCES By Martin Curry



As we all know the winter winds and blowing snow in Albany County can cause snowdrifts to accumulate in places where they are not wanted. A living snow fence can be planted to protect an area from excessive snow drifting. Additional benefits include permanent, high-quality wildlife habitat, improved environmental aesthetics and reduced heat loss from a house. When planning a living snow fence here are a few things to consider: a) plant selection, b) irrigation requirements and c) is there enough space for proper placement?

A properly designed living snow fence will assist homeowners in maintaining driveways and reduce the snow accumulation around structures. It is important to remember when designing a living snow fence to plan for sufficient space between the living snow fence and the area being protected to allow the snow to accumulate. For Albany County this distance is 150-200 feet (See figure 1).

Planting a living snow fence provides enhanced cover and nesting sites for upland game and songbirds. This habitat is critical during the winter when food sources may be covered with snow. Dense fruit bearing shrubs and small evergreens will provide needed relief and nourishment to non-migratory birds. Another benefit of a living snow fence is an improvement to the aesthetics of the landscape. Deciduous trees and shrubs will provide a variety of colors throughout the growing season and evergreens will present a continuous shade of green to the landscape year round.

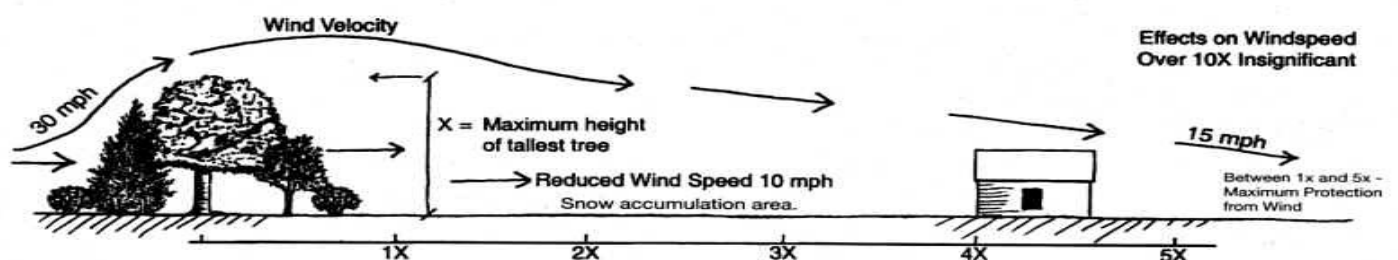
Relief from the wind on the Laramie plains is also possible when planting a living snow fence. The reduction of wind velocity in and around living spaces will benefit the homeowner by decreasing heating loss. A properly planned living snow fence can reduce the amount of heat loss from a house by 15%. Other benefits of wind reduction include a decrease in the amount of dust blown particles in and around the living space as well as improved outdoor enjoyment of the area.

When selecting planting stock for Albany County you need to take into consideration the soil type and alkalinity of the soil for your location. A good shrub candidate for the Laramie Basin is Caragana. This shrub has a mature height to 10 feet and can tolerate alkaline soils. To compliment Caragana shrubs, Rocky Mountain juniper is a small evergreen that will grow in the same conditions. Rocky Mountain juniper will mature to a height of 15 feet and provides excellent wildlife habitat.

It is best to install a drip irrigation system on all seedlings planted in the Laramie Basin. This will help them to become established. For planning, shrubs and small evergreens will require 1 gallon per hour emitters per seedling. A typical watering schedule would again depend on the soils at the site as well as the present climate conditions but is usually 9 to 12 gallons/week. It is also a good idea to provide wind protection to tender seedlings all season long. Call Martin Curry about planning your living snow fence today!

Conservation Plantings Provide Many Benefits

An Example of the Effects of a Windbreak on Wind Speed.



Farmers, Homeowners Can Help Pollinators Prosper

by Karen Clause

[range management specialist, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service]

More than three-fourths of the world's flowering plants rely on the help of pollinators to reproduce. One out of



three bites of food can be attributed to these important creatures – such as bees, butterflies, moths, birds, beetles, bats, and a few other small mammals. But as you may know, pollinators are in trouble. Many are seeing decreasing populations because of habitat loss, disease, parasites and pesticide use.

Pollinators provide crucial assistance to fruit, vegetable and seed crops as well as other plants that produce fiber, medicine and fuel. For many plants, without the help of pollinators, they would be unable to reproduce.

The honey bee and its pollinator allies are responsible for pollinating billions of dollars' worth of American crops each year. Pollinators visit flowers in search of food (nectar or pollen). During the visit, a pollinator may inadvertently brush against a flower's reproductive parts, depositing pollen from a different flower. This fertilized flower may then produce fruit or seeds.

While many pollinators are in trouble, you can help. It can be as easy as selecting high-quality pollinator plants for your garden. To find the best plants for your area, visit the websites of NRCS partners at the Xerces Society Pollinator Conservation Program (www.xerces.org/pollinator-resource-center) or Pollinator Partnership (www.pollinator.org/guides)

If you operate a farm or ranch, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service can help you create habitat for pollinators. This not only benefits pollinators, but also provides ample perks for the farmers and ranchers, too. More pollinators – native and managed – can increase crop yields.

Native pollinators are free, and their numbers can be increased by planting wildflowers in and around fields and choosing the right cover crops. NRCS offers more than three dozen conservation practices that assist in building healthier landscapes for pollinators.

Habitats used by pollinators also attract beneficial insects (insects that eat crop pests), and they may provide habitat for other wildlife, reduce soil erosion, and improve water quality. As you can see, pollinators and healthy habitat for pollinators help keep the ecosystem healthy. In fact, if you are putting in conservation practices to prevent soil erosion or protect stream banks, considers including wildflowers, shrubs and trees that support pollinators.

DID YOU KNOW?

- ◇ A world without pollinators would be a world without apples, blueberries, coffee, chocolate, almonds, melons, peaches or pumpkins.
- ◇ Pollinators include bees, butterflies, moths, birds, bats and beetles.
- ◇ North America is home to more than 4,000 species of native bees.
- ◇ Hummingbirds are the most common avian pollinators in the U.S.; these tiny wonders prefer tubular flowers in bright, warm colors.

Learn more: www.nrcs.usda.gov/pollinators



**LARAMIE RIVERS
CONSERVATION DISTRICT**
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**Soil, Water, and Plant Analysis
Cost Share Program**

**Potable Water
Trace Minerals in water
Irrigation and Livestock water
Forage testing for nutritional value
Soil testing for gardens for crops**

The SW&P Analysis Cost Share is a matching program in which up to 50% of project costs may be reimbursed by the District up to \$500 total.

If interested or want to know more, please contact us @ 721-0072. Our knowledgeable staff can assist with understanding the different tests that are available, where testing labs are located, and how to read results.

