

## **Todd County News**

**Article Submitted by: Todd County Soil and Water**

### **Put Trees and Shrubs to Work For You**

Many different conservation challenges are best met using vegetation, Todd SWCD has worked to make available trees and shrubs at low cost to landowners each year. Trees and shrubs can be used for windbreaks and shelter belts, control erosion, and provide wildlife habitat.

#### **Windbreaks and shelterbelts**

Do you have issues with snow drifts? Several rows of trees and shrubs planted along your driveway will make an excellent natural snow fence. Rows of trees and shrubs planted on the west and north sides of your house can reduce your heating bill by up to 20 percent. A windbreak planted along your property boundary provides privacy and wind protection, no manufactured fence can offer and last much longer.

#### **Erosion control**

Stands of trees are very effective at minimizing soil erosion from water and wind. The spreading branches of groves of trees slow the rain and wind, reducing the impact on soils. Tree and shrub roots help stabilize the soil, slowing the impact of runoff. Wetland shrubs like Red Osier dogwood and willow work great along waterways and wet areas protecting these from high water events.

#### **Wildlife**

Mixed plantings of trees and shrubs provide excellent cover and a source of food for a whole variety of animals, big and small. Deer like to feed on twigs and buds, birds on the seeds and berries (and on the insects that also find trees home). Pheasants seek the protection that dense plantings of trees and shrubs provide. Locating a mixed tree and shrub planting near your home provides ongoing enjoyment of wildlife throughout the year.

#### **Pollinators**

Pollinators are extremely important for the services that they provide to our food production and our native ecosystems. Planting flowering trees and shrubs can provide benefit to declining pollinator populations and the landscape. Providing pollinators with flowering plants to forage upon during the spring, summer and fall is very important. Incorporating flowering shrubs into your windbreak, erosion control, wildlife and other projects will help to ensure the continued services provided by pollinators.

Since a tree planting can be a significant investment in money and time, you should put some time into deciding what and where to plant. Proper selection can provide you with years of enjoyment as well as significantly increase the value of your property. An inappropriate tree for your property can be a constant maintenance problem or even a hazard. Before you buy trees, contact Todd Soil and Water at 320-732-2644.