

NEW CASTLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT

CONSERVATION NEWS

Urban Farmer and Gardener Mini-grant application deadline is March 2, 2022

WINTER 2022

BELLEVUE FARMS AND WILLOUGHBY FARMS NAMED 2021 COOPERATORS OF THE YEAR



Farm Director
Elisa King

The **Cooperator of the Year** award recognizes the outstanding efforts of our local farmers, both traditional agriculture and for the first time an urban agriculture operation. The urban agriculture awardee is Bellevue Farms, overseen by the farm's Director, Elisa King. The urban farm and community garden began life in 2014 on the site of a former baseball field behind the Bellevue Community



Left to Right: 1,000 gallon water cistern, the farm market stand, and a view inside the hoop house

Center in Bellefonte. Elisa and her team have received many grants to support the expansion of the farm. Grants from the District have funded an outdoor food prep station, the installation of a water line, a 1,000 gallon water cistern, and a drip irrigation system. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provided funds for the hoop house. The First State Resource Conservation and Development Council provided funding for pollinator habitat, a bee condo, and the farm market stand. During the 2020/2021 growing seasons, District urban agriculture coordinator Madison Walter taught a number of classes at Bellevue.



Robert Willoughby Jr. and Sr.

Robert Willoughby Sr. and Robert Willoughby Jr. are the traditional agriculture award recipients. Willoughby Farms is a small family grain farm primarily growing corn, soybeans, wheat and barley. They farm approximately 1500 acres between the home farm (84 acres) and rental land. Robert Sr. began using no-till back in the 1980's and they now practice both no-till and minimum tillage using a no-till ripper. Cover crops hold the nutrients in place



Cover crop on home farm and no-till soil ripper



and have increased the organic matter in the soil. They follow Best Management Practices (BMP's) and Good Agricultural Practices (GAP's). Precision ag techniques include the use of GPS for grid sampling and yield mapping and soil tests are done annually.



Planting corn into cover crop for no till

CONSERVATION COST SHARE PROJECTS



A homeowner in the Arbour Park development in Newark received assistance to address drainage and saturated yard conditions along the rear of the back porch and house. A tile drain was installed to intercept run-off from the sloping backyard and tied into a catch basin and pipe system.



A landowner on Deer Run Road experienced erosion on both sides of the driveway to the house. Existing rock filled wire baskets known as gabions were collapsing. The area was protected with stacked stones to stabilize the embankment below the pipe outfall.

POND CLEANOUT—FAIRWAYS AT VANDEGRIFT



Left to Right: view of the pond and old structure, sediment removal, removed sediment placed in capture area, view of new structure and regraded pond.

An existing stormwater management pond in the community required work. The pond was de-watered, the outlet structure replaced, the accumulated sediment was removed, and a new liner and outlet structure installed. The banks and disturbed areas were seeded and protected with erosion control matting. This project was done in coordination with the New Castle County Public Works department.

WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT UPDATE



An crop field ditch draining behind a home was piped and re-directed to drain to the front of the property to the roadside ditch along Alley Mill Road.



A pipe system was installed for three homes in Hampton Pointe to capture run-off from the sloped back yards.



Heritage Park - Gheen Road and Morningside



URBAN AGRICULTURE UPDATE

The 2022 grant application process kicked off in early February. Applications are due by March 2nd. Sixty-six people participated in the Urban Ag Session as part of Delaware Ag Month on January 13th. The theme of "Urban Agriculture Connections to Health and Wellness" as it relates to growing and providing local produce and other products was well received. Under an NRCS Cooperative Agreement, the District is working on several work items, including a website for the Delaware Urban Farm and Food Coalition, an urban agriculture assets inventory, and an urban farmer training site.



Produce wash station and compost bins

NEW CASTLE CONSERVATION DISTRICT



URBAN FARMER & GARDENER MINI GRANT PROGRAM

APPLICATION DEADLINE: MARCH 2ND, 2022

For more information and workshop registration:
madison.walter@delaware.gov



Register for our FREE virtual Grant Writing Workshop/ Information Session

FEBRUARY 5TH, 2022
 10:00- 11:30AM



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2nd place poster contest winners left to right: Gavin Chee from North Star E. S., Reena Patel from Odyssey Charter School, Noelle Evans from Del Castle Technical H. S., and Peyton Riedford from Heritage E. S. Each 2nd place winner received a \$25.00 gift card.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

The District Board sponsors many worthwhile educational outreach events and organizations each year. Some of them include:

- The Delaware Envirothon (state contest on April 28th)
- The Youth Environmental Summit (YES) on April 14th at UD's Clayton Hall
- The Del Tech Science Fair on March 9th
- The Christina River Clean-up on April 2nd
- The Partnership for the Delaware Estuary
- The Annual Conservation Poster Contest (fall 2022)
- Educational materials for use at outreach events during the year



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