

# CONSERVATION CATCHALL

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## **SCIENTISTS COMPLETE MOST COMPREHENSIVE GENETIC ANALYSIS YET OF CORN**

An interdisciplinary team, led by researchers at Cornell University and the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS), have just published the most comprehensive analysis to date of the corn genome.

The team expects the achievement to speed up development of improved varieties of one of the world's most important agricultural commodities. The results should boost international efforts to increase yields, expand areas where corn can be cultivated and produce varieties better equipped to resist pests and disease.

Funded in the United States by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the USDA, the work was a collaborative effort by scientists at 17 U.S. and foreign institutions that include the University of Wisconsin-Madison; University of Missouri-Columbia; North Carolina State University; Beijing Genome Institute; University of California, Davis and the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center, Mexico City, Mexico.

The study appears in two corn genome projects published in separate reports in the June 3, 2012 online edition of the journal *Nature Genetics*.

"This work represents a major step forward and an important tool in the arsenal available to scientists and breeders for improving a vital source of nutrition," said Edward B. Knipling, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

The analysis could also help those who develop corn yields as a source of fuel, who manage crops in the face of changing climates and who are concerned about the diminishing supply of arable land and growing populations, he said.

"This project is a stellar example of how collaborations of scientists, here and abroad, leverage resources across multiple agencies to enable transformational research with the potential to address urgent societal needs for a bio-based economy," said John Wingfield, assistant director for NSF's Biological Sciences Directorate.

It is anticipated that the tools and approaches generated in this project will enable scientists to look at genetic differences in other organisms as they respond to global climate change, human disturbance and invasive species, Wingfield explained.

The studies' collaborators shed light on corn's genetic diversity, detail how it evolved and outline how corn--known as maize among scientists--continues to diversify as it adapts to changing climates and habitats.

One study, published in the journal led by team member, USDA-ARS and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory scientist Doreen Ware, examines the genetic structure and the relationships and sequential ordering of individual genes in more than 100 varieties of wild and domesticated corn.

(Continued on page 8)

## *AISWCD Staff:*

**Richard Nichols,**  
*Executive Director*

**Sherry Finn,**  
*Administrative Assistant*

**Kelly Thompson,**  
*Program Coordinator*





## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - JAMES TODD

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Does anyone have any secrets for generating some rain? My fields are still holding their own but I'm afraid the crops can't go much longer without suffering damage from the lack of moisture. The pollination cycle is just starting in my area and the heat and dry conditions will most certainly affect the yield. I have also noticed that some of the herbicides aren't working as well as they should or normally would. Water Hemp in particular seems to be more difficult to control this year. I don't think it is resistant; it just seems that it has gone dormant because of the hot dry weather and isn't taking up the chemicals.

On a different note, SB1849 has passed in both chambers and will be sent to the Governor soon if it hasn't been sent already. At this point we can only speculate what the Governor might do with the bill. He does have three options – he can veto the bill, line item veto the bill by changing some provisions or reducing funding levels, or he can simply let the bill sit for 60 days until it becomes law. Senator Terry Link has introduced SB3925, a trailer bill that addresses most of the Governor's concerns with SB1849. We are hoping that the trailer bill will convince the Governor to either sign SB1849 or at least let it sit until it becomes law.

Also of note legislatively, the Farm Bill passed the Senate June 21st. Now it must go to the House where its future is uncertain. The House will start its markup of the bill on July 11th, just a couple of days before Lonnie Wilson and I are to attend the NACD Legislative Conference in Washington. I was glad to see that conservation compliance is back in the bill. I'm not sure how it will be accepted in the House since it is attached to crop insurance but we will be visiting with Illinois' Congressional Delegation on the 17th and urging them to support the Senate version of the bill. I was particularly concerned when the Senate seemed set on removing all conservation compliance wording. We have worked too hard and spent too much money on our fragile farmlands to remove any provisions that have encouraged farmers to properly maintain those lands. I don't know how many of you were able to contact our Senators but I will give credit to the NACD North Central Region state delegates for standing up in support of retaining conservation compliance.

I encourage you to contact your congressman to let your voice be heard in support of retaining the conservation compliance provisions of the Farm Bill as it was passed by the Senate. We are not sure how it will be accepted in the House. We were told early on that no Farm Bill could pass

the Senate this year with conservation compliance provisions in place. Obviously, that is not the case but we will certainly be watching what the House does and doing what we can to encourage retention of the Senate's language.

The Field Office of the Future efforts are progressing. I want to express my thanks to those of you that attended and participated in the area meetings. The comments and suggestions that came forth at the meetings have been compiled and the steering committee will meet June 25th to review the results and begin formulating our recommendations to NRCS. Information will be sent to NRCS Chief, Dave White for his consideration. We can only hope that the Farm Bill will include sufficient funding levels to allow NRCS to carry out the recommendations from the states.

This will be my last report as your Association President. I have enjoyed my two terms and appreciate the support you have given me over the past four years. We have had some ups and downs, especially with funding issues. I can still hope that I will see a dedicated source of funding for the SWCDs become a reality before my term officially ends at the end of July. This is as close as we have ever been to achieving realistic funding levels that will allow the SWCDs to do the job they were created to do. Though we are not quite there, I believe that we will see some form of the gaming bill pass, if not within the next 60 days then perhaps in the fall veto session. It has been somewhat frustrating but also an honor to have been part of this process. I can only hope now that we will see some fruit from our labors. I want to take some space here to thank everyone who has served on committees, the officers who have helped support our efforts, my staff and especially those of you who have taken your own personal time to write letters and attend events and legislative days to show your support for district funding. I want to thank all of the employees who have made calls and written letters on your own time and also single out the employees who attended the legislative day event this past March 27th. Your presence was important to our efforts and certainly appreciated, and I can't help but think we did much to help our cause that day.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the Summer Conference and Annual Meeting. We have much business to discuss and your presence will help assure that wise decisions will be made that will benefit all SWCDs now and in the future.

*James H. Todd*



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S NOTES - *RICH NICHOLS*

[rich.nichols@aiswcd.org](mailto:rich.nichols@aiswcd.org)

The last Day of June is upon us and I have to wonder where the time has gone. I think it really is an "age" thing. The older one gets the faster time goes by, at least it sure is true for me.

Senate Bill 1849 has been sent to the governor. Now, all we can do is write letters of support and wait to see what he will do with it. I have heard nothing of any meetings that were supposed to take place between the Governor's office and legislative sponsors for the bill. Senator Link has introduced a trailer bill that addresses most of the Governor's concerns with SB1849. The bill provides greater oversight for the gaming industry, more money for the State Police for enforcement, more money for gambling addiction programs, more money for the Gaming Commission and greater authority for the Gaming Commission. About the only concern expressed by the Governor that has not been addressed is slot machines at horse race tracks. The slots remain in the bill and the Ag program funding they are to support also remains.

That is good news for the SWCDs. \$12.5 million is to be deposited in the Partners for Conservation Fund on an annual basis for Soil and Water Conservation District Administration. That means that district operations will be funded for the Partners for Conservation Fund but the \$12.5 million can only be used for operations, not cost share. If the \$4.5 million currently in the Partners for Conservation (PfC) fund for cost share purposes remains, then all of that can be used for cost share instead of drawing it down to keep the SWCDs' doors open.

In case you are a little confused, the State Finance Act was amended in 2002 to allow PfC funds to be used for both cost share and operations (programs and administration). Since that time, money from the PfC Fund has been used to pay employee health insurance and more recently to supplement cuts to operating funds that were being paid from General Revenue source funds. Because of the tremendous drain on General Revenue Funds for pensions and Medicare there just isn't enough left to fund programs that were supported by general

revenues in the past. In fact, FY13 will be the first year since 1962 that the SWCDs will receive no money from the General Revenue Fund, a strong indicator of just how financially bad off the state really is.

The 2012 Annual Meeting and Summer Conference is coming up quickly! If you have not made plans to attend you need to do so immediately. The Planning Focus Area Committee and Annual Meeting Taskforce have worked very hard to respond to your requests to find a less expensive meeting location with affordable rooms and less expensive meals. I believe they have done that. The room rates are less than they have been for the past fifteen years (maybe more) and the prices for the meals are significantly less than we paid at the Hilton or the Crown Plaza. The down side is that the motel is smaller and the meeting rooms are also smaller than what we are used to. Also, to save money we are being very careful this year to order only the number of meals for which we have sold tickets. The Motel has agreed to help us in many ways but will also make sure they don't get shorted by only allowing persons with tickets into meal functions. We have cut expenses as much as we can and still retained a modest \$40 registration fee. The fee is necessary to allow us to pay for meeting rooms, speakers, equipment and other expenses associated with the Annual Meeting and Conference.

We think you will be pleasantly surprised by the accommodations, both at the Northfield Inn and the Ramada. Both properties are owned by the same company and both have undergone extensive renovation in the past year. Many of the guest room furnishings are new including carpeting in the guest rooms and throughout the motel.

We hope to see you there!

*Rich*





## ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT'S UPDATE - *SHERRY FINN*

[sherry.finn@aiswcd.org](mailto:sherry.finn@aiswcd.org)

### June Activities

#### 319 GRANT:

- Had two (2) meetings with IEPA and received draft grant agreement
- Had meeting with IEPA & IDNR to talk about wages, benefits, and scope of work
- Looking at LUC areas to place employees

#### JUNE QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING:

- Prepared Starbursts with Poster Information for Poster Entries along with judging sheet; e-mailed to Auxiliary; took copies to meeting
- Prepared Starbursts with Photo information for Photo Entries along with judging sheet; e-mailed to Auxiliary; took copies to meeting
- Prepared judging sheets for McKibben Scholarship applications; took to meeting for Education Committee to select winner
- Compiled FY 2012 "Not in Good Standing" reports for Area VPs and board meeting; gave hand outs
- Completed Executive Committee Meeting minutes
- Compiled FAC, Forestry & Board Meeting minutes to post to website
- Sent out e-mail to il.all listing with DOT Point Highlights of meeting
- Paid travel vouchers to meeting recorders

#### OTHER DUTIES:

- Phone calls, mail and e-mail correspondence
- Compiled expense reports for Credit Cards
- Timesheets
- Maintain Patio Paver and Rain Barrel Database
- Maintain SWCD Dues Paid (FY '12 Databases); mailed "not in good standing" notices to Districts
- Updated Records Retention, Mgmt & Destruction Folder
- Forward to Rich the monthly SWCD/LUC agenda and meeting minutes that are e-mailed to me; file these after seen by Rich
- Proofread Conservation Catchall and Legislative Newsletter; made changes and posted to website; copied link and forwarded to il.all
- Completed Monthly Office Supply Inventory and placed order
- Maintaining Earth Stewardship Bank Account; posted donation funds to account; redid income/expense statement
- E-mailed link to Districts & Board Members for Legislative and CC newsletters; mailed copies to non-email participants

#### FY 2011 AUDIT:

- Made copies of Audit Summary to hand out at June QB meeting; notified Auditor to make appearance at Annual Mtg

#### IL ENVIROTHON:

- Sent out Meeting Wizard for final wrap-up meeting for Envirothon Taskforce; tallied responses; sent out meeting date and time with teleconference call info
- Paid Canon Envirothon Registration fee for IL Envirothon winning team
- Paid IL Envirothon winning team the travel expense fee
- Preparing Income/Expense Statement for Annual Meeting voting delegate packet

#### 64th AISWCD ANNUAL MEETING/SUMMER CONFERENCE:

- Mailed McKibben Scholarship Winner letter with RSVP; mailed copy to Livingston County

- Mailed Poster and Photo Winners' letters with RSVPs; mailed copies to Winning Districts and Auxiliary
- Mailed Farm Family letters and RSVPs; mailed copies to LUC District
- Contacted Outstanding District Employee District
- Still working on sponsors or grants for funding awards and expenses.
- Contacted Parliamentarian with date and times needed for Director Forum and Annual Meeting.
- Contacted Brownfield Network to secure emcee and donate radios for Farm Family Banquet.
- Contacted Prairie Farmer to supply Farm Family Winner sign and tickets for the Ag Day at the IL State Fair.
- Working on Registration-meals & Sessions, Director Service Award, Auction Items and securing photos for slide show for new Directors and Director Service Awards
- Securing photos for award winners for slide show
- Mailed voting delegate memo with Resolutions and By-Laws change to registered voting delegates.

#### ACCOUNTING/OFFICE ADMIN:

- Completed Payroll and Payroll Taxes for June; will mail items.
- Will reconcile all bank accounts for June
- Completed bookwork for All AISWCD & Insurance Accts
- Prepared Deposits for SWCD Dues and Receivables
- Completed Checks for Payables; Completed Deposits for Receivables; Completed Monthly Financials
- Filed all Completed Payables & Receivables Documentation
- Wrote checks for SWCD various insurance premiums; had Rich sign; mailed; e-mailed copies to Debbie Holsapple; contacted SWCD worker's comp agent to update insurance premium payment and remove monthly fee.
- Completed Semi-Monthly IL Lobbyist Expenditure Data for IL Secretary of State for May.
- Posting FY '12 SWCD Dues payments to database, making deposits, and sending thank you letters to Districts via e-mail by end of June.

#### LOOKING AHEAD:

- 2012 64th Annual Meeting/Summer Conference
- CREP 319 & 608 Grant Programs
- Possible September QB Teleconference Call

**REMEMBER: The excitement of learning separates youth from old age. As long as you are learning, you are not old. Confidence comes from not always being right, but not fearing being wrong!!!!**

**TO ACT: 7 days without prayer makes one WEAK!!!!**

**Have A Safe & Happy 4th of July!!!**

*Sherry*



## PROGRAM COORDINATOR'S PAGE - KELLY THOMPSON

[kelly.thompson@aiswcd.org](mailto:kelly.thompson@aiswcd.org)

On June 21 I attended the Lake Springfield Watershed Resources Planning Committee at the Sangamon County SWCD in Springfield, IL. I had the pleasure of meeting with surrounding county land owners, SWCD employees, LUC members and individuals representing local and state government entities. The overall meeting was productive and informative. The topics discussed pertained to urban issues affecting a local watershed. Here are the topics discussed by the committee:

- New construction erosion- City stormwater ordinance- Developers utilizing retention ponds- Trash & garbage in ditches- Stormwater- Attitude on stormwater management- Rainwater utilization- Utilization of green infrastructure
- Shoreline preservation-Septic systems draining into Lake Springfield- Leaseholder responsible for shoreline stabilization- Cutting down trees- Lack of property up-keep- Resident geese population (phosphorus in excrement)- Lawn fertilization- Golf courses around or flowing into Lake Springfield
- Lack of Public Education
- Pesticide utilization-Pesticide timing- Rate-Application methods- Maintain setbacks
- Staging of inbound water into Lake Springfield- Invasive species in woodlands (woodland management)

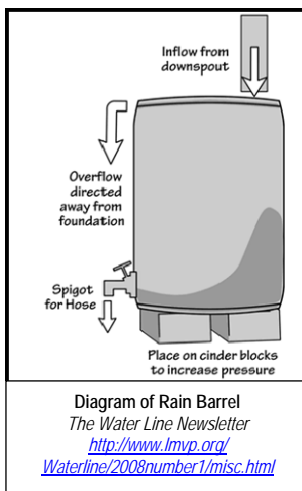
The above topics are vital points to be discussed when prepping for a watershed management plan. If any of you know the Springfield Lake area, it desperately needs a watershed management plan. The lake is one of Springfield's greatest assets for tourism/recreation and overall appeal as it receives over 600,000 visitors a year. Not only important to tourism and recreation but more importantly the 4200 acre lake is Springfield's (and surrounding towns) main source of drinking water. Surrounding the lake one will find a total of eight public parks and five boat launches. The lake's water is also used as cooling water for the nearby CWLP power plant complex.

The above information can be related to individual cities and towns throughout Illinois that are trying to achieve clean drinking water as well as trying to control stormwater runoff from an urbanized locale. The ideas discussed at the committee meeting can be linked to the Illinois Urban Manual, as the IUM is a collection of erosion and sediment control practices for an urban setting. So, all the new subdivisions popping up around Illinois towns and all the new development and construction, i.e. retail marts, gas stations, or even expansion of airports, the contractors or developers should be utilizing some type of erosion and sediment control practice and those practices can be found here [http://aiswcd.org/IUM/standards/urstdnd\\_alpha.html](http://aiswcd.org/IUM/standards/urstdnd_alpha.html).

At the committee meeting, members discussed ways to educate the public on how urban stormwater runoff is affecting local watersheds, drinking water and wildlife. Following are two examples of practices that could be implemented at your residence; whether it's urban or rural the outcome is still the same: PROTECTION of the WATERSHED & CLEAN DRINKING WATER!

### Introduce Rain Barrels to Capture Roof Water Runoff

**Benefits to the land** – In a traditional setting where a rain barrel is not installed, stormwater would typically fall onto the roof then trickle or gush (depending upon the type of rain event) into the gutter system where it would then be carried into the downspout and exit onto the lawn via gutter piping or near the foundation of the home. Water will then percolate into the ground or if the ground is saturated, will runoff onto streets and drive-ways carrying with it any chemicals, oil or pesticides that may have been introduced to the surrounding landscape. In most urban areas where concrete (impervious pavement) is predominant, the stormwater will immediately runoff, allowing for little to no infiltration. In this case stormwater runoff will pick-up contaminants and those contaminants will directly affect animals, plants and humans. However, when a rain barrel is installed the latter portion of the above scenario will be less likely to take place and/or less damaging to surrounding plants and animals unless the rain barrel is at capacity or not properly installed. A rain barrel simply allows the water to be kept in a holding "barrel" until it is needed. If the rain event should produce more rain than the barrel can hold, water would then be diverted into gutter piping and empty directly into the lawn, away from the homes foundation. Or in some cases have the excess water drain into a rain garden.



**Benefits to the land owner** – There are several benefits of harvesting rain water via rain barrel. The most obvious benefit and the one I will discuss further is a reduction in utility costs, especially during summer months. According to the U.S. EPA, the homeowner will save approximately 1,300 gallons of water during peak summer months. This is advantageous as many homeowners plant gardens and various perennials during the late spring to early summer. With planting comes watering, several times a week during the first several weeks in order to establish an adequate root system. As you water the utility bill will noticeably increase. If you decide to install a rain barrel (or two) you will only incur the initial cost of the barrel and materials needed to connect it to the home. Maintenance will need to be performed twice a year, once to prepare for winter and again to insure the barrel is spring-ready. It is recommended to place a wire-mesh screen on the opening of the barrel and empty the barrel every 10 days in order to prevent mosquito breeding.

*More information can be found through the web-links at the end of this article.*

### Introduce Rain Gardens

*(Continued on page 9)*



## ISWCDEA CORNER - *KARA DOWNIN, ISWCDEA RC VICE CO-CHAIR AND REGION ONE REPRESENTATIVE*

website: <http://www.il.ncdea.org>



Summer Conference will soon be upon us. I'm excited to take a break from Contribution Agreement work and go to Springfield to learn about some relevant topics. Summer Conference is also a time for Directors and Staff to network with other counties and create some great ideas. Recently, we had a Region 1/Area 4 meeting and I left with some great notes from our breakout session. So, if you have procrastinated thus far, please get your registration forms completed and sessions picked out and returned to Sherry Finn.

If you plan to attend Summer Conference or not, you are highly encouraged to participate in the Employee's Association 50/50 raffle. A minimum win of \$100 is guaranteed. Of course, we won't know how large the pot of cash will be until we all come together at Summer Conference, but you do not need to be present to win. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5 and can be purchased from any Regional Employee Association board members. The members are listed below so you can easily contact someone;

Region 1: Andrew Brachman, Kara Downin, Sharon Matson, Sherry Huffstutler  
Region 2: Dean Johnson, Jonathon Manuel, Debi Slade, Jenny Wold  
Region 3: Jane Brangenberg, Betty Buckert, Cindy Moon, Abbie Sperry  
Region 4: Tara Hopkins, Stephen Miller, Renee Weitekamp, One Vacant Rep.  
Region 5: Keith Livesay, Meghan Polacek, Two Vacant Reps.

### SWCD License Plate Initiative

For those attending Summer Conference, license plate applications and information will be readily available at registration. An order form and \$25 are needed to fulfill a commitment. 1500 commitments are needed before any plates will be made and each District has been asked to secure 16 commitments by December 31, 2012.

We are creating a press release that will be sent out shortly. Targeting current/previous board members, area contractors, Power of 10 list, high school Envirothon teams and loyal customers would be a great start to gaining pre-orders of our license plate. How is your county planning to help?



## **64th AISWCD Annual Meeting & Illinois Land and Water Resources Conference**

*Conservation for the Future: The Next Generation  
July 23 - 24, 2012*

The 64th AISWCD Annual Meeting and the Illinois Land and Water Resources Conference will be held at the Northfield Inn, Suites and Conference Center in Springfield, Illinois.

The two day event will begin Monday morning at 9:00 with the Opening Ceremony featuring Partner Remarks, Newly Elected Director Recognition and the Director Service Awards Presentation.

Training sessions during the conference will include Stabilization Structures, Cultural Resources, Director Training, Round Table Discussion, IAAP Meeting/Business Etiquette, CPESC- Nature of Disturbed Soils Across Illinois, Records Maintenance, and Director-OMA Certification Training.

Of course the event will feature the Farm Family Banquet and Live Auction on Monday evening and plenty of opportunities for visiting and networking throughout the event. We hope to see you there!





## Natural Area Guardians - Debra Carey

demydoidea@gmail.com

# STORMY SUMMER WEATHER

As you read this sentence, about 2000 thunderstorms are in progress over the Earth's surface. Almost 45,000 storms form in each 24-hour period.

Jagged, navy clouds gather on the horizon; a cool whisper of wind suddenly chills your cheek; you jump as a bold bolt of lightning is followed by distant rumbling and grumbling thunder. A peculiar silence may hang in the air as birds cease their twittering and your dog heads for cover under the porch.

The Prophet Ezekiel describes a thunderstorm, or possibly an actual tornado, in Babylonia about 2,500 years ago: "And I looked up, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the North, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself." Ezekiel compared this thunderstorm to the glory of God; to many people who cower while the thunder roars, this may not be comforting! But to those individuals who love to call themselves "storm watchers," the spectacle of lightning ripping across the black sky, accompanied by nature's sound effects, is very enjoyable.

I guess I fall somewhere in the middle - I thrill to the sound of thunder rumbling and even shaking my house; I gaze in awe when lightning crackles with energy. But severe lightning is not something to toy with. Every year people are killed by lightning. Farmers in particular are very vulnerable. Our motto is "When thunder roars, go indoors." Anyone who can hear thunder can be struck by lightning.

We see the effects of lightning on many trees on our farms and natural areas. Massive branches virtually exploded away from the tree; rippled scars from previous lightning strikes; and actual trees toppled are all common scenes. Lightning does take a toll on trees, and this is the reason one should NEVER stand under a tree.

If you afraid of thunderstorms, don't move to central Florida. This area experiences the most thunderstorm days each year in the United States - an average of 90. But this can't hold a candle to the country of Java which experiences 223 thunderstorm days annually. The states of Washington and Oregon have the least number of storms; these areas have excessive rain but it usually comes in gentle, lengthy showers unaccompanied by fireworks.

There are four basic types of thunderstorms.

1. Single-cell applies to a single storm and are the typical summer thunderstorms. These storms dissipate after an hour or less, and are the least violent.
2. Multi-cell thunderstorms form as clusters of storms and may evolve into a squall line. These storms may produce moderate hail, high winds, lots of rainfall and can be a precursor of tornadoes.
3. Multi-cell lines are squall lines that elongate into a severe storm front that may form ahead of a cold front. Heavy rain, hail, frequent lightning and strong, straight winds, tornadoes and waterspouts come with this type of a storm.
4. Super-cells are large, scary, severe storms that include what's called a mesocyclone. These storms produce destructive tornadoes with 80-mile an hour plus winds, 4-inch hailstones and flash floods. Yikes!

Yes, nature can be violent, but thunderstorms are a vital part of our ecosystem. Rain, and the accompanying cooler temperatures are often the welcome end result. The next time the wind rises and the sky darkens, take a ringside seat (but in a safe place) for the greatest show on Earth.

Storm Trivia that's not so trivial:

- Each year, on average, 61 people are killed by lightning in the USA.
- 1,000 people are injured each year by lightning and its effects.
- 98 people have been killed by lightning in Illinois in the past 46 years.
- In 2001, Illinois ranked second in the USA for lightning fatalities.
- 67% of lightning fatalities occur at recreational sites like golf courses, soccer fields, and ball diamonds.
- No place is safe outside when a thunderstorm is near.

Summer Storm Safety:

- Plan ahead. If storms are in the forecast, consider postponing farm, garden or yard work or at least take a weather radio along so as to keep up with the latest forecast.
- Watch the sky. Monitor what's happening overhead.
- Get away from water.
- In no indoor shelter is available, take cover in a vehicle with the windows rolled up.
- Stay away from trees, electric poles and other tall objects.
- When thunder roars, go indoors.
- Lightning CAN strike the same place twice!

## **SCIENTISTS COMPLETE MOST COMPREHENSIVE GENETIC ANALYSIS YET OF CORN**

(continued from page 1)

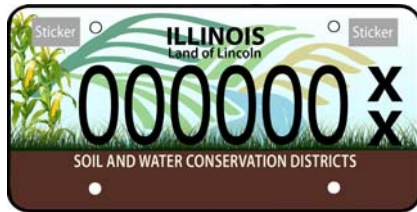
Another study led by team member Jeff Ross-Ibarra from the University of California, Davis gives an extraordinary glimpse into how corn evolved more than 8,700 years ago from a wild grass in the lowland areas of southwestern Mexico into today's ubiquitous international commodity.

The researchers compared wild varieties with traditional corn varieties from across the Americas and with modern improved breeding lines. They identified hundreds of genes that played a role in the transformation of corn from its wild origins to today's cultivated crop and show how that transition was largely achieved by ancient farmers who first domesticated it thousands of years ago.

Last year, the economic value of the U.S. corn crop was \$76 billion, with U.S. growers producing an estimated 12 billion bushels, more than a third of the world's supply. Corn is the largest production crop worldwide, providing food for billions of people and livestock and critical feedstock for production of biofuels.

The above story is reprinted from [materials](#) provided by [National Science Foundation](#).

National Science Foundation (2012, June 3).



## **SWCD LICENSE PLATES NEED TO BE ORDERED!**

Have you ordered your SWCD license plate yet? For many years, since the "Environmental" license plate first appeared, soil and water conservation districts have been talking about getting a specialized plate to promote soil and water conservation efforts in Illinois. With the passage of HB 4966, sponsored by Representative Chapin Rose, that discussion idea became reality. Public Act 96-1377 was signed July 29, 2010 allowing any Illinois resident to request a soil and water conservation district license plate for their automobile or light truck. **That law will expire September 28, 2012 unless 1,500 plates are ordered.**

We hope that since most of the crops are planted farmers and their families will have a little time to think about other things and we hope they will think about supporting soil and water conservation in Illinois. The money from the orders and \$25 from the sale of renewal plates will go to support the Illinois Envirothon, a very worthy cause.

To order a plate, interested persons need only complete a short form and mail it along with a nonrefundable \$25 deposit to secure their order. The funds will be used for the Illinois Envirothon whether there are sufficient orders to print the plates or not. In order for the Secretary of State to make the first printing, 1,500 plates must be ordered. Once that number has been reached, the Secretary of state will ask for a design to be submitted and if it is found to meet legal requirements then the first run of plates will be printed. *The plate pictured above is only an example and not the actual design of the plate.*

Only sixteen plates need to be ordered in each of Illinois' 97 soil and water conservation districts to meet the minimum so be sure to get your plates ordered now and ask your friends and customers if they will consider supporting soil and water conservation in Illinois. They are going to have to buy a plate or sticker anyway. They might as well make it a plate that supports a great cause **AND** promotes soil and water conservation.

You can obtain an order form at: [http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/pdf\\_publications/vsd702.pdf](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/publications/pdf_publications/vsd702.pdf). Print out a bunch and give them to your friends and neighbors or anyone else who might have an interest.

The name of the specialty plate is "**Soil and Water Conservation.**" Complete the rest of the form, sign it and mail it with a **\$25 check** to the Springfield office of the Secretary of State. Orders will not be accepted without the payment.



## PROGRAM COORDINATOR'S PAGE

(Continued from page 5)

### What is a rain garden?

Well, it's really nothing more than a shallow, man-made depression in the land that is landscaped using native plant species and perennials. The depression fills with rain water after a rain-event; rain amount will depend on the event. The water then infiltrates through the vegetative root system and into the ground; while doing so the soil will help to filter any contaminants that may have been picked-up. The idea is to capture rain water so little water will run-off into streets and into storm drains.

### Where should a rain garden be implemented?

Build a rain garden any place where stormwater runoff is an issue. Or build a rain garden for its beauty and benefit to the environment – by introducing oxygen producing plants; watershed protection – through capturing and filtering stormwater in order to reduce flooding and replenish the system; and clean water – by allowing our storm drains to capture less chemically-contaminated stormwater runoff.

### How do I build a rain garden?



Rain Garden  
by NRCS, IDALS-DSC

<http://ftpfc.sc.egov.usda.gov/IA/news/2009RainGardenFS.pdf>

[lake.springfield.htm](http://lake.springfield.htm)

Iowa, NRCS. "Rain Garden: ... *absorb water, reduce runoff, prevent flooding*"

<http://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/IA/news/2009RainGardenFS.pdf>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. "Mid-Atlantic Region Green Landscaping: *Rain Barrels* - What are the Advantages of Rain Barrels?"

<http://www.epa.gov/reg3esd1/garden/rainbarrel.html#advantages>

University of Illinois Extension. "Gardner's Corner: *Rain Barrels Make a Comeback*."

[http://urbanext.illinois.edu/gardenerscorner/issue\\_02/summer\\_04\\_06.cfm](http://urbanext.illinois.edu/gardenerscorner/issue_02/summer_04_06.cfm)

There are many excellent websites and local persons you can reference when constructing a rain garden. Raingardens.org recommends 7 steps to creating a long-lasting, environmentally friendly rain garden.

- 1) Before You Start – Location, location, location is key; Be aware of utility lines; Know concepts like re-directing rain; Determine if your land is sloping; And never plant large gardens under trees
- 2) Know Your Soil Type – Test the soil and test drainage
- 3) Designing Your Rain Garden – Determine size by considering the following: roof and impervious area size that will drain into the garden; Know how much water the soil can hold
- 4) Preparing the Site – Outline the gardens borders; prepare the soil; begin excavating
- 5) Vegetation – Native is ALWAYS best!
- 6) Planting
- 7) Maintenance

### Article Sources:

City Water Light and Power. "*Lake Springfield*"  
[http://www.cwlp.com/lake\\_springfield/](http://www.cwlp.com/lake_springfield/)



Residential Rain Garden  
by NRCS, IDALS-DSC

### Informational Resources:

A How-To Guide for Chicago Residents –

<http://www.cityofchicago.org/dam/city/depts/doe/general/>

[NaturalResourcesAndWaterConservation\\_PDFs/Water/ManagingStormwater\\_Home.pdf](http://www.naturalresourcesandwaterconservation.org/PDFs/Water/ManagingStormwater_Home.pdf)

Illinois River Watershed Partnership –

<http://www.irwp.org/conservation-and-restoration/rain-barrels/>

City of Aurora, Rain Barrel Program –

[http://www.aurora-il.org/development\\_services/publicworks/rain\\_barrels.php](http://www.aurora-il.org/development_services/publicworks/rain_barrels.php)

City of Elmhurst, Rain Barrels –

<http://elmhurst.org/index.aspx?NID=1031>

For additional information on any of the above material please feel free to call or email.

Happy Independence Day! I hope everyone has a safe and happy holiday!



Kelly



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- Independence Day - July 4th, Office Closed
- 2012 Annual Meeting and Summer Conference - July 23 - 24, Northfield Inn and Conference Center
- 2012 Illinois State Fair - August 10 - 19
- U of I Agronomy Day - August 16

### 2012 QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING DATES

- September 2012 Quarterly Board Meeting - September 11th, Teleconference 8:00 am (Only if Needed)
- December 2012 Quarterly Board Meeting - December 10th/11th, Northfield Inn - Springfield, IL

### july is:

- National Picnic Month
- National Blueberry Month
- National Anti-Boredom Month
- National Cell Phone Courtesy Month
- National Hot Dog Month
- National Ice Cream Month

### july dates of note:

- World UFO Day - July 2nd
- National Fried Chicken Day - July 6th
- Chocolate Day - July 7th
- Cheer Up The Lonely Day - July 11th
- Pecan Pie Day - July 12th
- National Ice Cream Day - July 15th
- Disneyland Opens (1955) - July 17th
- Moon Day (Armstrong and Aldrin land on moon in 1969) - July 20th
- Parent's Day - July 22nd
- National Hot Dog Day - July 23
- Summer Olympics Begin- July 27th
- Mutt's Day - July 31

### august is:

- Admit You're Happy Month
- Family Fun Month
- National Catfish Month
- National Golf Month
- Peach Month
- Water Quality Month

### august dates of note:

- National Ice Cream Sandwich Day - August 2nd
- National Watermelon Day - August 3rd
- US Coast Guard Day (Established on this day in 1790) - August 4th
- Sneak Some Zucchini onto Your Neighbor's Porch Day - August 8th
- Son & Daughter Day - August 11th

AISWCD Mission: *To represent and empower Illinois' SWCDs*

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