



# MUSKINGUM SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

225 Underwood Street, Suite 100 Zanesville, OH 43701  
Phone(740)454-2027 Fax(740)454-1451 www.muskingumswcd.org

## NEWSLETTER 2009 ISSUE 1

### BLUEBIRD BOXES IN WINTER

Nicole Hafer, Education Specialist

#### Mission Statement

"Providing leadership and assistance for the conservation and enhancement of our natural resources and environment."

#### Vision Statement

"Recognized as a dynamic, innovative team reaching for a harmonious environment."

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**2009 Seedling Sale**

For any of us who monitor bluebird boxes, either in your own yards or on a bluebird trail, it might surprise you to know it's not just summertime when the boxes are being used. Many species of birds, including bluebirds, will utilize nest boxes during the wintertime.

Birds often seek protected places to sleep or roost as the temperatures begin to fall. Dense vegetation in thickets or the interior branches of evergreens help serve as a wind-break and hide birds from night-prowling predators. Songbirds that are cavity nesters during breeding season will also roost in nest boxes in the winter. Species who utilize nest boxes include: bluebirds, chickadees, wrens, titmice and several species of woodpeckers. Screech owls and American kestrels will also use nest boxes year around. Generally, the cup-like nest builders, such as blue jays, juncos and cardinals will not use nest boxes at all. Interestingly enough, birds who use the nest boxes in winter will often share the box with others of their species. It's not uncommon to find several bluebirds sleeping in a group in the box on a cold winter night.

For those of us who enjoy watching birds, by adding nest boxes in close proximity to your feeders, you are essentially providing a bed and breakfast for your feathered neighbors. If you are interested in added nest boxes or leaving your bluebird boxes up for the winter, there are several things you should know. Winter boxes should be mounted or raised to 10 feet compared to the eye level height they are normally mounted to decrease predation. To easily achieve varying heights, a telescopic pole can be used. These poles also make cleaning the box easier. As with all nest boxes, they should be mounted on metal poles, never fence posts or trees to reduce predation from raccoons and weasels. Often winter nest box residents prefer a larger than normal hole to enter the box. The larger entrance allows the birds to enter and exit quickly and provides a more comfortable environment to look around. Extra ventilation holes around the bottom of the box should be sealed with weather stripping to maximize warmth. Remember to leave the top holes open to allow light to enter the box, birds do not like



**Slanted Bluebird Nest Box with Vents**

**Blue Bird Nest Box**

to enter a dark next box.

If even after all this effort, bluebirds do not choose to take up residence in your nest box, rest assured some other needy creature will. Flying squirrels commonly use next boxes year around, as do many species of meadow mice. If you are looking for the perfect gift for the wildlife enthusiast, consider a nest box. The Muskingum Soil and Water Conservation District can order a nest box for you for whatever species you wish to attract. Nest box plans for several species are also available on the Ohio Division of Wildlife's website. So enjoy your winter bird feeding and rest assured the birds have warm places on those cold winter nights.

### 2009 BIG TREE NOMINATION CONTEST UNDERWAY

For a number of years now, the Muskingum SWCD has sponsored a Big Tree Contest in Muskingum County. The purpose of the contest, in addition to locating, measuring and documenting our county's big trees, is to provide an opportunity to remind us of the importance of trees and their role in our quality of life.

Trees nominated for this contest may be on your own property, or on other privately owned or public land in Muskingum County.

Trees are scored using a format utilized by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources-Division of Forestry in determining Ohio's big trees, many of which remain National Big Tree Champions. The trees height, average crown spread, and Diameter at Breast Height (DBH) are factored in this measurement, earning specific points or values.

When you nominate a tree, we ask that you approximate these dimensions. SWCD staff will measure each nominated tree for points. Also, it is very

important to be specific as to the location of the nominated tree. It is equally important that the nominator or owner be available for the measurement by the staff during the field visit.

An award will be presented to the owner of the largest tree in Muskingum County, regardless of specie. A custom made plaque and recognition in the *District Newsletter* will be awarded to the owners of the "Big Tree 2009".

Last year's winning tree was a Silver Maple located in Chandlersville owned by Donald and

Grace Helle. The winning tree measured 19.5 feet in circumference, 82 feet in height, with an average crown width of 100.5 feet, giving it a total score of 340.125. Each tree entered is in the contest for two years. Previous big tree winners can enter again, but a different tree must be submitted for consideration.

If you would like to submit a tree for consideration, complete the entry form found on the next page.

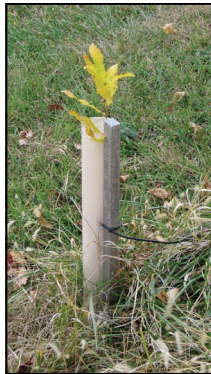


## TREE SHELTERS AVAILABLE

By: Clayton Rico

Tree shelters are used on hardwood deciduous trees and can not be used for coniferous trees (evergreens). Each thin walled PVC tree shelter comes with a bamboo stake, zip ties and a net. Tree shelters are reusable!

The district is taking orders for tree shelters this year during the tree seedling sale. Consider tree shelters when ordering your seedlings. For more information or questions on our tree sale, contact Clayton at 740-454-2027.



Make checks payable to: **Muskingum SWCD**  
Sales tax included in cost.



## Tree Shelter Sale Order Now!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

### Three Foot Tree Shelter

\$4.00 X \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Four Foot Tree Shelter

\$5.00 X \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Five Foot Tree Shelter

\$6.00 X \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount Due** = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## 2009 MUSKINGUM COUNTY "BIG TREE" CONTEST OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Owner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Circumference at 4 1/2' (in inches): \_\_\_\_\_

Approx. Vertical Height (in feet): \_\_\_\_\_

Average Diameter/Spread of Crown (in feet): \_\_\_\_\_

Exact Location of Tree: \_\_\_\_\_

Draw a brief sketch of the property showing the approximate location of the tree in the space provided below, or stop into the office and show us on an aerial map.

**Complete and return by March 6, 2009 to:**

**Muskingum SWCD "Big Tree" Contest 225 Underwood Street, Suite 100 Zanesville, OH 43701**

### Tri County: (Muskingum, Morgan, Perry) Grazing Management Workshop

Dates: March 26 & 31 April 2 & 4 (Field Day)

Location: Morgan County

Contact: Chris Penrose, Morgan OSU Extension Office

Phone: (740) 962-4854

Agenda to be  
Announced

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**WINTER LANDSCAPE DEER DAMAGE**

Ryan Fink, Ag/Wildlife Specialist

As winter starts to sink its teeth into our area, food sources for wildlife start to become scarce. This time of year forces wildlife to search for food and start eating less desirable plants. As a homeowner, you may start noticing shrubs and evergreens around your house showing signs of deer browse. If there are prolonged periods of snow cover, this can also increase the amount of damage.

One of the easiest ways of dealing with this type of winter damage would be with one of the many types of odor and taste repellents that are sold. There are many products on the market with active ingredients ranging from dried blood, putrescent egg solids, pepper and garlic. I have also heard from landowners that have made their own repellent concoction that has proved successful.

Many of these repellents can be found at local agriculture or feed supply stores. When choosing a repellent it is important to pay attention to application warnings the products may have. Also, some products offer dilution rates for different plant species. If a product is water soluble, the manufacturer may recommend reapplying the product after any wet weather event.

A final recommendation that I have is to purchase two different types of products and alternate use. Wildlife have an ability to adapt to many different factors. By using different products, the deterrent is always kept new to the animal and hopefully extends the usefulness. These repellents are not always a cure all however it is one of the easiest ways to protect your landscape from winter deer browsing.

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR**

January 27	Live-At-Noon, Kylene Newman	March 6	Big Tree Contest Deadline
February 10	MSWCD Board Mtg., 4:00 p.m.	March 10	MSWCD Board Mtg., 4:00 p.m.
February 10	Live-At-Noon, Nicole Hafer	March 10	Live-At-Noon, Ryan Fink
February 16	President's Day, Office Closed	March 24	Live-At-Noon, Clayton Rico
February 24	Live-At-Noon, Patty Dyer	March 26 & 31	Grazing Management Workshop
February 27	Tree Sale Order Deadline	March 29	Woodlands & Wildlife Conference
		April 2 & 4	Grazing Management Workshop

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Ryan Fink  
Paul Holdsworth  
Jeanette Weinberg  
Kylene Newman  
Nicole Hafer  
Ken Rupe  
Clayton Rico
- NRCS Personnel:** Patty Dyer  
Dee Wiseman

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