

The Resource

Employee Newsletter of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources

January 2003



DAVID VOSEFSKI – DOWN TO EARTH ENGINEER



All of Dave Vosefski's energies go to helping the landowners of 16 counties in southeastern Ohio. He's a conservation engineer in the Zanesville field office of the Division of Soil & Water Conservation.

Farmers and other landowners often need technical assistance with the planning, design, and construction of conservation projects on their land. Working in conjunction with 16 soil and water conservation districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Dave supplies the engineering know-how to ensure the farmers' new structures and operations meet state and federal regulations. Projects involve such things as fresh water springs, waterways and ponds, and manure storage systems. His job is very "down to earth."

Animal waste storage facilities are a hot topic. Farms that have a lot of animals produce a lot of manure. EPA standards have become rigorous, and consequently building proper storage facilities is even more critical.

Dave explained, "We need to reduce pollution by controlling the times of the year the farmers apply manure to the land. For instance, you

don't want to spread manure during wet weather because it could run off and contaminate surface water. So the farmer needs a containment structure to store the manure during those times of the year it can't be spread on the fields."

Manure storage facilities are custom-designed specifically for each situation. Dave continued, "The members of the conservation partnership [see sidebar] draw up a plan that looks at the big picture — taking into account the farm's soils, drainage patterns, appropriate fields for spreading manure, and so on. The type of containment system I design depends on this information plus the type of operation it is — the kind, number, and size of the animals. Are they dairy cows, pigs, chickens, horses, or what? It makes a difference. We then calculate the daily manure production, and factor in the number of months needed to store it."

Dave and the technicians from the SWCDs make numerous visits to clients during the design phase to talk about their projects. Establishing trust and communication with the client is essential. He acknowledged, "To avoid coming across as the government telling people what to do, we give them alternatives and let them decide. The key is getting the landowner to buy into the plan, to be a part of the decision-making process."

In addition to working with the public, he spends half his time training soil and water district

THE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP

As far back as 1929, the U.S. Department of Agriculture saw the need to help farmers with erosion control. But landowners then, as now, had a basic distrust of "government interference" in their operations; programs would have to be brought down to a local level, with federal and state agencies in a supporting role.

In Ohio, services and expertise are provided by three agencies.

The **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that provides trained technicians, soil scientists, economists, biologists, and other experts to help landowners with conservation.

The **Division of Soil and Water Conservation** provides technical, educational, and financial assistance to the 88 county soil and water conservation districts. Coordinating with other agencies, the division assists with soil inventory and evaluation, non-point source pollution control, environmental education, and erosion control.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), a political subdivision of the state, operate in all 88 Ohio counties and are supervised by local citizens. SWCDs provide *direct assistance* to farmers and landowners on such matters as windbreaks, farm ponds, drainage, no-till farming, and conservation.

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Vosefski, Continued from Page 1

technicians who actually provide the work for the farm projects. Dave said, "It is, in essence, on-the-job-training. We don't just explain the basics, we also take them into the field for some hands-on work." He may also spend additional time with a new technician who needs one-on-one help on a project in progress, or help an experienced tech who needs a new approach to a task.

The variety of challenges inherent in the job is what Dave enjoys about it. He said, "I like meeting new people and the satisfaction of coming up with solutions to their needs. It's good to hear them say how much better and nicer a new system or facility is, and how it makes their jobs easier."

Looking to the future, Dave hopes to extend soil and water conservation technical know-how to new arrivals to the rural scene. "Although farmers have been our traditional clients, a lot of city people are moving to the country, buying five-acre lots, and getting ideas about what they want to do with their land. They're going to need us!"



David Vosefski, a native of Pennsylvania, attended West Virginia University where he received a B.S. in Engineering, and passed the Professional Engineer (P.E.) test to become licensed in Ohio. He also has an MBA from Ohio University. Dave worked for AEP in the coal industry for 16 years before coming to ODNR in April, 2000. Dave and wife Pam live on 40 acres near Somerset, where they have some animals of their own. He likes to hunt, fish, farm, and has an interest in wildlife photography.

OLD WOMAN CREEK TURNS "GREEN"

Innovative renovations have been underway at the visitor/research center at Old Woman Creek (OWC) State Nature Preserve at Lake Erie. Remodeling has been done with many recycled-content products and other environmentally friendly materials and techniques.

Begun in November, 2001, renovations include an expanded exhibit gallery, additional office space and dormitory facilities for visiting students and researchers. Also installed were an energy-efficient geothermal heating/cooling system, and a parking area that absorbs rainwater rather than letting it run off. The project will be finished this April.

Gene Wright, OWC National Estuarine Research Reserve Program Administrator with the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves (DNAP), said, "These improvements will allow us to serve the public even better than before. We can also showcase the 'green' products used for sustainable coastal communities."

Sustainable architecture, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), recognizes the impact buildings have on our finite natural resources, and focuses on designing and assembling more ecologically friendly living and working spaces.

Linda Feix, OWC education coordinator, had always included information about recycled-content products in her education programs. It was only natural that she suggested this was the way to go on the renovations. **Ralph Roberts** with the Division of Engineering (since retired) coordinated the design of the project with the architect; they came up with a list of ecologically sensitive suppliers. Grant applications to NOAA and NatureWorks were enthusiastically received.

Ron Kolbash, chief of the Division of Recycling & Litter Prevention, applauded DNAP and Engineering for their initiative to incorporate as many recycled products as possible into the OWC visitor/research center. "It's all about conserving resources," he said, "and what better way to use resources to their fullest than to use products made from recycled materials in ODNR building projects."

Some of the environmentally friendly alternatives used in the building include:

- **Cork flooring:** the cork layer under the tree's bark is stripped from a live tree, which rejuvenates more cork
- **Recycled wall board:** recycled gypsum and paper fiber
- **Fly ash concrete:** fly ash, a by-product of the combustion of ground or powdered coal, substituted for a percentage of cement
- **Recycled rubber mulch:** 100 percent recycled scrap tires, low maintenance, improved plant performance
- **Ceramic tile:** 55-75 percent recycled glass such as car windshields, bottles, etc.
- **Composite siding:** in place of wood siding, fiber-cement composite is durable, attractive, and fireproof

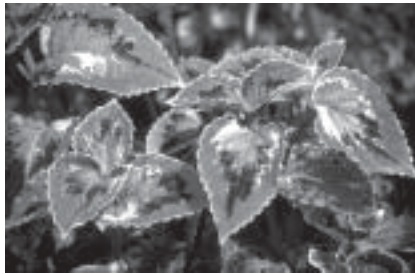
THE PRETTIEST GARDENS

From Laura Roth,
Horticulturist



COLEUS (say COAL-ee-us) BRIGHTENS YOUR GARDEN!

Laura Roth is *very* enthusiastic about coleus, also called painted nettle. “Coleus is exciting — and very hot right now, as are many old



fashioned plants from Victorian gardens. But today’s coleus isn’t like the two or three plants that Grandma had. Growers are creating wild colors in patented hybrids, and the weird names are as much fun as the colors!” Schizophrenic, Green Earrings, Inky Fingers, Chocolate Bingo, Dipt in Wine, and Zap Gnarley, are among many of the plant names.

These amazing plants are very versatile. According to Laura,

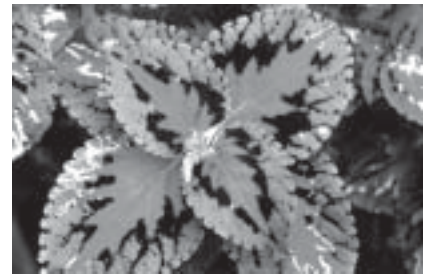
“They’re tiny and large, come in a huge pallet of colors, and can be used in beds and containers. I had some pots last summer that were *all* color foliage — with no flowers at all! You don’t need flowers with coleus!”

Coleus is a member of the mint family (square stems) and comes from Asia. Today’s coleus is painted in colors no leaf has seen before — bold pink, electric orange, purplish black, scarlet, chartreuse, and variations of bicolor, tricolor, multicolor, marbled, striped, and speckled. Not to be outdone, the shapes add texture and delight — frilly, ruffled, oval, lobed, and toothed.

Coleus is easy to grow from seeds and cuttings. Part shade is best for most types, but some new varieties perform well in full shade or full sun. Some sun brings out the most vibrant leaf colors. Laura said, “You can plant it in the sun as long as you water a lot — I call them ‘aquaholics!’”

Rich moisture-retentive soil is the best. Use compost, water regularly, keeping the soil evenly moist (but not sopping wet). Coleus wilts easily in dry soil and midday heat. Apply liquid fertilizer once every two weeks.

Coleus flowers aren’t much to write home about. It’s a common practice



to pinch off the flower spikes to keep the plants growing vigorously and sprouting bright new leaves. Pinching back is the remedy for a plant that’s gotten leggy — and you can start new plants from the stems you pinch off. Coleus that has gone to seed is finished.

For the winter, Laura takes some favorite coleus plants into her house, putting them in a warm window with lots of light. “And turn them regularly, because they’ll stretch toward the sun.” She added, “Actually, turning is a good idea for *all* house plants.”

Laura warned that you must be extra careful about bugs when you bring the plants inside. Mealy bugs and aphids are especially troublesome. Laura uses “dishwashing soap and water — just swish the plants in the sink, rinse them and shake off the excess water.”

To find out more about this beautiful plant, the Internet has many helpful sites; one of the most colorful is www.glasshouseworks.com/gallery2.html.



Be “In The Know” About Fire SAFETY!

- KNOW the fire and evacuation plan for your work area.
- KNOW the location of the closest fire alarm.
- KNOW where fire extinguishers are located and how to use them quickly.
- KNOW who to call in case of a fire.
- KNOW what flammable materials are used in your work area and the correct way to extinguish them.

*Brought to you by the ODNr-OCSEA
Health & Safety Committee.*

THE RESOURCE

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**Karen Kentosh, Editor
Mike Williams, Photographer**



Bob Taft, Governor
Sam Speck, Director



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TIDBITS



NEW CHIEF: **Terrie TerMeer** has been appointed chief of the Ohio Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). She's served as assistant chief since 1999 and has been acting chief since last June. She's helped guide the Corps through difficult times, while significantly expanding the services the CCC provides to other divisions. Terry is a graduate of Otterbein College and lives in Dublin.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Director **Sam Speck** was elected to a two-year term as chairman of the board of the Great Lakes Commission. This international agency of states and provinces promotes the wise development, use, and conservation of resources in the Great Lakes basin and St. Lawrence River. Delegates representing governments of the eight Great Lakes states and the Canadian provinces of Ontario and Quebec voted unanimously to elect him chairman. Issues facing the agency include ongoing efforts to develop a framework to manage water use, the challenge of battling aquatic invasive species, and working with other partners to develop a national program to protect the Great Lakes.

PROKOP TOP COP: **Adam Prokop**, of Neapolis in Lucas County, was named the 2002 Watercraft Officer of the Year. Adam is a 13-year veteran with the Division of Watercraft, assigned to the Maumee Bay field office in northwest Ohio. He patrols Lake Erie's western basin, one of the most heavily concentrated recreational boating areas in the state.



LIFE SAVERS: Watercraft Officers **Eric Reed** (Columbus) and **Andrew Hollenback** (Mt. Vernon) each received Life Saving Awards from the Division

of Watercraft. Both are assigned to the Alum Creek field office in Delaware County, and have been state watercraft officers for more than two years. The award recognizes the officers' successful efforts in April in helping save the life of a heart attack victim near the park.



ACTING CHIEF: **Nancy Strayer** has been appointed acting chief of the Division of Natural Areas & Preserves. She has been serving as assistant chief since May, 2000. Nancy's experience began in 1980 with Ohio State Parks, and includes stints as DNAP's public information officer and real estate administrator.

WE PASSED OUR GOAL! The generous employees of Fountain Square made the **2002 Holiday Food Basket Campaign** a success. A total of \$8,624.69 and 90 food baskets were donated. Funds and food were taken to the Mid-Ohio Food Bank for Franklin County needy families. Thanks to everyone who participated.

ANNIVERSARIES

5 Years

Chad Amos, Program Specialist,
Soil & Water/Zanesville

Jeff Thomas, Resource Management
Specialist, Soil & Water/Brookville

Steve Miller, Soil Survey Assistant,
Soil & Water

10 Years

Jeanne Russell, NPS Education
Coordinator, Soil & Water

Barbara Lesco, Naturalist
Supervisor, Parks/Quail Hollow

Jim Lynch, Assistant Chief,
Communications

15 Years

John Bozick, Park Conservation
Coordinator, Parks/Quail Hollow

Cindy Knight, Office Assistant,
Parks/Quail Hollow

Julia Roberts, Office Assistant,
Wildlife #2

20 Years

Curtis Smith, Officer, Wildlife #1

25 Years

Mike Tezlaf, Investigator, Wildlife/
Lake Erie

Dave Landis, Researcher, Recycling

Jerry Cunningham, Officer, Parks/
Mohican

Kathi Bibb, Business Administrator,
REALM

MILESTONES

New Hires

Brad Armstrong, Management Analyst
Supervisor 2, REALM

John Barr, Maintenance Repair
Worker 1, REALM

Promotions

David Risley, NRA4, Wildlife/
Management & Research

Mark Hemming, Assistant
Mgmt. Supervisor, Wildlife #4

Eric Smith, Fish Mgmt. Technician,
Wildlife #3/Highlandtown

John Cooper, Maintenance Repair
Worker 1, REALM

Transfers

John Berg, NRW, from Forestry to
Wildlife #3/Grand River

Margie Stump, Admin. Asst. 1,
from Wildlife to REALM

Deaths

Carol Hamilton, retired from Human
Resources; 11/20/02

John (Jack) Chapman, retired from
Engineering; 11/22/02

Randy Alexander, REALM, 12/14/02