

Schoharie County Soil & Water Conservation District
is happy to announce for 2025:

**ONLINE ORDERS ARE
NOW AVAILABLE
[Tree and Shrub Store](#)**



Click the link
or
scan the QR code
to go to our
NEW
online tree sale page

Save The Date!

The Schoharie County SWCD Tree Pick up will be on

Friday, April 18th 2023 8:30am - 4:00pm

Saturday April 19th 2023 8:30 - 11:30am

Cobleskill Fairgrounds

Find us online:

www.SchoharieSoilAndWater.org
[Tree and Shrub Online Store](#)

Facebook:

[Schoharie County Soil and
Water Conservation District](#)



Schoharie County Soil & Water Conservation District Winter Newsletter 2025

Nature's Comeback: Restoring Jefferson's Green

The Schoharie County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) played a pivotal role in reforesting the Jefferson Town Park as part of our 2024 Conservation Project.

Our initiative is dedicated to conserving, restoring, and enhancing the soil and water resources of the State. The Jefferson Park committee sought our assistance due to a fungal infection that severely deteriorated the trees on the Green.

An arborist was hired to tackle the critical issues, which included inspecting, crown cleaning, and removing dead or structurally unstable branches. The funding enabled the removal of diseased trees and the remediation of affected areas. Proper care was also given to salvageable trees to improve their survival rate.

Afterward, they planted Red Oaks, Sycamores, and Honey Locusts, which are more tolerant of salt and weather conditions. By reforesting the area, it will bring native trees back to the Green which are more tolerant to current conditions. Fertilization and timed watering were done to help the newly planted trees establish themselves.

These native plants will enhance the Green by rebuilding topsoil, mitigating runoff, and increasing the infiltration of rainwater and snowmelt. The additional trees will provide more shade, helping to keep the area cooler for the trees and surrounding landscape. They will also absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen, thereby improving air quality. The reforestation effort will reduce the community's carbon footprint and make a positive and lasting environmental impact.



Above: *Volunteers from the Jefferson Historical Society work to plant the new trees.*

Below: *The newly planted trees with their support lines and tree guards.*



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*Celebrating 85 years
of conservation
in Schoharie County!*

Grass Carp Permits: One Path to a Weed Free Pond

Each year, the District receives many inquiries about our fish sales, specifically about grass carp. Triploid Grass Carp are the preferred method for most people to eliminate unwanted vegetation in their ponds because they are voracious plant eaters! According to the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), U.S. grass carp producers began producing sterile (Triploid) grass carp in 1983 for this reason. Using Diploid (non-sterile) grass carp is prohibited in most of the U.S., including New York, because their rapid consumption of vegetation and reproduction would harm aquatic habitats.



To make them sterile, grass carp eggs are shocked with hot or cold water immediately after fertilization. This temperature shock causes the egg to retain an extra chromosome set, making the fish sterile.

Another common question we receive is whether grass carp will eat cattails. The answer is no; grass carp prefer tender, leafy plants over tough, fibrous species. They typically avoid floating or emergent plants like bulrush and water lilies. However, they will eat species like hydrilla, elodea, bladderwort, milfoil and curly pondweed. When applying for your grass carp permit, you must identify which plant species are in your pond on the application.

Another question we are asked frequently is when should grass carp be stocked. There are a few schools of thought on this. Some suggest in late spring when vegetation is just starting to grow, while others will say early fall. Neither is incorrect. For that reason, we offer grass carp for our spring and fall fish sales.

To obtain a permit application: Visit the NYS DEC website and search for "grass carp permit." You will find a printable PDF of the application there. You can also find a link to the application on our website under the "Services" tab. Once you complete the application, send it to our Regional Office (Region 4, Stamford, NY) for review. Upon approval, you have until November 30th of that year to buy grass carp.

Agricultural Assessments - What you need to know for 2025

Many of you have received requests from your assessors to update your ag assessment paperwork. New maps are required at least every 5 years, when the property changes hands (even within the same family), has been converted to a different land use, or has been subdivided or combined with another parcel.

As part of a statewide program, we assist farmland owners by completing the necessary Soil Group Worksheet (page 6 of the application). We plot the boundaries of each farmed parcel on a soil map, determine the acreage in each soil group and categorize the soil.

New York State assigns a value to each different soil group for farmland assessment purposes. The tax assessors use the soil group worksheets and the valuation from the state to calculate a real property assessment based on soil productivity. This allows farmland to be assessed based on its agricultural value, helping to keep land in production.

These open workable lands provide wildlife habitat, open space and natural resource diversification. Without this important program, many acres of our landscape would remain idle or be converted away from farmland to another form of land use.

If you own a property used by a farm and haven't applied to this program before, contact your tax assessor if you think your property is eligible.

Please Note: we ask that you be patient with our office as we have seen a significant rise in requests. Rest assured all requests that have been given to our office before February 20th will be available for pickup at our office to make the deadline of March 1st 2025.

From Floods to Fixes: Stabilizing Smith Brook

In 2022, the Schoharie County Soil and Water Conservation District identified stream instability issues along Smith Brook in Cobleskill. Smith Brook is the primary feeder for the Cobleskill Village Drinking Water Reservoir System. Damage to the creek likely occurred during Hurricane Irene in 2011 and other flood events, causing stream incision and excessive bank erosion.

In June 2023, Schoharie County allocated funds to the district for the assessment, design, and construction of projects to address these issues. The district hired engineers with a familiarity of the entire watershed system.

Survey work was completed in 2023, and designs were drafted. The next step was to apply for the necessary permits and bid out the project for construction, with the goal of completing the project in the summer of 2024.

After receiving bids from interested construction contractors the project commenced in the summer of 2024 and by October 2024 all work had been completed and the road was reopened. As part of the project, the District planted trees along the stream as a buffer to stabilize the banks along the roadway and stream.

Stabilizing the stream will prevent capacity reduction in the reservoir caused by sediment traveling downstream during flood events. This sediment settles in the drinking water reservoir, reducing its storage capacity. The sediment also carries nutrients like phosphates and nitrates, which can cause algae blooms and reduced dissolved oxygen levels, threatening the water system's health. Over time, these conditions may increase maintenance and treatment costs for residents and businesses that rely on water from the Cobleskill Water Department.

The successful completion of this project not only addresses the immediate environmental concerns but also ensures a reliable water supply for future generations. By proactively managing our natural resources, the District and County Board have demonstrated their commitment to the well-being of our community. Continued collaboration and investment in projects like these are essential to safeguarding our environment and public health.

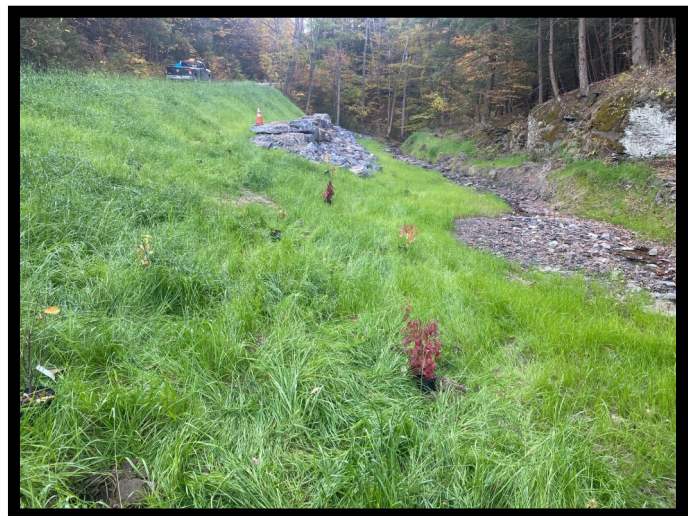










Right:
The completed rock wall after construction but before hydroseeding.











Below Left: *SWCD District Field Manager, Pete Nichols, planting buffer trees.*

Below Right: *The completed rock wall (background) after grass growth and tree plantings.*



	<p>Colorado Blue Spruce: <i>Picea pungens</i>. One of the more popular conifers. It has silvery blue-green needles and an almost perfect Christmas tree shape. It is great as a windbreak or for privacy while also providing food and shelter to a handful of bird species. At maturity, this tree can reach 50-75 feet in height and have a spread of 10-20 feet. Full sun is ideal while it can adapt to most soil types. It requires normal moisture has a moderate tolerance to flooding and drought.</p>
	<p>Concolor Fir: <i>Abies concolor</i>. Grows to a height of 30-50ft with a spread of 20ft. Grows best in well-drained, sandy, loamy soil. Has a moderate tolerance for drought. Prefers full sun to partial shade.</p>
	<p>White Spruce: <i>Picea glauca</i>. At maturity, the White Spruce can reach heights of 40-60ft with a 10-20ft spread. It is great for buffer strips, windbreaks, privacy, and Christmas trees. The White Spruce will retain its needles year-round. The White Spruce prefers full sun and tolerate most soil types as long as they are acidic and moist, but well-drained. This species is fairly drought tolerant. Wildlife will use the White Spruce as a food source. Several species of birds eat the seeds, and the foliage is eaten by grouse, rabbits, and deer. The bark is enjoyed by porcupines and black bear, which can sometimes be detrimental to the tree.</p>
	<p>Balsam Fir: <i>Abies balsamea</i>. A Christmas tree favorite that is also great as a windbreak. It can reach 45-75 feet in height at maturity with a spread of 20-25 feet. This tree prefers full sun to partial shade with soils that are acidic, cool, moist, and well-drained. Slightly salt-tolerant. Its seeds and buds are a food source for grouse, squirrels, mice, and voles. Moose and white-tailed deer use Balsam Fir for food, cover, and shelter.</p>
	<p>Norway Spruce: <i>Picea abies</i>. The Norway spruce grows to a height of 40–60' and a spread of 25–30' at maturity. Full sun is the ideal condition for this tree, meaning it should get at least six hours of direct, unfiltered sunlight each day. The Norway spruce grows in acidic, loamy, moist, sandy, well-drained and clay soils. It has some drought tolerance.</p>
	<p>Black Spruce: <i>Picea mariana</i>. A hardy North American native tree, found throughout Canada and the northern most parts of the United States and its high peaks. It is a slow-growing evergreen conifer, reaching 30-50 feet at maturity. They tend to not have a very wide spread, growing tall and narrow, not conical. It is known by other names such as Bog Spruce and Swamp Spruce. As those names suggest, they are tolerant of wetter, organic, more acidic soils. They tend to occur in wetland areas but are also found in dryer soils.</p>
	<p>Black Walnut: <i>Juglans nigra</i>. Once mature it will reach heights of 50-75ft, with similar spread. Is tolerant of various soil types as long as they are well-drained. Prefers full sun. Produces nuts from early to mid-autumn after 7 years. Is self-fertile, but plant multiple for a better crop.</p>
	<p>Common Lilac: <i>Syringa vulgaris</i>. A great, fragrant garden flower that blooms in early spring. The shrubs grow to 8-15 feet high with 6-12 feet spread at maturity. They prefer slightly acidic to neutral, loamy soils that are well-drained. Lilacs cannot tolerate wet conditions. Lilac does well in full sun and partial shade exposures.</p>

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	<p>Eastern Sand Cherry: <i>Prunus pumila</i>. A short, loosely branched shrub that spreads by rhizomes. This shrub will reach 2-6 feet tall at maturity (remains on the shorter end in high wind areas). It does well in full sun & on dry sites with loamy, dry, sandy, or rocky soils. It will adapt to other soils with good drainage. In May-June, white flowers appear, followed by shiny, reddish-purple fruits that turn nearly black once ripened. The fruits are edible by humans and wildlife. Use sand cherry in rock gardens or as a shrubby ground cover. The extensive root system provides excellent stabilization on slopes.</p>
	<p>American Hazelnut: <i>Corylus americana</i>. Also known as the American filbert, it is a native shrub of the eastern United States. Once mature, they reach heights of 15-18ft, with a spread of 10-12ft. They do well in various soil types as long as they are well-drained. Prefers full sun, partial sun/shade. Produces small, sweet nuts that are sought after by wildlife.</p>
	<p>Silky Dogwood: <i>Cornus amomum</i>. A versatile and hardy shrub that provides many ecological benefits from erosion control to wildlife support. At maturity, this shrub will reach heights of 6-12 feet with similar spread. The silky dogwood produces small, mildly fragrant white flowers in late spring that attract a wide range of pollinators, birds, and small mammals. By late summer, these flower turn to berry-like drupes that turn a blue color. Prefers partial sun/shade, full sun. Can tolerate full shade. Prefers soils that are moist, well-drained, acidic, and rich.</p>
	<p>Sugar Maple: <i>Acer saccharum</i>. A slower growing tree, the Sugar Maple will reach heights of 60-75 feet with a 40-50 spread once matured. Once the tree is large enough (usually 10 inches in diameter), it can be tapped for its sap to make maple syrup. Sugar Maples prefer areas that provide full sun, partial sun/shade and well-drained soils of varying pH.</p>
	<p>American Black Elderberry: <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>. A deciduous shrub with both woody and herbaceous branches that can reach heights of 12 feet. It tolerates a variety of wet to dry soils, but prefers rich, moist, slightly acidic soil. Does well in areas with partial shade. It can be found naturally on the shores of lakes and ponds, low forests, and old fields. Elderberry is a quick grower and an aggressive competitor with weeds and other herbaceous species. It may be necessary to cut the whole shrub to the ground every few years to keep it in check. Annual pruning will also help keep the shrub fuller. This shrub produces small white flowers in June-July which then turn to purple-black berries in August-September. The berries should NOT be eaten raw because they are considered toxic. However, they can be processed and used in jams, jellies, wines, etc.</p>
	<p>Heritage Raspberry: The canes of this berry will reach 5-6 feet at maturity. It is a vigorous plant, producing suckers throughout the growing season. Produces a firm fruit with excellent taste that is ready for harvest in late August/early September. Hardiness zones 3a-10. Comes in a 2.5-inch container.</p>
	<p>Northland Blueberry: High-bush/Low-bush type cultivar. Height is about 3-4 feet at maturity, the bush is vigorous and moderately spreading. Fruits ripen in early to mid-summer. This cultivar was hybridized to adapt to Northern Michigan. Northland has limber branches, which do not break under heavy snow loads, and adapts well to the sub-zero climate. Foliage is beautiful year round. Dark green foliage in summer and orange-red in fall with yellow branches in winter. Hardiness Zones 7a-3b.</p>
	<p>Polaris Blueberry: High-bush/Low-bush type cultivar. Mature height is 3 feet tall and slightly spreading. Ripening date is early mid-season. Yields have been consistent, averaging 3.5 pound per plant over a 7 year period. Fruit size is medium, approximately 70 berries per cup. Berry quality is good. The scar is moderately small. The light powder blue fruit is attractive and has good eye appeal. Fruits are normally hand harvested but the stature of the plants are tall enough for mechanical harvest. Flavor is excellent and has intense fruit flavor. Hardiness Zones 7a-3a.</p>

Where'd You Get Them Apples??



I'm sure that's what you are thinking looking at the list of apple trees available this year: Goldrush, Liberty, Freedom?

The district added apple trees to our tree sale about 7 years ago when our customers kept asking that we sell them. We've done our best to offer varieties that you are accustomed to seeing in the stores or at the orchards you may go pick at. But as we have found out – some of them can be quite finicky to grow, maintain and to even get fruit from. A lot of the big-name apples just can't do well here in the county.

Our weather, but more importantly, our soils (unless you're in the valley) make survival and fruit production extremely difficult. The last thing we want to do is make your tree management a frustrating experience. So, we contacted a local cidery for some help. He's growing his trees on a side hill with marginal soils and making lots of apples. He's provided us with some great alternatives that will get you making pies, sauce, cider or just snacking in no time!

Idared is a highly-aromatic heirloom eating and baking apple that will hold its flavor and texture in regular refrigeration for six months! Idared is a great baking and sauce apple, and it is also a useful apple for adding some late-season acidity to sweet and alcoholic cider blends. A reliable, annual cropper. It's a large, 25-foot-tall tree that blooms in early spring and is ready to harvest during the late summer through fall. This tree is your best bet in heavy, poorly-draining soils and where drought conditions occur. Plant 25 feet from other trees.

Goldrush a late-season, highly-flavored, blushed yellow dessert apple, perfect for organic production. If you're planting at higher elevations, this is a good bet, as it blooms later in the season. As an eating apple, its storage life is unparalleled, and can keep in cold storage (or the fridge) into the early summer. Typically, it's the last apple variety to pick in the fall here in Schoharie County. Great disease resistance except for its susceptibility to Cedar Rust Disease. It's a large, vigorous, tree that does well in a variety of soil conditions. Plant 25 feet from other trees.

Liberty is a McIntosh-style apple that is easy to grow and productive. Blooming in early-to-mid spring, it is resistant to fireblight and powdery mildew, and highly resistant to scab and cedar-apple rust. So, if you (or your neighbor) have Cedar trees on your property, this is the tree to plant. It is the perfect apple for the first-time grower, and it is the backbone of any organic orchard. Ripening midseason, it is a hardy, large, sweet-tart, aromatic, crisp, and juicy—perfect for fresh eating or for cider blends. This will be a semidwarf tree growing to 15 tall. Temporary staking is recommended for the first 3 years. Not recommended for hard-pan soils. Plant 15 feet away from other trees.

Freedom is a delicious, multipurpose apple for eating, baking or sweet cider blends. It has great disease resistance, second only to the Liberty apple. It blooms mid-to-late spring, ripens midseason and stores in the fridge until January. This will be a semidwarf tree growing to 15 tall. Temporary staking is recommended for the first 3 years. Best planted in deep, fertile soils. Not recommended for hard-pan. Plant 15 feet away from other trees.

Pear-Flemish Beauty Is an early season, European pear variety, ripening in late September. Excellent dessert quality eating pear along with canning, and baking. Flemish Beauty Pear trees are known for their high productivity and early fruiting. They usually start producing fruit within 3-4 years of planting. It does the best in well drained soils. It is a large tree, growing to about 20 feet tall. Plant 25 feet away from other trees.



Idared



Goldrush



Liberty



Freedom



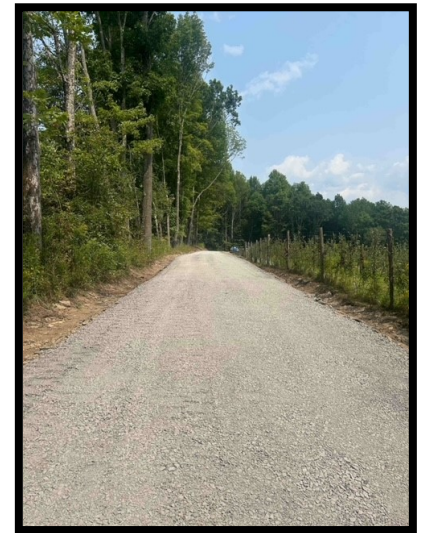
**Pear -
Flemish Beauty**

Agricultural Environmental Management Program (AEM)

AEM is a locally-led, voluntary, and confidential program. It addresses watershed-based water quality concerns, farm-specific conservation practices, and the farm's business objectives. AEM has been active in our district for nearly 20 years. The program partners with farms to manage the environment, protect Schoharie County's soil and water quality, and help ensure farm viability for future generations.

The AEM program is open to all interested farmers and agricultural landowners. It provides technical and financial assistance to farms in a cost-effective manner through a well-established environmental planning process. Then moves to the implementation of best management practices that provide both improvement to water and soil.

With the assistance of NY Department of Agriculture and Markets, The Schoharie County SWCD began a mini grant program 4 years ago which support farms both financially and developing conservation projects that improve water quality and reduce erosion. To qualify for this program, the farm must be a participant in the AEM program with the ability to cost share a portion of the practice. Examples of practices are shown below.



Above: Fence installed to increase rotational grazing
Left: Hydrant installed off a spring development to add water to pastures
Right: Access Road to gain access to pastures



Above: Ronnie the Raindrop visited the NYSEG Wildlife Festival at the Gilboa Power Authority in September 2024. Pictured with Susan Lewis (center) of Albany Co SWCD and Pete Nichols (right) of Schoharie Co SWCD

District Highlights 2024

- 10 total Grants awarded to farmers and producers to help with conservation practices!
- 124 Soil tests for farmers and gardeners across the county
- 832 Fish sold to stock local ponds
- 7,231 Trees and shrubs sold to landowners