



# Conservation News & Notes

Volume 022 Number 3 Fall/Winter 2022

## No-Till Drill

The Canyon SCD No-Till Drill has been & still keeping busy with Landowners planting Cover Crops to help improve Soil Health & Conservation. The Drill was purchased August 2020 with Conservation partnership funds from a 319 Grant through the Lower Boise Watershed Council.

Stan Hays, Canyon SCD Soil Conservation Technician, informed Canyon SCD the No-Till Drill has been to Cambridge, Council, Grandview, Jordan Valley, Adrian, Homedale, Marsing, Weiser, Emmett, Greenleaf, Parma, New Plymouth, Wilder, Kuna, Middleton, Sand Hollow, Melba, Nampa, & Caldwell. The Landowners have planted, teff, turnips, peas, winter wheat/wheat, oats, triticale, pasture, alfalfa, Italian rye, 3 or 5 or 17 way mix of cover crops, corn, beans, & grain. The actual acres of cover crops planted since 8/2020 is 3,027 as of 11/23/22, (1,543 since 1/1/22).

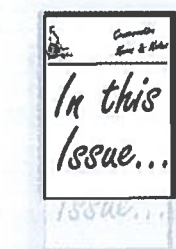
**The History Of Cover Crops:** Learn About Cover Crop Use Through Time by Mary Ellen Ellis 1/24/19. Known as green manure, cover crops have been used in farming and gardening since ancient times. From the biggest farms to backyard vegetable gardens, cover crops can be used to enrich the soil, prevent erosion, improve water penetration, & for many other reasons. Here's a little history behind this smart growing practice.

**What is a Cover Crop?** The term refers to anything that is grown on a farm or in a garden that is not a cash crop. In other words, it is not grown to sell or make a profit or to be used by the gardener. It serves a secondary purpose. Cover crops are usually grown in the winter when the fields are done producing and are then worked into the soil in the spring.

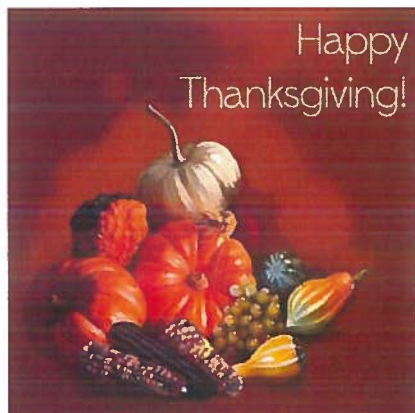
History of Cover Crops Agriculture is an ancient practice, first beginning more than 10,000 years ago. It probably didn't take long for early farmers to realize the benefits of cover crops. There are references to the practice from ancient China & India. In western writing, we see that the ancient Romans were using cover crops, but it was likely a practice that began earlier than that.

In the U.S., cover crops were used by some of our founding fathers, including George Washington. The monoculture on tobacco farms in the South depleted soil of nutrients, & by the late 1700s, the use of cover crops grew in popularity & really became essential. Cover crop use through time has been important in agriculture for a number of reasons. This old gardening and

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## Your Canyon SCD

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Rex Runkle, Supervisor

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Martha Schmidt — Soil  
Conservationist  
Benjamin Stiff — Range  
Conservationist

District board meetings are held the first Thursday after the first Tuesday of each month. Meetings are open to the public. Call the office for exact times.

All programs and services of the Canyon Soil Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, marital or familial status and political beliefs.

**Canyon SCD Website**  
**[https://](https://www.canyonsoilconservation.org)**  
**[www.canyonsoilconservation.org](https://www.canyonsoilconservation.org)**

farming practice has a lot of benefits for the farm: soil erosion, invasive weeds, enriched with nitrogen, biodiversity of area, enhance the soil & improve water filtration, & organic way to control pests

Traditional Cover Crops Cover crops were widely used, even in big agriculture, right up to the middle of the 1900s. Use dropped off in favor of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizer. But now there is renewed interest in cover crops and in using less of those industrial chemicals. Gardeners can get in on this too. Here are some plants traditionally used as cover crops to get you thinking: hairy vetch, white or red clover, winter or annual rye, field peas, soybeans, alfalfa, buckwheat. & legumes are especially popular as cover crops, and have been since ancient times, because the fix nitrogen and add it to the soil where cash crops can benefit from it.

## Idaho Soil Health

Soil Health is soil managed to its maximum potential through a system of conservation practices, including no-till, cover crops, advanced nutrient and pest management, and buffers and drainage systems where appropriate.

### Why is soil health important?

Managing your soil using soil health practices results in healthy soil that reduces erosion, requires less nutrient inputs, manages the effects of flood and drought, and reduces nutrient and sediment loading to streams and rivers.

Soil health is defined as the continued capacity of soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans. Healthy soil gives us clean air and water, bountiful crops and forests, productive grazing lands, diverse wildlife, and beautiful landscapes. Soil does all this by performing five essential functions:

Regulating water – Soil helps control where rain, snowmelt, and irrigation water goes. Water flows over the land or into and through the soil.

Sustaining plant and animal life – The diversity and productivity of living things depends on soil.

Filtering and buffering potential pollutants – The minerals and microbes in soil are responsible for filtering, buffering, degrading, immobilizing, and detoxifying organic and inorganic materials, including industrial and municipal by-products and atmospheric deposits.

Cycling nutrients – Carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, and many other nutrients are stored, transformed, and cycled in the soil.

Providing physical stability and support – Soil structure provides a medium for plant roots. Soils also provide support for human structures and protection for archeological treasures.

Soil health research has determined how to manage soil in a way that improves soil function.

**The main principles to manage soil for health are: Maximize Presence of Living Roots, Minimize Disturbance, Maximize Soil Cover & Maximize Biodiversity.**

As world population & food production demands rise, keeping our soil healthy and productive is of paramount importance. By farming using soil health principles and systems that include no-till, cover cropping, and diverse rotations, more and more farmers are increasing their soil's organic matter and improving microbial activity. As a result, farmers are sequestering more carbon, increasing water infiltration, improving wildlife & pollinator habitat—all while harvesting better profits and often better yields.

### Mission:

**The Canyon Soil Conservation District is committed to providing quality leadership, information, education, technical assistance and financial assistance for the conservation and wise use of natural resources.**

## Local Working Group

The USDA-NRCS works in a partnership effort with Soil Conservation Districts, other local and federal agencies, conservation groups, Native American Tribes and private Landowners to conserve, sustain and improve natural resources on private, tribal, and other non-federal lands. Our primary responsibility is to implement Farm Bill financial and technical assistance programs at the local level. To ensure the input and involvement of local stakeholders, Local Work Groups (LWGs) are convened annually. For our area of Idaho, the LWG area is made up of the following counties: Elmore, Owyhee, Canyon, Ada, Payette, Washington, Adams, Gem, Boise, and Valley.

If you have an interest in private land conservation and want a say in how Farm Bill financial and technical assistance resources are prioritized, we request that you, or a member of your organization, join our Local Work Group meeting.

Here are the three items Curtis Elke, State Conservationist, is asking for your recommendations:

- Identify the top three (3) priority resource concerns and high priority areas needing assistance from the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP).
- Develop 5 to 7 Local ranking Question for FY-18 EQIP ranking tools.
- Recommend the distribution of EQIP funds with the Division Fund Pools.

The Local Working Group Meeting was held on October 26th hosted by the Ada SWCD at the Caldwell U of I Facility.

### Fund pool recommendation this year was:

- Cropland 50%
- Pasture 25%
- Rangeland 10%
- Soil Health 10%
- High Tunnel 5%
- Land Use Conversion 5%



Treasure Valley High Desert Team — Ada/Canyon/Owyhee Soil/Water Conservation Districts.

### Coming Events . . .

**District Board Meeting**  
Caldwell Service Center  
Conference Room  
1:00 PM to 3:00 PM  
December 15  
January 5  
February 9

**319 TAC Meeting**  
WEBEX Meeting  
8:00 AM to 10:00 AM  
January 3  
February 7

**Lower Boise River Watershed Advisory Group**  
WEBEX Meeting  
For more information contact 208-779-3443  
1:00 to 3:00 PM  
December 15  
January 12  
February 9

**Soil Stewardship Week**  
April 30—May 7, 2023  
“One Water” (Theme)

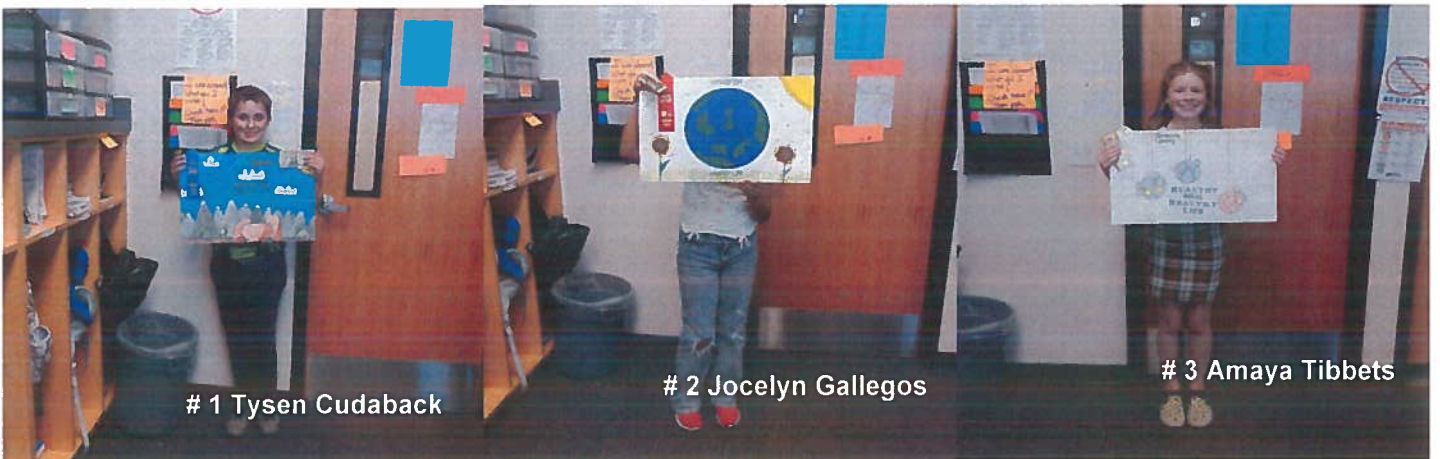


Jamie Miller  
Caldwell Adventist

## 2022 Canyon SCD Poster Contest for 5th & 6th Graders

This year's theme "Healthy Soil : Healthy Life", the Canyon SCD received 10 posters from Adventist & 28 posters from Notus 5th grade & 32 posters from Notus 6th grade. Canyon Soil Conservation District (Canyon SCD) wants to thank Caldwell Adventist Elementary and Notus Elementary students for participating in their annual contest. Also, their teachers Jamie Miller, Adventist Elementary & Yvonne Golden, Kala Hernandez & Megan Linkhart, Notus Elementary. The Caldwell Field Office staff (NRCS & FSA) were judges, I want to thank them for all their help.

Pictured below was the winners that proceeded on to the Division Level held at the Division III meeting at the Boise Watershed Facility on 10/11/22.



**Thanks to All for Participating in the Canyon Soil Conservation District Contest!**

## Leaf Clay Dish

By: [thebestideasforkids.com](http://thebestideasforkids.com)

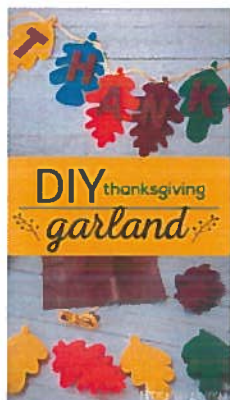
Fall is the perfect time to do crafts with leaves and nature. This leaf clay dish is one older kids can make. It would make a beautiful gift they can personalize for a birthday or Christmas. It's a gorgeous piece that can be used as a ring dish or simply to hold items like keys and coins. You can even turn it into a leaf bowl by using different leaves!

**Supplies Needed to Make a Leaf Clay Dish:** Air Dry Clay, Leaves – we used the leaves from a hydrangea plant. Use hydrangea leaves or preferably one similar as a maple leaf does not fold up as nicely to form a dish—Note: If you would like to make a leaf bowl instead, a maple leaf would work perfectly for this, Acrylic paint – we used rose gold, gold and bronze, Sealer – mod podge gloss, & Knife.

Aren't these clay dishes just so pretty? We are seriously in love with not only the final look, but the paint colors! We made painted these leaf dishes a bit more formal than kids would probably want to make, but older kids may like these colors. You can use any color you'd like! These would also look great in a bright red, orange or yellow too for Fall.

### How to Make a DIY Clay Dish

1. First gather your leaves. We used hydrangea leaves which is recommended for their shape. We did try a maple leaf and due to the shape of the leaf, it did not roll up well (feel free to try different leaf shapes as it is easy to roll out and start over if you do not like the way it looks). Note – if you want to make a leaf bowl then using a maple leaf would be fine.
  2. Cut out a piece of your air dry clay. Roll it out and then stamp your leaf onto it. Press firmly and make sure to press on all parts of the leaf to get a complete imprint.
  3. Take off your leaf and cut around the outline of the leaf with a knife (have adults do this part).
  4. Now remove the excess air dry clay from around your imprint.
  5. Gently start to roll up sections of your clay. There is no specific pattern required, just leave a bit of space in between the rolls. Leave the tip of the leaf intact. If any portions of the clay are not smooth, dip a sponge in a bit of water and use it to smooth out portions of the clay. Note: If you'd like to make a leaf bowl instead, place your leaf inside a small bowl to shape the clay into a bowl shape.
  6. Allow the clay to air dry and harden. Preferably on a cookie drying rack so that the bottom gets exposed to air as well. After 24 hours, check if the top of the clay is hardened. If it is, flip it over to allow the bottom to air dry. If not, let it dry for another 24 hours and then flip it the next day if needed.
  7. Once your clay dishes are dry and hardened, you can now paint them! We did 2 coats but if you really want to ensure coverage for gold, it may require 3 coats. Darker colors would be fine with 2 coats, while lighter colors like gold and yellow may need 3.
  8. Seal them with mod podge gloss or a more heavy duty sealer if desired. Note: If you would like to use these leaf clay dishes as soap dishes, you will need to use a heavy duty waterproof sealer.
- Now you can enjoy these beautiful keepsakes for years to come!



### DIY Thanksgiving Garland

By: [thebestideasforkids.com](http://thebestideasforkids.com)

This is really simple DIY Thanksgiving garland, you only need a few supplies.

**Supplies for DIY Thanksgiving garland:** Felt leaves – enough for your letters, string or ribbon, & glitter letter stickers. (You might find a kit at a craft store like Michaels)

Now you just need to arrange the leaves in a pattern that you like. With the tips of the leaves you can tie a knot around the edge to attach the leaves together for the garland. Then just add your stickers on top and you're done!





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*Recipe Spot . . .***Buckeyes**

From: Taste of Home

Total Time Prep: 30 min. + chilling

Makes: 5-1/2 dozen

**Ingredients**

5-1/2 cups confectioners' sugar

1-2/3 cups peanut butter

1 cup butter, melted

4 cups semisweet chocolate chips

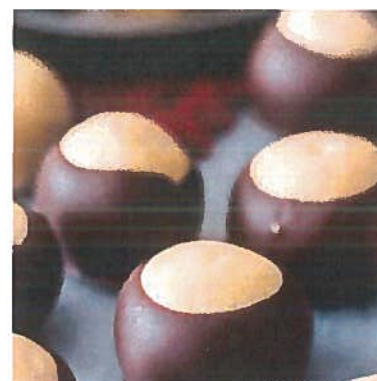
1 teaspoon shortening

**Directions**

In a large bowl, beat the sugar, peanut butter and butter until smooth.

Shape into 1-in. balls; set aside.

Microwave chocolate chips and shortening on high until melted; stir until smooth. Dip balls in chocolate, allowing excess to drip off. Place on a wire rack over waxed paper; refrigerate for 15 minutes or until firm. Cover and store in the refrigerator.

**Test Kitchen Tips:** Leave a bit of chocolate-free space on each piece for an authentic buckeye look!

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**Cherry Swirl Fudge**

From: Taste of Home

Total Time: Prep: 15 min. + chilling

Makes: 5 dozen

**Ingredients**

1-1/2 teaspoons butter

1 package (10 to 12 ounces) white baking chips

1 can (16 ounces) or 2 cups vanilla frosting

1 teaspoon cherry or almond extract

4 drops red liquid food coloring

**Directions**

Line an 8-in. square pan with foil; butter the foil. In a microwave-safe bowl, melt chips; stir until smooth. Beat in frosting and extract until smooth. Pour into prepared pan.

Randomly place drops of food coloring over fudge; cut through fudge with a knife to swirl. Cover and refrigerate for 4 hours or until firm before cutting into squares.



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**Chocolate Billionaires**

From Taste of Home

Total Time: Prep: 45 min. + chilling

Makes: about 2 pounds

**Ingredients**

1 package (14 ounces) caramels

3 tablespoons water

1-1/2 cups chopped pecans

1 cup Rice Krispies

3 cups milk chocolate chips

1-1/2 teaspoons shortening

**Directions**

Line 2 baking sheets with waxed paper; grease the paper and set aside. In a large heavy saucepan, combine the caramels and water; cook and stir over low heat until smooth. Stir in pecans and cereal until coated. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto prepared pans. Refrigerate for 10 minutes or until firm.

Meanwhile, in a microwave, melt chocolate chips and shortening; stir until smooth. Dip candy into chocolate, coating all sides; allow excess to drip off. Place on prepared pans. Refrigerate until set. Store in an airtight container

