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"5,000 trees planted on City of Norfolk well field"



Pam Bergstrom, Steve Rasmussen and Todd Roberts plant tree seeds on a City of Norfolk well field.

It took only about an hour to plant 5,000 trees. Tree seeds- that is- like walnuts, acorns and buckeyes.

Steve Rasmussen, UNL Nebraska Forest Service District forester, and Pam Bergstrom, Lower Elkhorn Natural Resources District forester, have been collecting the seeds and nuts all fall. They and Todd Roberts, City of Norfolk Water Division plant operator, planted the seeds by hand and with a seed planter on one of the City's well fields last week.

The seeds were planted next to the 275 seedlings the City planted earlier this spring. Milkweeds were also planted on the well field this fall.

Rasmussen said the tree seeds were planted in about two acres of snowy ground to give them moisture throughout the winter months. A mixture of nine tree and shrub species were used. It's expected that the seedlings will emerge in May and, depending on what the spring and summer brings, could grow from 6 to 14 inches.

"The first one to two years the seedlings will be establishing a good root system before they put on much above-ground top growth," Rasmussen said.

Many of the seeds may not survive over the winter because they'll be eaten by deer or mice but it's hoped that at least half of them will sprout. Some of those new trees will then be eaten off or not be healthy enough to survive so it's hoped that about 10 - 20% of the seeds planted will grow to maturity.



The seeds planted on the well field came from several locations across Nebraska including pin oak acorns from Plainview; swamp white oak acorns from Neligh; bur oak acorns from Battle Creek; buckeyes from the Stanton area; red oak acorns from Wayne; and walnuts from Concord. There were also shrubs planted – American plum, cranberry bush, blackhaw viburnum and ninebark.