



## Roger Coleman's Conservation Work Recognized

Potomac Conservancy awards Roger Coleman the *Growing Native* Appreciation Award for all his efforts to bring conservation into his classroom. Mr. Coleman and his high school biology students have participated in the project for the last two years and have taken the project to a new level.

*Growing Native* is a volunteer led project that spans the Potomac River watershed and includes Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington DC. In the fall, volunteers collect native tree seeds such as acorns and walnuts. The seeds are then delivered to the state nursery to replenish the native tree stock, or they are given to locally managed Grow-out Stations. Grow-out Stations are small, volunteer, tree nurseries where seeds are propagated. The small trees are planted right in the community where the seeds were gathered. This native supply of trees is better adapted to local environmental conditions and requires less maintenance.

Establishing a Grow-out Station is a challenging but highly rewarding task. When Roger Coleman heard about this activity he did not hesitate. He embarked on the adventure by taking his students out to collect northern red oak acorns with state forester Phil Varndell from DCNR. He then worked with Bob McBride, DCNR forester, and Tammy Gross, from Franklin County Conservation District, to secure the materials to set up the Grow-out Stations. Once everything was in place, they planted five hundred acorns.

Roger did not stop there. His enthusiasm to make a difference and engage his students in on-the-ground conservation work sparked an entirely new activity. Working with local agencies, Roger and his students went out to Wilson College to secure two hundred of tree cuttings. Tracey Coulter and Bob McBride showed the students how to properly cut the branches. The students took the unassuming sticks back to their classroom where they placed them in specially designed peat pellets. After only a few months, the sticks blossomed into recognizable trees and the students planted them at the former Birch Run reservoir. The trees that Roger Coleman and his students planted out in the field will provide long-term benefits to the environment. These trees, once established, will provide a forested buffer along the stream where they can be most effective in reducing sediment and other pollutants from entering the water. This will improve water quality in Franklin County and the larger Potomac River watershed.

To date, Mr. Coleman has participated in numerous collection events, established a school Grow-out Station, and engaged in two tree-cutting events. Collectively, Mr. Coleman and his students have planted over five hundred cuttings in Franklin County, and Chambersburg High School now serves as a local source for trees for future restoration projects. The students proudly displayed their involvement in *Growing Native* and all their successes during this past Advancing Science Program at Gettysburg College.

Roger Coleman is a leader in his community and a wonderful teacher that goes the extra mile to make learning a real experience for his students. The *Growing Native* Appreciation Award is appropriately awarded to an amazing community leader. The Potomac Conservancy thanks you.

*Growing Native* is the signature project of the Potomac Watershed Partnership managed by Potomac Conservancy. Partners in Pennsylvania include the Franklin County Conservation District, Pennsylvania Department of Natural Resources (DCNR) and Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).