

WIWCD sapling program now accepting applications

By Jeff Ward

The annual program that provides new tree saplings of more than 20 species of trees for free is once again being offered by the West Interlake Watershed Conservation District.

The WIWCD started the program in 2011 following the flood that left many trees dead. The program was designed to help replace those trees and has since grown in popularity with nearly 4,000 trees being planted last year.

The program is only open to those who are in the district and will cover the purchase price up to \$80. Saplings range from \$2.85 each up to \$7.25 and are provided by Sabados Greenhouse in Clarkleigh. Applicants can request more than \$80 worth of saplings but are responsible for any charges over that limit.

WIWCD manager Linda Miller said last year there were 400 applications for saplings.

"There were 3,965 trees received last year," Miller said.

"We have 22 different varieties of trees this year and some new ones like Laurel Leaf Willow, Assiniboine Poplar, Skyfest Poplar and Prairie Sky Poplar. We do have a budgeted amount that we can fund so we do want people to act quickly, although we've never had to turn anyone away."

The program has been responsible for planting tens of thousands of trees since the flood of 2011. New trees are good for the environment. They not only beautify backyards and property but clean air and store water and carbon.

Applications can be sent to Sabados Greenhouse, which will order them in for next spring.

Trees typically arrive sometime in May and must be picked up from Sabados Greenhouse. Trees that aren't picked up by the due date will become property of the WIWCD.

WIWCD staff work hard to take in the staggering number of orders each year and make sure information gets into the right hands. Board members also prioritize this investment and

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EXPRESS FILE PHOTO

Karen and Allan Sabados source new tree saplings funded by the WIWCD each year. Last year, the Sabados sourced nearly 4,000 new tree saplings.

budget for the expense every year.

"It's good to see people using it and planting those trees. Originally it was just meant to help people get back what was lost from the flood, and we just kept doing it. New trees are al-

ways good for the environment."

The deadline for applications is Oct. 31. Applications can be found online at www.wiwcd.com, from the WIWCD office in Lundar or from RM offices within the district.