



Students from Tina James' welding class are hard at work potting plants for use in stream restoration projects by the Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District.

## Potting Up Plants for Conservation

**Walton, NY** - Students from Walton High School got more than their hands dirty last week. A plant potting event was held at the school in observance of Arbor Day, which fell on April 30 this year. Adam Stewart, an SCA Hudson Valley AmeriCorps intern working with Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District (DCSWCD), brought native plant tubelings and bare-root tree and shrub seedlings from last month's sale at DCSWCD to be planted in containers for use in future stream and riparian (streamside) restoration projects.

Students from educator Tina James' welding, agricultural science, and environmental science classes participated in this activity. Although work began a bit frenetically, students soon divided the tasks and formed assembly groups in an effort to streamline the process. Mrs. James, who once spent several years working in a greenhouse, joined the effort as well and her expertise was of great assistance. By afternoon, the students had the process finely tuned. In fact, they were so efficient that all 287 plants found their way into pots and were loaded for transport back to the DCSWCD office before the final bell. "The enthusiasm and diligence of the students were terrific," said Adam. "I think all of us have an instinct to play in the dirt but outgrow the willingness to admit it. I wasn't sure if the high-schoolers would be into this type of event, but they really seemed to enjoy it. I couldn't believe how quickly the time passed or how soon the work was done. We had a lot of fun."

A number of different plant species were used in the event, all native to the Catskill Region. The potted trees and shrubs will be cared for over the summer by DCSWCD staff, allowing the plants to grow and develop a healthy root structure to increase their chance of survival when planted at project sites. These plants will be used in riparian restoration projects, as part of the DCSWCD's Catskill Stream Buffer

Initiative (CSBI), to help stabilize streambanks and prevent erosion, enhance wildlife habitat, and improve water quality throughout the watershed.

For more information on this or future events, please contact the DCSWCD Stream Program Office at (607)865-5223.

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