



# Shrub Planting

Alabama Guide Sheet No. AL 612B



## Purpose

Shrubs are planted around property for many reasons. They can provide food and cover for wildlife, screens along roadways or around farmsteads, corridors for wildlife movement, and diversity of plant populations along edges of fields.

## Planning Considerations

### Wildlife

- Shrubs along with strips of trees, forbs, and native grasses attract wildlife, but plant species selected can greatly affect the benefits provided. Plant species used should benefit wildlife as either food or cover.
- Plant a variety of fruit and seed producing shrubs.
- A combination of low and tall growing shrubs and/or trees is more effective for cover than a single species. Center row(s) should consist of the tallest growing species and height should decrease down to the outermost rows of herbaceous vegetation. Grasses and forbs should be planted in a strip at least 10 feet wide adjacent to the woody plants, this will minimize competition with woody species.
- Targeted wildlife needs should be considered when selecting plant species.
- Native species should be planted whenever possible. However, any adapted plant may be planted except where excluded by cost-share program requirements. Avoid noxious and invasive species.

### Screens

Shrubs, along with trees, may be used around homes and gardens as screens.

## Guidelines for Establishment

### Planting Dates

Bare root shrubs should be planted between December 1 and March 15. Containerized plants can be planted any time of the year provided they are watered regularly.

### Care of Seedlings

The seedlings should be stored in a well ventilated and cool area, but not exposed to freezing temperatures or excess heat. In storage, seedlings should be watered at least weekly if stored for an extended period of time. During planting, roots of seedlings must be kept moist and cool at all times. At the end of each day, loose plants should be either repacked and kept moist or healed-in.

### Site Preparation

To reduce competition, either tillage or herbicides may be used to control existing vegetation in the area to be planted. This operation should be performed several weeks prior to planting. Use only herbicides labeled for shrub establishment.

### Soil Amendments

Fertilizer and lime are not usually needed at planting.

## Planting Methods

Spacing of plants in row and between rows will vary depending on species of shrub. Plant with hand tools or use a suitable mechanical tree planter. Areas with compacted soil or plow pans should be subsoiled or planted in a manner that penetrates the pan or compacted soil layer. Seedlings should be planted to the root collar (usually to where they were planted to in the nursery). Soil around the seedling should be firmly packed upon completion of planting.

## Maintenance

Control competing vegetation by mowing, tillage, or herbicides until woody plants are established. If herbicides are used, follow label recommendations. Replant as needed to maintain stand density based on purpose.

Shrub lespedeza should be burned or mowed every 3 to 5 years in late winter to maintain desirable size for wildlife. Provide protection from wildfire and damage from wild or domestic animals as needed. Maintenance applications of fertilizer and lime will be needed to maintain plant vigor and production.

## Species to Plant

Recommended trees and shrubs for specific applications are listed in the table. Other plants may be used if they meet objectives and are adapted to the site. A NRCS technician should be consulted. Avoid use of species known to be pests such as privet.

<b>Plant Species</b>	<b>Primary Application</b>	<b>Spacing</b>	<b># Per Acre</b>
Chickasaw Plum	Wildlife cover & food	3' x 4'	3,630
Persimmon	Wildlife food	6' x 6'	1,200
Crab Apple	Wildlife food	6' x 6'	1,200
Dogwood	Wildlife food	6' x 6'	1,200
Virginia Pine	Screening & cover	6' x 6'	1,200
Eastern Red Cedar	Screening & cover	6' x 6'	1,200
Shrub Lespedeza	Wildlife food & cover	1.5' x 3'	9,680
Wax Myrtle	Wildlife cover	10' x 10'	436
Chinese Chestnut	Wildlife food	10' x 10'	436
Sawtooth Oak	Wildlife food	20' x 20'	109

## **References**

USDA-NRCS AL Conservation Practice Standard 612 - Tree/Shrub Establishment. January 1999.

Alabama Forestry Commission Seedling Care and Reforestation Standards. November 1997.

USDA-NRCS AL Conservation Practice Standard 422 – Hedgerow Planting. September 1993.

*The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).*

*To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call 1-800-245-6340 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.*