

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**HEDGEROW PLANTING**

(feet)

**Code 422**

**DEFINITION**

Establishing a living fence of shrubs or trees in, across, or around a field.

**PURPOSES**

To delineate field boundaries, serve as fences, establish contour guidelines, provide wildlife food and cover, provide screens, or improve the landscape.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

In, across or around fields.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes**

- Methods used will be designed to protect the soil resource from erosion.
- Management practices and activities are not to disturb cover during the primary nesting period. Exceptions could be granted when necessary to maintain the health of a plant community. Management and maintenance activities will generally be restricted to August 1 - September 1. Mowing may be needed during the establishment period to control weeds.
- Native species seeded or planted will be adapted to the soil-site conditions.
- Native species will be suitable for the planned purpose.
- Planting rates will be adequate to accomplish the planned purpose.
- Only certified, high quality, and ecologically adapted native plant materials will be used. Refer to Section II of the FOTG and practice standard 645 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Management for recommended native species.

- Site preparation, establishment, planting dates, and care in handling and planting of the plant material shall be in accordance with practice standard 380 - Windbreak Establishment.

- Exclude livestock from all plantings.

- Timing and use of equipment will be appropriate for the site and soil conditions.

**Criteria for Wildlife Travel Lanes**

- Wildlife travel lanes are linear plantings that provide cover and food for wildlife, while allowing wildlife to move safely from one area to another, across areas lacking adequate cover.
- Plant three or more rows of trees and/or shrubs. Select berry or nut producing species providing fall and winter food sources.
- Refer to practice 645 - Upland Wildlife Habitat Management for recommendations.

**Criteria for Screen Plantings**

- Screen plantings are linear plantings designed to hide unsightly areas from public view or reduce noise.
- Plant two or more rows of trees and/or shrubs. If only one row is planted, use conifers with low dense branches that will provide year around benefits. Multiple row designs allow the addition of plant materials that benefit wildlife and improve the general aesthetics of the area.

**Criteria for Hedges**

- Hedges are linear plantings designed for purposes ranging from livestock exclusion and wildlife habitat development to improving the beauty of the rural landscape.

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Conservation practice standards are reviewed periodically, and updated if needed. To obtain the current version of this standard, contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

- Plant one or more rows of trees or shrubs. If designing for the enhancement of wildlife or exclusion of livestock, use material that is dense and that will provide food for wildlife.

### **Criteria for Improvement of Existing Hedgerows**

The value of older established hedgerows for wildlife can be improved by the following practices.

1. Interplanting open areas within hedgerows with native vine, shrub or tree species that provide food and cover for wildlife.
2. If herbaceous strips are desired, periodic mowing (once every 3-5 years) will prevent woody plant encroachment. Delay mowing until August 1 to benefit ground nesting birds.

### **CONSIDERATIONS**

**Habitat Linkages** - Linking fragmented habitats or cover types with corridors may greatly increase the use of an area by wildlife. In general, the wider the corridor the more species will use it.

**Threatened and Endangered Species** - Careful consideration should be given to endangered or threatened species and non-target wildlife species during the planning process.

**Water Quality** - This practice can be applied to a number of different landuses, and a variety of individual practices applied. The hydrologic regime will be affected, improved or can be degraded with respect to water quality, depending on the activities prescribed.

**Water Quantity** - This practice may have little effect on the quantity of surface and ground water except for an increase in transpiration due to increased dense vegetative growth.

**Snow Drifting** - Establishment of this practice should account for the resulting snow drift patterns, its impact on soil moisture, and any structures or roads needing protection from blowing and drifting snow.

### **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Site specific plans will be developed based on principles contained in this standard and in Minnesota amendments to USDA-NRCS National Planning Procedures Handbook (NPPH) 180-VI.

Plans and specifications for establishment and maintenance of this practice shall be prepared for each site. Plans and specifications shall be recorded using approved applications, specification sheets, job sheets, narrative statements in the conservation plan or other acceptable documents.

These documents are to specify the requirements for installing the practice, such as the kind, amount or quantity of materials to be used, or the timing or sequence of installation activities.

### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

An operation and maintenance plan shall be developed that is consistent with the purposes of this practice, its intended life, and the criteria for its design.

Actions will be carried out to ensure this practice functions as intended throughout its expected life. These actions include normal repetitive activities in the application and use

This practice will be inspected periodically and restored as needed, to maintain the stated purpose. Additional operation and maintenance requirements will be developed on a site specific basis to assure performance of the practice as intended.

Management measures must be provided to control invasive species and noxious weeds in order to comply with state noxious weed laws.

Replacement of dead trees and shrubs will be continued until the hedgerow is meeting its intended purpose.