

PURPOSE

Covey headquarters provide natural cover sources for quail and other wildlife. Headquarters are clumps of dense shrubby cover with a canopy at least three feet high and little vegetation at ground level. Quail need and use this type of patchy “escape” cover on a daily basis. They use headquarters to avoid hot summer sun and seek protection from predators and harsh weather. Without this habitat component, few quail will be present.

LOCATION

A covey headquarters should be located on every 5 to 40 acres if cover of this type does not already exist. This habitat component should be placed next to early-successional vegetation such as managed wildlife friendly grasses/legumes and tilled soil in order to be most effective.

SIZE

50 by 30 feet or 1500 square feet that is at least 30 feet wide.

ESTABLISHMENT

There are two basic ways to establish a quail covey headquarters 1) direct seeding and 2) seedling planting.

Direct Seeding:

- Prepare seedbed with a disk then firm with roller.
- For a 1500 square foot area mix 0.4 pounds of pure live seed (PLS) of false indigo bush (12 pounds/acre) and 0.07 pounds (PLS) of showy tick trefoil or sessile-leaf tick trefoil or panicked tick trefoil (2 pounds/acre) with pellet lime to improve a better distribution of seed when broadcasting.
- Broadcast seed by hand or hand held cyclone seeder.
- Roll the seeding area to firm the seed in contact with the soil.
- During establishment year use an approved herbicide, if available, for control of annual



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and perennial grasses. Mow high over developing plants to control any broadleaf weeds that would restrict sunlight.

Seedling Planting:

- Planting area needs to be free of existing vegetation. Disk or use chemical treatment during the fall prior to shrub planting.
- Prior to spring shrub planting, for a 1500 square foot area broadcast 0.08 pounds of ladino clover (2 1/4 pounds/acre) or 0.2 pounds of annual lespedeza (5.6 pounds/acre) to suppress annual weeds in the planting.
- Plant a mixture of species such as: gray or roughleaf dogwood, American plum, blackberry, hazelnut, false indigo bush, elderberry, chokecherry, nannyberry, aromatic sumac, smooth sumac, or winged sumac.
- If bare root shrub seedlings are used, plant seedlings 5 by 5 feet apart (60 plants per 1500 sq. ft.).
- If container grown plants are used plant at 7 by 7 foot spacing (30 plants per 1500 sq. ft.)
- During establishment year use an approved herbicide, if available, for control of annual and perennial grasses.

MAINTENANCE

- Exclude livestock.
- Remove trees that overtop the shrubby area.
- Use herbicides to suppress invasive vegetation and to control noxious weeds.

Illinois Conservation Practice Job Sheet 645B
Quail Covey Headquarters

Name _____ Farm _____ Tract _____ Date _____

Specific Recommendations:

Number of plots, Locations and Dimensions: _____

Species	Pounds of Seed or Number of Seedlings Per Plot.	Number of Plots	Total
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Additional Operation and maintenance: _____

Map of plot locations and dimensions (or attach map):

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