

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

HEDGEROW PLANTING

(Ft.)

CODE 422

DEFINITION

Establishment of dense vegetation in a linear design to achieve a natural resource conservation purpose.

PURPOSE

Providing at least one of the following conservation functions:

- Food, cover, and corridors for terrestrial wildlife.
- Living fences.
- Boundary delineation.
- Contour guidelines.
- Screens and barriers to noise and dust.
- Improvement of landscape appearance.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies wherever it will accomplish at least one of the purposes stated above.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Plants selected must be suited and adapted to the soil, climate, and conservation purpose.

No plant listed by the State as a noxious weed shall be established in a hedgerow.

The practice shall be protected from livestock grazing and trampling to the extent necessary to ensure that it will perform the intended purpose(s).

Competing vegetation shall be controlled until the hedgerow becomes established. Control

shall continue beyond the establishment period, if necessary.

Additional Criteria for Food, Cover and Corridors for Terrestrial Wildlife

Choose native plants whenever possible.

Selected plants shall provide cover and/or food to support the landowner's wildlife objectives.

Generally, wider corridors accommodate more wildlife use.

Linking fragmented habitats may increase wildlife use of an area.

Hedgerows can complement the availability of naturally occurring wildlife foods.

Hedgerows may degrade grassland wildlife habitat. The need for grassland wildlife habitat and associated species should be considered in locating this practice.

Additional woody shrub species may be planted adjacent to hedgerows to improve the functions in providing winter cover and protection from predators.

The maintenance of hedgerows influences wildlife habitat quality. Ground dwelling wildlife species benefit from cut-over mature hedgerows where the understory has been excessively shaded. Slash should be piled upon cut-over stumps to provide habitat for small mammals and reptiles. Sprouting from the cut stumps allows regeneration of the vegetation and re-establishment of hedgerow benefits. It is important to protect the cut stumps and re-sprouts from fire and herbicide injury.

Additional Criteria for Living Fences

Selected plants shall attain a size adequate to create a barrier to protect livestock or humans, as needed.

Selected plants shall have a densely branched growth habit.

Thorny shrubs and trees can improve a living fence's barrier effect.

If the purpose is to protect livestock, selected plants shall not be poisonous or hazardous to the animals.

Additional Criteria for Boundary Delineation

Hedgerows shall be aligned along boundaries of fields or woodlands to differentiate land management units.

Additional Criteria for Contour Guidelines

Hedgerows shall be aligned so they provide permanent contour markers supporting implementation of the Conservation Practice Standards 330, Contour Farming, and 585, Contour Stripcropping. Refer to those conservation practices standards (above) for alignment criteria.

Additional Criteria for Screens, Noise, and Dust Barriers

Screening hedgerows provide privacy, hide unsightly areas from view, or reduce noise.

Hedgerows shall be located where they most completely obstruct a line of sight, offensive sound, or dust.

Additional Criteria for Improvement of Landscape Appearance

The hedgerow design shall meet the aesthetic objectives of the landowner.

Plants shall be selected based upon the landowner's preferences for color, texture, and growth habit.

Consider plants' seasonal display of colors on bark, twigs, foliage, flowers, and fruit.

Consider plants' growth habits (outline, height, and width).

CONSIDERATIONS

Hedgerows can be planned in combination with other practices to develop complete conservation systems that enhance landscape aesthetics, reduce soil erosion, improve sediment trapping, improve water quality, and provide wildlife habitat.

Hedgerows following land contours create meandering lines on the landscape, produce a natural appearance, and increase the availability of "edge" wildlife habitats.

Hedgerows containing a mixture of native shrubs and small trees provide greatest environmental benefits.

Consider the amount of shading a hedgerow will provide at maturity. Shading may impact growth of adjacent plants, microclimate, and aesthetics. Limiting renovation events to one-third of a hedgerow's length or width will prevent sudden elimination of the practice's wildlife habitat function.

Periodic root pruning can reduce nutrient and water robbing from adjacent cropland.

Although not a primary purpose, hedgerows may incidentally trap windblown snow or sand.

Consider installing hedgerows on alignments that prevent trapping and accumulation of snow and sand on public roads.

Refer to Conservation Practice Standard 380, Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment, for criteria when snow or sand trapping is a primary conservation purpose.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Plans and specifications for this practice shall be prepared for each site. Plans and specifications shall be recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, or narrative documentation in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Supplemental plantings may be required when survival is too low to produce a continuous hedgerow.

Vegetation shall be protected from unwanted fire and grazing throughout its lifespan.

Pests shall be monitored and controlled.

Periodic applications of nutrients may be needed to maintain plant vigor.

Renovation activities shall be scheduled to prevent disturbance during the wildlife nesting season.