

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**TREE/SHRUB ESTABLISHMENT**

(Ac.)

**CODE 612**

**DEFINITION**

Establishing woody plants by planting seedlings or cuttings, direct seeding, or natural regeneration.

**PURPOSE**

To establish woody plants for forest products, wildlife habitat, long-term erosion control and improvement of water quality, treat waste, increase carbon storage in biomass and soils, renewable energy production, energy conservation, and enhance aesthetics.

**CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES**

On any area where woody plants can be grown.

**CRITERIA**

**General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes**

Species will be adapted to site conditions and suitable for the planned purpose(s).

Planting or seeding rates will be adequate to accomplish the planned purpose.

Planting dates, and care in handling and planting of the seed, cuttings or seedlings will ensure that planted materials have an acceptable rate of survival.

Only viable, high-quality and adapted planting stock or seed will be used.

Site preparation shall be sufficient for establishment and growth of selected species.

Adequate seed or advanced reproduction needs to be present or provided for when using natural regeneration to establish a stand.

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

All non-dormant bare root and containerized planting stock will be placed in the ground 3 weeks before ground temperature reaches biological zero in the fall and after the ground reach the same temperature in the spring.

The acceptability and timing of coppice regeneration shall be based on species, age, and diameter.

The planting will be protected from unacceptable adverse impacts from pests, wildlife, livestock damage, or fire.

Each site will be evaluated to determine if mulching, supplemental water or other cultural treatments will be needed to assure adequate survival and growth.

Comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations during the installation, operation and maintenance of this practice.

**Additional Criteria for Improving or Restoring Natural Diversity**

Species selected will be indigenous to the site and will reflect species composition of the desired stands.

**Additional Criteria for Increasing Carbon Storage in Biomass and Soils**

For optimal carbon sequestration, select plants that have higher rates of sequestration in biomass and soils and are adapted to the site to assure strong health and vigor. Plant the appropriate stocking rate for the site.

When using trees and shrubs for greenhouse gas reductions, prediction of carbon sequestration rates shall be made using

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

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current, approved carbon sequestration modeling technology.

### **CONSIDERATIONS**

When underplanting, trees should be planted sufficiently in advance of overstory removal to ensure full establishment.

Use locally adapted seed, seedlings or cuttings. Priority will be given to plant materials that have been selected and tested in tree/shrub improvement programs. All plant materials should comply with a minimum standard, such as the American Nursery and Landscape Association otherwise comply with USDA Forest Service, NRCS, or Alaska Division of Forestry planting stock specifications.

Plans for landscape and beautification plantings should consider foliage color, season and color of flowering, and mature plant height.

Where multiple species are available to accomplish the planned objective, consideration should be given to selecting species which best meet wildlife needs.

Tree/shrub arrangement and spacing should allow for and anticipate the need for future access lanes for purposes of stand management.

Residual chemical carryover should be evaluated prior to planting.

Species considered locally invasive or noxious should not be used.

Species used to treat waste should have fast growth characteristics, extensive root systems, capable of high nutrient uptake, and may produce wood/fiber products in short rotations.

### **PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS**

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.

Plans and specifications will include the following: adapted tree species for the purposes outlined, spacing, planting methods, cultural practices, maintenance requirements, and variations in methods and species between interplanting, underplanting, and planting in open areas. Separate specifications can be prepared for each of these planting methods.

### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

The following actions shall be carried out to insure that this practice functions as intended throughout its expected life. These actions include normal repetitive activities in the application and use of the practice (operation), and repair and upkeep of the practice (maintenance).

If needed, competing vegetation will be controlled until the woody plants are established. Noxious weeds will be controlled.

Replanting will be required when survival is inadequate.

Supplemental water will be provided as needed.

The trees and shrubs will be inspected periodically and protected from adverse impacts including insects, diseases or competing vegetation, fire and damage from livestock or wildlife.

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