



Biology FL-37

May, 1999

Guidelines for Hedgerows

Hedgerows are living fences of trees, shrubs and other vegetation in, across, or around fields.

Hedgerows can be used to delineate field boundaries, serve as fences, establish contour guidelines, provide wildlife food and cover, provide screens, or improve the landscape.

The most common purpose is for wildlife food and cover, and this is generally provided even where that is not the primary purpose for establishing the hedgerow.



I. Establishment

The two primary methods of establishing hedgerows are by natural seeding by birds or by planting seedlings and/or seeds. Although natural seeding is much cheaper, planting can ensure a greater variety of desirable species and generally, quicker establishment.

Natural Seeding Method

This method can be used when establishing hedgerows for field borders and for wildlife food and cover. Although this is the cheapest method, the major disadvantages are that it takes longer for establishment and there is little control over what plant species become established. Following are recommendations for this method:

1. **Land preparation.** Break and thoroughly harrow a strip to the width and length of the desired hedgerow. Where sod-forming grasses are established, herbicide treatment will probably be needed to control these grasses.
2. **Erect perching wire(s).** Place one or more lines of fence posts in the center of the prepared strip. Place posts about 1 rod or about 16.5 feet apart. Brace both the end posts and any posts at definite angles in the strip. Firmly attach a strand of wire, preferably No. 9, to the posts and about 4 feet above the ground.
3. **Planting.** Birds will perch on the wire, and adapted plants will become established from seed in their droppings. Other seeds will already be present in the soil or may be carried in by the wind or mammals.
4. **Fertilizer and other soil amendments.** These items are typically not used with this method. Fertilizer may be applied after the woody plants are well established and large enough to not be smothered by competing weeds.

5. **Cultivation.** None.

Planting Method

Any adapted plant, except noxious weeds or exotic invasives, may be used, including trees, shrubs, grasses, vines, and herbaceous plants. The hedgerow will be more pleasing aesthetically and of more value to wildlife if a variety of species and growth forms are included. At a minimum, the hedgerow should be planted to at least two species of trees and at least two shrub species. For some recommended plants, see the attached lists. For other adapted plants, see the Technical Notes listed below:

- PM-FL-5, Trees and Shrubs for Screens and Buffers
- PM-FL-8, Native Trees for Beautification
- PM-FL-9, Native Shrubs for Beautification
- PM-FL-10, Native Ferns, Herbs, Low-growing Shrubs, Succulents and Vines for Beautification
- PM-FL-17, Plants for Traffic Control
- PM-FL-24, Plants for Hedges

Also see “Management for Wildlife”, A Supplement to Wildlife Standards and Specifications for Florida

Once the plant species are picked, follow the planting methods listed below:

1. **Land preparation.** Several weeks before planting, break and thoroughly harrow a strip to the width and length of the desired hedgerow. Where sod-forming grasses are established, herbicide treatment will probably be needed to control these grasses.
2. **Planting dates.** For bare-root seedlings, plant between November 15 and February 15. Container plants may be planted anytime sufficient water can be expected for several months after planting. Plant seeds in the spring or early summer.
3. **Fertilizer and other soil amendments.** For best growth, add fertilizer and lime according to soil test recommendations. Thoroughly mix fertilizer into the soil during land preparation. Where there is a large deer population, use of fertilizer may increase deer depredation on the young woody plants and it might be better to not fertilize until the plants reach 5 to 6 feet in height.
4. **Planting.** Transplant seedlings by hand or tree planter. The distance between rows and the number of rows will vary, depending on species of plants, width of hedgerow and density desired. Plant seed by drill or broadcast. Where the hedgerow separates a field or pasture from forests, tree species will not be needed. Tree species should be included for hedgerows between or within crop fields and/or pastures.
 - Trees are generally planted 6 to 25 feet apart, depending on size at maturity. If planted in two or more rows, space plants alternately in the rows.
 - Shrubs are generally planted 1 to 6 feet apart, depending on size at maturity. If shrubs will be planted on only one side, plant the south side of east-west hedgerows, so the mature trees will not shade them.
 - Grasses, vines and forbs should be planted in a 6 to 8 foot wide strip adjacent to the woody plants, so they will not compete with woody plant establishment. Follow seeding recommendations in” Management for Wildlife” and in the Pasture and Hayland Planting ((512).

- 5. Cultivation.** Many hardwood trees/shrubs do not compete well with herbaceous plants until well established. Mulch or cultivate, as needed, during the first few years until the woody plants are established.

II. Maintenance

Prune and clip to retain desired shape and size. Replant, apply fertilizer and protect from grazing as needed. Prevent uncontrolled spreading by using mechanical methods or herbicides to destroy the seedlings. When renovation is needed, cut back or burn only parts of the hedgerow at one time, so that the entire wildlife habitat is not destroyed at one time.

III. Plant Recommendations for Hedgerows in Florida

Following are recommended plants that commonly are found in hedgerows, some of which have to be planted and others which may volunteer:

Plants	North FL*	Central FL*	South FL*
<u>Trees</u>			
Cedar, Red	+	+	+
Cherry, Carolina laurel	+	+	
Cherry, Wild black	+	+	
Dogwood, Flowering	+		
Dogwood, Swamp	+	+	
Fringe tree	+	+	
Hackberry, Sugar	+	+	+
Hawthorns	+	+	
Hickories	+	+	
Hollies	+	+	+
Oaks	+	+	+
Palm, Cabbage	+	+	+
Pear	+		
Pecan	+		
Persimmon	+	+	+
Pines	+	+	+
Plums	+	+	
Redbud	+		
Sassafras	+	+	
Sweetgum	+	+	
<u>Shrubs</u>			
Anise	+		
Beautyberry	+	+	+
Blackberries	+	+	+
Blueberries	+	+	+
Chinkapin	+		
Coffee, Wild			+
Crabapple	+		
Devil's walking stick	+	+	
Elderberry	+	+	+
Firethorn	+	+	

Gallberry	+	+	+
Juniper	+	+	
Lespedeza, Shrub	+		
Possumhaw	+		
Privet, Japanese	+	+	+
Sawpalmetto	+	+	+
Silverthorn	+		
Sparkleberry	+	+	
Stopper			+
Sumacs	+	+	+
Viburnums	+	+	
Waxmyrtle	+	+	+
Yaupon	+	+	
Herbaceous Plants			
Asters	+	+	+
Beggarweeds	+	+	+
Bluestemgrass	+	+	+
Crotalaria, Lance-leaf	+	+	+
Gammagrass, Eastern	+	+	+
Goldenrods	+	+	+
Indiangrass	+	+	+
Indigo, Hairy	+	+	+
Lespedezas, Annual	+	+	
Partridge pea	+	+	+
Pigweed	+	+	+
Pokeweed	+	+	
Ragweeds	+	+	+
Spanish needles	+	+	+
Sunflowers	+	+	
Vines			
Creeper, Trumpet	+	+	+
Creeper, Virginia	+	+	+
Grape, Wild	+	+	+
Greenbriars	+	+	+
Jessamine, Yellow	+	+	+
Peppervine	+	+	+

* The climatic zones used here are the same as those in 26 Ecological Communities of Florida.