

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD**

**WINDBREAK/SHELTERBELT ESTABLISHMENT VARIANCE**

(Ft.)

**CODE 380**

**BACKGROUND**

Windbreak and shelterbelt establishment is an important and widely utilized conservation practice in Iowa. Colorado blue spruce was taken off the list of acceptable conifer species during the last revision of the conservation practice standard in 2007. Colorado spruce was eliminated as a recommended species statewide in Iowa due to a disease problem. This problem occurs when Colorado spruce are planted at a spacing that encouraged overlap prior to the 15 year lifespan of the practice. The list of conifers is limited in Iowa. Red cedar and white pine are our only native conifers and therefore substantially limit acceptable native choices to meet clients windbreak needs.

A variance to use Colorado spruce in MLRA's 102 & 107 in combination with approved other species and under the following conditions is effective immediately.

1. Utilize only 1 row of Colorado spruce per windbreak.

2. Utilize the maximum within row and between row spacing as allowed by current 380 standard.
3. Plant Colorado spruce only on soil groups per Iowa Windbreak Suitability Groups that support growth of spruce species.
4. A serious discussion with customer that this specie, as well as many others could have disease or insect problems that may shorten the tree's life span and conversations on management alternatives to assist successful establishment.

Planning of windbreak with the client must include objectives, spacing, design, species diversity, and discussion and information about each tree species growth habits and management requirements.

The four items above will be documented in the customer's case file.

This variance will remain in effect until the 380 Conservation Practice Standard dated 2007 is revised.