

Weed Control Practice Matrix for Noncroplands

BACKGROUND

Weed control is a complex array of plants, purposes and practices. Tansy in woodlands, buckthorn in windbreaks, vetch in wildlife habitats, redcedar in pastures, thistle in prairies, purple loosestrife in wetlands; which weed control practice to apply; 314, 315, 650, 666? New practices and new practice definitions have been implemented for vegetation management creating even more complexity for weed control options.

To untangle the knot of vegetation management; weed control practices can be simplified using land use and vegetation type to determine which practices are most suitable for the land use. Basic land use categories for this purpose are: noncroplands including pastureland and grazingland, incidental forestlands; forestland and windbreaks. Vegetation types to be managed are either herbaceous (soft or fleshy stemmed) or woody (hard stemmed); these plants are considered ‘weeds’ under the conditions they are found and include noxious weeds and invasive species.

NONCROPLANDS (PASTURELAND AND GRAZINGLAND)

Brush Management, Code 314, is applied on pasturelands, grazinglands, perennial hayland, and other noncroplands including (non-wooded) incidental lands, prairies and wildlife habitat areas to control **woody** vegetation; for example: red cedar in pastures, buckthorn in incidental areas, dogwoods in filter strips, Russian olive in wildlife areas and Siberian elms in wetlands. Brush Management can also be used to control unwanted woody vegetation on lands in conservation programs such as CRP and WRP.

The new practice, Herbaceous Weed Control, Code 315, can be applied on the same land uses as above to control **herbaceous** weeds or vegetation such as field bindweed, wild parsnip, thistles and knotweeds.

INCIDENTAL FORESTLAND (INCLUDES NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS AND AGROFORESTRY)

Usually incidental areas found on farms contain a mix of various sized trees or shrubs and are usually a few acres to about 20 acres in size, but could be smaller or larger. These forests (also known as woodlands or woodlots) may include wet forests and forested wildlife habitat areas not including windbreaks (which are discussed separately below). These incidental areas are managed *primarily* for non-timber forest products and may not be managed at all. However these areas are often where invasive plants become established on the farm. Vegetation management for forests managed *primarily* for timber or customary wood products is discussed below.

Non-timber forest products include edibles (maple syrup, mushrooms, berries, nuts); medicinals (ginseng, yarrow, willow bark); florals and fragrances (spruce tops, balsam needles); and even noncommercial firewood could be placed in this category. To control undesirable **woody** plants such as buckthorns or honeysuckles use the practice Brush Management, Code 314. More intense management, applied when crop trees are at or beyond the sapling stage (diameter at breast height or dbh is at least 4” or larger), use the thinning or release techniques found in the practice standard Forest Stand Improvement (FSI), Code 666 to manage or control undesirable **woody** plants. Non-timber forest products or resources in this context may include recreation, aesthetics, wildlife habitat and hunting.

For managing or controlling **herbaceous** weeds on incidental forestland, use Herbaceous Weed Control, Code 315.

FORESTLAND (CUSTOMARY WOOD PRODUCTS)

When the intent of forestland management is *primarily* for customary wood products such as timber, logs, veneer, lumber, (commercial) firewood, or pulp and paper products, and the crop trees are at the sapling stage (see above), use the practice Forest Stand Improvement (FSI), Code 666 to control or manage undesirable **woody** vegetation either by thinning or release. The techniques “thinning” and “release” are silviculture methods used to manage forest composition, growth rate, species mix and density when the stand is at the sapling stage of development (or larger). If the stand (crop trees) has not attained the sapling stage, use the practice Brush Management, Code 314 to remove competing woody plants of any size.

For managing or controlling **herbaceous** weeds in forestlands, use Herbaceous Weed Control, Code 315.

WINDBREAKS

When windbreaks, including field windbreaks, shelterbelts and living snow fences, no longer function properly for the intended purpose, the practice Windbreak Renovation, Code 650 is used for controlling or managing **woody** vegetation. This practice is used to widen, replant, release, remove or replace selected trees and shrubs to improve windbreak function.

For managing or controlling **herbaceous** weeds in windbreaks, use Herbaceous Weed Control, Code 315.

MULCHING, CODE 484 (FOR WEED CONTROL)

For weed control at time of tree and shrub establishment using synthetic weed control barriers i.e. fabrics and mats, or using organic mulches use the practice Mulching, Code 484.

WEED CONTROL PRACTICE MATRIX

- 650 – Windbreak Renovation (hard stemmed or woody plants)
- 314 – Brush Management (hard stemmed or woody plants)
- 315 – Herbaceous Weed Control (soft or fleshy stemmed plants)
- 666 – Forest Stand Improvement (silvicultural treatments: release or thinning of trees or shrubs; woody plants only)

MATRIX OF LAND USE AND WEED CONTROL PRACTICES*

		PRACTICE			
		650	314	315	666
LAND USE	Pasture & Noncropland		X	X	
	Incidental Forestland		X	X	X
	Forestland		X	X	X
	Windbreaks	X		X	

* Consult practice standards and program provisions for details about implementing the practices.