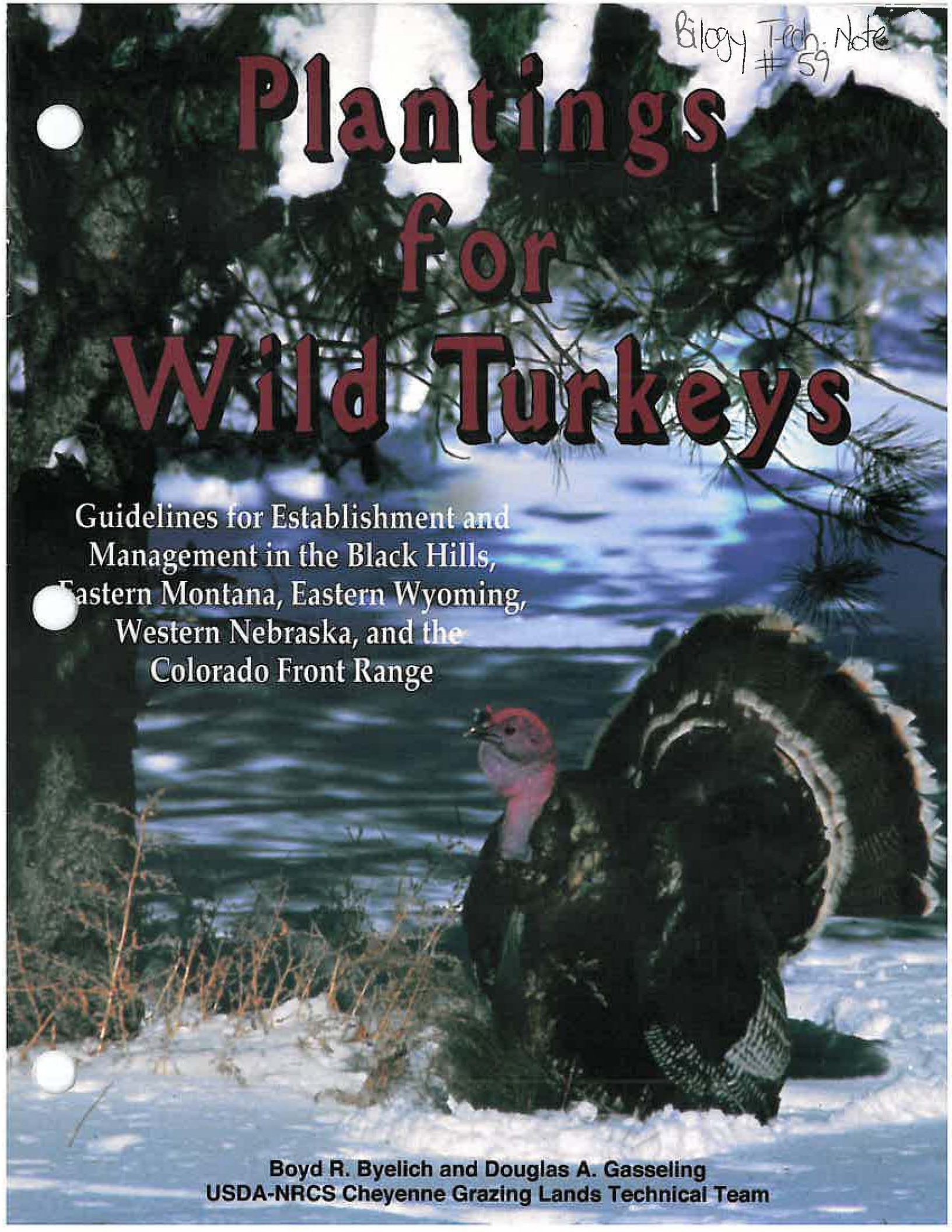
Biology Tech. Note #59

Plantings for Wild Turkeys

Guidelines for Establishment and Management in the Black Hills, Eastern Montana, Eastern Wyoming, Western Nebraska, and the Colorado Front Range



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Introduction

Vegetative plantings can be used to create or enhance habitat for wild turkeys. Habitat plantings may consist of shrubs, trees, grasses, forbs, cultivated grains, or a mixture of these. The general information contained in this publication can be applied to areas in the Northern Great Plains and Rocky Mountains. To assist you in determining if it is feasible to improve or develope turkey habitat on your land, it is important to have some understanding of wild turkeys and their habitat requirements.

With the exception of Colorado, wild turkeys are not native to much of the Northern Rocky Mountains and Great Plains. Some biologists suggest that the native populations of wild turkeys found in the Southwestern United States at the time of European settlement were relatively new and had not yet expanded to the north. Other biologists maintain that the limited availability of reliable winter food is responsible for their historic absence in the north. Today, wild turkeys can be found in every state in the Northern Great Plains and Rocky Mountains, and even extend into some of the Canadian Provinces. This is largely due to trapping and transplanting efforts. Generally speaking, these efforts have focused on releasing wild turkeys into areas that have the potential (habitat) for supporting sustainable populations. Habitat refers to the necessary requirements of food, cover, water, and space, and how they are arranged together on the landscape.

The most common subspecies in the Northern Great Plains and Rocky Mountains are the Merriam's and Rio Grande turkeys, with the current distribution and abundance of the Merriam's turkey exceeding that of the Rio Grande. The Merriam's turkey is believed to have its American origins associated with the ponderosa pine forests of what is now Arizona, New Mexico, and Southern Colorado. The Rio Grande subspecies, on the other hand, is a native of the mesquite, pine, and oak scrub country adjacent to the Rio Grande River corridor in what is now West Texas and Northeast Mexico. Today, the distribution of Merriam's turkeys in the Northern Great Plains and Rocky Mountains is associated with ponderosa pine forests, gambel oak or pinyon-juniper woodlands, other mountain shrub communities and to a lesser extent, cottonwood bottomlands. The Rio Grande wild turkey, while relatively new to this region, appears to prefer a complex of more open areas in association with woody stream corridors that are typically found in the lower elevation foothills and extending out onto the plains.

Regardless of these differences in landscape preference, all wild turkeys have specific habitat needs for mating, nesting, brood-rearing, foraging, loafing and roosting. During courtship for hens (females) in early spring, adult toms (males) will make use of just about any area that allows them to display their plumage and strut, such as small openings or forested areas with little understory vegetation. In their search for a suitable nesting site, hens will invariably select a site with some form of dense ground cover. This may be in the form of herbaceous vegetation such as grasses or legumes, or next to a rock or tree. Visibility is also important, which explains the tendencies to select nest sites on steep slopes or in vegetation that offers the hen a wide field of view. This dense ground cover and field of view are essential for protecting their 10-12 eggs from nest predators such as ravens, raccoons, skunks, and foxes. Proximity to a water source is also important for the hen during the 28 day incubation period. Once the poults hatch near the end of May, overhead cover becomes more important for protecting the brood from inclement weather and from avian predators such as hawks, owls, and eagles. Riparian (stream corridor) areas with a shrub and tree overstory and grass/forb understory are preferred for brood-rearing, as the increased moisture availability typically provides better cover and foraging opportunities than can be found in adjacent areas.

Hens with poults generally stay close to cover.

Poults are not able to fly until about 2 weeks of age, so suitable ground roosting habitat is critical during this time period. Hens may use a large rock outcrop or slope offering good visibility, provided there is a shrub or tree overstory. Once they have learned to fly, the poults will join the roosting adults in larger trees with branches spaced far enough apart to accommodate them. These are typically mature trees within the forest or riparian area, not individual trees standing alone away from the forest. Wild turkeys of all ages will use areas offering good visibility, overhead cover, and easy movement along the ground for loafing. When foraging, adults will use small forest openings, riparian areas, woodlands with an herbaceous understory, and more open, savannah type landscapes, provided that escape cover from predators and

inclement weather is nearby. Travel corridors are essential for allowing turkeys to move securely between these various habitats. Often, forested or riparian areas separated by no more than 100 yards of open space provide these links. Some populations of Merriam's turkeys are known to travel in excess of 40 miles between summer and winter ranges to obtain all their habitat requirements, while Rio Grande turkeys seldom need to range more than 8-10 miles over the course of the year to meet their needs. On a daily basis, wild turkeys may wander over a 10 acre area or a 1000 acre area, depending on the availability and arrangement of food, water, and cover, and whether or not they are subjected to any disturbances by predators, recreationists, livestock, or weather.

The availability of reliable food sources throughout the year probably dictates wild turkey distribution and abundance more than any other habitat component. During the spring and summer, wild turkeys will utilize green plant matter from cultivated crops and native grasses, grass seeds, and insects. The high levels of protein in these foods are especially

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Food plots and other plantings can help turkeys survive the critical winter months.

important for the development and growth of poults. The higher moisture levels associated with riparian areas and the abundance of sunlight-loving weeds in openings provide ideal environments for insects. This makes these areas important for brood-rearing and foraging . As summer progresses towards autumn and the western climate generally becomes drier, wild turkey diets will shift to more grass seeds, green material from legumes (clover and vetch), grain from early maturing field crops (if available), and soft mast (berries) from fruit producing shrubs. As fall turns to winter, diets will be comprised of just about anything a wild turkey can find. Often, this may be limited to pine seeds or acorns (hard mast), juniper berries, and any persisting grass seeds or basal leaves that are not covered by snow. The energy that these plant parts provide is essential for sustaining wild turkeys through the winter months and can not be overstated in importance, as winter is the most critical time period of limited forage availability for wild turkeys. The cycle is completed as the temperatures rise in the spring, plants begin to initiate growth, and insects start to become active again.

Planning Considerations

Your first consideration should be to identify if a population of wild turkeys is present in the vicinity of your land or your neighbors' lands at any time during the year. Is it conceivable that the closest population of wild turkeys might utilize habitat on your land if it were available? Your local game biologist can help you answer these questions. If so, then look at the landscape on and around your land to identify which wild turkey habitat components are present and which ones are lacking. Are there sufficient travel corridors for turkeys to access your land? Could this landscape provide turkeys year-round or only seasonal habitat? Are there other species of wildlife that you want to specifically target? Do you have the ability (time, tools, and space) and desire to establish or enhance all habitat components or just one? Considering questions like these will allow you to select the appropriate type of plantings to complement basic habitat needs for wild turkeys in your area and meet any aesthetic objectives you have regarding wild turkeys. You can also be confident that your efforts to improve habitat for wild turkeys may benefit a host of other local wildlife, which could include upland gamebirds like sharp-tail grouse and pheasants, some waterfowl, songbirds, and big game such as deer and elk.

The following guidelines are not intended to be absolute, but to help you evaluate and implement habitat improvements on your land. The location, plant species selection, and size of plantings are important planning considerations, with most biologists believing that the location and plant species selection are more critical than the size.

Locating Food plots

- Lay out plantings to complement, enhance, or create habitat that will result in a mix of open areas, riparian corridors, and woodlands of varying plant species, age-class, and density.
- Position plantings so wild turkeys do not have to cross open areas >100 yards in width. Planting clumps or rows of shrubs and trees to create travel corridors at least 50 feet wide across openings that are >100 yards wide may help link two potentially usable habitats.
- Plantings with irregular margins simulate natural habitat boundaries more favorably than plantings in strips or blocks, as more edge will be created. Edges

are areas where two different habitats come together, and are usually preferred by wildlife because more of their needs can be met in a smaller area.

- Food plantings should be < 25 yds. from forest or shrub cover sufficient to conceal adult turkeys from view.
- Food plantings >100 yds. from woody cover may receive very little or no use from wild turkeys.
- Select openings <200 yards wide for establishing food plantings in forested areas.
- Locate food plantings > 100 yards from, and out of sight of, regularly used roads or trails.
- Avoid areas where snow accumulations will prevent access to planted foods.
- Avoid plantings near single or small groups of mature trees out in the open that might serve as perches for avian predators.
- Shrub plantings on slopes along streams or forest edges may enhance nesting and brood-rearing habitat.
- Tree plantings can be used to extend the margins of the existing forest towards other turkey habitat, add additional age class structure to the forest, or to create islands and travel corridors between other habitats.
- Position plantings so there are no physical barriers (house, barns) between the plantings and woody cover.
- Locate plantings away from residences, barns, etc. to avoid contact with domestic fowl, dogs, and cats, and to avoid having the wild turkeys become accustomed to humans.
- A water source should ideally be within 1/4 mile, and not more than 1 mile, of any planting.

Providing a water source will benefit turkeys and other wildlife.

Size /number of plantings

- Consider the kinds and numbers of wildlife in your area. An abundance of upland gamebirds and big game might indicate that adequate forage and/or cover already exists and that no additional plantings are necessary.
- The size and/or number of plantings, along with any existing usable habitat, needs to accommodate the anticipated use by other wildlife to insure benefits for wild turkeys.
- Food plantings completely utilized by early winter can have dire consequences on a population of wild turkeys that have become dependent on that food source, particularly if additional food sources are not in close proximity to that planting. The size and number of food plantings should reflect this concern.
- Small size or number of plantings, especially food plantings, may concentrate wild turkeys and thereby increase their susceptibility to predation. However, larger numbers of turkeys flocked together, with their keen eyesight, should have a greater ability to detect predators.
- Select the number and/or size of plantings that you have the ability (time, tools, and space) and desire to adequately establish and manage.
- Most forage and cover plantings are generally one-half acre to several acres in size.

Species Selection

- Select plants that will benefit wild turkeys during the time of year they are present on your property or have the potential to be present.
- Select plants that will enhance existing turkey habitat or, if feasible, help create missing habitat components.
- Selecting a variety of plants is a measure of insurance in the event that one or more doesn't produce a crop.
- The importance of seed producing species increases as you go north and winters tend to be longer and more severe. Wild turkeys that have to rely more on green vegetation throughout the year do not do as well.
- **Annual food plots**: Select a combination of 3 - 4 fall and spring-seeded small grains that mature at different times. Small grains also provide green forage. Some grains such as corn, proso millet, and sunflowers will persist during periods of heavy snow cover. Another option is to include a biennial legume, like sweetclover, with the small grain and then leave the food plot to grow into mature clover the second year. Alternate food plots with this method.

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Select species that enhance the native habitat.

- **Permanent herbaceous forage plantings**: Select a combination of abundant seed producing perennial grasses (50-70%) and perennial forbs or domesticated legumes (30-50%) that will provide green forage in late winter/early spring. Try to include 2-3 different grasses and 2-3 different forbs/legumes.
- **Attracting insects**: Forbs and legumes provide an ideal environment for insects, which are a highly preferred food for wild turkeys during the spring, summer, and fall, and are critical for poult development.
- **Fruits and nuts**: Berry producing shrubs can provide food for wild turkeys and other upland gamebirds during early fall. Seed and nut producing trees may be critical food sources during the late fall and winter. However, natural mast crops are not dependable every year.
- **Herbaceous cover**: Select a mix of grasses (50-70%) and forbs/legumes (30-50%) that will grow to a height of 8-15 inches to provide dense ground cover for nesting, brood-rearing, and foraging.
- **Woody cover**: Shrubs and trees should be used in combination with grasses and legumes to provide cover for nesting, brood-rearing, escape, and foraging. Shrub and tree communities with a more open understory often provide escape, loafing, and roosting cover.
- **Advantages/disadvantages of using annual vs perennial crops**: Annual crops require more labor as the landowner will need to prepare and plant the plot each year. If equipment is not readily available, this can be a burden on the landowner and the food plot may not get planted on time. Perennials are longer lived and require less maintenance but can be slower and more difficult to establish and are often more expensive to purchase. Annual crops may be a more reliable food source year-in and year-out, if they get planted. Perennial, native plants may not produce a crop every year.

Seeding Rates

- Refer to the appropriate planting guide for your state for seeding rates, seeding depths and seeding dates. If you want to seed to a mixture, select the species you want to plant from the planting guide and decide what percent of each you want to plant. Then multiply the seeding rate by this percent to get the pounds per acre you need to plant of that species. Example : You are going to plant a mixture of alfalfa (50%), Pubescent wheatgrass (30%), and Maximilian sunflowers (20%). Calculate the amount of seed required for each species as follows:

Alfalfa	5 lbs/a	X	50%	=	2.5 lbs/acre
Pubescent wheatgrass	7 lbs/a	X	30%	=	2.1 lbs/acre
Maximilian sunflower	8 lb/a	X	20%	=	1.6 lbs/acre

- Examples of permanent and annual planting mixtures for wild turkeys:

Permanent		Annual	
%	Species	%	Species
35	Pubescent Wheatgrass	30	Sorghum
25	Russian Wildrye	20	Millet
20	Small Burnet	20	Oats
18	Alfalfa	20	Spring Wheat
2	Yellow Sweetclover	5	Corn
		5	Sunflowers
100		100	

If you have any questions, contact your local NRCS office or the County Extension office for the best varieties and mixtures to plant.

NRCS

Planting Guide for Turkey Food Plots[1,2]

Species	Seeding Date	Lbs/Acre	Seeding Depth
Annual Seedings			
Wheat, Spring	April 1 to June 1	60	3/4 *in* to 2 *in*
Wheat, Winter	Sept 1 to November 1	75	3/4 *in* to 2 *in*
Barley	April 1 to June 1	65	3/4 *in* to 1 1/2 *in*
Oats	April 1 to June 1	50	3/4 *in* to 1 1/2 *in*
Sorghum	May 1 to June 10	10	1 *in* to 1 1/2 *in*
German Millet	June 1 to July 1	20	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Corn	May 1 to June 1	18	2 *in* to 3 *in*
Canola	May 1 to June 1	7	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Sunflowers	May 15 to June 15	9	3/4 *in* to 1 1/2 *in*
Triticale, Spring	April 1 to June 1	60	3/4 *in* to 1 1/2 *in*
Perennial Seedings[3]			
Legumes[4]			
Alfalfa	April 10 to May 30	5	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Birdsfoot Trefoil	April 10 to May 30	5	1/4 *in* to 1/2 *in*
White Clover	April 10 to may 30	3	1/4 *in* to 1/2 *in*
Cicer Milkvetch	April 10 to May 30	7	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Sainfoin	April 10 to May 30	34	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Yellow Sweet Clover	April 10 to May 30	4	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Purple Prairie Clover	April 1 to May 30	4	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Grasses[4]			
Russian Wildrye	Prior to May 10	6	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Basin Wildrye	Prior to May 10	6	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Pubescent Wheatgrass	Prior to May 10	7	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Intermediate Wheatgrass	Prior to May 10	7	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Tall Wheatgrass	Prior to May 10	10	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Orchardgrass	Prior to May 10	2.5	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Switchgrass	Prior to May 20	3	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Indian Ricegrass[5]	Prior to May 20	6	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Prairie Sandreed	Prior to May 20	2.5	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Forbs			
Small Burnet	May 1 to June 1	3	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
American Vetch	May 1 to June 1	1	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Lewis Flax	May 1 to June 1	3	1/2 *in* to 3/4 *in*
Maximilian Sunflowers	May 15 to June 10	8	1/4 *in* to 1/2 *in*
Stiff Sunflowers	May 15 to June 10	8	1/4 *in* to 1/2 *in*
Shrubs and Trees			
Buffaloberry	Prior to May 15		Use seedlings
Choke cherry	Prior to May 15		Use seedlings
Snowberry	Prior to May 15		Use seedlings
Barberry	Prior to May 15		Use seedlings
American Plum	Prior to May 15		Use seedlings
Hawthorn	Prior to May 15		Use seedlings
Kinnikinnik	Prior to May 15		Use seedlings
Burr Oak	Prior to May 15		Use seedlings
Ponderosa Pine	Prior to May 15		Use seedlings
Serviceberry	Prior to May 15		Use seedlings

1/ When broadcast seedings are used, double the seeding rates listed in the table.

2/ Seeding dates may be adjusted plus or minus five days to the listed seeding dates.

3/ Under irrigation the seeding rates should be increased by 50 percent: Example Dryland seeding rate = 50 pounds per acre, irrigated seeding rate = 75 pounds per acre.

4/ When irrigation is provided, planting may be done at any time during the growing season except from August 15 to October 25.

5/ Indian ricegrass has dormant seed and should be planted as a dormant fall seeding unless germination by standard seed test is greater than 50 percent.

Food Plot Establishment

There are several items critical for successful forage and cover establishment. These include variety selection, soil preparation, fertilizer requirements, planting, and protection from livestock.

Soil Testing and Fertility

Prior to planting, a simple soils test should be completed to determine the fertility of the area and the suitability of the area for supporting a forage or cover plot. The test should check for nitrogen (N), phosphorous (P), potash (K), and pH, which is the level of the soil acidity or alkalinity.

Soil tests can be completed by a number of private companies and/or universities. Soil testing information can be obtained from your local County Extension Agent.

If you are planting a permanent mixture, the area designated for planting should be fertilized as suggested by the soil test once the perennial plants are established, probably the second year. If the an area is used every year for annual food plots, fertility management becomes a critical element to insure that adequate nutrients are available for plant growth each year and that the soil does not become nutrient deficient.

Other than to balance the carbon:nitrogen (C:N) ratio, only starter fertilizer at the time of seeding is recommended. An example starter fertilizer is 16-20-0-15 (nitrogen-phosphorous-potash-sulfur).

Seedbed Preparation

Seedbed preparation is probably the most important criteria for establishing food plots. How you prepare the area is dependent upon the size of the seed to be planted and moisture conditions. A smooth, weed free, and firm seedbed is best. A seedbed is firm and not too wet if the footprint of a person walking across the area does not sink any deeper than 1/4 inch. A weed-free seedbed is especially important for small seeded plants, which are more susceptible to competition from other plants.

The type of vegetation present will determine the type of seedbed preparation required. If the area is in undesirable permanent vegetation, use a moldboard plow or a heavy disk to work the area. If you don't have access to this type of tillage equipment, a rototiller can be used. One recommendation to insure better control of the grass prior to tillage is the use of a herbicide, such as a glyphosphate product (it has a half life of 6 weeks, breaks down into carbon and nitrogen, and is environmentally safe). The final step would be to use a packer to be sure the soil is firm (cultipacker, tractor tires, 4-wheeler, etc. will all work).

Once an annual food plot has been planted, very minimal seedbed preparation is needed in the following years to plant annual crops, unless there is a large infestation of weeds (> 20% of the total food plot area). In this case, seedbed preparation will again be important. It is best to plant directly into the previous years residue if weeds are not a problem. Weed free grain stubble provides an excellent firm seedbed and microenvironment for seedling establishment. If desirable perennial plants have become successfully established by the second year, no additional seedbed manipulation is needed.

In many areas, individuals or farmers-ranchers can be hired at a minimal cost to prepare the area for planting.

Food plots should be located away from roads and buildings

Planting

Planting annual crops and perennials can be accomplished using several methods. Depending on what the vegetation is on the land where the plantings are going to be established, the landowner may want to consider the use of annually planted crops for one to three years prior to planting perennials. This will help to eliminate competition from the native species. A drill is best for placing the seed at the proper seeding depths, but most individuals who are planting for wildlife do not have drills and broadcasting is more common. Large seeds are easily broadcast. Some perennials, especially legumes, have low seeding rates and are small seeds, and it is easy to inadvertently spread an acres worth of seed over a relatively small area. To broadcast small seeds, use a bucket and your hand or mix the seed with dry sand and use a hand-held, crank seeder. Avoid dumping the small seed into a hand-held spreader alone because just a few cranks of the handle will

empty the seeder. When using the broadcast method, the seeding rates listed in the state planting guide will need to be doubled. (i.e. if the normal rate is 6 pounds per acre, then for broadcasting you would need 12 pounds per acre). This is important because in broadcast seeding not all of the seed has a good soil-to-seed contact. Some seed is exposed on the soil surface and may be lost to birds, animals, wind, or removed with rainfall runoff. The seed should be lightly covered with soil (raked or harrowed) and packed after it has been broadcast. A person can use tractor tires, 4-wheelers, a drag chain and cultipacker, or by footsteps if it is a small area.

When planting perennials, the use of a nurse crop is permissible. A nurse crop is a light seeding of a small grain, such as oats, that assists the perennial crop in becoming established by protecting the seedbed and new seedlings from wind and water erosion. A nurse crop should not be planted any heavier than 15 - 20 pounds per acre. A word of caution on nurse crops: nurse crops seeded too heavy will cause more damage to the perennials as they will compete for nutrients, light, and moisture. Legumes, such as alfalfa, clovers and birdsfoot trefoil, are nitrogen-fixing plants. They obtain nitrogen from the air for their own use with the help of a nitrogen-fixing bacteria that attaches to their roots. Prior to planting, make sure the legumes have been recently inoculated with this bacteria. Otherwise, the plants will be unable to fix nitrogen.

When planting shrubs or trees, keep the roots moist prior to planting. Trim off any long, unruly roots with a pair of scissors. Set seedling in spud hole so that the roots are pointing straight down. Push soil against seedling with spud, and tamp soil surface with your foot.

Managing Food Plots

Once food plots are established, proper management is the key to long-term habitat benefits for wild turkeys and other wildlife. There are a number of practices that, when implemented either alone or in combination, will help maintain quality habitat and meet your wildlife goals.

Grazing

- Food plantings should initially be protected from livestock use. Following establishment, careful grazing management is one tool for maintaining grass, grain, and legume plantings.
- Wild turkeys will more readily use a planting if they can pass under the fence. Use of woven wire is discouraged and the bottom strand of any barbed or smooth wire fence should be at least 16 inches off the ground.

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Food plots should be located close to escape cover.

- Time your grazing to occur when turkeys don't need that area, or seed has been completely consumed by turkeys.
- Rest-rotation grazing, where some pastures are grazed and some are rested (not grazed) each year, is a good method for achieving livestock benefits and maintaining habitat for wild turkeys. A pasture rested this year would be grazed next year, and one or some of your pastures grazed this year would not be grazed next year. Set up your pastures so that only a portion (25%) of those areas used by turkeys for nesting, brood-rearing, and foraging are grazed by livestock each year, preferably after July 1.
- Flash grazing, where a large number of livestock use the area for a short period of time (1 week or less), is another preferred method. This should occur when turkeys are not using the area, forage is available for livestock, and there is time for the grazed plants to regrow to provide food and cover for turkeys when they do use that area.
- Any planted shrubs or hardwood trees need to be provided adequate protection from grazing animals. Tubular tree shelters are recommended for 3-5 years after planting.
- Grazing of annual food plot residue should only occur after the grain, either on the stalk or on the ground, has been consumed by turkeys or is unavailable to them because of snow. Do not graze if grain stalks are still erect and are providing cover for the turkeys Trampling of annual food plots by livestock after use by turkeys can help reestablish grains by pushing any seeds lying on the surface into the soil.

Other Practices

- Any soil disturbance will encourage weeds to invade. These are typically forbs like dandelions, lambsquarter, and wild mustard, which provide an ideal environment for insects. Disturbance tillage, where the soil is worked but not seeded, can be used on small areas within openings.
- Eliminate fall tillage of fields that were used to produce grain. Turkeys can make use of any seeds lying on the ground for food and may be able to use the stubble for some measure of cover.
- If you have grain fields within 100 yards of woody cover, leave the outside swath or rows unharvested to provide food for wild turkeys and other wildlife.
- Periodically mowing or grazing narrow strips of your perennial grasses and legumes between July 15 - September 15 will stimulate regrowth of herbaceous vegetation and enhance foraging opportunities for insects. It is best to start in the middle of an opening and work your way towards the outside to allow turkeys and other wildlife an easy escape route.

Supplemental Feeding

Food plots and permanent plantings are more biologically sound than supplemental feedings (e.g., putting corn in a feeder or on the ground) because they provide a more natural representation of a food source.

There is much debate over the practice of supplemental feeding wild turkeys. This practise tends to concentrate turkeys, making them more susceptible to predators and disease. Many biologists believe , however, that the benefits of supplemental feeding during the critical winter months, outweigh the risks. Few would argue that it is preferable to provide winter forage in the form of food plots and permanent plantings.

Merriam's Tom Turkey

For additional information, contact your local conservation district, Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office, County Extension Office, State Game biologist, or the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Information contributed by representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks, Nebraska Game and Parks, Montana Bureau of Land Management, and the National Wild Turkey Federation.

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