

Nearly every Oklahoma farm, ranch or small acreage has unproductive or hard-to-reach areas. Also, nearly every Oklahoma farmer, rancher and landowner desires to have wildlife on their property. All wildlife species need food, cover and water to survive. Where appropriate, landowners can enhance wildlife habitat by planting trees, shrubs, grains and grasses, and put “idle” acres to better use. The information that follows provides a brief look at how trees and shrubs can be used to help wildlife.

FOOD

Most wildlife species require a wide variety of foods, such as nuts, berries, seeds and some types of foliage. Foods fall into three broad categories:

- **Preferred foods** – those selected first.
- **Staple foods** – those providing the biggest part of the diet.
- **Emergency foods** – those available when other sources are used up.

Trees and shrubs generally provide preferred and staple foods, although some do offer emergency rations as well. Grasses and grains are an important factor in the diets of most animals and birds. To provide more complete food sources, leave areas of grains and grasses unharvested, and plant trees and shrubs for food and cover.

COVER

Wildlife needs cover for protection from predators, shelter from the weather, concealment and nesting. Trees and shrubs provide some of the best wildlife cover. Trees provide good escape cover for many small birds and mammals. Evergreens provide year-round cover and shelter from harsh weather conditions. Shrubs provide low-level concealment and escape cover.

One of the most important aspects of cover is the “edge effect”. Edge is the area of transition between two different types of vegetation – between timber

and grass, for example. Typically, such an area has a wider variety of cover types, and will support a more diverse species mix. *In general, to create more wildlife habitat diversity, maximize your edge effect.*

WATER

Because water is critical, locate wildlife plantings near a water source. Ponds, lakes, creeks or even small depressions are ideal sites for plantings.

ROOM TO ROAM (RANGE)

Some wildlife species need more space than others. For example, deer, wild turkey, bobcat and coyote need much larger areas than do squirrel, rabbits and most birds. Tracts of 5, 10 or 20 acres may not be able to entirely support these species, but they can be improved to encourage their regular visits. Wildlife generally uses streams and drainages for travel lanes. Plant trees and shrubs in these areas to encourage wildlife to use your property.

SUMMARY

Wildlife habitat needs to have four basic elements to be effective: food, cover, water and space. Trees and shrubs can provide two of these – food and cover.

TREE PLANTING SPACING

Trees and shrubs planted for wildlife should be planted closer together than for other types of plantings. In general,

- Shrubs 4 – 5 feet
- Conifers 6 – 8 feet
- Medium trees 8 – 12 feet
- Tall trees 12 – 15 feet

When planting trees of different sizes next to each other, use the spacing for the larger of the two.

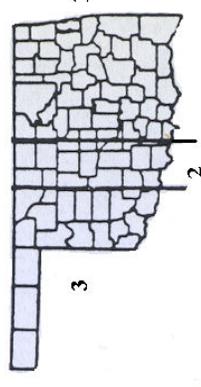
SEEDLING TREES AND SHRUBS AND THEIR USE FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT

Species	Tree Type ¹	Habitat Component	Range ²	Importance Rating ³	Comments
Arborvitae	C	Year-round cover	1,2,3	2	
Autumn Olive	S	Food, some cover	1	4	
Baldypress	TT	Nesting	1,2	1	
Black Locust*	MT	Food, cover	1,2,3	4	Aggressive fast growing.
Black Walnut	TT	Food, nesting	1,2,3	4	Should be planted on good, well drained soil.
Bur Oak	TT	Food, nesting	1,2,3	4	Excellent for squirrels.
Chokecherry	S	Food, cover	3	5	Thicket-forming shrub.
Euonymus	S	Food, cover	1,2,3	4	Browse for deer; seed for birds.
Green Ash	TT	Nesting	1,2	1	
Hackberry*	TT	Food, cover, nesting	1,2,3	5	Browse for deer on younger trees; seed for birds.
Lacebark Elm*	MT	Nesting	1,2,3	1	
Mulberry	MT	Food, cover, nesting	1,2,3	5	
O-sage Orange*	MT	Food, cover, nesting	1,2,3	4	
Pecan	TT	Food, nesting	1,2	4	Excellent for squirrels.
Redbud	S, MT	Cover, emergency food	1,2,3	3	
Rky.Mn.Juniper	C	Year-round cover, food	3	3	
Russian Olive	S	Food, cover	1,2,3	4	Fast growing; produces seed at early age.
Sand Plum*	S	Food, cover, escape	1,2,3	5	Forms dense thickets; fruit at an early age.
Silver Maple	TT	Nesting	1,2	2	Fast growing.
Sycamore	TT	Nesting	1,2	2	Some browse for deer.
Austrian Pine	C	Year-round cover	1,2,3	2	
Loblolly Pine	C	Year-round cover; nesting;	1,2,3	3	
		Some food			
Ponderosa Pine	C	Year-round cover; nesting	2,3	2	
Scotch Pine	C	Year-round cover; nesting	1,2,3	2	
Shortleaf Pine	C	Year-round cover, nesting	1	2	
Virginia Pine	C	Year-round cover, nesting	1,2	2	

*These species tolerate droughty sites and poor soil conditions.

¹TREE TYPES: C = conifer; S = shrub; MT = medium height, deciduous tree; TT = tall deciduous tree

²RANGE

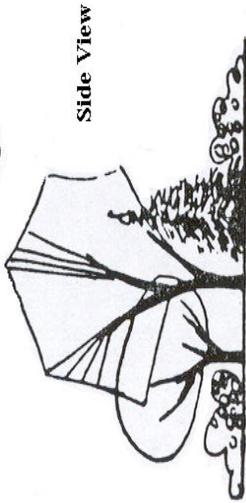
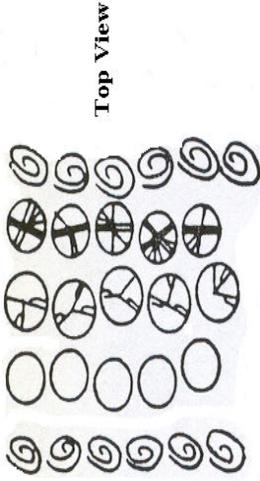


³IMPORTANCE RATING:

- 5 = Excellent; provides good food and cover.
- 4 = Good; provides some food and cover.
- 3 = Acceptable; provides food or cover for some or all of the year.
- 2 = Fair; provides cover or nesting for most of the year, may provide some food.
- 1 = Limited; may provide some food or cover at certain times of the year.

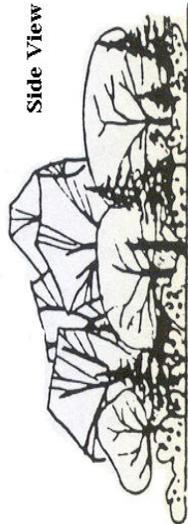
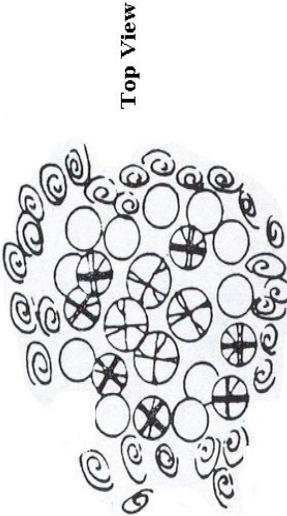
SAMPLE PLANTING DESIGNS

Strip Planting



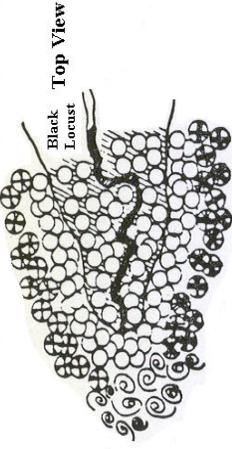
Strip plantings are windbreaks or border plantings. Edge can be increased by adding curves to the strips.

ISLAND (CLUMP) PLANTING



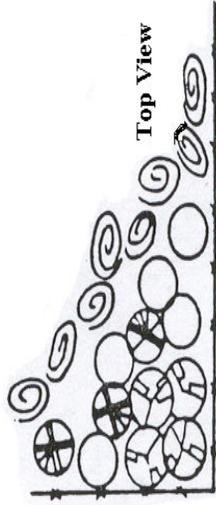
To be most effective, the planting should be one-quarter to one acre in size.

Gully Planting



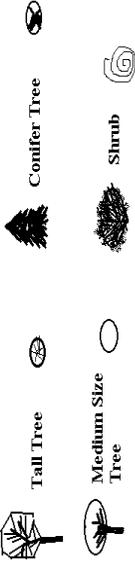
Gullies can provide good wildlife habitat when planted with trees and shrubs. In addition to habitat, trees and shrubs can control the growth of a gully and encourage vegetative cover.

Fence Corner Planting



Fence corners provide an excellent opportunity to improve wildlife habitat.

Key:



This brochure was designed to provide general information about wildlife habitat improvements using trees and shrubs. For more detailed information or technical assistance, contact one of the following agencies:

- Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation, 1801 N. Lincoln Boulevard Oklahoma City, 73105 - (405) 521-3851 (ODWC).
- Conservation Districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, in each county (NRCS).
- O.S.U. Extension Service, in each county (Ext.).
- Oklahoma Dept. of Agriculture, Food & Forestry, 2800 N. Lincoln Boulevard, P.O. Box 528804, Oklahoma City, 73152 - (405) 522-6158 (ODAFF).

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- Acres for Wildlife (ODWC)
- Bobwhite Quail Management Guide (NRCS)
- Improving Your Acres for Wildlife (ODWC)
- Making Land Useful to Wildlife (NRCS)
- Rabbit Management Guide (NRCS)
- Whitetail Deer Management Guide (NRCS)
- Wild Turkey Management Guide (NRCS)
- Attracting Birds (ODWC)
- Habitat Management Programs for Oklahoma's Prairie Chickens (Ext.)
- Oklahoma's Forest Stewardship Program (ODAFF)

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PLANTING TREES AND SHRUBS TO IMPROVE WILDLIFE HABITAT IN OKLAHOMA



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