

# Disc to give wildlife a new food source

Head and shoulders  
Photo of DC or  
Soil Conservationist  
here

By \_\_\_\_\_,  
District Conservationist, Natural  
Resources Conservation Service,  
\_\_\_\_\_ County.

What's the easiest, cheapest way to provide new food to quail, turkeys, songbirds and other wildlife? And at the same time create nesting and brood-rearing cover for young ones?

Disc.

Discing disturbs the soil to promote the growth of new, smaller plants that young birds can navigate. The new plants then offer seeds as well as a draw for insects that young birds need. Many of the new plants will be weeds. Expect to see more of the same type of weeds that exist before discing; if there are noxious weeds or others you don't want more of, then you won't want to disc in that area.

### Creating a disc plot.

While it's easy to disc an area and create the plot, it will pay you to consider where you can get the most good from it. Locate a place next to some good permanent cover-- brushy fence row, woodlot, or near brushy areas along a stream or pond.

You could disc in either spring or fall, but fall may be better because discing will help set seeds from ragweed, sunflowers, beggarweeds and other plants that offer quality seeds to birds.

### Monitor, disc again.

Watch the plot over the next few years. You will want to disc

again--likely in three years--when it looks like the plot isn't producing much seed.

If you have several plots, you can rotate the discing schedule so you disturb at least one of the plots each year, or part of a plot each year. The diversity of plants offered with various stages of succession after discing will be better for wildlife.

### Strip disc grasslands.

Light discing provides more insects and desirable seed at a lower cost than planting food plots, and is an excellent way to enhance grassland habitat for bobwhite quail and songbirds.

If you have large grassland fields with dense sod dominated by a single species, you have a good candidate for strip discing.

Light contour discing of 25-foot to 75-foot wide strips, separated by strips of undisturbed grass that are at least twice as wide, gives the best of both worlds to wildlife. The discing areas produce forbs and legumes which produce seeds and attract insects, and the undiscing area will provide nesting cover.

For more information, stop at our office at \_\_\_\_\_ (Number) \_\_\_\_\_ (Street) \_\_\_\_\_ in (city) \_\_\_\_\_, or visit the NRCS Wildlife Habitat Management Institute's website at [www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.whmi.nrcs.usda.gov) or the NRCS home web site at [www.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov)



Discing disturbs the soil and promotes new growth of weeds that attract insects and offer seeds to young quail.

## Wildlife Ways Did you know....



An essential habit bobwhite quail seem to enjoy is called dusting. They scratch a small bowl in the ground, leaving a few inches of finely ground soil to dry. They periodically bury their breast in the bowl of the "dust bath" and shower dust across their backs with their beaks and feet.