

"Food Plot" Conservation Practice Job Sheet

Definition:

A "food plot" is a small permanent grass/forbe opening in the forest to provide food for, deer, turkey, waterfowl, grouse and other wildlife. Also, these permanent openings provide singing grounds for woodcock.
1 acre maximum allowed for cost share.

Practices Used:

Upland Wildlife Habitat Management- Mast Tree Release (Acre or Each)

Upland Wildlife Habitat Management- (Acre or Each) Heavy Control for Conversion to Grass

Obstruction Removal (1 acre max per landowner) if needed to remove stones and or stumps to facilitate mowing and planting.

Benefits:

- These areas provide important nesting, escape cover, and mast primarily for game species.
- Planned with larger early successional openings >5 acres improves habitat for several declining species.
- Regenerates valuable tree species

Site Location:

- Not in hydric soils
- Select flat <5% sloping areas.
- Find old pasture sites which have already been cleared of stones.
- Not adjacent to houses
- Does not justify long stretches of forest trails and stream crossings
- Locate near wetlands, deer yards, and oak stands, aspen-birch stands, and young forest.
- Adjacent to the food plot create a 25-50ft wide feathered edge (thick brush and saplings) for escape cover.

- Release stands of Oak, Ash, Hickory, Cherry, and Beech greater than 12" DBH and Apple Trees to increase food.



Above: a ¼ acre food plot planted with a clover mix and surrounded by 1 acre of released Oaks, the far side has a regenerating aspen-birch young forest (feathered edge) to provide escape cover. In 5 years oak regeneration and other species such as raspberries will improve cover around the plot.

- Do not locate in areas where invasive plants are not controlled.
- Target poor quality timber including, red maple, pasture pine, and beech.
- Stump and seed an irregular shaped opening.
- Mow clover plots more often to control weeds.

Seeding the Food Plot:

June- August: Clear site during dry summer conditions. August 15- September 1st Lime at 2 tons per acre and add 100 lbs per acre of 20-20-20 fertilizer. Seed with conservation mix or other desired cover. NRCS will not provide payment until the area has "greened-up".