United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

2013 Ranking Period 1

Plant Enhancement Activity - PLT18 – Increasing on-farm food production with edible woody buffer landscapes

Enhancement Description
This enhancement is for the enhancing of windbreaks, alley cropping, silvopasture, or riparian forest buffer systems with trees and shrubs that produce edible products for human or wildlife consumption.

Land Use Applicability
Cropland, Pastureland

Benefits
An edible landscape is special in that it is planted with trees and shrubs that produce foods that we can eat/sell or that are beneficial for wildlife. Trees and shrubs can be used to provide shade, to improve microenvironments or to protect crops, or to mitigate challenging environmental issues. In an edible landscape they provide more than just a protective structure, they become sources of food that produce home grown and nutritious fruits and nuts, increase household food security, and create sites that provide critical habitat for pollinators and wildlife.

Conditions Where Enhancement Applies
This enhancement applies to all crop or pasture land use acres.

Criteria
1. Follow appropriate standard for basic agroforestry practice design.
2. Plant tree, shrub and bramble species that produce food and/or culinary items to create an edible landscape. Lists of suitable woody plants will be available at your local NRCS field office.
3. Maximize planting space by creating vertical structure with varying plant heights and plant sizes.
4. Use all of the following methods to improve edible food production:
   a. Add at least one edible food producing row to existing agroforestry practices or incorporate at least one edible food producing row into new planting designs.
   b. Adding planting masses in scattered clusters is encouraged.
   c. Plant a variety of tree, shrub and bramble species (3 or more; use native species whenever possible) with varying flowering times to favor pollinator species and to add a longer harvest time frame. Choosing several fruit bearing cultivars can provide an extended period of seasonal production.

d. Minimize herbicide use. Use spot weed treatments and avoid spraying when flowers are present.

Adoption Requirements

This enhancement is considered adopted when each selected acre has been planted to the desired tree, shrub and bramble species that produce food or culinary item.

Documentation requirements

1. List of edible food producing trees, shrubs and brambles.
2. Brief written description of the activities (criteria) completed with dates of application and receipts for planting stock, herbicides, etc.
3. Acreage of the enhancement activity.
4. Delineations on a map or aerial photo of landscape layout and placement.

References

Dana, M.N. 2001. Fruits and Nuts for Edible Landscaping. Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service. Landscape Horticulture, HO-190-W. http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/HO-190.pdf

Josiah, S.J. and J. Lackey. 2001. Edible Woody Landscapes for People and Wildlife. University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension.Lincoln, NE. http://www.unl.edu/nac/brochures/sfp/sfp3.pdf

USDA-NAC. 2008. Working Trees for Agriculture. USDA National Agroforestry Center, Lincoln, NE. http://www.unl.edu/nac/workingtrees/wta.pdf

USDA-NAC. 2006. Agroforestry: Sustaining Native Bee habitat for Crop Production. Agroforestry Notes – AF Note 32. USDA National Agroforestry Center. Lincoln, NE. http://plants.usda.gov/pollinators/Agroforestry_Sustaining_Native_Bee_Habitat_for_Crop_Pollination.pdf

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CSP 2013-1
Mississippi Supplement
PLT18

Guidance on Vegetative Cover for Edible Woody Buffers

Refer to MS-ECS-422-02(JS/SS), Establish Wildlife Transition Zones, for planting and management guidelines.

CSP requires edible woody buffers must be composed of at least 3 species of non-noxious, wildlife friendly perennial trees, shrubs, and bramble/forbs best suited to the function of the buffer and site conditions as follows: (Include at least one species that provides human, wildlife and/or pollinator food.)

1. Trees and/or shrubs best suited for wildlife, and
2. May have a 30-foot transition zone of grasses, legumes, and/or forbs best suited for wildlife.

Refer to Appendix 2 of the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program Manual or consult a NRCS biologist for acceptable species, planting rates, dates and planting guidance.

Noxious weeds and other undesirable plants, insects, and pests shall be controlled during establishment.

OCTOBER 2012

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