



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E612D (WITH MONTANA SUPPLEMENTS)

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Adding food-producing trees/shrubs to an agroforestry system

CONSERVATION PRACTICE: 612 - Tree/Shrub Establishment

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual & Mixed), Crop (Perennial), Pasture, Range, Forest, Associated Ag Land, Farmstead

RESOURCE CONCERN: Animals, Plants

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 15 years

Enhancement Description

Plant food producing trees/shrubs for wildlife or human consumption within an agroforestry system (windbreaks/shelterbelts, alley cropping, forest farming, silvopasture, and/or riparian forest buffer).

Criteria

- States will apply criteria from the NRCS National Conservation Practice Standard Tree/Shrub Establishment (Code 612), and any additional criteria as required by the NRCS State Office.
- Species selected will be able to produce food and/or culinary items to create an edible landscape. See States list for suitable woody plants.
 - **MT: Refer to [USDA Plants Database](#) and do a Characteristics search for Suitability/Use of Palatable for Humans. Refer to Conservation Trees and Shrubs for Montana Brochure for list of species suitable for wildlife food. Consult NRCS biologist and/or forester for planting of species not listed within either source.**
- Apply at least one of the following activities to improve edible food production:
 - Add at least one edible, food producing row to existing linear plantings.



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- Add clusters of food-producing plants to existing plantings, so that food plants occupy at least 10% of the total area established in an agroforestry practice.
 - Add food-producing plants to occupy idle areas of the operation, such as field corners adjacent to existing plantings.
- Plant a variety of tree, shrub, and-or bramble species (3 or more, using native species whenever possible) with varying flowering times to favor pollinator species and to provide an extended time frame for available food.
 - Further considerations are visual appeal, proximity to farmsteads, proximity to areas of wildlife use or viewing, or other locations depending on landowner objectives.
 - Minimize herbicide use. Use spot weed treatments and avoid spraying when flowers are present.
 - Selection of species should also be chosen according to the site's natural disturbance regime. Species should be selected based on traits, successional status, structure, and composition.
 - Build forest resilience by favoring existing species that are better adapted to projected future climate conditions, and by enhancing relative compositional and structural diversity.
 - Do not plant species on the Federal or State invasive species or noxious weed lists.
 - Only viable, high-quality and site-adapted planting stock or seed will be used.
 - A precondition for tree/shrub establishment is appropriately prepared sites. Refer to criteria in NRCS CPS Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (Code 490).
 - Implementation and timing of planting will be appropriate for the site and ensure successful establishment.
 - Plantings must be protected from unacceptable adverse impacts from insects, disease, wildlife, livestock, and/or fire. Apply supporting practices and treatments as necessary to protect establishing trees and shrubs.
 - Each site will be evaluated to determine if mulching, supplemental water, or other treatments (e.g., tree protection devices, shade cards, weed mats) will be needed to assure adequate survival and growth.
 - The enhancement will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and with States' Forestry Best Management Practices for Water Quality.



Documentation and Implementation Requirements

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Participant will:

- Prior to implementation:
 - provide an updated Forest Management Plan that documents intended objectives for adding food-producing trees/shrubs for wildlife or human consumption.
 - prepare the planned acres for trees and shrub establishment. Refer to NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Tree-Shrub Site Preparation (490).
 - select the required number and diversity of tree and shrub species (preference for native edible food plants) that will increase food and forage production for wildlife and humans.
 - select planting technique, arrangement and spacing design, and timing appropriate for the site conditions.

Species	Note selected species characteristic(s)

- During implementation:
 - install and maintain erosion control measures as needed for the site.
 - protect the planting(s) from plant and animal pests and fire.
 - notify NRCS in writing of any planned changes to verify changes meet NRCS enhancement criteria.

TASK	Species	Species	Species
Planting Date			
Planting Technique			
Arrangement/Spacing			



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NRCS will:

- Prior to implementation:
 - provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Tree/Shrub Establishment (Code 612) as it relates to implementing this enhancement.
 - verify the enhancement is planned for the appropriate land use.
 - verify no plants on the Federal or state noxious weeds list are included.
 - NRCS will provide Technical Assistance, as needed, in the following:
 - Selecting a combination of species to meet enhancement criteria.
 - Selecting planting techniques, arrangement and spacing design, and timing appropriate for the site and soil conditions.
 - Planning the use of additional erosion control for the site, as needed.
 - Preparing specifications for applying this enhancement for each site using approved state implementation requirements, national technical notes, appropriate state technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.
 - During implementation, evaluate any planned changes to verify they meet the enhancement criteria and were established to specifications developed for the site.
 - After implementation, verify the plantings were protected from plant and animal pests and fire.
 - After implementation, verify all erosion control needed for the site is functioning and is maintained to specifications developed for the site.
- During implementation:
 - evaluate any planned changes to verify they meet the enhancement criteria and were established to specifications developed for the site.
- After implementation:
 - verify the plantings were protected from plant and animal pests and fire.
 - verify all erosion control needed for the site is functioning and is maintained to specifications developed for the site.



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NRCS Documentation Review:

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

Participant Name _____

Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____

Fiscal Year Completed _____

NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature

Date