



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY
E612133X3

CONSERVATION
STEWARDSHIP
PROGRAM

Sugarbush management

Conservation Practice 612: Tree/Shrub Establishment

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Range, Forest, Associated Ag Land

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Degraded Plant Condition

PRACTICE LIFE SPAN: 15 years

Enhancement Description

Establish or maintain species diversity in a sugarbush to enhance pollinator and wildlife needs. Maintain at least 20% of basal area in species other than sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) to provide species diversity. Half of the trees that are not sugar maples (10%) will be mast producing species (hard or soft mass). Use maple tree tapping guidelines that minimize tree damage.

Criteria

- States will apply general criteria from the NRCS National Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) 612 as listed below, **and additional criteria as required by the NRCS State Office.**
- Maintain the sugarbush in a fully stocked condition based on an appropriate stocking guide.
- Tap trees sustainably, minimizing impact to the trees and the forest, using appropriate equipment and methods for the geographic area.
- Diversify the stand by maintaining or planting 20% of basal area in species other than sugar maple.
- Half of the trees that are not sugar maples (10%) will be mast-producing species that help sustain wildlife populations.



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- When the existing sugarbush does not have 20% of basal area in species that are not sugar maple, tree species to plant will be selected based on their adaptation to the climatic region, soil properties and capabilities, and light requirements for establishment in the sugarbush. A precondition for any tree/shrub establishment is appropriately prepared sites. Use criteria in CPS Tree/Shrub Site Preparation (490). If some sugar maples must be removed to achieve correct stocking levels and/or allow space for planting new trees, use criteria in CPS Forest Stand Improvement (666) to identify characteristics of trees to remove.
- No plants on the Federal or state noxious weeds list shall be planted.
- Planting or seeding rates will be adequate to accomplish the planned purpose for the site.
- Planting dates, and care in handling and planting of the seed, cuttings or seedlings will ensure that planted materials have an acceptable rate of survival for the intended purpose.
- Only viable, high-quality and adapted planting stock or seed will be used.
- Selection of planting technique and timing will be appropriate for the site and soil conditions.
- Refer to criteria in CPS Integrated Pest Management (595) to assist with site-specific strategies for pest prevention, pest avoidance, pest monitoring, and pest suppression.
- 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.

Documentation Requirements

- Plans and Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes, and narrative statements in the conservation plan, or other acceptable documentation.
- **Additional documentation as required by NRCS State Office.**