

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) -

reduces soil erosion, protects the Nation's ability to produce food and fiber, reduces sedimentation in streams and lakes, improves water quality, establishes wildlife habitat, and enhances forest and wetland resources. It encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover.

Site Preparation

Site preparation is the manipulation of the site to enhance the success of regeneration. The common treatments or methods may include chemical spraying, burning, sub-soiling, mowing, or other methods. The intent is to ensure the seedlings are free to grow without competition during the first growing season. It may be necessary to postpone planting until the proper site preparation has been performed.

Recommended Species

Oak Species

(in order of adaptability to wet sites)



Hardwoods planted in an upland site.

- overcup oak
- nuttall oak
- willow oak
- water oak
- swamp chestnut oak
- shumard oak
- cherrybark oak
- white oak

Other species can be planted, if approved.

Most Common Alabama Hardwoods

(in order of frequency)

- sweetgum
- water oak
- yellow-poplar
- white oak
- southern red oak
- blackgum
- chestnut oak
- pignut hickory
- mockernut hickory
- red maple
- laurel oak
- post oak
- swamp tupelo
- green ash
- black cherry
- winged elm
- water tupelo
- black oak
- northern red oak

For more information about establishing and managing hardwood plantations in Alabama, visit your county USDA Service Center to determine eligibility. NRCS field offices are listed in the telephone directory under U.S. Department of Agriculture or on-line at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov>. General program information is available on the AL NRCS website at www.al.nrcs.usda.gov. Individuals are not eligible until they have completed the Farm Bill eligibility requirements.

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Establishing and Managing Hardwood Plantations in Alabama



Helping People Help the Land

Introduction

Trees and shrubs help reduce soil erosion and sedimentation, improve water quality, and provide wildlife habitat. Using proper planting and management techniques, especially during the establishment years, will significantly improve the health and survival of these plants.

Hardwood Afforestation

Afforestation is the establishment of a forest or stand in an area where the preceding land use was not forest.

Early on you should determine type of species to plant. Hardwood management deals with many different species, each with unique soil requirements. To maximize the vigor and growth potential of a given hardwood species, it should be planted on the appropriate site.

It is best to first determine site characteristics. In Alabama, hardwood sites can be classified into three broad groups: major bottomland sites, minor bottomland sites, and upland hardwood sites.



Cherrybark oaks planted in a riparian buffer along the Paint Rock River.

Good hardwood afforestation is most often achieved in the bottomland areas.

Realistic Expectations

Planting hardwoods can help a landowner achieve certain objectives such as increased mast production, increased diversity, stream bank protection, water quality protection, and more. Landowners are wise to consider their objectives before investing in hardwood planting. Normally the production of high quality sawlogs for income is not a reasonable goal, at least not without decades of growth.

Financial Assistance

Landowners may qualify to receive financial assistance and professional advice from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for establishing hardwood tree plantations.

Environmental Quality Incentives

Program (EQIP) - provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners for forestry practices such as site preparation and planting of hardwood and pine trees, fencing



Two year-old water oak planted on a bottomland site in Mobile County.

to keep livestock out of the forest, forest road stabilization, timber stand improvement (TSI), and invasive species control. Priority is given to projects with multiple management practices to be completed over a number of years.

In addition, a percentage of EQIP funds provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners installing wildlife habitat improvement practices on their land. These practices may include tree and shrub planting, prescribed burning, invasive species control, creation of forest openings, riparian buffer establishment and fencing livestock from the forest.

Wetlands Reserve Easement Component -

is a voluntary program that provides technical assistance and financial incentives to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring marginal land from agriculture. Landowners that enter into WRP may be paid an easement payment in exchange for enrolling their land. Program emphasis is on restoring wet cropland to bottomland hardwoods.