



# Shrub Planting



## PURPOSE:

Shrubs provide numerous benefits to wildlife, especially quail, pheasants, and other upland wildlife. Shrub plantings provide escape and loafing cover, protection from harsh winters, and travel corridors. Deer will also use shrubs as browse and cover. Other wildlife may use the shrubs for nesting and roosting. Some shrubs also produce fruits that are attractive to numerous species of wildlife.

## SPECIFICATIONS:

- Select shrub species that are adapted to the local climate. Species like American Plum, Sand Hill Plum, Choke Cherry, Peking Cotoneaster, Lilac, Golden Currant, and Fragrant Sumac are excellent choices for wildlife plantings.
- Generally shrubs are planted as bare-root seedlings. Select shrub planting sites that are adjacent to cropland, field borders, food plots, CRP, or other early successional vegetation.
- Site preparation is vital to shrub survival. The summer prior to planting, spray the site with a contact herbicide. Then during the fall, plow the site to loosen the soil. Disk the site prior to planting during the spring. The prepared bed should be a minimum of 4' wide so that there is 2' of loose soil on each side of the rows. However, if weed barrier fabric will be installed, the tilled strips should be at least 10' wide.
- Shrubs should be planted from the 1st of March to the 15th of May. Shrubs can be planted in linear rows, or in blocks to form thickets. If shrubs are planted in rows, the spacing should be 3' – 6' feet apart within rows, with an 8'-16' spacing between rows (*Figure 1*).
- A minimum of two rows should be planted. Length and number of rows can vary depending on landscape. A typical shrub thicket is 100 shrubs, planted in a square with 4' between each shrub (*Figure 2*). Shrub thickets may also vary in size, depending on the landscape.
- Water the shrubs shortly after planting. Weed barrier fabric or mulches like straw or wood chips can be used to reduce vegetative competition and conserve moisture. Weed barrier can be applied by hand, or by using a dispensing machine that is pulled behind a tractor.
- Since weed barrier fabric inhibits root sprouting of shrubs, the fabric should be removed after the shrubs are well established. The root sprouting of shrubs increases stem density, which provides better habitat for wildlife. It may take up to 5 years for the shrubs to provide cover for wildlife.
- If the site allows for supplemental watering, plantings should be watered for the first three years to ensure proper establishment. This is especially true in the more arid western half of Kansas.

## MAINTENANCE:

- Protect plantings from livestock and prescribed burning until well established.
- Use herbicides or mowing to control vegetation between rows for at least 3 years. This will reduce competition with other plants and help prevent rabbit damage resulting in better survival.
- Plantings should be protected from burning, disking, and non-selective herbicides.
- Replace any dead shrubs annually.
- Monitor for insect or wildlife damage.
- Supplemental watering may be needed during periods of drought, especially during the first 3 years after planting.

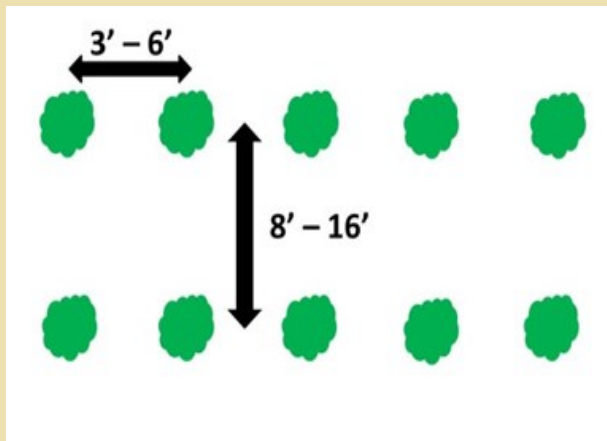


Figure 1. Spacing for shrubs planted in rows

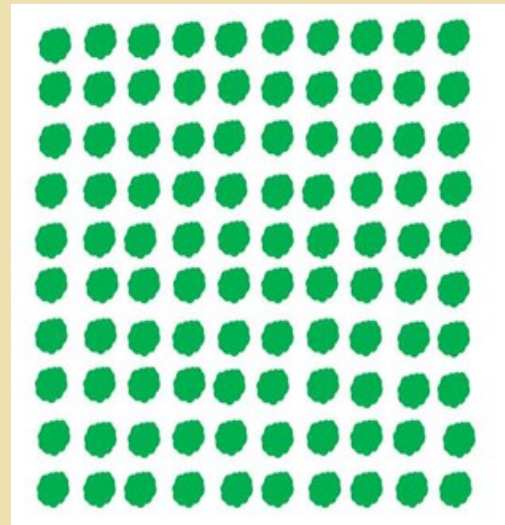
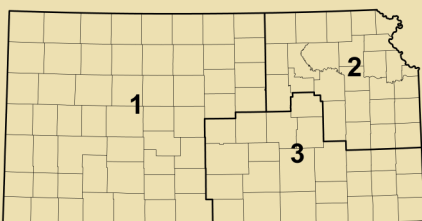


Figure 2. 100 shrub thicket with 4' spacing

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