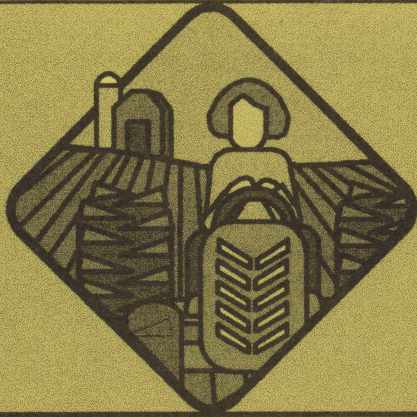




SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION UPDATE

A Newsletter from the Dickinson County SWCD

January 1997

Windbreak Opportunities

For Wildlife...

Windbreaks offer a source of food and shelter a large variety of wildlife. Foods that are available to wildlife from windbreaks include fruits, seeds, nuts and nectar. Leaves provide food for browsing animals such as deer. Chickadees find insects under crevices in barks. Hummingbirds and honeybees use species such as honeysuckle as a source of nectar.

Windbreaks provide year round shelter for wildlife—in the Spring and Summer for protection from heavy rains and storms, in the Fall the leaves and bark assist in nesting and in the Winter windbreaks which include evergreens can offer a good roosting area during storms for a variety of birds. This winter has been a prime example of wildlife's need for windbreaks for shelter.

For Livestock...

Windbreaks are a good way to protect livestock from cold winds and blowing snow. Improved animal health, lower feed costs and increased livestock profits can result from windbreak protection. Research has shown that a properly designed windbreak can reduce the detrimental effects of cold on livestock by over 50%.

Windbreaks should be planted far enough away from the feedlot that drifting snow will not enter the feedlot. Livestock should be fenced away from the windbreak to prevent damage to trees and shrubs. It is also recommended that feedlot runoff not be allowed to come in contact with the windbreak to prevent damage to the trees and shrubs.

For energy-savings...

In the Spring and Summer, trees give off cooling, evaporated water into the atmosphere and provide shade that lowers air and soil temperatures. During the Winter, recent studies show, windbreaks can reduce winter fuel consumption by 10 to 30 percent. Windbreaks help by greatly reducing the wind velocity and prevent or reduce snow drifting around buildings, roads, and walkways.

If you would like assistance in designing a windbreak, please call the Natural Resources Conservation Service at (712) 336-2604 or stop at our office in the USDA Building at the junction of Highways 9 & 71 in Spirit Lake.

~Equal Opportunity Employer~



Living Snow Fence

A new program is being offered by the Soil & Water Conservation District. It will provide a one-time incentive on trees and shrubs planted to form a **Living Snow Fence**. The goals behind this program are to help protect public roads from drifting snow and to encourage landowners to consider the benefits windbreaks add to their property. The general specifications for a

Living Snow Fence are as follows:

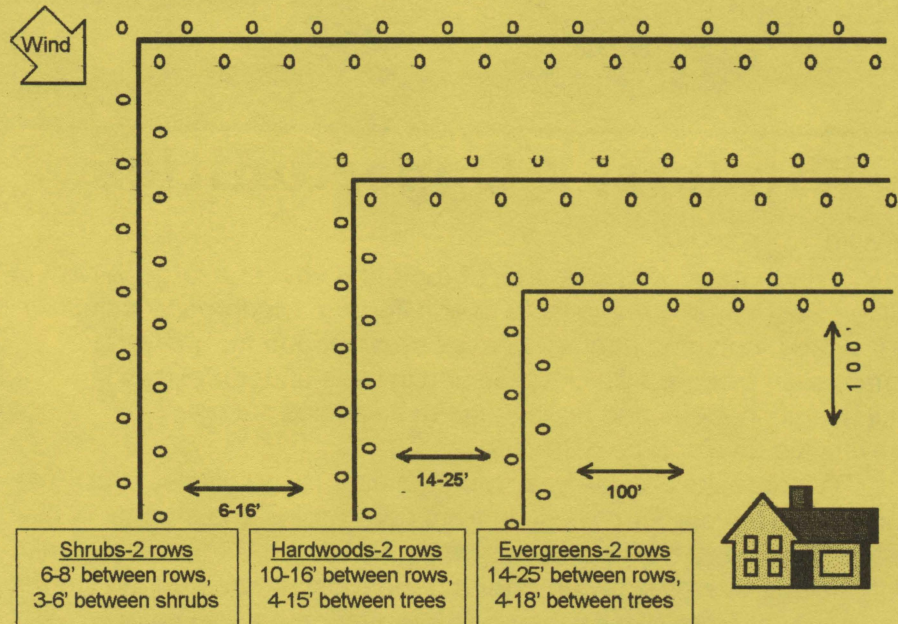
-  'Fence' will have a minimum length of 300' and will have at least one row of trees or two rows of shrubs
-  Windward side must be at least 200' from the road right of way
-  Application to participate will be completed before 'Fence' is planted
-  A 'refund' will be made on living trees or shrubs after one year of growth

Please contact the office for more information (712) 336-2604.

Planning your windbreak

This picture gives an example of a windbreak with evergreens, trees, and shrubs. Your soil types and ground or landscape size will dictate what you can do. Evergreens will provide year-round foliage and protection, so these should be considered first. Then rows of trees and shrubs can be positioned as in the example provided.

Evergreens are susceptible to snow damage—lower branches may be broken by the weight of heavy snow drifts—therefore they are placed on the inside/leeward. You will notice that the shrubs are placed on the outside/windward, this is because they are best able to stop snow without permanent structural damage. Deciduous trees are placed in the middle row as their height causes winds to be uplifted which in turn affects snow distribution positively.



Did you know...

- ▲ the best time to prune living branches is late in the dormant season or very early in Spring before leaves form. Dead and dying branches can be pruned anytime. Be sure to use sharp tools and make clean cuts
- ▲ one tree has the cooling effect of five air-conditioners
- ▲ 'wound dressings' do not stop rot. Do not apply paint or wood preservatives to damaged tree limbs. Keep your tree healthy and it will take care of its wounds naturally
- ▲ the Soil & Water Conservation District is currently selling trees and shrubs for windbreaks and landscaping

Conservation Staff

Carroll Oskvig — District Conservationist
John Wills — Environmental Specialist
Ann Ditsworth — State Secretary
Heath Dodge — Conservation Aide

Environmental Education Committee

The Environmental Education Committee met on December 4 at 7:30 p.m. in the Spirit Lake Middle School to discuss the year's projects and activities. There are representatives from each School District:

Harris-Lake Park

Dan Hebl & John Nelson

Okoboji

Owen Primavera, Becky Steen & Marcia Swanson

Spirit Lake

Jerry Ingvall, Kathy Kleen & Eileen Nation

Terill

Marc Benedict & Fran Cerny

Also assisting with educational information and funding are Ann Ditsworth, SWCD Representative and Rich Leopold, DCCB Naturalist. The Committee was established by the District Commissioners and staff to provide quality environmental education materials to Dickinson County Educators and to show that the environment can become a part of any curriculum (English/math/science/phys. ed.) For more information, please contact Ann at (712) 336-2604.