



Planning and ground preparation keys to a successful windbreak

An important part of windbreak success is proper planning and ground preparation. Without well-thought-out plans, new windbreak plantings can turn into a lot of work. And these days, windbreaks don't have to be a lot of work. Equipment and products are locally available to help plant trees, control weeds, conserve moisture and to make watering easy. You can even have your own windbreak installed turn-key, by experienced contractors with their own equipment.

But aren't windbreaks expensive to plant? Answer: far from it! Windbreaks can be installed, with the help of the Conservation Reserve Program with very little final out-of-pocket expense. For windbreaks planted on cropland, the Conservation Reserve Program offers financial incentives that should simply not be ignored.

You say, "Yes, this all sounds good. But I need protection in my pasture and around the farmstead, not my cropland." Keep in mind, many times we can plan a windbreak on the edge of cropland that will serve to protect a pasture to the south or east. Cropland that lies close to farmsteads or feeding areas can be used as well.

However, plans need to be made soon. The planting area will need to be prepared, weed fabric must be estimated and ordered, trees and shrubs must be calculated and ordered. If you hire someone, they need to schedule your job. Besides, we need time to prepare and approve your Conservation Reserve Program contract for the funding you'll be counting on.

Please contact your local conservation district about a new windbreak today. After all, they do say, "The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago, the next-best time is today."

Harvey and Sandra Pakkebieer, 2008 Windbreak Award Winner

These trees, planted in the spring of 2003, will provide a windbreak for Harvey and Sandra Pakkebieer's farmstead when they are fully mature. The back row is Eastern Red Cedar, which is better at providing a wind break, and the front row is Ponderosa Pine, which is more aesthetically pleasing.

- Telegram photo by Brandy Leroux



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