

Maintaining Permanent CRP Wildlife Plantings

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Introduction

One of the CRP options available to landowners was planting trees and shrubs for wildlife. Now time has passed and these plantings are beginning to bear fruit. If you have created such plantings for wildlife they need care and maintenance to make them last a lifetime. If you do nothing, your plantings may be invaded and overcome by undesired trees and other vegetation.

Thin Fruit and Nut Plantations

If the trees are beginning to grow together, consider removing some trees to put the growth on the best ones. The best ones, from the standpoint of wildlife, are those that produce the most fruit. By age 10, some of the faster maturing species like sawtooth oak, red mulberry, hackberry, honey locust, persimmon, black cherry and Chinese chestnuts should be producing.

Watch these trees for at least 3 years and make note on which produce well and which produce poorly. Then, as thinning becomes necessary, remove the less desirable trees to let the best ones expand. Watch particularly dioecious species like red mulberry and persimmon.

Only the female trees bear fruit. Remove most male trees. Only a few are necessary for pollination. It will be 20 years or more for black gum, beech and most native oaks to bear so delay thinning those species until they begin to bear fruit.

Maintain Thicket Forming Shrubs

Wax myrtle, autumn olive, Russian olive, native hollies, mountain laurel, hawthorn, crabapple, dogwoods, wild plums, bicolor lespedeza, sumac and blueberries were eligible for CRP payment. If you have stands of these, you can allow them to grow into solid thickets that will provide food and cover. Remove unwanted volunteer tree saplings.

Maintain Openings

Mow grasses to keep down invading seedling trees. Do not mow the entire opening at once so as to leave some areas of tall cover.

Use Herbicides

Invading trees can be removed by spraying the base of the stems with certain herbicides. See your county agent for advice.

The wildlife plantings in the following table were eligible for the Conservation Reserve Program.

¹1998. Maintaining Permanent CRP Wildlife Plantings. Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, The University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602 U. S. A.

Maintenance is as follows:

Maintenance Options for CRP Wildlife Plantings (not necessarily required)

	Allow to grow into dense thicket	Thin out poor fruiters	Mow as necessary	Remove unwanted competition	Fertilize	Lime
Mast Bearing Trees:						
Native Oaks		X		X		
Saw tooth Oak		X		X		
Persimmon		X		X		
Black Cherry		X		X		
Chestnuts		X		X		
Hackberry		X		X		
Honey Locusts		X		X		
Hickories (Carya sp.) including pecans		X		X		
Blackgum		X		X		
Beech		X		X		
Shrubs & Small Trees:						
Autumn Olive	X			X		
Russian Olive	X			X		
Native Hollies	X			X		
Mountain Laurel	X			X		
Haw thorn	X			X		
Crabapple	X			X		
Dogwoods	X			X		
Red Mulberry		X		X		
Wild Plums (<i>P. Augustfolia</i>)	X			X		
Wax myrtle, Bayberry	X			X		
Bicolor Lespedeza	X			X		
Privet	X			X		
Chinkapin		X		X		
Sumac	X			X		
Blueberries	X			X		
Openings:						
Bermuda grass			X	X	X	X
Bahia grass			X	X	X	X
Orchard grass			X	X	X	X
Clovers			X	X	X	X
Lespedezas			X	X	X	X
Honeysuckle	X			X	X	X
Grapes	X			X		