

Thinking of Planting a Windbreak?

Windbreaks provide relief from dust and noise, lessens wind erosion, keeps snow from drifting against your house or in your driveway, provides privacy, and can greatly reduce utility costs.

There are some important factors to consider when planning a windbreak. Such as...

- Where will the windbreak be the most effective?
 - A windbreak should be located so that it sits as close to a right angle as possible to the prevailing wind direction.
 - Ideally, the windbreak should be about 100 feet from the house or structure you wish to protect. If you plant closer than that to a house or driveway, drifting snow on the lee side of the windbreak can cause problems in the winter.
 - If possible, the windbreak should extend 50 feet beyond the area you wish to protect.
- How many rows will you plant?
 - Many people plant only one-row windbreaks. NRCS recommends planting a three-row windbreak, with two rows of evergreens and one row of shrubs. In general, the more rows you plant, the more effective the windbreak will be.
 - Make sure to leave enough room between trees so that when they reach a mature size, they won't be overcrowded. Overcrowding will result in slow growth or death of some of the trees. Staggering the trees when planting will help to prevent this problem.
- Will the trees create a problem when they reach a mature size?
 - Also make sure that there are no overhead power lines or cables buried near the area of your windbreak. Falling or growing branches and growing roots can pose serious problems in these cases. Always have your property checked for underground lines before digging.
- How long will it take for my windbreak to be effective?
 - If planned and planted properly, it will only take about 5-6 years for your windbreak to start offering protection. Within 10-20 years, the windbreak should be fully grown and providing effective protection for your property.
- How should I space my rows?
 - Spacing between rows should be 16 feet, except when planting a row of shrubs next to the last row of evergreens. In that case, allow 8 feet between the shrub row and the evergreen row. Spacing between individual plants in the rows should be as follows:

Tree/Shrub Type	Multiple Row Windbreaks	Single Row Windbreaks
Dense Shrubs	3 Feet	2 Feet
Medium Deciduous Trees	9 Feet	6 Feet
Tall Deciduous Trees	12 Feet	8 Feet
Medium Evergreen Trees	9 Feet	4-8 Feet
Tall Evergreen Trees	16 Feet	8 Feet

- How do I ensure the survival of my newly planted windbreak?
 - First, clear the sod from the site where you're planting your tree. Dig a hole big enough to place your tree inside, without curling or twisting the roots. You want the roots to grow out into loose soil. You may even want to place some loose topsoil into the hole to keep the roots from pointing straight down. Plant the tree up to the point on the stem where it changes color.
 - A 2-4 inch layer of wood chips or bark mulch will be very beneficial in keeping down weed growth and maintaining soil moisture. Just be careful to keep the mulch off of the tree trunk, as this can cause fungus and other diseases.
 - Be sure that your trees, especially when young, get enough water. Watch out for deer damage, as deer like to eat small seedlings and then like to rub their antlers on the bark in the fall. Erect small fences or use deer repellent if necessary.

Now sit back and take pleasure in knowing you've done something that will benefit your family, and the environment, for generations to come!