

Maintenance Tips for Your Windbreak or Ornamental Plantings

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We should be aware that once a windbreak or ornamental area is planted, there are important maintenance items that need to be performed. The following checklist of items may help you to enhance the function and value of your windbreak or ornamental planting.

- Controlling weeds reduces plant stress, improves tree and shrub growth rates and can also reduce susceptibility to insect and disease damage.
- Replace dead trees and shrubs during the first three years of the windbreak or ornamental planting. Gaps reduce the effectiveness of windbreaks and can also be an eyesore.
- Ensure that the irrigation system is operating properly during each growing season. Check for trees or shrubs that are getting too much as well as too little water.
- Inspect the windbreak or ornamental planting often during the growing season to spot any insect or disease damage that may be taking place. Catch problems early and implement control measures.
- Inspect frequently for signs of animal damage. Find problems early and initiate control measures.
- Pruning windbreaks should be discouraged unless the health of the windbreak is at risk or safety is a factor. If pruning is necessary, use proper equipment and pruning techniques. Ornamental plantings may require pruning occasionally but be sure to use proper equipment and techniques.
- If weed barrier fabric was installed on the windbreak or ornamental planting, make sure that fabric is not damaging trees and shrubs by rubbing or girdling the trunk or stem. You may need to enlarge the slit in the fabric as trees and shrubs grow larger.

For additional information on windbreak maintenance and guidance in windbreak establishment and woody planting management practices, check out the Aberdeen Plant Materials Center web site at <http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov/idpmc>. Click on publications and look for Plant Materials Technical Note No. 43, Tree Planting, Care and Management. Also, feel free to give us a call at (208) 397-4133 for further information.

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