



Plant Materials Fact Sheet

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Temple, TX

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FIELD BORDERS CONSERVATION PRACTICE 386



DEFINITION

A field border is a band or strip of perennial vegetation established on the edge of a cropland field.

PURPOSE

A field border reduces sheet, rill, and gully erosion at the edge of fields; protects water quality by trapping sediment, chemical and other pollutants; provides a turning area for farm equipment; and provides wildlife habitat.

PLANTING CONSIDERATIONS

- Identify the primary purpose of the practice (nutrient uptake, sediment retention, wildlife habitat, etc.).
- Field borders should be a minimum of 20 feet wide

and should be wide enough to allow turning of farm equipment.

- Identify the season-of-use (spring, summer, fall, or winter). The season-of-use will determine whether cool-season plants, warm-season plants, or a mix of both will provide the appropriate vegetative cover.
- Identify environmental factors affecting installation (soils, topography, rainfall, temperature, etc.).
- Locate available plants or seeds.
- Field borders are normally established as part of a conservation management system in accordance with the landowner's objectives to address the soil, water, air, plant and animal needs of the land.

| PLANT SPECIES* | WILDLIFE VALUE** | GROWING SEASON*** | RECOMMENDED USES**** |
|--|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Buffalograss | M | W | |
| Sideoats Grama | M | W | |
| Blue Grama | M | W | |
| Little Bluestem | M | W | |
| Sandhill Lovegrass | M | W | 4 |
| Sand Bluestem | M | W | 4 |
| False Rhodesgrass | M | W | |
| Plains Bristlegrass | H | W | |
| Alkali Sacaton | M | W | 3 |
| Western Wheatgrass | M | C | 5 |
| Canada Wildrye | M | C | 5 |
| Herbaceous Mimosa | M | W | |
| Bermudagrass* | L | W | 1,2,6 |
| Kleingrass* | H | W | |
| Bahiagrass* | M | W | 4 |
| Weeping Lovegrass* | M | W | 4 |
| Lehmann's Lovegrass* | M | W | 4 |
| Limpograss* | L | W | 4 |
| Buffelgrass* | L | W | |
| Old World Bluestem* | L | W | |
| <p>* Denotes an introduced species. ** L (Low), M (Moderate), H (High) *** W (Warm), C (Cool) **** Recommended Uses Code: 1= High Nutrient Uptake 2= High Sediment Retention 3= High Salinity Tolerance 4= Adapted to Sandy Soils 5= Shade Tolerance 6=High Traffic Tolerance</p> | | | |

MANAGEMENT

Apply lime and fertilizer according to soil test recommendations. Plant into a firm, weed-free seedbed. Consider a mixed planting that includes forbs and legumes such as Partridge pea, Engelmann daisy, Awnless bush sunflower, Illinois bundleflower, clover and vetch for improved forage quality and plant diversity. Maintain original width of the border area. Harvest, mow, reseed and fertilize to maintain plant density and vigorous plant growth. Inspect

after major storms, remove trapped sediment, and repair any eroding areas. Shut-off pesticide sprayers when turning on a field border. Delay mowing until after the nesting season for ground-nesting birds and mammals.

Specifications should be prepared in accordance with the local NRCS Field Office Technical Guide and the Field Border practice standard (386).



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