

# West Texas Nursery

We're Growing for Texas!

## Windbreaks and Wildlife

Windbreaks are planted to protect farmsteads, livestock, roads or crops. The additional goal of providing wildlife benefits can be added without compromising the primary purpose. In developing a plan, select a design, plant materials and location that meet your windbreak needs and include factors that benefit wildlife.

### A Place to Nest

Windbreaks provide nesting habitat and cover for a wide variety of birds and other wildlife species. In addition, many birds that live in windbreaks consume pest insects gathered from adjacent crop fields.

### Food and Foraging Sites

Windbreaks can provide food for wildlife, including fruits, nuts, acorns, seeds, foliage and invertebrates. Availability of these foods will depend upon the season and what is planted or growing within the windbreak.

### Shelter from Predation, "Escape Cover"

Windbreaks provide escape cover and refuge for many wildlife species. For example, pheasants often stay near windbreak cover while feeding in adjacent areas. In general, wider windbreaks with a thick layer of understory vegetation offer better escape cover. Be aware that tall trees may attract predators such as hawks and owls when no other high perches are available in the area.

### Shelter from Weather

Shelter from the wind is a critical aspect of wildlife survival in winter. Food also is vital because it is the basic source of all body heat. The combination of wind protection, food and sun exposure can be a life saver for wildlife during weather extremes.

### Travel Lanes

Wildlife often need to travel from one habitat to another to find necessary food and resources. The long, linear nature of windbreaks provides wildlife with safe travel routes. These lanes can also be a focal point for an owner's outdoor family activities such as walks, bird watching or hunting.



### A Note of Caution for Grassland Wildlife

Some native grassland birds need large unbroken areas of grass habitat with few trees and shrubs. Planting windbreaks in large unbroken areas of grasslands, although helping some wildlife species, may hinder others. It is important for landowners to be aware of conservation efforts or habitat laws that may be in effect near their land.

### Additional Information

For help in planning and designing a windbreak for your property, contact Texas A&M Forest Service at 806-892-3572 or find us online at [WestTexasNursery.com](http://WestTexasNursery.com). For help determining the specific needs of wildlife, contact the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department at [tpwd.texas.gov](http://tpwd.texas.gov).