



# Edge Feathering-Forest Edge



## PURPOSE:

Many wildlife species need dense shrubby escape cover on a daily basis. Without this habitat component certain species like bobwhite quail will be absent. Many field edges are abrupt changes from grass or crops to tall mature trees. Edge feathering is used to create woody escape cover along forested edges. This creates a transition zone of shrubs, vines, and herbaceous vegetation

between crop or grassland and the wooded area. To be effective, edge feathering should be completed next to early successional vegetation such as native warm season grasses and forbs, field borders, food plots or cropland.

## SPECIFICATIONS:

- Create 0.1 to 1.0 acre of dense woody cover per 5-40 acres of wildlife friendly habitat. The minimum size of each resulting brushy/shrubby area is 30'X50'. It takes three 30'X50' areas to equal 0.1 acre.
- Kill existing grass/vegetation (regardless of type) wherever trees will fall, with an approved herbicide before edge feathering. This provides for instant usable habitat and good growing conditions for annual food plants and shrubs.
- Edge feathering may be completed in blocks or in long linear strips along the field edge.
- Pick an area to edge feather where all existing trees can be cut, so to avoid valuable timber or mast producing trees.
- Cut all trees over in the area to be edge feathered. Cut all stems over 1 inch in diameter.
- Treat all cut stumps (except cedar) with an approved herbicide to prolong the benefits of edge feathering. Leave native shrubs such as dogwood, plum, and sumac if they are less than 12 feet tall. If they are greater than 12 feet tall, cut them off at ground level and DO NOT treat the stumps. Cutting down older stems will encourage new growth.
- If possible, leave felled trees where they fall. Edge feathered trees may be loosely stacked along the edge of the field. Do not push the downed trees into a dense brush pile.
- Edge feathering may be completed with a chainsaw or mechanical clipper.



**Without Edge Feathering**

*Abrupt change from grass to woodland habitat*



**Edge Feathering Completed**

*Loose row of felled trees provide escape cover and overhead protection*



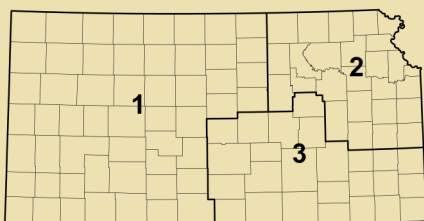
**Within Edge Feathering**

*Note growth of annual plants, overhead protection, and openness at ground level*

**MAINTENANCE:**

- Use herbicides to suppress invasive cool season grasses like smooth brome and fescue.
- Edge feathering can be expected to provide quality dense woody cover for 5-10 years. The area should be re-treated when at least 50 percent of the re-growth exceeds 15 feet in height.

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