

Regional Recommendations for Planting for Wild Turkeys

Written by Ron Brenneman
NWTF WILDLIFE BULLETIN No.13



NATIONAL WILD
TURKEY FEDERATION

Wild turkeys can be characterized as opportunistic feeders, meaning that they will eat a diversity of plant and animal species based on what is available during a particular time of year in the locale where they are living. Depending on the abundance or lack of a given food source, like acorns, turkeys may feed on alternative foods. Many wild turkey food habits studies have been conducted across the country. One study in Virginia illustrates the turkey's feeding habits. From examination of crops and gizzards from 537 turkeys in November and December, researchers found that turkeys had used 354 species of plants and 313 species of invertebrates.

With the wide variety of plant species used by turkeys, how do you decide what to plant to enhance the habitat in your area? To help answer that question we sent a survey to the NWTF Technical Committee members asking for a list of the herbaceous, shrub and tree species they recommend planting in their state. Members of the Technical Committee are professional biologists, employed by the state fish and wildlife agency, and responsible for the turkey management program in their state. Their responses were combined by region to provide the recommendations in this publication.

Their recommendations have been combined into three categories: those frequently mentioned in the survey, those more frequently mentioned, and those most frequently mentioned. Species are listed alphabetically within these categories, therefore, the order does not denote preference.

Planting of the species listed will improve habitat not only for wild turkeys but many other types of wildlife as well. There are also other plant species not listed here that are used by wildlife. Hopefully this list of species will help you make the decision what to plant in your area. If you have additional management questions contact your state wildlife agency, Soil Conservation Service or county extension office.

Most of the species mentioned in this publication are available through the National Wild Turkey Federation's Project HELP, Habitat Enhancement Land Program. The NWTF also has a publication, "Managing Openings For Wild Turkeys and Other Wildlife", that provides information on planting rates, planting times, soil conditions, ranges of various species, etc.

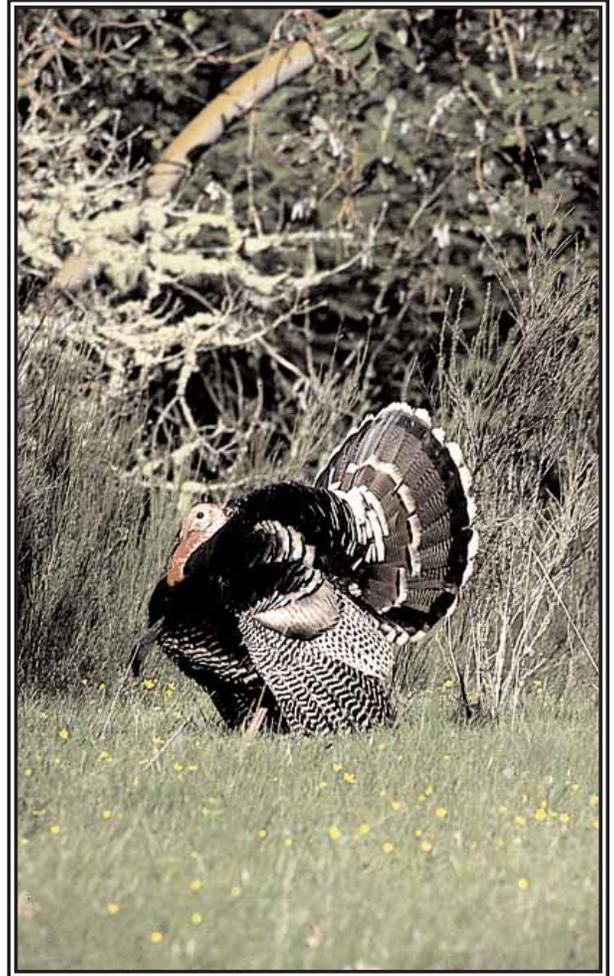


PHOTO BY ERIC J. HANSEN

NORTHEAST

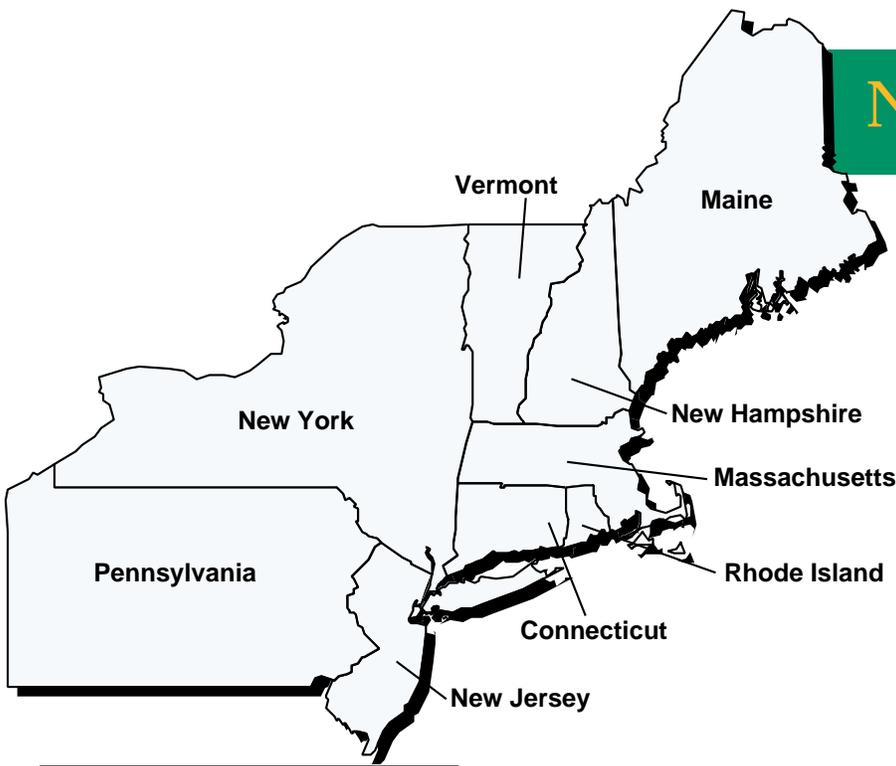


PHOTO BY RON BRENNEMAN

Mapleleaf Viburnum



PHOTO BY RON BRENNEMAN

Birdsfoot trefoil and red clover

MOST FREQUENT

HERBACEOUS SPECIES - Spring & Fall

buckwheat
clover (white, red)
Kentucky bluegrass
perennial ryegrass

SHRUBS

bittersweet*
rugosa rose
elderberry*
hawthorn*
japanese barberry
staghorn sumac*
Viburnum species*
(highbush cranberry,
blackhaw, maple-leaf)

TREES

oaks*
(white, red, pin)

MORE FREQUENT

alfalfa
annual ryegrass
birdsfoot trefoil
corn
ladino clover
millet
oats
orchardgrass
red fescue
timothy
wheat
winter rye

blackberry*
bluebeech*
hazelnut*
honeysuckle*

beech*
black cherry*
white ash*

FREQUENT

big bluestem*
crabgrass
deer tongue
foxtail
hairy vetch
indian grass*
latcho flatpea
little bluestem*
red top
sorghum
soybeans
sudan grass
switchgrass*

crabapple*
dogwood*
(flowering, silky,
grey, red osier)
hophornbeam*
jet bead
juniper*
multiflora rose
spicebush*
wild grape*
winterberry*
witch hazel*

basswood*
black gum*
black locust*
chinese chestnut
hemlock*
hickory*
mountain ash*
norway spruce
white pine*
white spruce*
wild apple*

* Native species

MIDWEST



Autumn olive



Ladino clover

Choke cherry

PHOTO BY RON BRENNEMAN

MOST FREQUENT

HERBACEOUS SPECIES - Spring & Fall

alfalfa
 birdsfoot trefoil
 bluestem* (big, little)
 buckwheat
 clover
 (alsike, red, ladino, white)
 corn
 indiangrass*
 oats
 orchardgrass
 sorghum
 switchgrass*
 timothy
 wheat

SHRUBS

crabapple*
 bearberry*
 bittersweet*
 buckthorn*
 mountain ash*
 Rubus*
 sumac*
 Viburnum*
 wild grape*
 wild plum*

TREES

beech*
 black cherry*
 hickory*
 oaks*

MORE FREQUENT

browntop millet
 canada wildrye*
 Kentucky bluegrass
 lespedeza
 milo
 perennial ryegrass
 sand dropseed*
 smooth brome
 soybeans
 sunflower

chokeberry*
 hawthorn*
 hazelnut*

black walnut*
 red cedar*
 red pine
 white pine*

FREQUENT

annual ryegrass
 barley
 bergamot*
 black-eyed susan*
 broom sedge*
 junegrass*
 ox-eye daisy*
 panicgrass*
 sideoats grama*

dogwood*
 serviceberry*
 wild rose*
 winterberry*
 elderberry*
 greenbrier*
 honeysuckle (bush)
 ninebark*
 pin cherry*
 sand cherry*
 snowberry*
 spicebush*
 Vaccinium*

black ash*
 black gum*
 black locust*
 chinese chestnut
 cottonwood*
 hackberry*
 norway spruce
 sassafras*
 sugar maple*
 white ash*
 white cedar*
 white spruce
 wild apple*

* Native species



Native grasses

PHOTO BY RON BRENNEMAN

SOUTHEAST



PHOTO BY RON BRENNEMAN

Chufa

MOST FREQUENT

MORE FREQUENT

FREQUENT

HERBACEOUS SPECIES - Spring

chufa
bahiagrass
browntop millet

buckwheat
clover (alyce, ladino)
corn
cowpeas
lespedeza
millet (cattail, dove proso,
foxtail, japanese)
partridge pea
sorghum
soybeans
sunflower

alfalfa
beggarweed*
bermuda grass
birdsfoot trefoil
blackberry*
clover (red, white)
dallisgrass
deer tongue*
egyptian wheat
hairy vetch
ironclay peas
milo
orchardgrass
Paspalum*
peanuts
switchgrass*

HERBACEOUS SPECIES - Fall

clover (ladino, crimson)
wheat
oats
ryegrass

birdsfoot trefoil
clover (red, white)
hairy vetch
orchardgrass
rye

alfalfa
austrian winterpea
clover
(Louisiana S-1,
subterranean,
arrowleaf)
cowpeas
deer tongue
elbon rye
lespedeza
sorghum
sweet clover
wrens abruzzi rye

SHRUBS

american beautyberry*
dogwood*
(flowering, silky, grey)
hawthorn*
(parsley, engleman, warner)
Vaccinium*
(huckleberry, gallberry,
deerberry, sparkleberry)

blackberry*
chinquapin*
crabapple*
japanese barberry
lespedeza
sumac*
(staghorn, smooth, wing rib)
Virburnum*
(arrowwood, blackhaw,
cranberry bush)
wild grape*
wild plum*

yaupon*
american holly*
bittersweet*
choke cherry*
deciduous holly*
dwarf live oak*
Eleagnus
greenbrier*
honeysuckle
mountain ash*
mulberry*
myrtle oak*
privet
redbud*
running oak*
spicebush*
yaupon*

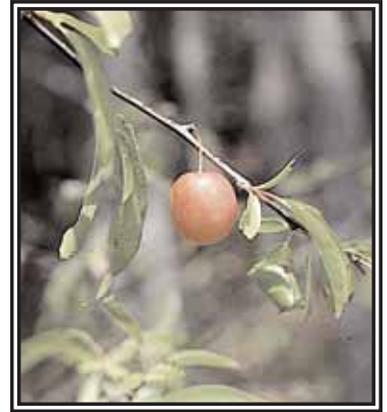
TREES

black gum*
oaks*
(white, red, water, willow,
laurel, cherrybark, live, pin,
shumard, nuttall)
sawtooth oak

beech*
black cherry*
persimmon*

american elm*
ash*
bald cypress*
black locust*
cabbage palm*
chinese chestnut
hackberry*
hickory*
longleaf pine*
magnolia*
red maple*
sweet pecan*
tupelo*

* Native species



Wild plum

PHOTO BY RON BRENNEMAN



Peredovic sunflower

PHOTO BY RON BRENNEMAN

WEST



Big bluestem



Wild rose

MOST FREQUENT

HERBACEOUS SPECIES - Spring

alfalfa
brome (meadow, smooth)
orchardgrass
vetch*
watercress*
wheatgrass*
wildrye (basin, Russian)
yellow sweet clover

HERBACEOUS SPECIES - Fall

barley
dandelion*
oats
yellow sweet clover*

SHRUBS

buffaloberry*
choke cherry*
hawthorn*
russian olive
serviceberry*
wild rose*

TREES

oak*
ponderosa pine*

autumn olive
currant*
elderberry*
kinnikinnik*
mounatin ash*
nanking cherry
snowberry*
sumac*
wild plum*

blue spruce*
cottonwood*
juniper*
(Rocky mtn., Utah)
pinyon pine*
scotch pine

MORE FREQUENT

FREQUENT

bee plant*
bluestem* (big)
buffaloberry*
candytuft*
dropseed*
geranium*
giant ragweed*
mexican hat*
mountain mahogany*
needlegrass*
perennial wheat
small burnett*
stickseed*
western yarrow*
wild buckwheat*
wild flax*
wild sunflower*

bluegrass*
bluestem* (big, silver)
buckwheat
california poppy*
clover
(red, white dutch)
filgree
foxtail fescue
lewis flax*
milk thistle*
milkvetch
mountain rye
orchard grass
panic grass*
popcorn flower*
quaking grass*
sleepy-grass*
smooth brome*
soft chess*
timothy*
wheat*

bladdersenna
california buckwheat*
carayna
dogwood*
fourwing saltbush*
gooseberry*
indian squawbush*
japanese barberry
lilac
oregon grape*
poison oak*
quail bush*
Rubus*
sandberry
thimble berry*
toyon*

austrian pine
douglas fir*
green ash*
hybrid poplar
red cedar*
siberian elm
wild apple*
willow*

* Native species

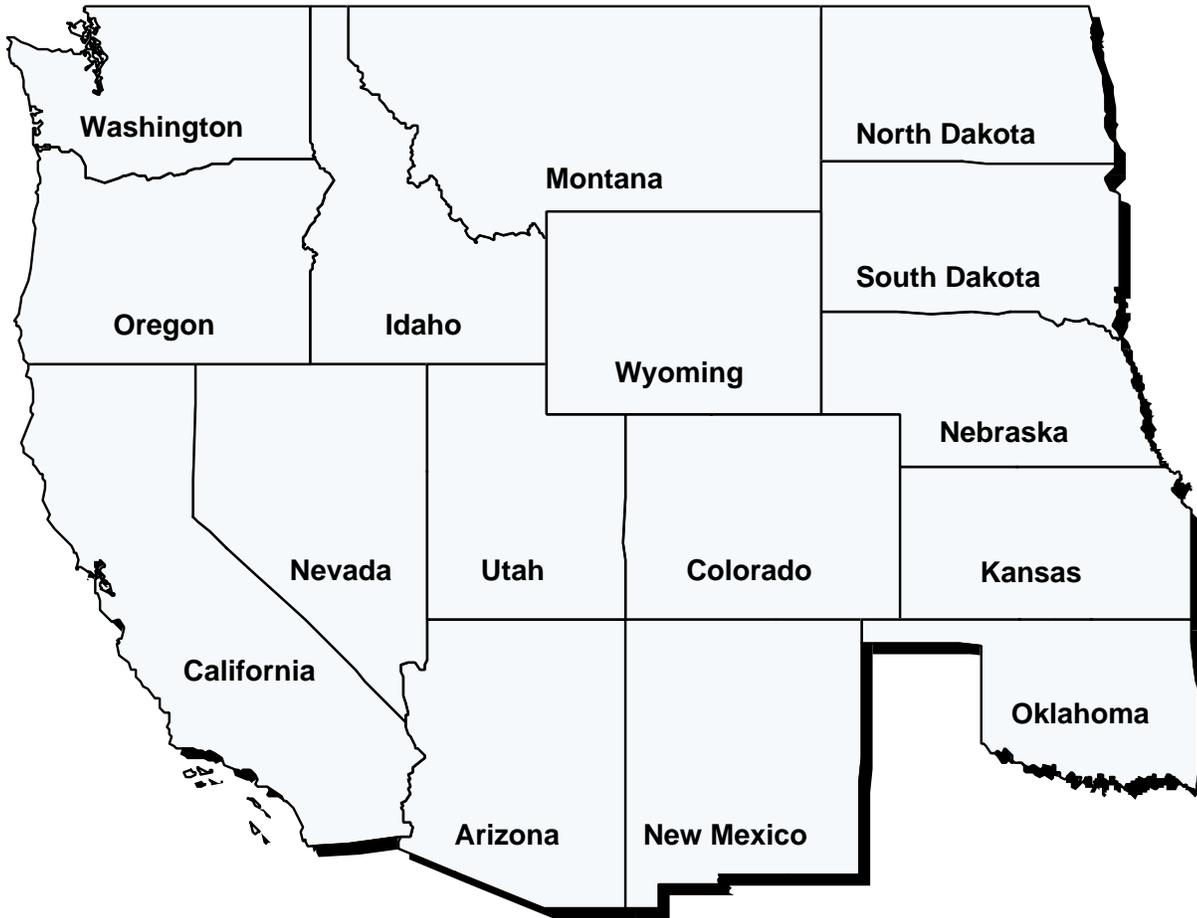


PHOTO BY DAVID J. ODE

Buffaloberry



PHOTO BY DAVID J. ODE

Bur oak



FEDERAL
Ammunition



Financial support for this publication was provided in part by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Federal Cartridge and Wildlife Forever and published by the National Wild Turkey Federation.