

Benefits of Hedgerows



Reduce need for Drainage Maintenance:

- Keeping the channel free of grass and sediments
- Improve drainage by shading out the invasive Reed canary grass
- Stabilize streambanks by creating a dense mat of soil holding roots



Improve Water Quality:

- Trapping and filtering of field sediments and runoff.
- Reducing water temperatures and increasing dissolved oxygen
- Creating a physical buffer from pesticide applications



Create Habitat:

- Improving cover to shelter fish from predators such as Great blue heron
- Increasing forage for fish by providing habitat for native insects
- Improving pollination of crops by providing habitat for native pollinators

Hedgerow Facts

Will hedgerows help me with drainage?

Yes, Reed canarygrass growing in the channel traps sediments, fills the channel with decaying plant growth and impedes water flow. Fortunately the grass does not grow in the shade. A mature hedgerow will cast enough shade to keep the channel open and flowing well.

Will a hedgerow improve fish habitat?

Yes, shade will decrease water temperatures and fish need cool water. Native insects in the hedgerow also will become excellent food for fish. Cover over the stream will also protect the fish from predators.

How much will a hedgerow cost a landowner?

There are public benefits to planting a hedgerow so funding is usually available at no cost to the landowner. In fact hedgerows planted with the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program not only pay for the planting and maintenance but also compensate the landowner for land taken out of production with an annual lease payment.

What about Beavers?

A hedgerow will not attract beavers but as the young animals disperse from other areas they may well find a stream reach with hedgerows attractive. A good hedgerow is planted with species that beavers do not usually browse. If beavers do colonize a stream population and/or dam management might be needed. Although it is a nuisance, managing this rodent is much less expensive than constantly managing drainage in a grass choked channel.

What about other wildlife?

Hedgerows provide critical habitat for native bird species including a wide variety of songbirds that are not accustomed to large open fields. You will see and hear much more bird life than before. Small mammal species will also take advantage of the cover under hedgerows.

What about insect pests?

The concern with SWD is that they might use fruit produced by hedgerow plants to forage and reproduce. We can avoid this by planting natives such as Pacific ninebark that have hard fruit not utilized by SWD. Himalayan blackberries growing on streambanks are a good host to SWD. These plants can be removed and replaced with better native species often without losing any field.

For questions or to book a site visit contact:

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