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Have you thought about planting a windbreak?

Posted on [October 31, 2016](#) by [Madé Quay](#)

Windbreaks are a great way to reduce soil erosion and increase crop growth on your farm.

- They reduce wind speeds, which can increase growth of crops for a distance of up to 20 times the height of the trees.
- The taller the trees and the longer the windbreak, the greater the area the windbreak will protect: wind speeds can be reduced upwind for a distance up to five times the height of the trees, and downwind for a distance of up to fifteen times the height of the trees.
- Combine a windbreak with other conservation best practices, such as conservation tillage, crop residue management and cover crops, and you'll obtain optimal wind erosion control.

Fall is the perfect time to start planning for a spring planting. To get started:

Do a site assessment where the windbreak will be planted.

Decide on the tree species you would like to plant based on why you're planting a windbreak, your site's characteristics (e.g. soils) and your seed zone.

Develop a planting plan.

You may wish to consider the expertise of a conservation authority forestry specialist or private consultant to help you with these first steps.

Next, you'll need to **prepare the site** and order the trees.

- **Establish cover crops** to slow weed growth and to reduce the amount of maintenance needed after planting.
- **Confirm the number of trees** you'll need and **place your tree order**. You can order trees through nurseries and some conservation authorities.
- **Prepare the site** by marking out in-row and between-row tree spacing, tilling,

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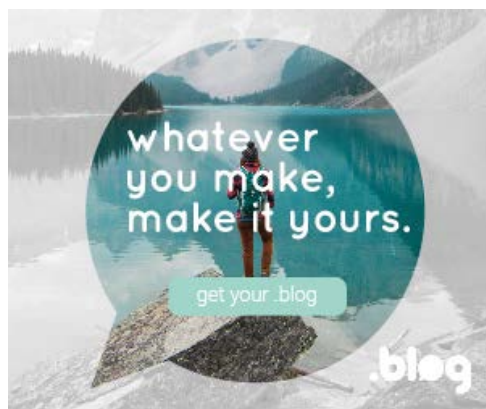
mulching, mowing and/or band or spot spraying, and placing black plastic mulch over the area to control weeds. Instead of plastic mulch, you may wish to apply mulch in the spring after the trees are planted.

Your soil type and the region of the province you're in will affect the type of trees you can plant. Trees can thrive and provide maximum protection when they're matched with the right soils. Visit the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change's [Tree Atlas](#) to determine the best trees for your situation. Your local [conservation authority](#) can help you to determine your seed zone.

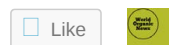
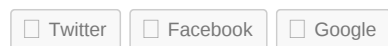
The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) has many resources to help you with windbreak planning. Visit [our website](#) to watch our four windbreak videos on planning, planting, maintenance and windbreak successes. Our free Best Management Practices book, "[Establishing Tree Cover](#)," provides a step-by-step guide for planning and planting a windbreak.

You can also contact your local [conservation authority](#) for more information about planning and planting a windbreak.

For more information about OMAFRA's resources, contact our Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300 or ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca.



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carolynprieur says:

October 31, 2016 at 1:48 pm

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Sean Westerveld says:

October 31, 2016 at 2:26 pm

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