

Some Recommendations for Helping Pheasants

Grasses - Establish cool season and warm season grasses to provide nesting and brood rearing cover. If hayed or grazed, these grasses should not be disturbed until after July 31st. Some warm season grasses, such as switchgrass, also provide great winter cover because they remain standing into spring.

Trees - Pheasants are not forest dwelling wildlife like turkeys. Remove trees when possible, especially those found in hedgerows. Trees act as perches for hawks and owls and provide little cover for pheasants. Trees can be removed for timber or firewood. There are some trees, like conifers, that can be beneficial. Spruce planted in small clusters help provide protection from harsh winter weather and act as windbreaks.

Hedgerows - Many of today's larger farms have eliminated hedgerows from their fields. Do not remove hedgerows. Establish hedgerows to prevent soil erosion, to help break-up large fields, to provide food and winter cover, and to provide travel lanes for daily activities.

Fall Plowing - Fall plowing buries important food items, such as seeds, and reduces the amount of available cover that pheasants can use to hide from predators. If economically feasible, do not fall plow.

Crop Stubble - Wheat, oats and corn stubble, if left tall, provide cover for pheasants during their daily search for food. Pheasants are difficult to spot in tall stubble. Stubble also prevents soil erosion and holds moisture.

Wetlands - Allow poorly drained areas to revert to wetlands. Pheasants find secure winter cover in cattail marshes. In addition, grasses planted adjacent to wetlands or man-made ponds provide good nesting cover.

Food - Plant food plots of corn, sorghum, and sunflowers to help pheasants survive long-cold winters. Establish food plots close to winter cover. When pheasants have to travel far distances to find food, they become vulnerable to predators.

Drainage - Plant drainage ditches with cool or warm season grasses. Grass plantings help prevent soil erosion and provide nesting, brood-rearing and winter cover for pheasants. If necessary, mow ditches after July 31st, but allow time for the grasses to regrow and provide residual cover in the spring.

Field Corners - Round field corners to leave a small amount of cover for pheasants to nest, loaf and search for food.

Farm Programs - There are number of Farm Bill programs available to farmers and landowners that include wildlife habitat improvements, along with water quality and soil protection. Contact your local Farm Service Agency office or Natural Resources Conservation Service office to learn more about these programs.