



Plant Materials Fact Sheet

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Temple, TX

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CONTOUR BUFFER STRIPS CONSERVATION PRACTICE 332



DEFINITION

Contour buffer strips are strips of perennial vegetation alternated with wider cultivated strips which are farmed on the contour.

PURPOSE

Contour buffer strips slow runoff and trap sediment. Sediment, nutrients, pesticides, and other contaminants are removed from the runoff as they pass through the buffer strip.

PLANTING CONSIDERATIONS

- Identify the primary purpose of the practice (nutrient uptake, sediment retention, terrace drainage, reduce wind erosion, and snow drift).
- Identify the season of use (spring, summer, fall, or winter). The season of use will determine whether cool season plants, warm season plants, or a mix of both will provide adequate vegetative cover.
- Identify environmental factors affecting installation (soils, topography, precipitation, and seasonal temperature).
- Locate available plants or seed.
- Cropland and rangeland use affects plant selection and management.

MANAGEMENT

Mow buffer strips to maintain appropriate vegetative density and height for trapping sediment. Fertilize buffer strips according to soil test recommendations. Spot seed or renovate buffer strip area damaged by herbicides, equipment, or unusual rainfall events. Redistribute

sediment accumulations as needed to maintain uniform sheet flow along the crop/buffer boundary.

Specifications should be prepared in accordance with the local NRCS Field Office Technical Guide and the Contour Buffer practice standard (332).

Table 1 Plant Materials for Use in Contour Buffer Strips

		USES (see below)		USES (see below)	
1. Switchgrass	W	1,2,4,5,6	11. Engelmann daisy	W/C	1,2,5
2. Indiangrass	W	1,2,4,5	12. Illinois Bundleflower	W	1,2,5
3. Big Bluestem	W	1,2,4,5	13. Sand Bluestem	W	1,2
4. Sideoats Grama	W	1,2,4,5	14. Alkali Sacaton	W	1,2,4,5,6
5. Eastern gamagrass	W	1,2,4,5,6	15. Blue Grama	W	1,2,4
6. Buffalograss	W	1,2	16. Sandhill Lovegrass	W	1,2
7. Western Wheatgrass	W	1,2,4,5,6	17. Green Sprangletop	W	1,2
8. *Tall Wheatgrass	W	1,2,4,5,6	18. *Kleingrass	W	1,2,4,5
9. Partridge Pea	W	1,2	19. Little Bluestem	W	1,2,4,5
10. Maximilian Sunflower	W	1,2,5,6	20. *Bahia grass	W	1,2,4,5

* Denotes an introduced species. W=Warm season C=Cool season All these species are utilized by wildlife.

Recommended Uses Code

1= Nitrogen uptake
4= Sediment Retention

2= Phosphorus uptake
5= Adapted for use along streams

3= Pesticide uptake
6= Adapted to high water tables

Additional information about Contour Buffer practice standard 332 relating to species varieties, adaptability, installation, and management of these plants can be obtained from your local Natural Resources Conservation Service Field Office.



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