



Tree Protective Tubes

Tree tubes are an effective method to protect deciduous trees from rabbits, deer, and mechanical injuries. The tubes are 4-foot tall, translucent polyethylene cylinders which allow enough light transmission to reach the seedling. They are thick enough to prevent injuries from rabbits, deer browsing and rubbing, and mechanical injuries from weed eaters or lawn mowers that often occur to seedlings and small-diameter trees. While tree tubes are designed for use on deciduous trees, they are not to be used on shrubs or evergreen seedlings.

In addition to providing protection from injury, the tubes also create a “mini-greenhouse” for the seedlings, which increases survival and growth. Because the tubes physically restrain the seedlings from outward growth, the seedlings focus on upward growth and often will begin growing out the tops of the tubes after 2 to 3 years of being protected.

Although the protected trees will be much taller than an unprotected tree, because the plants are not subjected to the wind, the tree’s

diameter will be much smaller than if it were growing unprotected. If the tube is removed soon after the seedling begins to grow out the top, it will not be large enough in diameter to support itself and the seedling will fall over. Therefore it is important to leave the tube on the plants until the tree largely fills the cavity of the tube.

Not only can tubes be used on newly planted seedlings, but they also can be installed on older stock that has been severely damaged. For example, tubes can be placed over an older seedling that has been heavily browsed by deer.

Tree tubes are 4 feet tall and approximately 4 to 6 inches around. They are sold in multiples of fives and come with a stake and zip-ties to anchor and support the tube. It may be necessary to drill new zip-tie holes in the tube in order to adequately secure the tube to the stake.

To establish, simply place the tube over the plant so that the vents (the pre-drilled holes in the tubes) are at the top. Slide the provided stake through the zip-ties and pound the stake into the ground at least 12



Tree tubes protect seedlings and foster growth.

inches or more until the stake and tube feel secure. Blue birds can enter the tops of the tubes and become stuck, so it is recommended to cover the tops with cheesecloth or another vented material to restrict top entry. It is advised to periodically check the tree tubes to ensure that wildlife or weather have not loosened the stake, thus allowing the tree tube to begin rubbing on the seedling, which may damage the seedling.

Technical Assistance

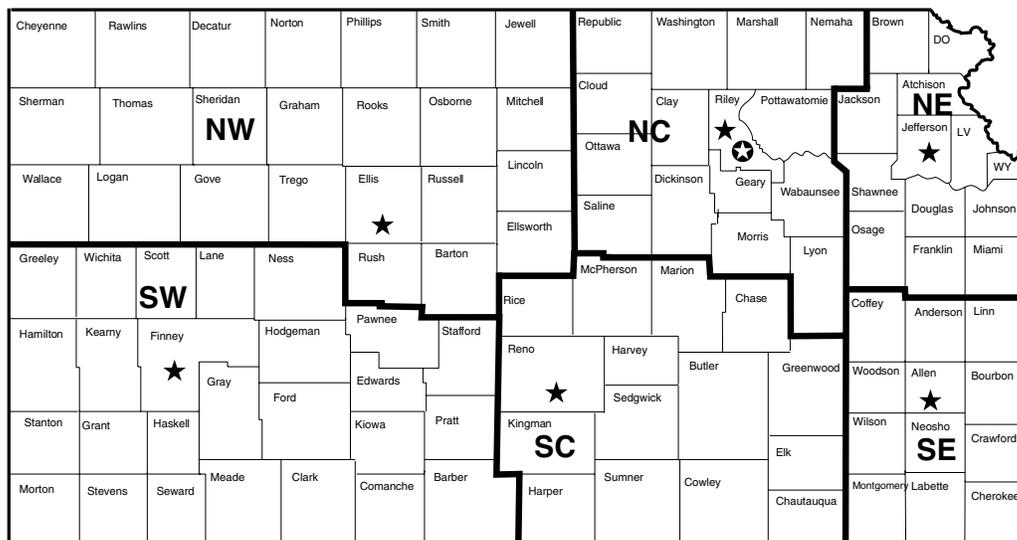
Several sources of free technical assistance are available for designing and managing your conservation planting:

Your local K-State Research and Extension office

Your local County Conservation District

Your local representative of Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism

Kansas Forest Service State and District Offices



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