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EC1724 Tamarix as a Hedge Plant

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Nebraska
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
U. of N. Agr. College & U.S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

Extension
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1724

TAMARIX AS A HEDGE PLANT

Tamarix is considered a very desirable hedge plant in Nebraska. It is suitable for planting as a part of a multiple row windbreak or as a single row garden windbreak.

It is a hardy, fast growing shrub or small tree, and although it may occasionally die back to some extent, the roots do not winterkill. The slender, graceful shoots, with cedar-like foliage, give it an attractive appearance.

When allowed to grow naturally, Tamarix tends to become somewhat scraggly, and less attractive. To keep it at its best, it is necessary to cut it back somewhat every year. It then sends out numerous, fast growing, slender branches which make a more compact hedge.

How and When to Prune

Tamarix which were planted a year ago should be pruned back to about 1 foot above the ground. This induces a number of shoots to form below and will tend to thicken up the hedge from the ground up. When these new shoots are a foot or so long, the ends should be nipped off to induce additional side branches. Plantings made a year earlier should be pruned back to about 3 feet above the ground.

By frequent pruning the hedge can be kept at the desired height and it will be more attractive than if allowed to go unpruned. For garden windbreaks, a height of 6 to 8 feet should be sufficient.

Pruning may be done at any time of the year but the best time for general pruning is before growth starts in the spring.

Plantings from Cuttings

If additional plants are needed to extend the hedge or to plant an additional windbreak, these plants may be grown from cuttings. The cuttings should be made soon after frost or even up to January or early February. They should be of about the size of a thin lead pencil and 10 or 12 inches long.

Cuttings should be tied in small bundles and either buried in the ground with enough mulch to protect them from excessive freezing, or packed in a box with slightly moistened sand and stored in a cave until planting time.

Planting should be done in the spring before growth starts. The cuttings should be planted solidly in the ground with the top about 2 inches above the ground level. If they are planted in the permanent location they should be planted about 2 feet apart. They can be planted 8 to 10 inches apart in nursery rows in the garden and grown a year and then transplanted to the permanent location the following spring.

The planting should be kept cultivated and free from weeds and watered if there is a shortage of rainfall.