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NEWS

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Living Snow Fences: A Green Way to Block Blowing Snow

FORT COLLINS, Colo. – Coloradans who want an inexpensive, long-term solution to prevent blowing snow from blocking driveways and access roads might consider snow fences grown from seedling trees.

“Customers who planted our seedling trees in the past frequently tell us that the living snow fences they grew are more effective than artificial barriers built to block blowing snow,” said Randy Moench, manager of the Colorado State Forest Service Nursery in Fort Collins.

Moench says that landowners from Durango to La Veta to the Wyoming border have boasted this winter of the effectiveness of windbreaks grown from CSFS seedlings. The CSFS Nursery offers a wide variety of seedling trees ideal for planting in rows to block wind and snow, including Rocky Mountain juniper and eastern redcedar.

Planting a snow fence generally is more economical than building one, because the seedlings are inexpensive, long-lasting and do not require intensive maintenance. Planting seedlings also may appeal to some landowners as a carbon-capturing, green alternative to building fences from lumber and other materials. But Moench says one should expect a 10-year establishment time for living fences to become fully effective – which is why the CSFS Nursery encourages landowners to plant now.

CSFS seedling trees can also be planted to block wind year-round, enhance wildlife habitat, reduce soil erosion, protect livestock, reforest mountain properties, increase property values and reduce utility bills. Seedling orders are now being accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis.

“Landowners should order now, as several species have already sold out this year,” Moench said. He stresses the importance of contacting a local CSFS forester for guidance on planting seedlings.

To purchase seedling trees from the CSFS Nursery, landowners must own two or more acres of land, use the seedlings for conservation purposes, purchase minimums of 30 to 50 seedlings and agree not to use them for landscaping or resale as seedlings.

The CSFS seedling tree program was established to encourage Colorado farmers, ranchers and rural landowners to plant seedling trees for conservation purposes. More information about the CSFS seedling tree program is available at local CSFS district offices and at csfs.colostate.edu.

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