

# The ecological and amenity functions of woodland edges in the agricultural landscape; a basis for design and management

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[http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0169-2046\(96\)00369-6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0169-2046(96)00369-6), How to Cite or Link Using DOI

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## Abstract

Guidelines for landscape management acknowledge woodland edges for providing important biological and amenity functions, as well as functional and economical benefits for farmland and forestry production. Afforestation of many areas of European agricultural landscapes, due to changes in agricultural politics, will lead to a considerable increase in woodland edges over the next decades. In many countries this development coincides with an increasing emphasis on the multiple use of forest landscapes, e.g. a combination of recreation, biodiversity and production objectives. The potential role of woodland edges in nature conservation and landscape planning is raised. This paper focuses on woodland edges in agricultural landscapes and examines their major biological and amenity functions in the context of multiple-use management and design. The structural properties important for biological diversity and amenity values are discussed and compared for compatibility. We argue that the factors of greatest significance in determining the functions of woodland edges are width, physical structure and the composition of woody species, as well as their spatial dynamics at both site and landscape levels. Aspects of the design and management of woodland edges to achieve multi-functional objectives are discussed.

## Keywords

Agriculture; Edges; Forestry; Habitat functions; Landscape aesthetics; Multiple use