

# CONSERVE WILDLIFE FOUNDATION OF NEW JERSEY

## LANDSCAPING FOR WILDLIFE: CREATING BACKYARD HABITAT

### BRUSH PILE



A brush pile is a large mound of woody vegetation that is constructed to provide cover for wildlife. A brush pile can be made to benefit different species of wildlife. Either way it provides cover, protection from harsh weather conditions, nesting habitat, and protection from predators. Some wildlife that benefit from brush piles include ground nesting birds like quail, songbirds, and mourning doves, small mammals like cottontail rabbits and chipmunks, and reptiles like garter snakes and five-lined skinks. Brush piles are mainly constructed to substitute for otherwise poor habitat on a small property where there is little cover that is near the ground. There are several

different types of brush piles that you can make. Here we will describe the creation of a “log-based” brush pile. This is an easy and inexpensive way to help wildlife in your own backyard. Follow these simple steps to successfully create a brush pile.

**Location is critical:** Brush piles should be near food resources. Place near forest edges and clearings, along roadsides or near wetlands and streams. Secluded piles are not as beneficial to wildlife. Several medium-sized piles (6ft. high x 10ft. wide) are better than one huge one. Space piles out for maximum effects. Allow native vines or other wildflowers/annuals to grow where pile meets the ground. This will provide additional cover to wildlife. *Do not place brush pile near your house.* It is better to place where there will be minimal disturbance from people.

### HOW TO CREATE A BRUSH PILE:

1. To create a “log-based” brush pile, first you construct the base, using eight 6ft. long logs that are about 4-6” in diameter. Place the first four on the ground parallel to each other around -12” apart. Then place the other four perpendicular to the bottom four. This makes it easier for wildlife to be able to access the base of the brush pile and evade predators.
2. Stack brush on top of the logs. Place larger brush on the bottom and lighter brush on top. Your pile should be at least 4ft. in height and 10ft. in diameter. The higher the pile the longer it will last.

### ABOUT THE HABITAT RESTORATION PROGRAM

Since 2007 the Conserve Wildlife Foundation (CWF) has been actively restoring habitat for rare wildlife in New Jersey. Since the beginning of the program over 29 acres of wildlife habitat have been restored. CWF encourages the citizens of New Jersey to help create and protect wildlife habitat in their own backyard. We

*This fact sheet is part of the Habitat Restoration program created by Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey (CWF).* CWF is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting New Jersey’s endangered and threatened wildlife and the habitats they depend on for survival. We accomplish this through research and conservation projects and education and outreach programs that advance the protection of New Jersey’s rarest wildlife residents.

**For more information, visit [www.conservewildlifenj.org](http://www.conservewildlifenj.org)**



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