

Branch piles as a small-scale structure

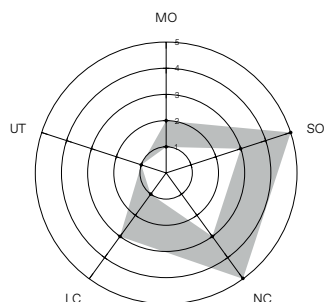
Branch piles offer sheltered cavities and sunny surfaces for wild animals such as reptiles, allowing them to hibernate or lay their eggs.



Definition

Branch piles are stacked dead branches from trees or shrubs, which can be supplemented with tree stumps if required. Branch piles can be constructed in different sizes and shapes and combined with other structural elements such as stone piles.

Site requirements



Moisture (MO)

- 1 Dry
- 2 Fresh
- 3 Moist
- 4 Wet
- 5 Always/part. inundated

Soil (SO)

- 1 Raw soil
- 2 Mineral soil (gravelly)
- 3 Medium humus content
- 4 Rich in humus
- 5 Litter-rich humus (duff)

Nutrient content (NC)

- 1 Very low
- 2 Low
- 3 Moderately low/rich
- 4 Rich
- 5 Very rich

Light conditions (LC)

- 1 Full sun
- 2
- 3 Semi-shade
- 4
- 5 Shade

Utilization (UT)

- 1 Passive nature experience
- 2
- 3 Active utilization temporarily possible
- 4
- 5 Active utilization possible

Principles

Fulfilling these guidelines promotes the biodiversity of this habitat type.

Structure	- Loose piling - Alternate layers of thin and thick material - Create cavities
Maintenance	Supplement new material if required
Utilization	No active use
Site	Sheltered from wind and sunny

Advanced requirements

By fulfilling these requirements, the biodiversity of this habitat type is additionally promoted.

Material	Use of hardwood
Minimum size	> 1 to 3 m³
Structure	- Cover using thorny branches or vines - Multiple branch piles within short distances (50 to 100 m)
Maintenance	> 1 m wide herbaceous border



Planning

- Adjust the time of creation to maintenance work (e.g., pruning)
- Include into utilization and design concept
- Use hardwood
- Create multiple branch piles
- Combine with near-natural habitats

Implementation

- Use differently sized material
- Pile up alternately
- Cover using thorny branches or wood pieces

Maintenance

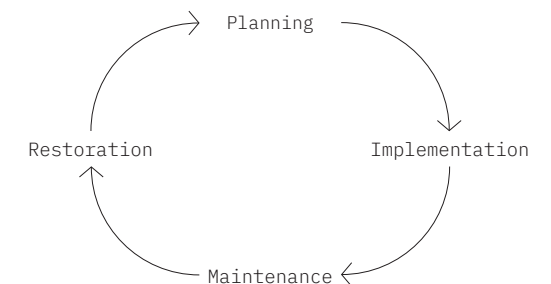
- Add new material
- No disturbances between November to March and July to August
- Promote natural herbaceous border
- Remove invasive alien species and unwanted species

Restoration

- Reutilization of material where possible
- Conduct interventions between September and October

Climatic requirements

No specific requirements.



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Deadwood pile in Cham, Switzerland (Manuela Hotz)



Branch pile (Valentin Klaus)



Ermine, *Mustela erminea* (Adobe Stock)



European robin, *Erithacus rubecula* (Adobe Stock)