

Plants Enhancement Activity –*PLT01–Establish Pollinator Habitat*



Enhancement Description

Seed nectar and pollen producing plants in non-cropped areas such as field borders, vegetative barriers, contour buffer strips, waterways, shelterbelts, windbreaks, conservation cover, and riparian forest and herbaceous buffers.

Land Use Applicability

This enhancement is applicable on cropland, pasture land, rangeland and forest land.

Benefits

Increased habitat for pollinators will improve fruit set, size and quality, productivity per acre, biodiversity, beneficial insect populations, and the food base for

many wildlife species. The increased plant diversity of pollinator habitat will enhance wildlife habitat and may increase populations of other beneficial insects, reducing the need for pesticides.

Criteria for *Establishing Pollinator Habitat*

Pollinator habitat areas will be at least ½ acre in size for each 40 acres of cropland, pastureland, rangeland or forest land and include a minimum of nine (9) flowering plant species including forbs, legumes, vines, shrubs, and/or trees.

- ◆ Lists of plants suitable for pollinator habitat will be developed by NRCS at the state level. The lists must emphasize as many native species as practical.
- ◆ The habitat planting will include (as a minimum) three early, three mid, and three late flowering species from the NRCS state list. Plants that produce toxic nectar will not be planted.
- ◆ Site preparation and plant establishment shall be accomplished according to the appropriate NRCS conservation practice and specifications. Management and/or maintenance activities such as mowing, haying, burning, or grazing must be conducted outside of the growing season or bloom period. Maintenance should be done on less than 1/3 of the acreage during any given year.
- ◆ Insecticides and herbicides should not be used in the habitat planting area. Even natural herbicides and botanical insecticides can harm bees and other pollinators. If adjacent crop areas are treated use one or more of the following actions to limit insecticides in the pollinator habitat area:



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- Create insecticide free buffers in the first 25 feet of crop area,
- Use application methods that minimizing drift to the adjacent habitat,
- Apply active ingredients in the evening when most insect pollinators are not active.
- ◆ The planted habitat areas must be regularly inspected for invasive and/or noxious plants or other plants that may compromise the purpose of this enhancement. Undesirable species should be controlled using the least damaging method.
- ◆ Any use of the pollinator habitat area must not compromise its intended purpose.

Documentation Requirements for *Pollinator Habitat Establishment*

- ◆ A map showing the location and dimension of the pollinator habitat areas.
- ◆ A list of pollinator species planted.
- ◆ List of maintenance activities carried out to manage the pollinator habitat areas.



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Criteria

The following list of pollinator plants has been selected due to: high quality pollen, ease of establishment and relatively low cost. Seed for most of the plants listed is less than \$10.00 per pound. Tall White Beard Tongue (\$80/lb), New England Aster (\$200/lb), Calico Aster (\$40/lb) are some exceptions. Typically these non-agronomic seeds need cold stratification, which means they need to overwinter in the soil in-order to germinate.

A seeding rate of 20 lbs per acre is a good standard.

Instead of mixing seed, consider planting strips of various species, to allow for more efficient foraging of native bees.

Weed control is a major issue with getting some plantings established. An early fall seeding is best. The second best option is a dormant seeding (frost seeding) after November 1st in Northern NH and after November 15th in Southern NH. Dormant seedings should have hay or mulch spread on sites where erosion may be a problem. Spring seedlings tend to have the most weed competition.

The best way to control weeds is to kill vegetation in the late summer with roundup and drill seed directly into the soil. This reduces competition from the seed bank in the soil.

Crab grass and other weeds are typically a problem, and can be controlled with a monocot herbicide. See above for details on herbicide applications.

In addition, several plants are listed under “additional old field plants”. These plants may already be on your property and can be encouraged by reduced mowing, collecting and spreading seed, or transplanting.

NRCS will provide specific recommendations based on site conditions if requested.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Bloom Period
narrow leaf lupine	<i>Lupinus polyphyllus</i>	Early
Tall White Beard Tongue	<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	Early
Pussy Willow (live stakes)	<i>Salix discolor</i>	Early
Alfalfa	<i>Medicago sativa</i>	Mid
Garden Cornflower	<i>Centaurea cyanus</i>	Mid
Red Clover medium	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Mid
white clover ladino	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	Mid
yellow sweet clover	<i>Melilotus officinalis</i>	Mid
Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Mid
Purple vetch	<i>Vicia villosa</i>	Mid
Calico Aster	<i>Aster lateriflorus</i>	Late
Spearmint, Mint,	<i>Mentha sp.</i>	Late
New England Aster	<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	Late
Additional Old Field Plants		
Cherries	<i>Prunus sp.</i>	Early
Hawthorne	<i>Crataegus sp.</i>	Early
Blueberries	<i>Vaccinium sp</i>	Early
Dandy Lions	<i>Taraxacum</i>	Early
Raspberry/Blackberry	<i>Rubus</i>	Mid
Common Milkweed	<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Mid
Steeple Bush	<i>Spirea sp</i>	Mid
Golden Rod	<i>Solidago</i>	Late
New England Aster	<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	Late