USDA NRCS
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Cover Crop & Pollinators

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Cover crops can have beneficial effects for pollinators. The chart below list the Insectary and Pollinator Friendly Cover Crops for Illinois. The full description can be found in the Biology Technical Note 23 in the Illinois NRCS Field Office Tech Guide.

Insectary and Pollinator Friendly Cover Crops for Illinois
(Insectary plantings attract beneficial insects for biological control of crop pests when planted adjacent to crop fields)

Common Name	Bloom Period	Flower Color	*Height Mature (feet)	Light Needs	*Drought Tolerance
Borage	early	blue	1.5	sun	low
Canola	early	yellow	1	sun	low
Buckwheat	mid to late	white	1.5	sun	moderate
White Lupine	early to mid	blue or white	3	sun	low
Alfalfa	mid	purple	1.5	sun	moderate
Sweet clover	mid to late	yellow	5	sun	moderate
Phacelia	early	purple	3	sun to shade	moderate
Dakin radish	early to mid	white	2	sun	moderate
Alsike clover	early to mid	yellow	2	sun	low
Crimson clover	early	red	1	sun to part shade	low
White clover	mid	white		sun to part shade	low
Purple vetch	early to mid	purple	1.5	sun to part shade	low
Fava bean	early to mid	white	4	sun	low
Hairy vetch	early	blue	1	sun to part shade	low

Biology Technical Note 23 provides information on how to plan for, protect, and create habitat for pollinators in agricultural settings. Pollinators are an integral part of our environment and our agricultural systems; they are important in 35% of global crop production. Animal pollinators include bees, butterflies, moths, wasps, flies, beetles, ants, bats and hummingbirds. This technical note focuses on native bees, the most important pollinators in temperate North America, but also addresses the habitat needs of butterflies and, to a lesser degree, other beneficial insects.

To find the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide, go to www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/ and select eFOTG on the right column.

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