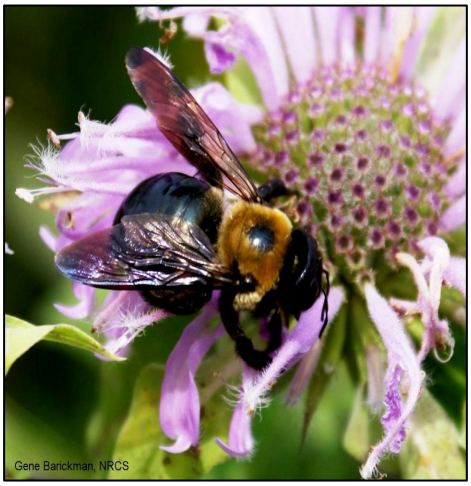
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

2010 Ranking Period 2

Plant 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
Cropland, pastureland, rangeland and forestland

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

Pollinator habitat areas must be at least ½ acre in size for each 40 acres of cropland, pastureland, rangeland or forest land. Where the applicable land use is greater than 40 acres, the 0.5 acre habitat areas must be interspersed in the larger land use areas. For example, for an 80 acre cropland parcel, the required 1 acre of habitat should not be locate in one corner of the 80 acre field. The pollinator habitat areas must include a minimum of nine flowering plant species including forbs, legumes, vines, shrubs, and/or trees.

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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 then 1/3 of the acreage during any given year.
4. 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:
    a. Create insecticide free buffers in the first 25 feet of crop area,
    b. Use application methods that minimizing drift to the adjacent habitat,

   c. Apply active ingredients in the evening when most insect pollinators are not active.
5. 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.
6. Any use of the pollinator habitat area must not compromise its intended purpose.

Documentation Requirements

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

Wisconsin Supplement 5/20/2010

Follow Wisconsin NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 327 (Conservation Cover) and Wisconsin Biology Technical Note 8:

http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/WI/327.pdf
ftp://ftp-fc.sc.egov.usda.gov/WI/technotes/biology-tn8.pdf

Written documentation shall include a summary of the soil moisture regime of the site, plant species established and method of establishment. An annual written summary of the site management and weed control activities implemented shall be provided.