

United States Department of Agriculture

## INDIANA CONSERVATION CHOICES Urban/Small Farm Practices

Conservation practices help improve soil health, reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and provide other natural resource benefits.

## USDA's NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE - INDIANA February 2023

No matter the size of your farm, having the knowledge you need to conserve, maintain and restore the natural resources on your farm is a powerful tool. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can help urban and small farmers create a conservation plan that can serve as a road map towards improving the health and resiliency of your operation.

A conservation plan can enable you to make educated decisions for your farm, keep you from making costly management mistakes, and possibly help qualify you for financial programs.

The way we manage our soil resource has a greater impact on its ability to function than any other factor. Productive and resilient land can be obtained by using a soil health management system that incorporates these four simple principles:

- Minimizing disturbance from tillage and over-grazing
- Maximizing soil cover with residues and living plants
- Maximizing diversity with crop rotations and cover crops
- Maximizing living roots year-round with crops, forages and cover crops

Benefits can include increased soil organic matter, improved resilience to drought and floods, improved nutrient cycling, and overall increased profits.

This fact sheet lists common conservation practices that will help address natural resource concerns on your urban/small farm. To learn more about the assistance available for you farm and how to get started, visit your local USDA NRCS office. We can help you make the right choices to protect and improve your land and other natural resources.



High TunnelImprove plant graving conditions : Ended the graving season : Improve plant graving conditions : Improve sold modular management : Impro	Practice	Description		Benefits
Tunnel       • Extends the growing season         Cover Crops       • Excludes pests from crops         Mulching       • Reduces erosion         Mulching       • Pollinator & Beneficial Insect Habitat         Pollinator & Crops       • Pollinator * Crops         Pollinator & Beneficial Insect Habitat       • Pollinator * Crops         Pollinator & Beneficial Insect Habitat       • Pollinator * Crops         Pollinator & Beneficial Insect Habitat       • Pollinator * Crops         Crops       • Pollinator * Crops         Pollinator * Applying plant residues or beneficial Insect Habitat       • Improves soli moisture management * Reduces weed pressure and erosion         Pollinator * Builds or maintains soli organic matter       • Improves soli moisture management * Reduces used pressure and erosion         Pollinator * Applying plant residues or busport pollinator and peneficial Insects       • Improves soli moisture management * Reduces or epsts insects, disease, weeds)         * Adds sol biological diversity * Crop Rotation       • Pollinator * Crop Rotation       • Reduces crop pests (insects, disease, weeds)         * Adds sol biological diversity * Can reduce erosion       • Adds sol biological diversity * Can reduce erosion         Microoirrigation       • Improves ingation water use efficiency * Miniting ingation diversity * Miniting ingation indices of ingation		protect crops from sun, wind,	»	Extends the growing season
Cover Crops       Grasse, legume, and/ or broadleaves planted for sesonal cover       Maintains or increases soil organic matter         Mulching       Improves water infinition and water-holding capacity       Improves mater infinition and water-holding capacity         Mulching       Improves soil moisture management       Improves soil moisture management         Reduces compaction       Improves soil moisture management         Pollinator & Beneficial Insect Habitat       Improves soil moisture management         Reduces soil organic matter       Improves soil moisture management         Pollinator & Beneficial Insect Habitat       Improves soil moisture management         State of the soil organic matter       Increases pollination of crops         Pollinator & Cropp Rotation       Improves soil moisture management         Microirrigation       Improves infiation and paratitism of pests         Provide adverse mumber of crops in a planned sequence       Increases pollination of crops         Provide adverse mumber of crops in a planned sequence       Improves infiation matter use efficiency         Minitation       Improves infiation mater use efficiency         Proves plant develor       Improves infiation mater use efficiency         Proves plant develor       Improves infiation mater use efficiency         Proves plant develor       Improves infiation mater use efficiency         Proves plant deve		covered structure that	»	Extends the growing season
Mulching       • Reduces weed pressure and erosion         Pollinator & Beneficial Insect Habitat       • Increases pollination of crops o support pollinators and beneficial insects       • Increases pollination of crops • Increases predation and parasitism of pests • Reduces soil erosion, runoff and improves water quality         Crop Rotation       • Reduces crop pests (insects, disease, weeds) • Adds soil biological diversity • Can reduce erosion         Microirrigation       • Increase press (insects, disease, weeds) • Adds soil biological diversity • Can reduce erosion		or broadleaves planted for	» » »	Maintains or increases soil organic matter Traps and cycles nutrients Improves water infiltration and water-holding capacity
& Beneficial Insect Habitat       Increases production of crops         Crop Rotation       Increases production and parasitism of pests         Reduces soil erosion, runoff and improves water quality         Proving a diverse number of crops in a planned sequence       *         Reduces crop pests (insects, disease, weeds)         Adds soil biological diversity         Can reduce erosion	Mulching	other suitable materials to the	»	Reduces weed pressure and erosion
Rotation <ul> <li>Adds soil biological diversity</li> <li>Can reduce erosion</li> </ul> Microirrigation <ul> <li>Managing the volume, frequency, and rate of irrigation water</li> <li>Minimize irrigation-induced soil erosion</li> <li>Minimize irrigation-induced soil erosion</li> </ul>	& Beneficial	grasses and wildflowers to support pollinators and	»	Increases predation and parasitism of pests Reduces soil erosion, runoff and improves water
Managing the volume, frequency, and rate of irrigation water » Minimize irrigation-induced soil erosion Improves plant growing conditions			»	Adds soil biological diversity
	Microirrigation	frequency, and rate of	» »	Minimize irrigation-induced soil erosion Improves plant growing conditions

## For more information visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/Indiana