

Outagamie County Success from the Field

Pollinator Planting Blooms Throughout Growing Season

Background

In 1991, Gerry Mich purchased 230 acres of cropland, grassland and forest in northern Outagamie county. With the help of a Forest Management Plan through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), he has since been working tirelessly at managing the land for timber and wildlife purposes. Throughout the years since he purchased the land, Gerry has continued to educate himself on management techniques that assist him in his goal for a diverse and sustainable property.

Program Successes

Timber and wildlife habitat, for deer in particular, have always been a priority in the established property management and goals. However in 2017, Gerry decided to pursue new ideas to help diversify his land. Gerry applied and received a contract through the NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Under the program, he would continue to improve his property by eliminating invasive species within his forest, such as spotted knapweed, and improve his grassland fields by planting them to a monarch habitat mix. Site preparation was key. Throughout late 2017 and spring/summer of 2018, Gerry worked diligently at making sure the field was properly prepared for the first of his two plantings that would occur in 2018 and 2019.



Pictured left:
 The field before Gerry began site prep. The field was a mix of reed canary grass, clovers and other cool season grasses.

The site preparation process was again, completed the next year for the second of the two plantings accounting for a total of four acres. The management doesn't stop there. Gerry continued to mow the monarch/pollinator plantings throughout the first growing season, preventing the annual weeds from

becoming a problem and insuring the perennial flowers that were planted had a chance to flourish. Gerry found out that it was a lot of hard work but, it certainly has paid off! The plantings looked excellent in 2020. Flowering plants were observed throughout the entire growing season, some of which include: Foxglove Beardtongue, Golden Alexanders, Common Milkweed, Black Eyed Susan, Bergamot, Coreopsis, New England Aster, and many others.



Pictured left: (Top) Vervain, Boneset and Black Eyed Susan thrive after the monarch/pollinator planting. **(Bottom)** Coreopsis and Foxglove Beardtongue in bloom on the property.



Future Plans

When Gerry's CSP contract is up for renewal, he plans on planting more acres to monarch/pollinator mix. The entirety of his farm will continue to be holistically managed so that his family will have a diverse and beautiful property for generations to come. Gerry sums it up best himself, "I have found working with Lynn and Tony (NRCS staff) very educational. I knew little about prairies, but I now have four acres. I could not have done it without the encouragement and advice from NRCS. I've found you can trust NRCS to help you be successful. EQIP helped me get a management plan for my property and CSP has helped me plant a prairie. It is reassuring to work with friendly folks who are knowledgeable. I like to share photos of all the different flowering plants that I find. It's like Christmas with pretty surprises throughout the summer."

Wisconsin
Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

