

## Establishing Pollinator Habitats

Establishing habitats for pollinators can increase plant health and vigor, improve biodiversity and land productivity, and increase the food base for many wildlife species. Better plant diversity within pollinator habitats will enhance wildlife habitat and may increase populations of other beneficial insects.

NRCS's Plant Enhancement Activity (*PLT01-Establish Pollinator Habitat*) suggests that a pollinator habitat area should be at least half an acre in size and include at least nine flowering plants species. NRCS also recommends removing introduced species of plants and grasses while promoting native species.



For additional information, contact your local NRCS office, Soil and Water Conservation District office, or local USDA Service Center. NRCS offices are listed in the telephone directory under U. S. Government, Department of Agriculture.

United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
P.O. Box 311 (3381 Skyway Drive 36830)  
Auburn, AL 36831-0311

Phone: 334-887-4500  
Fax: 334-887-4551

You may also visit Alabama NRCS online:  
<http://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov/>

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## NRCS Helping to Establish Pollinator Habitats



Helping People Help the Land

## Pollinators Are Essential for Sustaining a Healthy Food Supply

Pollination plays a vital role in the health of our national forests, grasslands, and private farm and ranchlands. Together, these areas provide forage, fish and wildlife, timber, water, mineral resources, and recreational opportunities, as well as enhanced economic development opportunities for communities. Keeping pollinator populations healthy is critical to maintaining our quality of life.



## Native Plants Can Attract Pollinators

Native trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses planted along farm and ranch borders and within fields can attract wildlife, including pollinators and beneficial insects. The right mix of plant species will bloom all season and provide a continuous source of nectar and pollen needed by pollinators.

## Pollinator-Friendly Native Species Plantings Can Help:

- **Reduce Pesticide Use** by providing habitat and winter cover for insects, enhancing weed seed suppression and providing some biological control of insect and disease pests.
- **Stabilize Soil and Provide Ground Cover** by holding root systems in place to reduce the risk of erosion.
- **Act as Windbreaks and Shelterbelts** to protect farmsteads, crops, and livestock from wind and dust damage and may help to filter wind-blown weed seed.
- **Provide Wildlife Habitat.** Woody perennials provide food and shelter for many native wildlife species.
- **Provide Clean Air** (carbon cycling/sequestration). Flowering plants produce breathable oxygen by using the carbon dioxide produced by plants and animals as they respire.
- **Water and Soils.** Flowering plants help to purify water and prevent erosion through roots that holds the soil in place, and foliage that buffers the impact of rain as it falls to the earth.



## Pollinator-Friendly Plantings and NRCS Programs

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers financial assistance that can help agricultural producers establish pollinator-friendly native species of plants. This assistance is available through some of NRCS's programs, such as:

- **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**
- **Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program**
- **Conservation Stewardship Program**

NRCS supports the use of native species in many conservation practices that involve seeding or transplanting. Selecting pollinator-friendly native species for these practices can provide added conservation benefits. These practices include:

- Channel bank vegetation
- Critical area planting
- Early successional habitat development and management
- Field borders
- Filter strips
- Riparian herbaceous cover

