

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

Habitat for Pollinators



How to Help Pollinators

Pollinators, including both commercially-raised honey bees and native pollinators, play an important role in food production and our environment.

Pollinators are especially important to Michigan's fruit and vegetable producers as pollinators help improve the quality and quantity of the food they produce. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides technical and financial conservation assistance to help farmers protect pollinators.

Forage & Nesting Habitat

Any area of a farming or forest operation that is not in cultivation can be utilized for permanent pollinator habitat. Establishing habitat with plants that flower throughout the growing season is important, especially for supporting native pollinators. When selecting a seed mixture, it is important to include different species that bloom throughout the growing season from spring through late fall.

Native plants are most effective for pollinator plantings as they will thrive once they are established and provide proper nourishment. It is also important to control weeds and woody vegetation by utilizing prescribed burning or mowing periodically. NRCS assistance is available for both establishing and maintaining pollinator habitat.

In addition to habitat plantings, allowing cover crops and forage to flower before cutting also benefits pollinators.

Another consideration for pollinator habitat is nesting sites. Many pollinators,

such as bumble bees, nest underground. It is important to minimize tillage and other disruptions around pollinator plantings that could disrupt ground nesting pollinators.



Establishing pollinator habitat near orchards and fields benefits not only pollinators but also other beneficial insects and wildlife.

Pest Management

Utilizing integrated pest management methods will limit the impact of pesticides and herbicides on pollinators and other beneficial insects.

Practices such as applying pesticides at the time of day when pollinators are less active, reduces their exposure. The amount of pesticides can be reduced if they are applied at the precise time in the life cycle of the targeted pest when they are most effective. This can be accomplished by utilizing pest scouting in contrast to a strict calendar-based application schedule.

EQIP

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides conservation financial assistance for working lands. Rather than take land out of production, EQIP helps farmers maintain or improve production while conserving natural resources.

EQIP assistance is available for all types of agricultural operations, including field crops, specialty crops, organic, confined livestock and grazing, and private non-industrial forest land.

Another method to reduce pesticide use is to treat targeted areas of pest damage rather than broadcasting pesticides. Reducing pesticide exposure to non-targeted insects benefits not only pollinators but also beneficial insects that prey on crop pests.

These are just a few pest management practices that can be incorporated into an integrated pest management system. NRCS has financial assistance available for producers to develop a plan with a certified Technical Service Provider.



Ground nesting pollinators like bumble bees need undisturbed ground for nesting sites.

NRCS Assistance

Local NRCS conservationists can provide technical assistance for establishing pollinator habitat and other practices to protect pollinators. In addition, eligible landowners may be able to receive financial assistance to offset the cost of establishing or improving pollinator habitat and related practices.

Conservation financial assistance for pollinator habitat is also available through the USDA Conservation Reserve Program. Producers should compare both programs before applying.

Conservation Practices for Pollinators:

- Brush Management
- Conservation Cover
- Conservation Crop Rotation
- Cover Crops
- Early Successional Habitat Development/Management
- Field Border
- Forage and Biomass Planting
- Foreststand Improvement
- Prescribed Burning
- Prescribed Grazing
- Riparian Herbaceous Cover
- Tree/Shrub Establishment
- Upland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Fence (for livestock exclusion only)
- Firebreak
- Herbaceous Weed Control
- Integrated Pest Management (for adjoining crop or pasture only)
- Wetland Wildlife Habitat Management
- Windbreak Shelterbelt Establishment



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