



Pollinator Habitat at Omeg Family Orchards

- Benefits
- How we started
 - Where/how to plant?
 - What to plant?
- Management of our plantings.



Pollinator Habitat at Orchards



Photo by Mary Stewart



Photo by Mary Stewart

Why do I establish pollinator habitat?

Because it makes me money.

- Eliminated Black Cherry Aphid sprays due to increased predator activity.
- Increased crop set on Regina variety due to improved pollination.
- Studies in tree fruits are limited but its hard to argue with results: We are planting more insectaries each year.



Getting Started

- Find some help:
 - Xerces Society - xerces.org
 - Local native plant nurseries – plantnative.org
 - NRCS and Conservation Districts
 - Native Pollinators in Agriculture – agpollinators.org
- Find a place to plant
 - Start small
 - Somewhere you can make regular observations
- Prep your site
- Select what you want to plant
- Plant, manage and observe.

Finding a place to start: *Roadsides work great*











Site prep and management

- Talk to the experts and get a plan.
- For our plantings we:
 1. Rototill then irrigate.
 2. Keep in chemical fallow for at least two years.
 3. Plant potted plants then mulch with sawdust.
 4. Irrigate twice monthly for the first 2 years using drip. After that we water monthly in July-October.
 5. Fertilize each spring.





Weeds are a challenge







What to plant:

Tall, hardy, perennial, long blooming,
cheap, readily available



Nuttall's Sunflower



Goldenrod



Spearmint



Redosier Dogwood

(like more water than others)



Wild (Rugosa) Rose

Watch out for leafrollers!



Conclusion

- Pollinator plantings make you money.
- Get expert help to develop a plan and then start small.
- Site prep and weeds are major management factors. Don't ignore them.
- I prefer tall, hardy, perennial, long blooming plants.
- Observe what works and be open to change.

More info at: omegorchards.com

