

Establishing Pollinator Plantings Organically

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Pollinator Planting Benefits

“Increased habitat for pollinators will improve fruit set, size and quality, productivity per acre, biodiversity, beneficial insect populations, and the food base for many wildlife species. The increased plant diversity of pollinator habitat will enhance wildlife habitat and may increase populations of other beneficial insects, reducing the need for pesticides.” NRCS.

Blueberry Hill Organic Farm has observed significant improvement in fruit set, size and quality, as well as a noticeable reduction in pest species since the establishment of the pollinator plantings.

Blueberry Hill Organic Farm .2 acre Pollinator Planting Budget; \$400/.2 acre

Grant Reimbursement Funds Provided by NRCS, EQUIP Grant; \$585/acre

Seeds; Northeastern Pollinator mix with Wild Lupine

Ernst Seeds; Xerces Northeastern Pollinator Conservation Seed Mix \$81.90/lb, recommended rate of 8lbs/acre

Eden Brothers; Wild Perennial Lupine Seed \$19.95/1/4 lb, recommended rate of 1 lb/acre

Seeder; Nolts Produce Supplies; Earthway Seeder \$87.00

Mulch; Straw; \$7/bale, 20 bales

1 lb of the Pollinator seed, 1/4 lb of the Lupine Seed, approximately 20 bales of straw was used for .2 acres, requiring approximately 4 hours of labor

Pollinator Planting Establishment Procedures;

Contacted;

NRCS and applied for EQUIP grant to include Pollinator Habitat Planting

Purchased;

-Xerces Society Northeastern Pollinator Conservation Seed from Ernst Conservation Seed Co., www.ernstseed.com or 800-873-3321

-Wild Perennial Lupine seed from Eden Brothers, www.edenbrothers.com
828-633-6338

-Earthway Seeder from Nolts Produce Supplies; www.noltsproducesupplies.net, 717-656-9764

Preparation;

-Scarified Lupine seed with plastic jar and sand paper and added to Pollinator seed mix

-Turned soil with Troybilt tiller

-Raked out large clumps, rocks

Planting , Mulch, Care;

-Seeded in late April/early May using Earthway seeder and cucumber or popcorn plate, rows at 2' apart, approximately ¼ " deep

-Seeded just before rain

-Mulched with straw between rows

-Watered as needed to establish

-Mowed year three in late fall

Notes; Soil pH was approximately 5.8, second and third year pollinator planting provided constant bloom from late May through late October