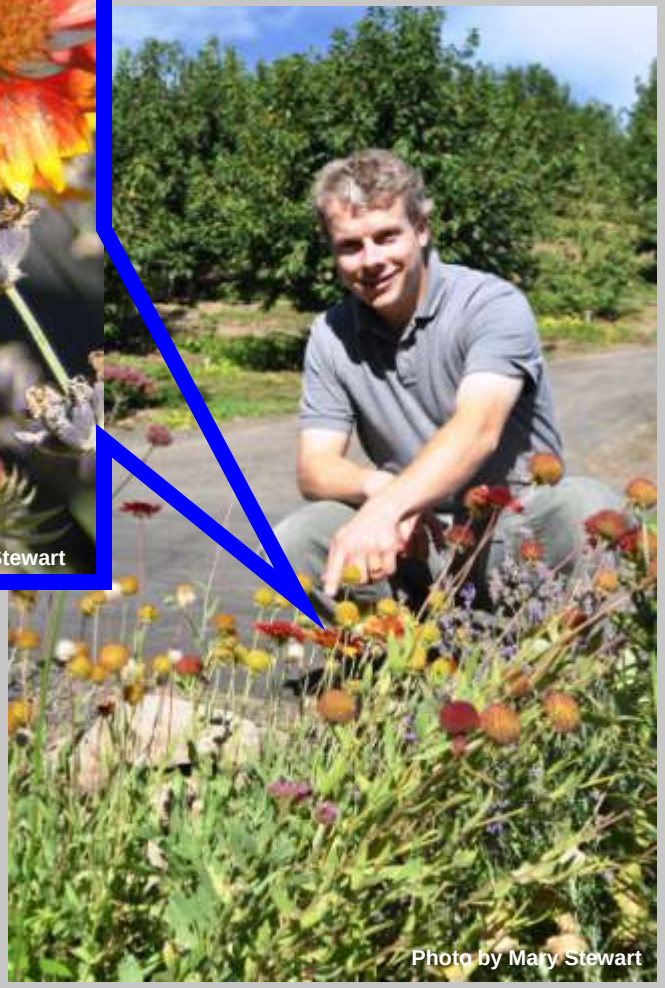
Pollinator Habitat at Omeg Family Orchards

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

Pollinator Habitat at Orchards



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 Conser-vation 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