Pollinator Habitat at Omeg Family Orchards

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

Photo by Mary Stewart
Pollinator Habitat at Omeg Family Orchards

• Benefits
• Getting started
• Management

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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