

# Hedgerows and Pollinator Habitat

Hedgerows are plantings of dense vegetation (perennial grasses, shrubs, and small trees) along the edges of agricultural fields. They serve as a windbreak as well as a way to add biodiversity and create habitat for beneficial insects and other wildlife. They also increase carbon storage in biomass and soils. Some ranchers and farmers have found ways to use these plantings for additional cash crops or as a way to make their land more aesthetically beautiful. The annual value of crops pollinated by wild, native bees and other pollinators in the U.S. is estimated at \$3 billion. But these insects and birds have declined due to habitat loss and excessive use of pesticides and other factors. Because over 30% of our food relies on native pollinators the federal government has taken a keen interest in encouraging and providing support for farmers who establish habitat for pollinators on their farms.



## Benefits

- Increases biodiversity
- Improves ecosystem function and resiliency
- Provides a windbreak, preventing erosion
- Can provide shelter and food for livestock
- Can provide an additional cash crop
- Reduces or eliminates need to truck in bees for crops that depend on that
- Increases carbon sequestration
- Adds aesthetic beauty, providing emotional benefit to farm employees and community



## Potential Considerations

- Cost, labor, and time to add them
- Research time to choose plants for desired outcomes
- Research and design time to determine where to put them and how
- Native plants are often preferred by bees over non-native plants
- Some hedgerows may require trimming, an ongoing maintenance cost
- Might need to add protection from rabbits and other small rodents who could cause crop damage



## Resources



### **NRCS Conservation Practice Standard—Hedgerow Planting**

Minimum quality criteria that must be met to achieve the intended purpose.  
<https://bit.ly/3ctxVxd>



### **Establishing Hedgerows on Farms in California**

Publication by Rachael Long and John Anderson at UC Davis  
<https://bit.ly/3pFxoPD>



### **Hedgerows & Farmscaping for California Agriculture**

In-depth manual about choosing and caring for appropriate plants.  
<https://bit.ly/356IKkL>

## Financial Assistance



### **Equip, USDA-NRCS**

Includes funds for pollinator habitat projects.  
<https://bit.ly/3giLv7u>

### **Conservation Reserve Program, USDA-NRCS**

Pays a yearly rental payment to farmers for removing environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production and planting species that will improve environmental quality. <https://bit.ly/359XtLK>

### **CDFA Healthy Soils Program**

Check to see when they will start accepting applications again. <https://bit.ly/3pidbh3>

## Research

Garratt P.D., Michael, etc. “The benefits of hedgerows for pollinators and natural enemies depends on hedge quality and landscape context.” *Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment*, Volume 247, 1 September 2017, Pages 363-370. <https://bit.ly/3ziF7Gk>

Long R., Garbach K, Morandin L. 2017. “Hedgerow benefits align with food production and sustainability goals.” *Calif Agr* 71(3):117-119. <https://bit.ly/3wqDgol>

Morandin, Lora A., Kremen, Claire. “Hedgerow restoration promotes pollinator populations and exports native bees to adjacent fields.” *Ecological Applications*, 23(4), 06-01-2013. <https://bit.ly/3gu3Xuh>

Stiles, William. “The benefits of hedgerows and trees for agriculture.” IBERS, Aberystwyth University, September 2016. <https://bit.ly/3pJkgYo>

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