Why Pollinators?

Why is Pollinator Habitat important to me?

- Pollination and Pollinator species are crucial to the world food supply. As many as 75% of all flowering plants in the world require the use of pollinators to reproduce.
- Pollinator species like bees have been experiencing significant population declines in recent years.
- Pollinating insects are essential for wildlife as a food source, especially pheasant and quail chicks.
- Pollinator habitat will help keep your CRP planting in a more diverse and productive condition.

Why should I use an increased number of wildflower species in my mix?

- It's great insurance against future program compliance issues if you were to end up with less than 9 wildflower species in your planting based on events like managed haying and grazing, natural successional changes, competition with grasses, etc.
- The more diverse your pollinator habitat planting is, the more wildlife species it will support.
- Many pollinator species need a certain size and shape of flower; more species in your mixture will increase the likelihood of providing good pollinator habitat.

How many wildflower species should I include?

- For the reasons stated above, the more wildflower species you can plant in your mixture, the better. Twenty is the minimum to provide true pollinator habitat—you may choose to add more.
- Mixtures that contain a high number of wildflower species are not as expensive as they once were. Highly diverse pollinator mixtures can be designed so that cost is about the same as CRP grass mixtures.
- FSA regulations require that pollinator mixtures are calculated on a PLS/ft^2 manner rather than in the old pounds per acre method. This gives you many options to consider and use when creating pollinator habitat mixtures. Remember, the goal is to get lots of plant diversity…. That means just a few of many different species rather than many of only a few. It's simple math.

Other Pollinator Habitat Considerations

- Since you already have to plant wildflowers to get an increased EBI score, you will have already given up the use of broad spectrum broadleaf herbicides (like 2, 4-D) in the CRP planting. Adding more wildflower species to the mix is just a good idea.
- With CRP moving in the direction of diverse stands of wildflowers and grasses, controlling noxious weeds in the future means more spot treatments of the problem areas and less broadcast treatments—this will ultimately save you both time and money.
- Haying and grazing at the wrong times can hurt your pollinator planting, so you will want to be sensitive to where your pollinator habitat is located to keep them in your mix in the future.