United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Plant Enhancement Activity - PLT18 – Increasing on-farm food production with edible woody buffer landscapes

Enhancement Description
This enhancement is for the enhancing of windbreaks, alley cropping, silvopasture, or riparian forest buffer systems with trees and shrubs that produce edible products for human or wildlife consumption.

Land Use Applicability
Cropland, Pastureland

Benefits
An edible landscape is special in that it is planted with trees and shrubs that produce foods that we can eat/sell or that are beneficial for wildlife. Trees and shrubs can be used to provide shade, to improve microenvironments or to protect crops, or to mitigate challenging environmental issues. In an edible landscape they provide more than just a protective structure, they become sources of food that produce home grown and nutritious fruits and nuts, increase household food security, and create sites that provide critical habitat for pollinators and wildlife.

Conditions Where Enhancement Applies
This enhancement applies to all crop or pasture land use acres.

Criteria

1. Follow appropriate standard for basic agroforestry practice design.
2. Plant tree, shrub and bramble species that produce food and/or culinary items to create an edible landscape. Lists of suitable woody plants will be available at your local NRCS field office.
3. Maximize planting space by creating vertical structure with varying plant heights and plant sizes.
4. Use all of the following methods to improve edible food production:
    - Add at least one edible food producing row to existing agroforestry practices or incorporate at least one edible food producing row into new planting designs.
    - Adding planting masses in scattered clusters is encouraged.
    - Plant a variety of tree, shrub and bramble species (3 or more; use native species whenever possible) with varying flowering times to favor pollinator species and to add a longer harvest time frame. Choosing several fruit bearing cultivars can provide an extended period of seasonal production.

- Minimize herbicide use. Use spot weed treatments and avoid spraying when flowers are present.

Adoption Requirements

This enhancement is considered adopted when each selected acre has been planted to the desired tree, shrub and bramble species that produce food or culinary item.

Documentation requirements

1. List of edible food producing trees, shrubs and brambles.
2. Brief written description of the activities (criteria) completed with dates of application and receipts for planting stock, herbicides, etc.
3. Acreage of the enhancement activity.
4. Delineations on a map or aerial photo of landscape layout and placement.

References

- *Working Trees for Agriculture*. 2008. USDA National Agroforestry Center, Lincoln, NE.
- *Agroforestry: Sustaining Native Bee habitat for Crop Production*. August 2006. Agroforestry Notes – AF Note 32. USDA National Agroforestry Center, Lincoln, NE.
- *Improving Forage for native Bee Crop Pollinators*. August 2006. Agroforestry Notes – AF Note 33. USDA National Agroforestry Center, Lincoln, NE.
- *Edible Woody Landscapes for People and Wildlife*. 2001. University of Nebraska – Lincoln, Cooperative Extension.
- *Fruits and Nuts for Edible Landscaping*. May 2001. Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service. Landscape Horticulture, HO-190-W.

Indiana CSP Enhancement Supplemental Information

PLT18 – Increasing on-farm food production with edible woody buffer landscapes:

Choose woody plant species (trees and/or shrubs) from the following lists:

1. the appropriate *CSP Wildlife Plant Species* tables http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CSP/csp2010/2010%20CSP%20Wildlife%20Plant%20Species.doc or,
2. the **IN Seed Calculator** (http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/IN/IN_NRCS_Seeding_Calculator.xlsm) (Required: check "Yes" for wildlife-friendly species).