



New Research Demonstrates Viability of Pollinator Friendly Groundcovers in Agricultural Systems

Wendy and George Kral, PhD of Scholls Valley Native Nursery recently implemented a series of field trials and prepared a report that examines the suitability of a broad suite of native and naturalized plants as groundcovers in headland roads, hedgerows, production field furrows, woodlands and bioswales. The goal of the research was to “identify and test a diversity of native and naturalized herbaceous plants with potential to support birds, pollinating insects and other wildlife while also providing the benefits of groundcovers for erosion control, soil tilth and weed abatement.”

After testing a suite of species common to the Tualatin Valley in a pilot study, the Kral's examined the effectiveness of four groundcover mixes totalling 76 species across a mix of agricultural settings. They evaluated success of the seed application and plantings on their performance within the following metrics:

- germination/ease of establishment
- coverage
- seasonality
- pollinator support
- compatibility with crop systems/land use
- invasiveness/mobility

The authors found that increasing the plant diversity of non-farmed areas has demonstrable benefits to pollinators, and experienced no negative impact to their bare-root nursery crop yields. This project provides invaluable data that supports agricultural producers who are hoping to decrease reliance on large scale herbicide use and improve wildlife habitat and biodiversity on their farmland. This study was funded by a **TREE grant** awarded by the Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District. Read the full findings [here](#).



(Clockwise from left) Bumblebee departing *Eschscholzia californica*, bee mimic pollinating *Madia elegans*, solitary bee on *Plagiobothrys scouleri*, Swallowtail butterfly visiting *Gilia capitata*, bee mimic pollinating *Spergularia rubra*. Photo Credit: Scholls Valley Native Nursery