Insectary Plantings

Insectary Plants Defined

‘Insectary plantings’ refers to the use of flowering plants which contain resources in the form of nectar and pollen for natural enemies of crop pests and other beneficials.

In addition to floral resources, these plantings can provide alternate prey or host food and shelter for certain natural enemies.

Insectary Planting Tactics

Insectary plants can be included in cropping systems in many different configurations, including:

- Within the crop field or orchard in strips or smaller blocks
- Among hedgerow plants, or as perennial or annual plantings in crop margins
- In cover crops

By selectively conserving existing insectary plants

Types of Natural Enemies which Make Use of these Plantings

If carefully selected, the floral resources of insectary plants can potentially attract, retain, and/or enhance the reproduction, longevity and effectiveness of a wide range of natural enemies, especially:

- hoverflies
- ladybird beetles
- parasitoid tachinid flies
- predacious wasps
- soldier beetles
- green lacewings
- parasitoid wasps
- ground beetles
- spiders
- rove beetles
- assassin bugs
- damsel bugs
- minute pirate bug
- big-eyed bug
- predacious stink bugs

Other common natural enemies can also be attracted and enhanced by the alternate prey or host food and shelter found in some insectary plantings, such as:

- Some photos above are from the collections of Ken Gray and Nigel Cattlin

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