The Farm on Putah Creek: Putting Pollinator Restoration into Practice

The Xerces Society, the University of California-Berkeley, and Audubon California have been working with the Center for Land-Based Learning to develop a native pollinator demonstration site for the Farm on Putah Creek. This site was developed to provide a working model for native pollinator habitat restoration in agricultural landscapes.

Walking north past the Center for Land-Based Learning office down the gravel drive and around the bend towards the farm house and barn, you will see a walnut orchard to your left and the pollinator restoration site on your right. This restoration site is composed of a hedgerow and plantings around the sediment trap and tailwater pond.

Over the past two years, pollinator-friendly plants were planted as a supplement to the existing hedgerow and pond planting. These plants were chosen to provide a year round supply of pollen and a diverse array of colors and floral shapes for bees to choose from.

Most days of the year you can see some of the diversity of California's 1,500 native bee species by spending ten minutes watching any of the flowering plants along this hedgerow.

This table highlights some of the flowering forbs and shrubs planted in the hedgerow and around the sediment trap.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Time of Bloom
Western redbud	*Cercis occidentalis*	Early Spring
California poppy	*Eschscholzia californica*	Spring
California wild rose	*Rosa californica*	Spring - Summer
Gum plant	*Grindelia camporum*	Summer
California buckwheat	*Eriogonum fasciculatum*	Summer - Fall
Coyote brush	*Baccharis pilularis*	Fall

The sediment trap was seeded in February 2006 with California poppy and lupine. This area will be seeded biannually with ten species of flowering plants including yarrow, vinegar weed, and turkey mullein.

On the North end of the hedgerow, just after the drive turns west, you will see an artificial nest block on a stand. This block of wood is drilled with smooth holes of various sizes. It will provide nest sites for solitary bees that ordinarily build their nests in abandoned beetle burrows or other tunnels in snags.

Looking closely below the hedgerow, one might see a bumble bee flying from an abandoned rodent nest under the duff or from under the meadow thatch around the tailwater pond. Bumble bees are one of the few social native bees, and usually our most important native pollinators.

By providing both floral and nesting resources for native bees, the Center for Land-Based Learning and the Farm on Putah Creek are playing an active role in restoring wild bees and the services they provide.

For more information on how to make artificial nest blocks or to download a list of annual forbs and flowering shrubs that can be a year round source of pollen for native bees in California visit www.xerces.org

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The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

Center for Land-Based Learning

NRCS Natural Resources Conservation Service

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