



Conservation Options for Urban Agriculture

NRCS offers technical and financial assistance to help food and farm operators, landowners, Tribes & other organizations who produce local foods.

USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Are you interested in improving the health of your soil and plants on your food or farm operation? Or perhaps you would like to save labor and water to improve your irrigation water efficiency. Or maybe you would like to better manage for pests and weeds. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) may be able to help.

NRCS offers technical and financial assistance to farmers, ranchers, forest managers, landowners, Tribes and other groups to conserve natural resources on their land. Participation in our programs is entirely voluntary. We can help you install conservation practices that suit the unique needs of your property and help you achieve your management goals.

NRCS Conservation Planners will visit your growing area and evaluate the current conditions of natural resources such as soil, water, air, plants, animals/wildlife habitat and energy. Together, we can identify possible conservation practices to help improve the health and productivity of your operation.



NRCS helps food and farm operators improve the health of their soil, water, air, plants and animals to sustain and enhance local food production.



ALASKA
Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

Practice

Description

Benefits

Seasonal High Tunnel



An enclosed, covered structure that protects crops from sun, wind, excessive rainfall or cold that extends the growing season in an environmentally safe manner.

- » Extend the growing season
- » Improve plant health
- » Increase diversity of crops grown
- » Protect crops from frost and wind
- » Energy savings from local food production

Low Tunnel



An enclosed, covered structure that protects crops from sun, wind, excessive rainfall, or cold, that extends the growing season or reduces pest pressure.

- » Extend the growing season
- » Improve plant health
- » Protect crops from frost and wind
- » Reduce plant pest pressures

Nutrient Management



Managing the rate, source, placement, and timing of plant nutrients and soil amendments while reducing environmental impacts.

- » Improve plant health and productivity
- » Save money on fertilizers and amendments by reducing inputs and only applying what you need
- » Reduce excess nutrients in surface and ground water
- » Improve soil health

Cover Crop



Planting grasses, legumes and forbes for the purpose of providing seasonal vegetative cover and protection of the soil.

- » Reduce soil loss from erosion caused by wind and water
- » Improve soil health and organic matter
- » Suppress weed pressure and break pest cycles
- » Improve soil moisture efficiency
- » Minimize soil compaction

Crop Rotation



Rotating the sequence of which crops you grow on the same ground over a period of time.

- » Reduce erosion
- » Improve soil health and organic matter
- » Reduce plant pest pressures
- » Reduce water quality degradation due to excess nutrients
- » Improve soil moisture efficiency

Practice

Description

Benefits

Composting Facility



A structure or device to contain and facilitate decomposition of manure, other organic material, or both into compost.

- » Reduce water pollution potential
- » Conserve energy by reducing organic waste solids
- » Reuse organic waste as animal bedding
- » Transform organic waste into a soil amendment that improves soil health

Micro-Irrigation System



An irrigation system that applies small amounts of water on or below the soil surface through applicators placed along a water delivery line.

- » Conserve water through improved water use efficiency
- » Maintain soil moisture for plant growth
- » Save labor compared to hand watering
- » Improve plant productivity and health

Irrigation Water Management



Monitoring and adjusting the volume, frequency, and application rate of irrigation water to maximize water use efficiency.

- » Collect data to ensure you are not over-watering or under-watering
- » Minimize soil erosion caused by too much irrigation
- » Protect surface and ground water quality
- » Manage moisture in plant root zones

Pest Management Conservation System



A system that combines integrated pest management decision making with natural resource conservation to address pest and environmental impacts.

- » Reduce plant pest pressure
- » Reduce injury to beneficial organisms such as pollinators
- » Reduce transport of pesticides to surface and ground water
- » Reduce emissions of particulate matter and ozone from pesticide use

Wildlife Habitat Planting

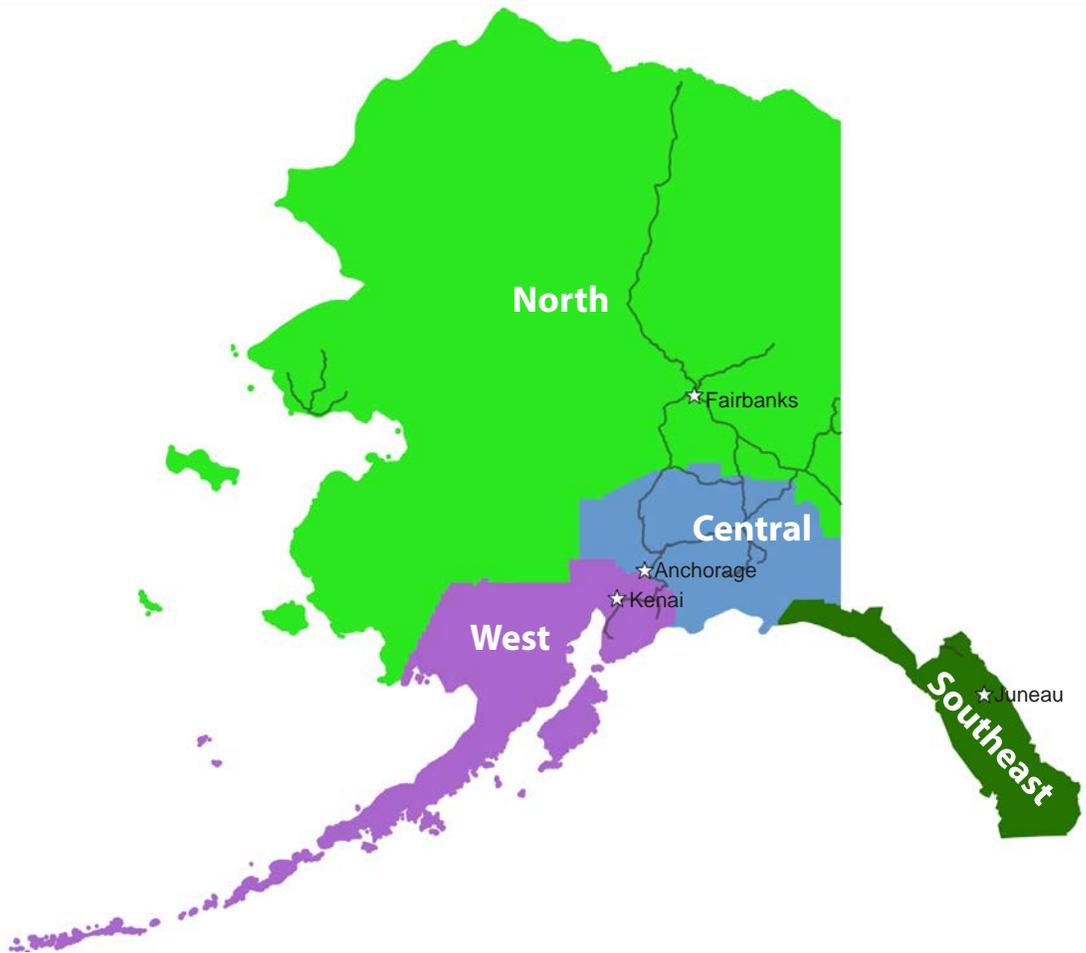


Establishing wildlife habitat to include pollinator habitat by planting vegetation or shrubs.

- » Attract pollinators to your farm or garden including bees
- » Increase habitat for pollinators and other desired wildlife
- » Increase biodiversity on your operation
- » Increase native plants



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