

Elanor O'Brien, Jeff Falen, Gwendolyn Ellen, Paul Jepson

Integrated Plant Protection Center, Oregon State University, 2040 Cordley Hall, Corvallis, OR 97331-2915



Persephone Farm

Persephone Farm in Lebanon, Oregon is bordered by the South Santiam River, with diverse and mature riparian vegetation, and oak savannah that eventually merge with the forested vegetation of the western Cascade foothills. Innovative farmers, Jeff Falen and Elanor O'Brien have been farming organic vegetables there for 20 years.

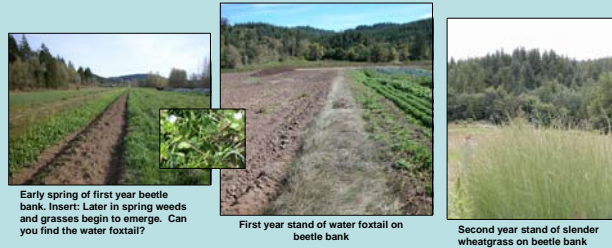


"Several crops that we direct seed for market, such as dill leaf and cilantro, provide insectary benefits when allowed to stand and bloom past harvest time. Growers who sow and sell salad mix may consider letting mustard greens, arugula, and Asian greens bloom after harvest. In many cases consideration is a moot point. . . bloom happens."

Elanor O'Brien, Persephone Farm

Experimental Beetle Banks at Persephone Farm

Persephone Farm has the oldest experimental beetle bank in the project. It was created in fall 2004 and is approximately 4 X 400 feet. It is divided into three sections and direct seeded with water foxtail (*Alopecurus geniculatus*), blue wild rye (*Elymus glaucus*) and slender wheatgrass (*Elymus trachycaulus*) respectively.



Early spring of first year beetle bank. Insert: Later in spring weeds and grasses begin to emerge. Can you find the water foxtail?

First year stand of water foxtail on beetle bank

Second year stand of slender wheatgrass on beetle bank

A week or so after the bank was raised it was flamed with a back-pack flamer. The following spring, sections of the water foxtail were hand weeded. Most of the water foxtail section was established by the first year. Some bare areas were over-seeded with blue wild rye. In the second year, a vigorous, thick stand of slender wheatgrass emerged where only weeds were thought to have been. It took two seasons for the slender wheatgrass to become established! This section of the bank was mowed in the summer. The entire bank consists of thick stands of water foxtail, more sparse areas of blue wild rye and a thick stand of slender wheatgrass.

In fall 2006, another 4 X 400 foot bank was constructed at Persephone Farm and direct seeded with water foxtail and blue wild rye.

Farmscaping at Persephone Farm

by Elanor O'Brien

The farmscaping techniques used at Persephone Farm are simple and compliment our philosophy of diversity in a balanced ecosystem. Once we started to think about what practices we could employ to attract and sustain beneficial insects, we realized we already had a few things going for us.

Many natural aspects of the farm landscape and its surroundings affect local beneficial insect populations. The farm, surrounded by forested and riparian areas, benefits from beneficial insect activity in these border areas.

Our cover crops, planted for soil health, are also useful for farmscaping. The blooms of alfalfa, buckwheat, various clovers, fava, phacelia, vetches, peas, etc. are all attractive sources of nectar and pollen for beneficials. Even weeds are helpful. Various wild mustards and radishes are favored by parasitic wasps. Tall grasses provide shelter for many beneficial bugs, especially ladybugs. Mulching with straw, leaves, bark, or compost not only inhibits weeds and conserves moisture, but also provides fantastic habitat for spiders, a general predator.

What practices have we adopted specifically for the purpose of farmscaping for beneficials? We seed and transplant a variety of insectary species along with each mechanical transplanting of cash crops (ten transplantings, each 2 weeks apart throughout the season). The insectary plants we currently use for this are allysum, agastache, fennel mix, calendula, and orache.



Creating the Bank

