Native Plants for Wild Bee Conservation

Fact Sheet: Maximilian Sunflower

Scientific name: *Helianthus maximiliani* Schrad.

Maximilian sunflower was one of nine plant species used in research evaluating native perennial wildflower plantings for supporting wild bees and improving crop pollination on farmlands in Montana.

Family: Asteraceae
Life cycle: perennial
Growth habit: forb/herb

Flower color: yellow ray flowers, yellow-brown disk flowers
Flower shape: disk-shaped flowers
Foliage: dull gray-green, hairy, narrow, lance-shaped leaves
Height: 4-7 feet
Bloom period: July-September

Habitat: Grows in a variety of environments throughout its range including meadows, mixed- and tallgrass prairies, plains, roadsides, ditches, and disturbed sites.

Growing conditions: full sun; prefers dry to moist clay-like soils, but tolerates a range of soil types; drought tolerant once established.

Establishment: Seed does not require pre-treatment to break dormancy. For this project, we grew plants from seed in the greenhouse and transplanted them to the field as plugs in Spring. Plants flowered considerably during the year they were planted, and abundantly so the following two years. Overwintering success was high on all farms. Seed collecting was easy and seed matured fairly simultaneously. Seed was highly desirable to birds. Plants readily self-seeded and also spread via rhizomes.

For more information on native plants: Visit the USDA-NRCS PLANTS database or the Montana Native Plant Society website.

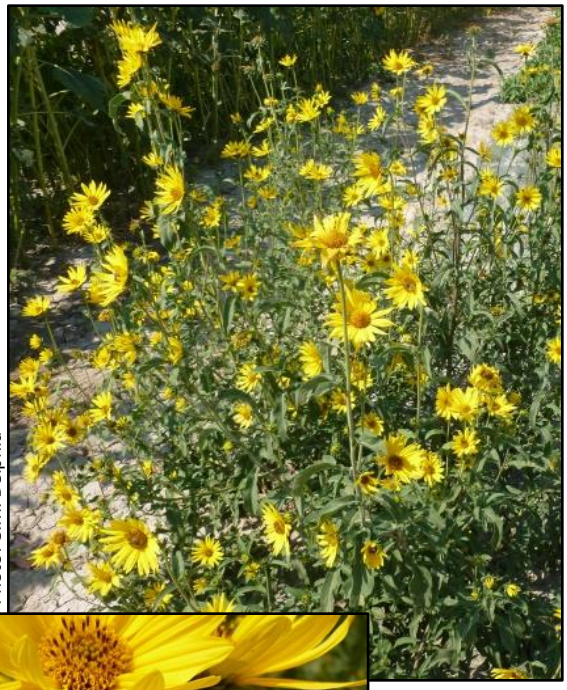

Photo: C.M. Delphia

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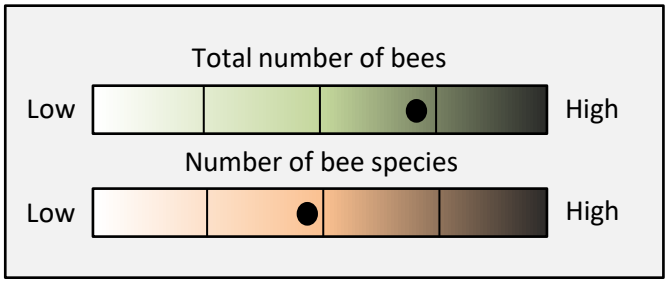
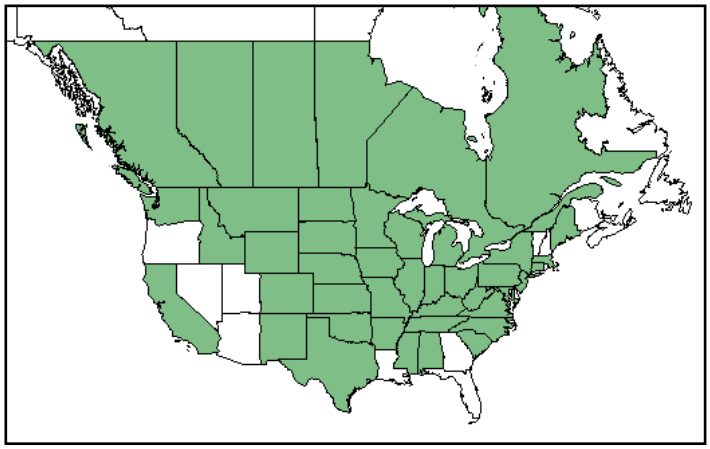
Bee visitation: Bumble bees, medium and small mining bees, green sweat bees, banded sweat bees, small dark sweat bees, small carpenter bees, mason bees, leafcutting bees, long-horned bees, and cuckoo bees.



Relative attractiveness of *H. maximiliani* across farms over 2 years.



Helianthus maximiliani distribution from USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

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