

Cultivating Conservation

Naramata Vineyards Grow Nature-Based Solutions

Nestled on the Naramata Bench, local growers are showing how agriculture and nature can thrive together. Along Aikins Loop, Elephant Island Winery and JOIE Farm Winery are blending the art of winemaking with the science of stewardship — planting native vegetation, attracting beneficial insects, and strengthening their farms.

Through the Farming With Wildlife initiative, a project led by Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship (Stewardship), the two vineyards have partnered to install a 535-plant shelterbelt and hedgerow along their shared fenceline. The project is supported by the South Okanagan Conservation Fund and the Sitka Foundation, and it serves as a living demonstration of how nature-based solutions can benefit both crops and wildlife.

Planting a hedgerow or shelterbelt is one of the most effective ways to bring balance back to a farm. In the Okanagan and Similkameen, these strips of native shrubs and wildflowers attract pollinators and beneficial insects that help control pests naturally- a proven win-win.

Stewardship staff worked with both vineyards to develop a customized list of native plants that support pollinators and beneficial insects common to the region. The mix includes flowering shrubs like snowberry, mock orange, and Nootka rose (species that provide habitat for lacewings, lady beetles, and wild bees) all vital allies in Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

“Native plants bring balance back to the farm,” explains Tamara Richardson, an agrologist from Cawston and contributor to Stewardship’s farm-centric workshops. “When you build habitat for beneficial insects, you create a natural pest management system that reduces the need for chemical inputs. It’s a win for the grower, the soil, and the ecosystem.”

The new shelterbelt will serve multiple purposes: filtering wind, stabilizing soil, improving biodiversity, and creating food and cover for birds and small mammals that help control pest populations. It’s a tangible example of how simple, science-based changes can make a difference across working lands in the Okanagan.





Nature-based Solutions in Practice

Our “Farming With Wildlife” initiative demonstrates how nature-based solutions can strengthen the resilience of agricultural landscapes in a changing climate. Hedgerows and shelterbelts moderate wind, improve soil health, and provide habitat connectivity for pollinators and wildlife moving through the Naramata Bench- part of a larger mosaic of working lands, riparian zones, and natural areas that make up the valley’s ecological corridors.

Each new planting is a small act of restoration, helping to reverse the gradual loss of native habitat from decades of development and intensive cultivation. Together, these projects form a growing network of stewardship sites that bridge the gap between conservation and cultivation.

When growers like Miranda and Del Halladay, and BJ Tumanut and Richard Charnock invest in native habitat, they’re helping to rebuild the ecological foundations of our landscape. It’s about rethinking what a productive farm looks like: one that includes wildlife as part of the working system.



A Model for Collaboration

Okanagan Similkameen Stewardship supports landowners across the region in caring for the habitats on their properties, offering technical expertise, native plants, and recognition for conservation leadership. Projects like this one on Aikins Loop demonstrate how collaboration can yield lasting results — for farmers, for wildlife, and for the landscape that connects them.



“Every hedgerow we plant is a living corridor. It’s where agriculture meets ecology; where farmers help ensure that the Okanagan and Similkameen remains both productive and alive with biodiversity.”

As native shrubs take root, the fenceline between Elephant Island and JOIEFarm will tell a new kind of story- one of resilience, and shared stewardship. In Naramata, farming with wildlife isn’t just possible, it’s the path forward.



For more tips on Integrated Pest Management or to get started with native plantings, visit our website at

<https://www.farmstewards.ca/fruits-beneficials>