



Cover crops play a critical role in sustainable agriculture by improving soil health, preventing erosion, and controlling pests and diseases.

Earth Day: The importance of cover crops

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Since 1970, Earth Day has been a global call to action -- a day dedicated to raising environmental awareness and inspiring communities to protect our planet. At SBALT, every day is Earth Day as we partner with farmers and ranchers to conserve the lands that sustain us. These working landscapes provide more than food; they safeguard clean water, wildlife habitat, fresh air, open space, and the natural resources vital to our future.

One important conservation practice that supports both agriculture and the environment is the use of cover crops. These crops play a critical role in improving soil health, reducing erosion, and enhancing soil fertility -- key factors in sustainable farming.

Reducing Soil Erosion and Protecting Waterways

Cover crops help protect soil by reducing both the rate and quantity of water runoff from fields, which in turn prevents sediment and nutrients from washing into waterways. Their biomass creates a protective layer between rainfall and the soil surface, allowing water to filter more gradually into the ground. Additionally, the extensive root systems of cover crops help anchor soil in place, increasing soil structure and porosity while creating habitat for beneficial soil organisms.

Enhancing the Soil Fertility with Green Manure

Certain cover crops, known as "green manure," are specifically grown to improve soil fertility. These crops absorb nutrients—particularly nitrogen—during their growth cycle. When incorporated back into the soil,

they release these nutrients, enriching the soil and improving conditions for future crops.

San Benito Agricultural



This Earth Day, join us in celebrating our agricultural lands—not just as sources of food, but as essential landscapes that provide watershed benefits, wildlife habitat, carbon storage, and open spaces for all to enjoy. To learn more about our conservation work, visit us at www.sanbenitolandtrust.org and be sure to visit our booth in downtown Hollister on April 19.

Sources: USDA/Wikipedia