The goal is to find an acceptable balance between the benefits and potential costs of maintaining biodiversity.

Actively managing for biodiversity does not necessarily increase the risk of wildlife-related damage to crops and farm operations.

The figure on the inside of this brochure shows the key principles that are involved in maintaining biodiversity on farms and ranches.

What can you do about It?

Managing for biodiversity involves maintaining or enhancing the great variety of living things, including native and domestic species, as well as the interactions among them.

Flexibility in Production – Maintaining both native areas and a mix of crops in the cultivated portion of your farm adds flexibility to production.

How can the guide help?

The guide presents eight principles for maintaining biodiversity (see inside). They form the basis for assessing the state of biodiversity on your farm, and can be adapted to your own operation.

You can use the on-farm assessment in the guide to determine what you are already doing to maintain and take advantage of biodiversity, and to identify other things you can do to enhance it.

To help you further, the guide outlines the steps you can take to develop and implement a biodiversity maintenance plan for your farm. It also lists the agencies that can help you maintain biodiversity by providing you with financial and/or technical help.

Related EFP publications

You should use the guide along with your **EFP Reference Guide** and completed **Planning Workbook**.

Conservation organizations or the **Environmental Farm Plan** Program may be able to provide you with funding or advice on completing your on-farm biodiversity assessment and implementing agriculture practices that benefit biodiversity.

Why is it important?

Biologically diverse landscapes provide a number of important 'free' goods and services. These can help reduce pesticide and fertilizer use, increase land productivity, and reduce production risks. They can also help maintain or even increase farm profitability.

Example Benefits:

Productivity – Biologically diverse landscapes tend to be healthy and productive. Many have diverse plant communities that are more productive than communities with little diversity.

Stability in Production – The more diverse a production system is, the more stable it tends to be. This is the foundation of sustainable agriculture production.

What is biodiversity?

Biodiversity is defined as the variety of all life. It includes all species from bacteria, viruses, and fungi to grasses, forbs, shrubs, trees, worms, insects, amphibians, reptiles, fish, birds, and mammals. Biodiversity depends on the habitats and the natural processes, such as water and nutrient cycling, which support all forms of life.

Biodiversity also includes all agricultural crops, livestock and yes, even people.

Agriculture context

Farmers and ranchers care about their land. It is where you live and where you work.

All life forms affect how landscapes function and what they can produce. For this reason, maintaining and enhancing biological diversity over the long term is the most critical part of maintaining agricultural productivity.

Managing farms and ranches for biodiversity is the key to ensuring the availability of food and fibre in the future.

The Guide

What is biodiversity? Why is it important? How does it apply to a farm or ranch? Why should you care and what can you do about it?

This new guide tackles all of these questions – and more.

The guide is on the web at:
www.bcac.bc.ca/EFP_pages/documents/index.htm

Planning for Biodiversity - A Guide for BC Farmers and Ranchers is intended to be used along with the suite publications that are part of the Environmental Farm Planning Series:

- **Riparian Management Field Workbook**
- **Drainage Management Guide**
- **Grazing Management Guide**
- **Irrigation System Assessment Guide**
- **Nutrient Management Reference Guide**

For further information

BC Agriculture Council
1-866-522-3447 or 604-854-4483
www.bcac.bc.ca/EFP_pages/documents/index.html

BC Ministry of Environment
www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/bio.htm

BC Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
www.al.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/EnviroFarmPlanning/index.htm

www.al.gov.bc.ca/agroforestry/index.htm

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
www.agr.gc.ca/index_e.php

Environment Canada – Canadian Wildlife Service
www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/

Ducks Unlimited Canada
www.bc.ducks.ca/index.html

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BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

The Canada – British Columbia Environmental Farm Plan Program

delivered by the

British Columbia Agriculture Council

Planning for Biodiversity
A Guide for BC Farmers and Ranchers

8 Biodiversity Principles

Managing for biodiversity is about conserving the variety and number of all living things, including both native and domestic species, and the relationships and interaction among them.

Principle 1
Go Native!

Native areas (wetlands, aquatic areas, riparian areas, forest/woodlands and grasslands) provide the most important contribution to biodiversity

Principle 2
Can't Go Native? Go Semi-Natural!

Semi-natural areas (e.g. shelterbelts, hedgerows, fencerows, pastures and haylands, buffers, road margins) also contribute to the conservation of biodiversity.

Principle 3
Location, Location, Location!

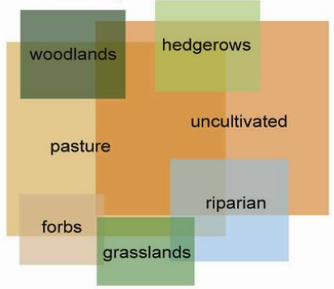
The location, pattern and seasonal availability of habitat influences the type and amount of biodiversity present.

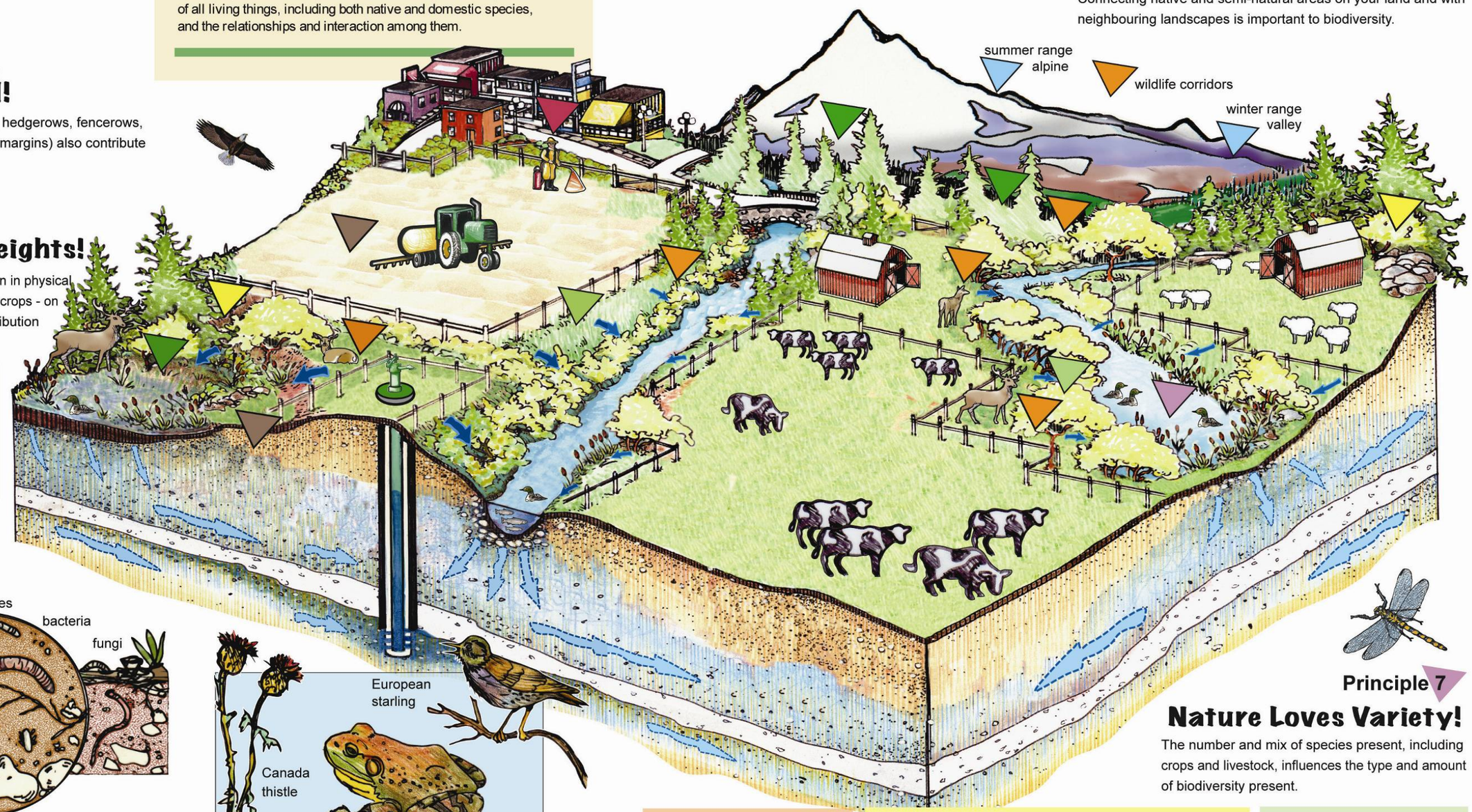
Principle 4
You Gotta Have Connections!

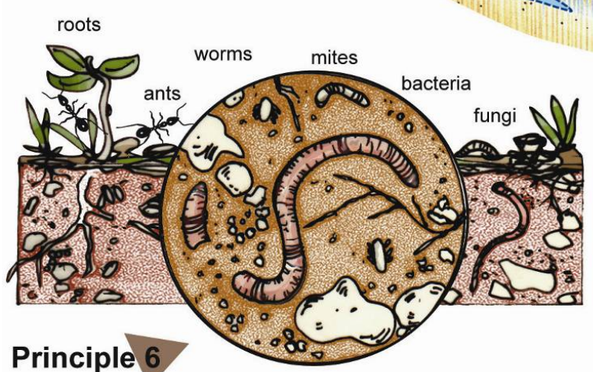
Connecting native and semi-natural areas on your land and with neighbouring landscapes is important to biodiversity.

Principle 5
Achieving New Heights!

Structural diversity - that is, the variation in physical structure of both native vegetation and crops - on your land provides an important contribution to biodiversity.







Principle 6
Healthy Soil is the Foundation of Healthy Ecosystems!

The health of the soil, native and semi-natural areas, and all other farmland influences the type and amount of biodiversity present.

Principle 8
Watch Out for Aliens!

Alien invasive species are generally detrimental to the conservation of biodiversity.

Principle 7
Nature Loves Variety!

The number and mix of species present, including crops and livestock, influences the type and amount of biodiversity present.

96% of commercial vegetables available in 1903 are **now extinct**

The loss of crop and livestock diversity puts the world's food and fiber supply at risk

75% of all foods consumed in the world are from **12** plant crops

50% of the world food consumed is from just **3** plant crops

90% of all animal-derived foods are from **15** species

90% of all plants and animals used for food were domesticated and / or cross bred originally from **wild stocks**