

Pollinator Gardens and Prairies

Establishing and Maintaining



Pollinator Garden Vs. Prairie



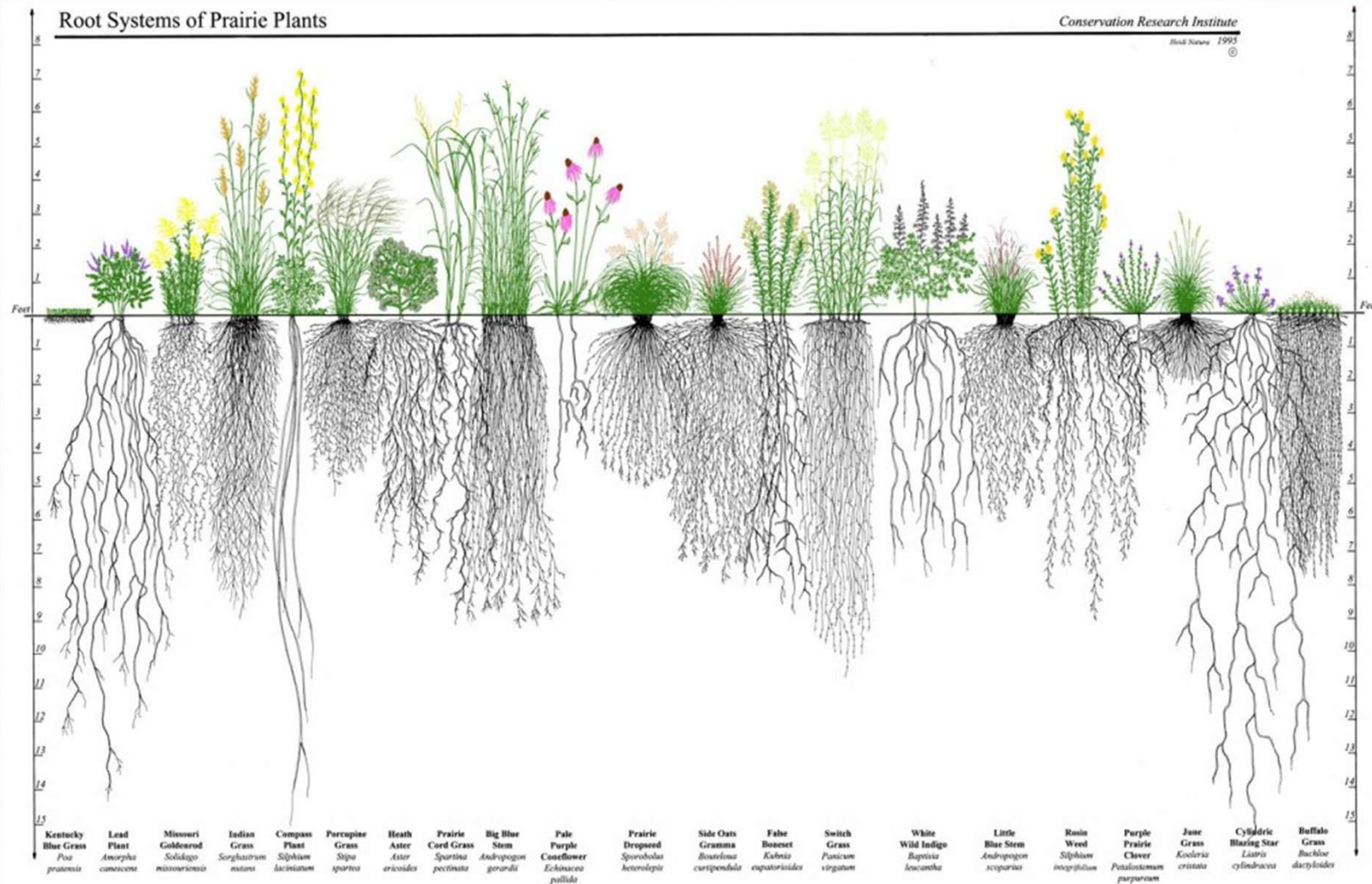
PATIENCE is the Key to Establishing Prairie Plants

- ▶ The first year requires prepping which means terminating all plants on the site.
- ▶ The second year requires mowing two to three times, knee high, to keep down annual weeds.
- ▶ The 3rd year requires mowing 2 times, knee or thigh high, to control weeds.
- ▶ Prairie plants take longer to grow because they first put energy into their deep roots before growing green above the ground. It takes some plants 3 - 4 years to bloom.

Root Systems of Prairie Plants

Conservation Research Institute

Book Name 1993
©



Choose Your Spot

- ▶ Prairie plantings can be ANY size or shape
- ▶ Prairie plants must have sunshine
- ▶ At least 6 hours of sunshine a day
- ▶ There are seed mixes for all types of soil
- ▶ Prairies must have good air flow
- ▶ You may want to avoid areas with a history of noxious weeds.



Prepping Your Ground

- ▶ Prepping your ground is THE most important part of establishing your prairie.
- ▶ You must kill the weeds in different growing seasons during the year before you put down seed in the next.
- ▶ Tilling is not absolutely not necessary. There are thousands of seeds preserved in soil. Each time you till, you bring more to the surface.



Ways to Terminate Existing Growth

- ▶ Plastic
- ▶ Glyphosate
- ▶ Cardboard
- ▶ Deep soil tillage every three weeks during growing season
- ▶ Sod Removal

Seed Bed Prep

There are **MANY** ways to prep an area

- ▶ In smaller areas, after vegetation has been killed with cardboard or plastic, spread seed and rake.
- ▶ Spray Glyphosate three times throughout the first season as each new round of weeds emerge. Spring, summer and fall. Do not till again before putting down seed. Each time you till it brings up new weed seed. You can no-till drill the seed in.
- ▶ Spray Glyphosate earlier in the spring, till only 4-5" deep, then spray 3 more times to kill weeds in each season.



Distributing Seed

- ▶ On small areas you can hand broadcast seed. Mix with sawdust or rice hulls.
- ▶ On areas larger than $\frac{1}{2}$ acre, you can hand broadcast or use a spreader. Use rice hulls or a carrier to help disperse seed more evenly.
- ▶ On areas larger than an acre, a no-till drill can be used. You can rent one of these from Pheasants Forever.



What Kind of Seed??

- ▶ The seed mix you get depends on the area in which you are planting, soil type and the particular type of prairie you like.
- ▶ Tall grass prairie
- ▶ Short grass prairie
- ▶ Wetland prairie
- ▶ The place you buy your seed from will help direct what seed mix is the best for your space. Stay away from Maximilian Sunflower which can become invasive.



Maintaining Your Prairie

► Year Number one

- Keep plants mowed at 6” in height. This should not be more than 3 times in the growing season.
- This is to keep annual weeds from forming and dropping seed.
- The first year your site will not look pretty. Some annuals will be blooming but roots are becoming established in perennials this first year. Prairie plant roots can go down as far as 15’.

► Year Number Two

- Keep plants mowed at 12” in height. This should not be more than 3 times in the growing season.
- This is to keep annual weeds from forming and dropping seed. The number of times you mow depends on the weed seeds in your site.
- Site will become more pleasant to look at.

► Year Number Three and Onward

- Trees and a build up of thatch will need to be kept out of your prairie.
 - Mow in the late spring annually before new growth emerges. Leave plants standing through the winter to provide cover and food for wildlife and spring ground nesters.
 - Manually grub out trees or cut and treat with an herbicide.
 - You may perform a controlled burn. This will also help maintain thatch, invasive species like crabgrass and trees.

Grant's Pollinator Garden

▶ OPN Seed

- ▶ They instructed him to spray his grass with Round Up in the spring (April).
- ▶ When the grass was dead, he tilled with a tiny tiller to rough up the dead sod.
- ▶ He broadcast seed directly into the chunky thatch and raked it in - in early May.
- ▶ Water. The thatch acted as a mulch and the pollinators came up perfectly with next to no weeds present.

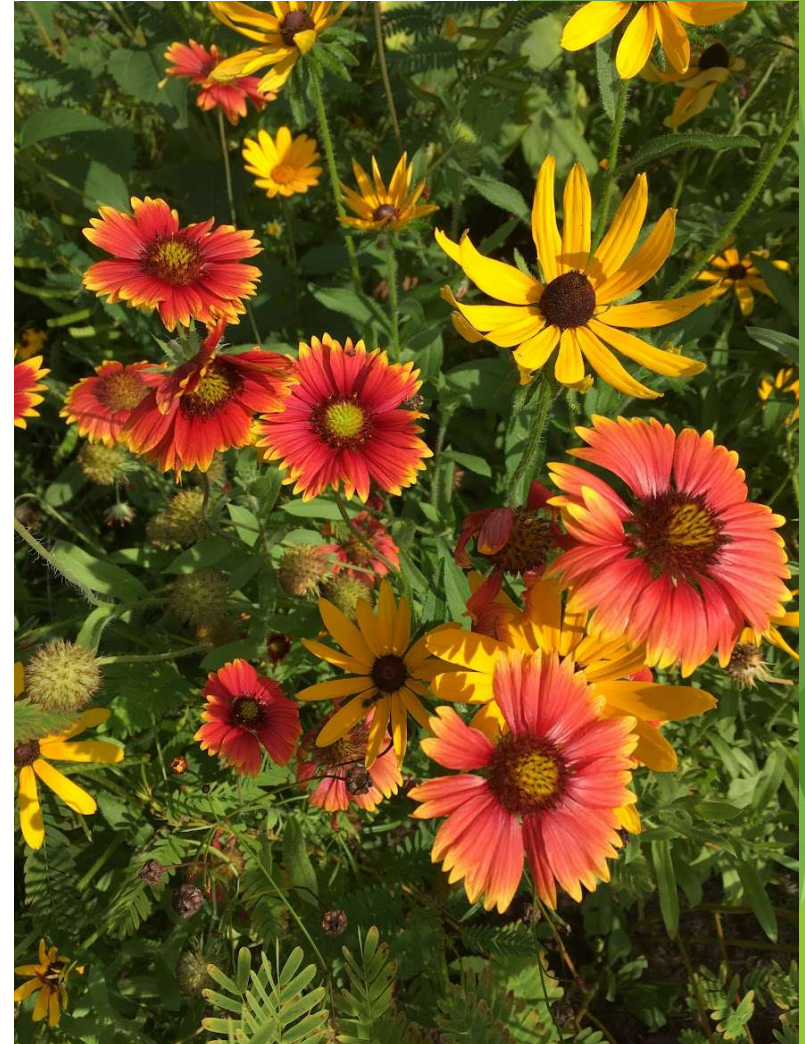






Grant's 1st Year during the summer





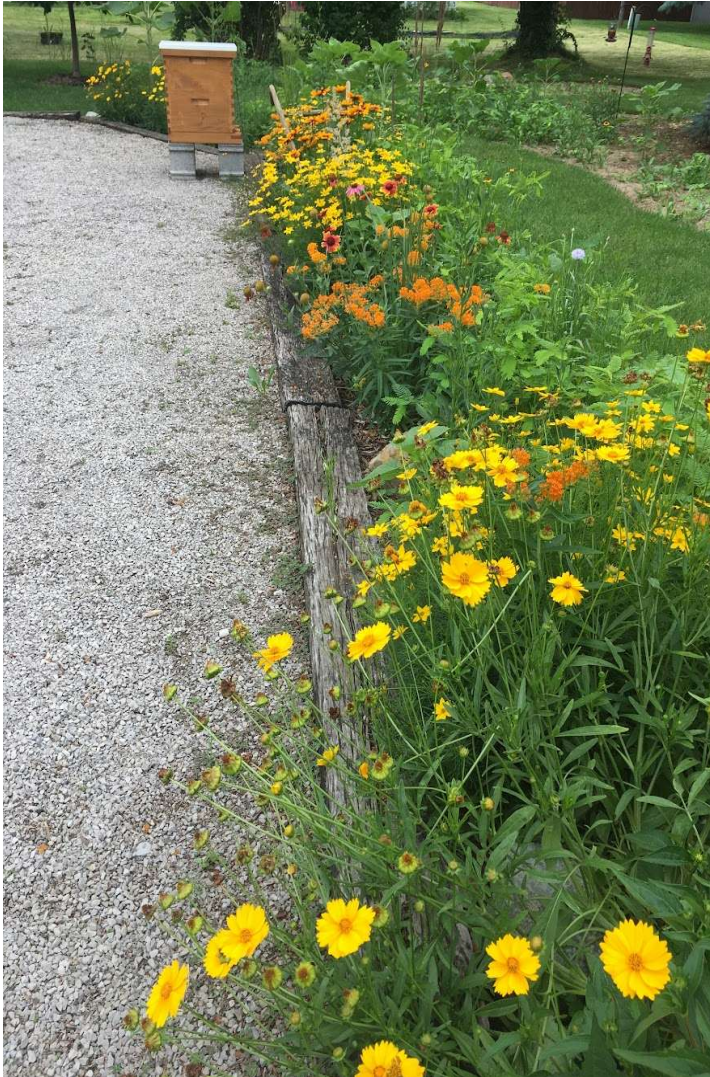






https://www.opnseed.com/products/ohio-pollinator-oasis-native-seed-mix?_pos=1&_psq=pollinator&_ss=e&_v=1.0

This is a formal bed with many of the same plants in the beds. These plants are transplants.



Around the Pond at the Brooks Home



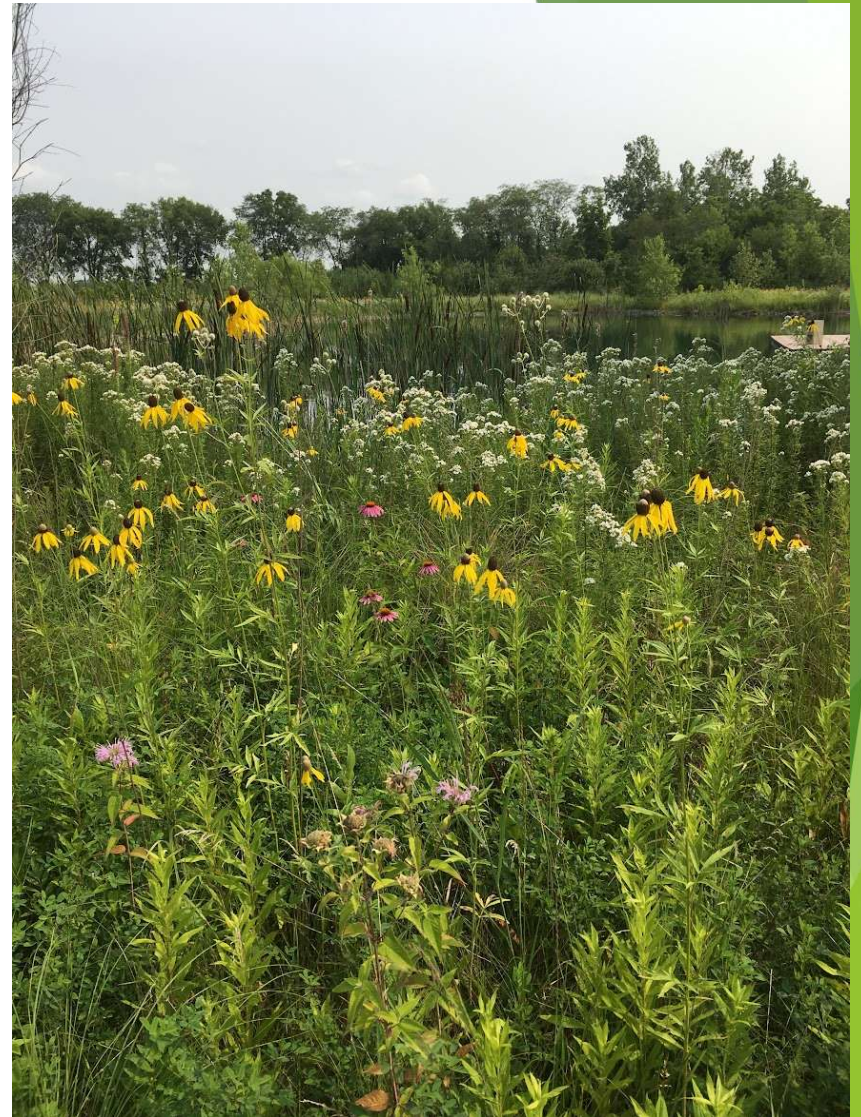


These plants are examples of natives planted around a pond. Mesic soils.



Beyond the Pond







The Seek App, iNaturalist, Google Search, PlantNet, will help you identify any organisms and plants in your pollinator areas.





Over 450 insects are known to feed on common milkweed.





Monarch chrysalis.

The Jewelweed below is a favorite of hummingbirds.





Keep an eye out for pollinators along roadsides and wild areas. This stand of Boneset was growing by the railroad tracks.

Don't forget to collect seed from pollinator plants throughout the fall to add to existing or new plots from November through February.

Seeds can even be spread and raked into a prepared seedbed in late April or early May.

Tips from Xerces Society on which plants for each season for your own garden design.

https://www.xerces.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/17-047_03_XercesSoc_Pollinator-Plants_Great-Lakes-Region_web-4page.pdf

