

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 forever because they first put energy into their deep roots before growing green above the ground. It takes some plants 3 - 4 years to bloom.

Choose Your Spot

- ▶ Prairie plantings can be ANY size or shape
- ▶ Prairie plants must have sunshine
- ▶ At least ½ day of sunshine
- ▶ Wet or heavy clay soils need sun all day
- ▶ 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 all three growing seasons of the year before you put down seed in the next.
- ▶ There are thousands of seeds preserved in soil. Each time you till, you bring more to the surface.



Ways to Terminate Weeds

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



Seed Bed Prep

- ▶ After vegetation has been killed with cardboard or plastic, a seed bed should be established before putting down seed. You will want to till VERY lightly (less than 1”) and rake lightly before applying seed.
- ▶ After spraying Round-Up the first time, you can burn the thatch (or not) and then till to a few inches. Spray again two more times throughout the season. Do not till again before putting down seed. Each time you till it brings up new weed seed.

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.
- ▶ 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 you what to get.

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 the weeds from forming and dropping seed.





► **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 the weeds from forming and dropping seed.



▶ **Year Number Three and Onward**

- ▶ **Trees will need to be kept out of your prairie.**
 - ▶ **You can mow**
 - ▶ **You can manually grub out trees**
 - ▶ **You can perform a controlled burn. This will also help maintain thatch and invasive species like crabgrass.**

Grant's Pollinator Garden

▶ OPI Seed

- ▶ They instructed him to spray his grass with Round Up in the spring (May)
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ Water. The thatch acts as a mulch.

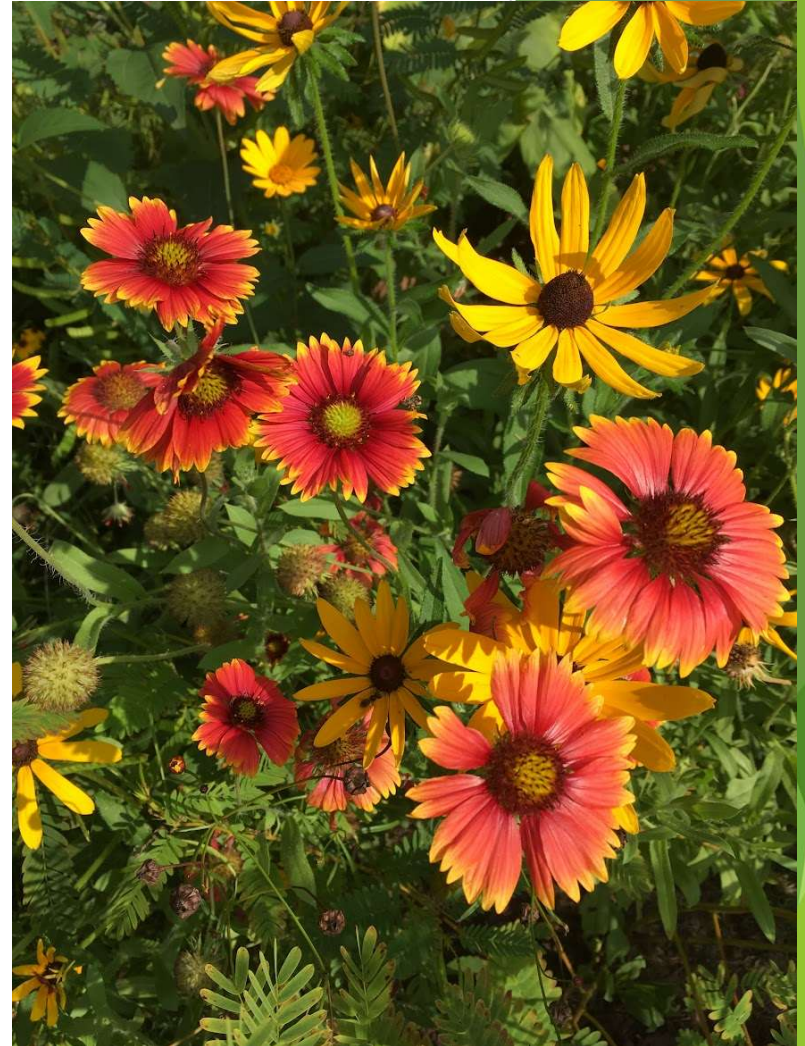






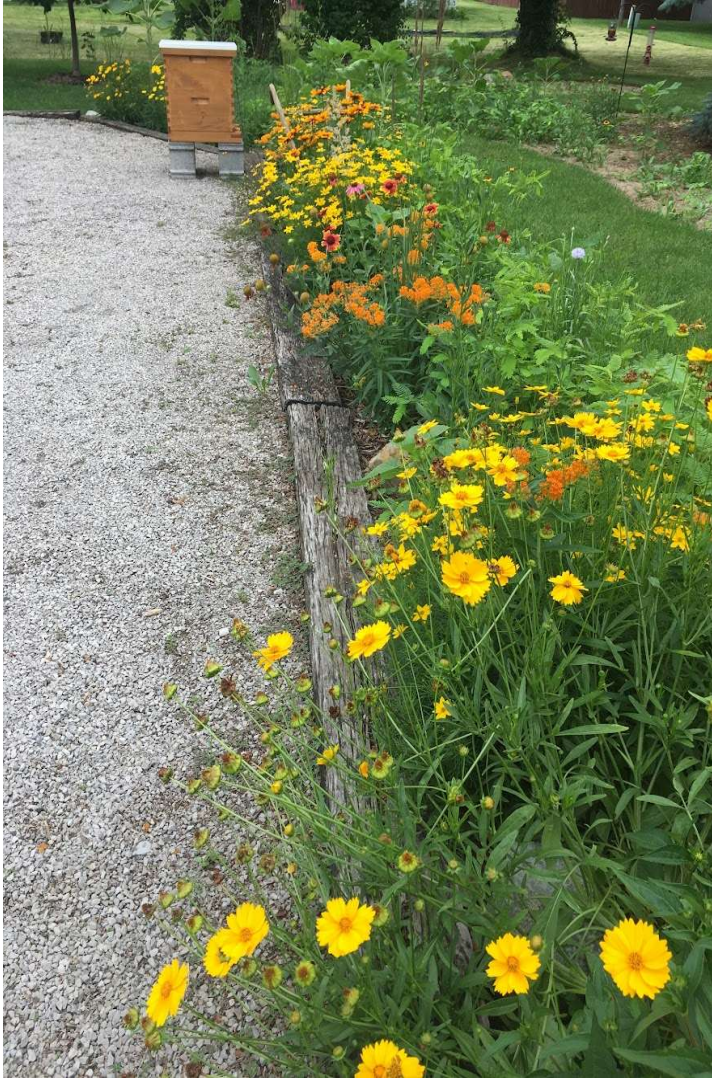
Grant's 1st Year











Around our Pond





Beyond the Pond



