



GRAHAM-MARTIN
FOUNDATION

**2013 Illustrated
Species Selection Guide**



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2013 GMF Program Participants

- Plant Dane! program: www.myfairlakes.com/plantdane.aspx (For Dane County Residents)
- Waukesha Raingarden program: www.waukeshacounty.gov/defaultwc.aspx?id=39349 (For Waukesha County Residents)
- MMSD Raingarden program: <http://v3.mmsd.com/RainGardens.aspx> (For Residents within the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District)
- If you do not have a plant program in your area please contact the Graham-Martin Foundation to participate. The Graham-Martin Foundation can also assist you in setting up a plant program in your area

Icon Key



Full Sun



Part Sun



Full Shade



Hummingbird Favorite



Butterfly Habitat



Bird Habitat



Great for Cut Flowers



Ideal for Raingardens



Karner Blue Butterfly Favorite



Agastache foeniculum
Lavender Hyssop

Richly scented leaves on this perennial wildflower are loved for their licorice odor. Plant grows into a beautifully symmetrical candelabra shape if given enough space.

Ht: 2-4' | **Bloom:** June-Sep | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry Mesic



Allium cernuum
Nodding Pink Onion

With blooms like tiny fireworks, this pretty wildflower will grow and multiply by bulbs to form colonies. A favorite for shortgrass prairies and gardens.

Ht: 1-2' | **Bloom:** July-Aug | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry Mesic



Aquilegia canadensis
Wild Columbine

This hummingbird favorite is perfect for woody edges and areas with dappled sunlight. Prefers well-drained soils.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** April-June | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry



Asclepias incarnata
Marsh (Red) Milkweed

This attractive wildflower is a valuable food source for the Monarch butterfly and adds bright color to moist areas.

Ht: 3-5' | **Bloom:** June-Aug | **Moisture:** Wet-Mesic





Asclepias tuberosa
Butterfly Weed

Bright orange flowers and host for Monarch Butterflies make this plant a must have! Prefers dry and well-drained soils.

Ht: 2-3' | **Bloom:** June-Sep | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry



Aster azureus
Sky-blue Aster

The blue flowers of this Aster are on center stage in fall. Show them off in short prairies and garden plantings.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** Aug-Oct | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry



Aster novae-angliae
New England Aster

Paint your garden purple and pink with this very popular Aster. One of the last blooms of the season before winter sets in.

Ht: 3-6' | **Bloom:** Sep-Oct | **Moisture:** Wet-Dry Mesic



Aster sagittifolius
Arrow-leaved Aster

The stems of this perennial flower often lean because of heavy clusters of attractive pale blue blossoms.

Ht: 2-3' | **Bloom:** Sep-Oct | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry Mesic





Aster sericeus
Silky Aster

Thick, short, downy hairs feel silky to the touch. Yellow centered blooms, as much violet as blue, appear on single stems.

Ht: 2-3' | **Bloom:** June-Aug | **Moisture:** Dry Mesic-Dry



Boltonia asteroides
False Aster

This eye-catching aster has delicate flowers, which look like white rays circling around a bright yellow disc.

Ht: 2-4' | **Bloom:** Aug-Oct | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Mesic



Coreopsis lanceolata
Sand Coreopsis

Tough and cheerful, this bright yellow flower is a winner that never fails to please. Also known as lance-leaf coreopsis due to the lance like appearance of its leaves.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** May-July | **Moisture:** Dry Mesic-Dry



Coreopsis palmata
Prairie Coreopsis

These beautiful flowers once formed seas of yellow on native prairie lands. Quick growing and easy to maintain this is a popular species in prairie restorations.

Ht: 1-2' | **Bloom:** June-Aug | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry





Echinacea pallida
Pale Purple Coneflower

The narrow, drooping petals of the Pale Purple Coneflower have a charming waif-like look. A very popular wildflower for gardens and natural landscaping.

Ht: 3-5' | **Bloom:** June-July | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry



Echinacea purpurea
Purple Coneflower

One of the most popular coneflower species. Bright vibrant purple blooms make it a beautiful addition to gardens and prairies. A resilient plant and easy to grow!

Ht: 3-4' | **Bloom:** July-Aug | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry Mesic



Eupatorium coelestinum
Mist Flower

Soft blue flowers on reddish stems make beautiful cut flowers in late autumn.

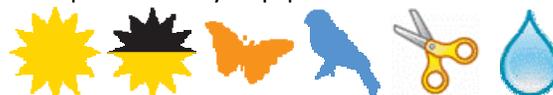
Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** July-Oct | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry Mesic



Eupatorium maculatum
Spotted Joe Pye Weed

Glorious tall plant with clusters of hardy rose-colored flowers, grows well in wet, swampy areas. It is named after the Indian medicine man, who is rumored to have eased typhoid with this plant.

Ht: 4-6' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet-Wet Mesic





Eupatorium purpureum
Sweet (Purple) Joe Pye Weed

The delicate purple flowers have a sweet vanilla scent earning it the name "Sweet" Joe-Pye weed. The flowers are a magnet for butterflies and bees.

Ht: 4-7' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry Mesic



Geum triflorum
Prairie Smoke

This unusual flower is much loved for the delightful seed heads having long graceful filaments. Provides early color in spring, foliage can turn red in autumn. Roots are bright pink.

Ht: 6-12" | **Bloom:** April-June | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry



Helenium autumnale
Sneezeweed

This gorgeous yellow flower was once used by the Native Americans to cure head colds. Birds feast on the seeds when flowers fade.

Ht: 3-5' | **Bloom:** Aug-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet-Wet Mesic



Helianthus strumosus
Pale-Leaved Sunflower

Similar in appearance to many other native sunflowers with yellow petals and yellowish centers, but adapted to woodland and dappled shade conditions..

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** July-Aug | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry Mesic





Heliopsis helianthoides

Early Sunflower

This cheery yellow flower is similar in appearance to the true sunflower. It is popular and desirable due to long blooming season and ease of cultivation. Makes great cut flowers.

Ht: 3-5' | **Bloom:** June-Oct | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry Mesic



Hypericum pyramidatum

Great St. John's Wort

Shiny yellow five pedaled blooms with long flowing stamens make this native perennial wildflower a standout in any garden. The plant has been used for various medicinal applications and the leaves as a tea substitute.

Ht: 4-6' | **Bloom:** May-July | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Mesic



Liatris aspera

Rough Blazing Star

Striking lavender flowers that circle around the stalk are just terrific. The seeds are loved by birds and pollinators. Foliage forms a clump of lance-shaped leaves.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** Aug-Oct | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry



Liatris cylindracea

Dwarf Blazing Star

Another gorgeous blazing star with shorter stature and slender leaves. Valuable for its ability to adapt to poor soils and dry conditions. Perfect for rock gardens..

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** Aug-Oct | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry





Liatris ligulistylis
Meadow Blazing Star

Striking flower spikes on this perennial wildflower open from top to bottom and the seeds are loved by finches. Foliage forms a clump of narrow, dark green leaves.

Ht: 3-5' | **Bloom:** Aug-Oct | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Mesic



Liatris pycnostachya
Prairie Blazing Star

A stunning blazing star easily distinguishable by its long purple flowers that resemble fairy wands. Very popular with gardeners and valuable for bird and butterfly or rainwater gardens.

Ht: 2-4' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry Mesic



Liatris spicata
Marsh Blazing Star

A beautiful blazing star adapted to moist prairies and sedge meadows. Also known as dense blazing star for its densely clustered blooms. Excellent for attracting bees and butterflies.

Ht: 3-4' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet-Mesic



Lobelia cardinalis
Cardinal Flower

The Cardinal flower gets its name from its flowers which can be as Red as a Cardinal. These distinct red spires of these stunning flowers make the popular in rain gardens and bird & butterfly gardens, but can also be valuable in shorelines and waters edges. The Cardinal flower depends on hummingbirds for pollinations.

Ht: 3-5' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet-Wet Mesic





Lobelia siphilitica
Great Blue Lobelia

A beautiful native with a rosette of velvety leaves and pretty blue flowers on long stems in midsummer. Great Blue Lobelia makes great cut flowers. The charming plant is loved by gardeners, birds and butterflies.

Ht: 1-2' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet-Mesic



Monarda fistulosa
Wild Bergamot



A favorite of gardeners and prairie enthusiasts! Quick spreading, easy to grow wildflower with fragrant, minty foliage and beautiful large lavender blooms. Summer time means enjoying swaying stalks of bergamot blooms.

Ht: 2-4' | **Bloom:** June-Aug | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry



Penstemon digitalis
Smooth Penstemon



The large white flowers of this plant are the prettiest you can find. Naturally found in open woodlands and meadows. This plant is easily grown in sunny or partly shaded areas.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** May-July | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry Mesic



Physostegia virginiana
Obedient Plant



Beautiful snapdragon like blooms bring late season color and are popular in wildflower gardens. The name obedient plant comes from the tendency of flowers to stay in place when moved.

Ht: 2-3' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet-Mesic





Pycnanthemum virginianum

Mountain Mint

The flower of the mountain mint has a robust mint scent. The Chippewa and the Fox used the buds and flowers for flavoring meat and broth.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet-Mesic



Ratibida pinnata

Yellow Coneflower

Very casual and charming flowers. The long bloom time and bright color make it essential for wildflower gardens and prairies. The entire plant is delicate causing it to sway in the breeze.

Ht: 4-5' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry Mesic



Rudbeckia hirta

Black-eyed Susan

A must have plant for prairie restorations and wildflower gardens. The beautiful yellow blooms of this plant are well known. It is easy to grow and sows itself in favorable conditions.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** June-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry



Rudbeckia subtomentosa

Sweet Black-Eyed Susan

A strong plant with attractive foliage. Striking features include the soft fuzzy texture of leaves and the shiny appearance of the central cone. Used in prairie plantings as a permanent species to follow behind the shorter lived Black-Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)

Ht: 4-5' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry Mesic





Rudbeckia triloba
Brown-eyed Susan

Easily distinguishable from other rudbeckias due to its smaller flowers and rough dark green leaves. Highly adaptable from open woodlands to tall prairies.

Ht: 3-5' | **Bloom:** July-Oct | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry Mesic



Silene regia
Royal Catchfly

Royal Catchfly is quite rare in some regions. However, it will readily sow itself in suitable areas. Red flowers are unusual amongst prairie flowers making this a unique addition to the color spectrum of a prairie.

Ht: 1-4' | **Bloom:** July-Aug | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry Mesic



Solidago ohioensis
Ohio Goldenrod

One of the prettiest goldenrod varieties, well adapted to wet meadows and moist sunny sites.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet-Mesic



Solidago riddellii
Riddell's Goldenrod

The yellow flowers of this goldenrod grow in dense, flat-topped clusters. Very attractive to bees and butterflies. Also makes great cut flowers.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet-Mesic





Solidago rigida
Stiff Goldenrod

This sun-loving and popular Goldenrod blooms in late fall and attracts butterflies and hummingbirds. Goldfinches, and other small birds feed on its seeds

Ht: 3-5' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry



Solidago speciosa
Showy Goldenrod

The name says it all. Showy goldenrod has clusters of tiny, bright yellow flowers that contrast nicely against the broad oval leaves and reddish stems.

Ht: 3-5' | **Bloom:** July-Oct | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry



Solidago ulmifolia
Elm-Leaved Goldenrod

Butterflies love these yellow blossoms, which arch out and downward creating a vase-shaped flower cluster.

Ht: 2-5' | **Bloom:** Aug-Sep | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry Mesic



Tradescantia ohiensis
Spiderwort

Popular, and long blooming, these blue-violet flowers open in the morning and close during the mid-day sun.

Ht: 2-4' | **Bloom:** May-July | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry





Verbena hastata
Blue Vervain

This perennial wildflower has handsome leaves and candelabra-like pointed spikes of small rich purple flowers that bloom their way up to the top. Produces tiny pink seeds.

Ht: 3-5' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet-Mesic



Vernonia fasciculata
Ironweed

This bold red-purple wildflower carries tall, showy flower clusters on strong stems. Great for pollinators in wetter environments.

Ht: 4-6' | **Bloom:** July-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Mesic



Veronicastrum virginicum
Culver's Root

The unique white spires of this stately plant add visual interest to every prairie planting. Mid-summer blooms last for about a month.

Ht: 2-4' | **Bloom:** July-Aug | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry Mesic





Baptisia leucantha
White Wild Indigo

This tall shrub like plant has spiky clusters of white blooms in summer and attractive black seed pods in fall.

Ht: 3-5' | **Bloom:** May-June | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry



Baptisia leucophaea
Cream Wild Indigo

Attractive creamy flowers bloom early in the season. This low-growing and long-lived plant can have a unique grey-green hue.

Ht: 1-2' | **Bloom:** May-June | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry



Cassia hebecarpa
Wild Senna

Bold yellow flowers, with masses of feathery foliage are excellent at attracting birds and butterflies. A gardening and restoration essential.

Ht: 4-6' | **Bloom:** Aug-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Mesic



Lupinus perennis
Wild Lupine

A must for dry prairie plantings and gardens. An invaluable legume that provides food and habitat for the rare Karner Blue Butterfly. Self-sowing and can thrive in sandy woodland habitats and even under canopies of black oak.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** May-June | **Moisture:** Dry Mesic-Dry





Petalostemum purpureum

Purple Prairie Clover

This legume has purple cone-shaped flower heads sitting upon wiry stems. This plant is valuable to birds as well as pollinators.

Ht: 1-2' | **Bloom:** June-Aug | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry





Carex bebbii
Bebb's Sedge

This delicate sedge is small in stature, clump forming and has distinctive brown seed heads.

Ht: 1-2' | **Bloom:** June-July | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Mesic



Carex comosa
Bristly Sedge

An excellent wetland sedge known for its unique bristly seedheads.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** June-July | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Mesic



Carex hystericina
Bottlebrush Sedge

This sedge can be called porcupine sedge or bottlebrush sedge on account of its unique seed heads that resemble a spiky bottlebrush.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** June-July | **Moisture:** Wet-Wet Mesic



Carex sprengelii
Long-beaked Sedge

This sedge can be called porcupine sedge or bottlebrush sedge on account of its unique seed heads that resemble a spiky bottlebrush.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** June-July | **Moisture:** Wet-Wet Mesic





Carex stipata

Fox Sedge

A sturdy, deer-resistant sedge with small prickly seed heads that turn gold and brown when mature.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** June-July | **Moisture:** Wet-Mesic



Carex vulpinoidea

Brown Fox Sedge

This attractive clump-forming sedge is perfect for wetland restorations and rain gardens. Its ability to grow in a variety of moisture types makes it very versatile.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** April-May | **Moisture:** Wet-Dry Mesic



Scirpus pendulus

Red Bulrush

Also known as nodding bulrush as the red inflorescence is often elegantly drooping and nodding. The species can adapt to some surprisingly dry areas as well.

Ht: 2-6' | **Bloom:** May-June | **Moisture:** Wet-Mesic



Scirpus validus

Great Bulrush

This great bulrush can grow into large colonies in the mud or in water several feet deep in marshes, lakes, and streams. The plant is tolerant to saline and poorly drained conditions. One of the tallest bulrush species and can grow almost ten feet tall.

Ht: 3-9' | **Bloom:** May-Aug | **Moisture:** Wet-Wet Mesic





Andropogon gerardii

Big Bluestem

The "turkey-foot" seed heads announce the king of tall prairie grasses! This warm season grass has upright, clump-forming foliage that turns bronze for the winter.

Ht: 4-7' | **Bloom:** Aug-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry



Andropogon scoparium

Little Bluestem

Little Bluestem is one of the most attractive native grasses, especially in fall when mature plants can form seas of bronze and red. It provides food and cover to many prairie fauna. This is a versatile grass that is known to adapt to scrubby barrens and rocky slopes as well

Ht: 2-3' | **Bloom:** June-Aug | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry



Bouteloua curtipendula

Side-oats Grama

Side-Oats gets its name from the unique attractive flowers that hang from only one side of the stem. This drought tolerant, warm-season grass is a favorite for shortgrass prairies.

Ht: 1-3' | **Bloom:** July-Aug | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry



Elymus canadensis

Canada Wild Rye

This fast growing, cool-season grass is commonly used as a native cover crop for prairie restorations. In bright sunlight, the grass can take on a beautiful metallic appearance.

Ht: 3-5' | **Bloom:** June-Oct | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry





Elymus villosus
Silky Wild Rye

An attractive woodland grass, with nodding bristly inflorescence. The sheaths of this grass are hairy and silky. Excellent for meadows and shady conditions.

Ht: 3-5' | **Bloom:** June-July | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry Mesic



Hystrix patula
Bottlebrush Grass

This very unique grass is perfect for savannas and woody edges. The bottlebrush shaped seed heads are sure to provide interest and diversity.

Ht: 3-5' | **Bloom:** July-Aug | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry Mesic



Koeleria cristata
June Grass

This short stature native grass is ornamental in appearance and perfect for formal natural landscapes and butterfly gardens.

Ht: 1-2' | **Bloom:** June-Sep | **Moisture:** Dry Mesic-Dry



Panicum virgatum
Switch Grass

One of the most beloved and well-known prairie grasses for its beautiful yellow autumn color and showy seed heads that persist well into winter. Tall and robust, this species can withstand harsh dry summers. It is an excellent source of food and cover for a variety of prairie fauna.

Ht: 4-6' | **Bloom:** May-Sep | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry





Sorghastrum nutans
Indian Grass

An excellent grass for wildlife habitat and nesting cover! Attractive golden seed heads in autumn.

Ht: 4-6' | **Bloom:** Aug-Sep | **Moisture:** Mesic-Dry



Sporobolus heterolepis
Prairie Dropseed

Our most popular native grass! Perfect for prairie plantings or borders for backyard gardens and formal landscapes. Emerald-green leaves turn gold in fall adding winter interest.

Ht: 2-3' | **Bloom:** July-Aug | **Moisture:** Wet Mesic-Dry





Shortgrass Prairie Seed Mix

A great bargain! We have carefully selected a blend of short stature attractive wildflowers and grasses to create a showy mix suitable for residential gardens. Now you can enjoy a diverse shortgrass prairie in your own backyard.

Covers 25-50 sq. ft

Mix Composition

Grasses: Side Oats Grama-Bouteloua curtipendula; Little Bluestem-Andropogon scoparius; June Grass-Koeleria cristata; Prairie Dropseed-Sporobolus heterolepis; Prairie Brome-Bromus kalmii; Wildflowers: Black-Eyed Susan-Rudbeckia hirta; Yellow Coneflower-Ratibida pinnata; Wild Bergamot-Monarda fistulosa; Butterfly Weed-Asclepias tuberosa; Sky-Blue Aster-Aster azureus; Pale Purple Coneflower-Echinacea pallida; Smooth Penstemon-Penstemon digitalis; Purple Prairie Clover-Petalostemum purpureum; White Prairie Clover-Petalostemum candida; Early Sunflower-Heliopsis helianthoides; Prairie Blazing Star-Liatris pycnostachya; Spiderwort-Tradescantia ohiensis

Raingarden Kits

Raingardens look great and protect our lakes and streams at the same time. Not sure what plants to select? No problem! We have done that for you. We have put together some great Raingarden mixes with our favorite wildflowers and grasses. Choose from two kits – full sun and part shade.

Each kit Covers 30-50 sq. ft

Full Sun: KIT-GMF-RGFS (4 each of the following species)

Purple Coneflower-Echinacea purpureum ; Early Sunflower-Heliopsis helianthoides ; Prairie Blazing Star-Liatris pycnostachya ; Cardinal Flower-Lobelia cardinalis ; Great Blue Lobelia-Lobelia siphilitica ; Smooth Penstemon-Penstemon digitalis ; Brown Fox Sedge-Carex vulpinoidea ; Prairie Dropseed-Sporobolus heterolepis.

Part Sun: KIT-GMF-RGPS (4 each of the following species)

Wild Columbine-Aquilegia canadensis ; Sky Blue Aster-Aster Azureus ; Arrow Leaved Aster-Aster sagittifolius ; Purple Coneflower-Echinacea purpureum ; Pale-leaved Sunflower-Helianthus strumosus ; Cardinal Flower-Lobelia cardinalis ; Long-beaked Sedge-Carex sprengei ; Silky Wild Rye-Elymus villosus.

Bird & Butterfly Garden Kit

Save our pollinators by creating a pollinator habitat in your garden. Bird & butterfly gardens not only protect pollinators, but are showy and gorgeous as well. Our garden kit has some colorful wildflowers that are sure to attract hummingbirds and butterflies. Bird & Butterfly gardens are also a fun, interactive tool to teach children about native habitats and conservation.

Covers 30-50 sq. ft

KIT-GMF-BBG (4 each of the following species)

Wild Columbine-Aquilegia canadensis ; Marsh (Red) Milkweed-Asclepias incarnata ; Butterfly Weed-Asclepias tuberosa ; Lance-leaf (Sand) Coreopsis-Coreopsis lanceolata ; White Wild Indigo-Baptisia leucantha ; Wild Lupine-Lupinus perennis ; June Grass-Koeleria cristata ; Prairie Dropseed-Sporobolus heterolepis.

Shortgrass Prairie Garden Kit

Our shortgrass prairie garden kit is a select blend of wildflowers and grasses suitable for manicured residential landscapes. Ideal for those who want to establish a native prairie quickly and easily.

Covers 30-50 sq. ft

KIT-GMF-SPG (4 each of the following species)

Sky Blue Aster-Aster azureus ; Butterfly Weed-Asclepias tuberosa ; Prairie Coreopsis-Coreopsis palmata ; Pale Purple Coneflower-Echinacea pallida ; Culver's Root-Veronicastrum virginicum ; Purple Prairie Clover-Petalostemum purpureum ; June Grass-Koeleria cristata ; Little Bluestem-Andropogon scoparius.

Create a Native Plant Garden

Site Preparation

Carefully plan where you would like the garden to be. Mark the space out on the lawn. You can create an outline of the bed with small stakes and twine or you can use spray paint or spray chalk to mark the outline.

Strip the sod back. Dig down about 1-1/2 when removing the sod from the edges. Take the sod you stripped back, lay it in the center of the bed upside down, and pack it down firmly. Use several layers of wet newspaper to cover the entire garden area. You can also purchase plastic or cloth to cover this area at a garden center if you do not want to deal with the newspaper. This covering will help prevent weeds from popping up in your new garden.

Cover the layers of newspaper with 6-8 of topsoil. If you are purchasing your top soil, grainy looking soil is going to work the best. If it appears clumpy, it probably has clay in it, which will not drain water well in wet weather and will become very hard during dry spells. Look for topsoil that is very dark in color. The dark color indicates that the soil is rich in organic matter. If you have compost available, this can be added to the soil as well.

Installing Native Plant Plugs

It is best to plant your native species on a cool or cloudy day to minimize the stress of transplanting. Planting in the early morning or late afternoon also helps. Most flowers should be planted in the spring, after the danger of frost.

Work the soil. Use a garden spade or rototiller to break up the large clumps. Add soils amenities as need. You may need to add sand to your soil if you have clay based soil. This will help with drainage. Most gardeners will add some organic matter or compost to the soil to provide the plants with essential nutrients.

Dig a hole in your freshly worked soil. Put the soil aside to fill the hole back in later. The diameter should be about twice the diameter and the same height of the root ball of the plant. Gently remove the plant from its container, and brush your hand over the root ball to stimulate the roots.

Place the plant in the hole. It is very important to place the roots at the proper level so that the plants roots are not exposed and the foliage of low-lying plants does not get too wet. Fill the hole about halfway with the original soil. Gently pack the soil to remove any trapped air. Give the plant a good drink.

Finish filling in with soil around the plant, gently pack, and water one more time. Cover the base of the plant with good mulch. Straw, dead leaves or grass clippings work well. After planting, keep your plants well watered for the first year until they establish a good root system.