

Seed Ball Activity and Planting Instructions

Creating the seed balls

Our process is using native (local) soil and store-bought 'mushroom compost'. The clay in the local soil will help bind the seed balls, and the mushroom compost will provide organic matter for new plants as well as water retention and breaking up the clay to help the balls incorporate into their new homes.

Dried and crushed flower petals are to add fun bits of color and additional organic matter to benefit the soil.

Using only a few seeds per ball is important so that new plants don't crowd each other out.

When the ball with seeds is pressed together, allow to dry until it is time to throw!

Planting and Care

February is the best time of year to throw your seed balls where you want the plants to grow. Prairie plants of the great plains need *stratification* (cold treatment) in order to germinate.

Throw or drop the seed ball where you want the plants to grow. During the sun-heating and night freezing day to day, the ball should break up and the seeds get worked into frost cracks in the soil.

Year 1

With some luck, nature will water your seeds well in the spring and they will begin germinating. If it is a relatively dry year, keep the seeds moist in April and May. Water 1-2 times per week as the young plants establish throughout the season; 2-3 times is likely needed in July and August.

It may be difficult to tell the difference between your new prairie plants and weeds. You can use the list provided to look up if you have a particular plant. If you know that you have a weed, *cut it, don't pull it* as pulling it could potentially uproot your desirable plants. Year 1 and in the future, mowing can be used to keep weeds from flowering, and prairie plants will be able to grow after being cut.

Leave plant material over winter and cut back in May.

Year 2

Again, if there is a dry start to the season be sure your young plants receive enough water to get them out of dormancy and keep establishing in their space.

Mow or trim weeds as they reach about 8-10 inches. Prairie plants evolved to be grazed and will eventually be able to out-compete weeds in the immediate vicinity.

Plan to cut back watering this year. A good rule of thumb is 1" of water per week – basically, make sure the ground is watered enough to soak in 4+ inches. This will mean less-frequent watering and help your plants learn to stretch their roots to find the water. **Watering too much can create dependent plants; watering less will make them more drought-tolerant in the future.**

Leave plant material over winter and cut back in May.

Year 3+

Prairie plants take at least 2-3 years to get fully established. Keep an eye out for weeds to be pulled. Leaving plant material over the winter means free seed and nesting/overwintering habitat for pollinators and beneficial bugs. Cutting the plant material in May gives time for native bees to emerge and leaving it to lay gives you free mulch.



Plant List (alphabetical)

- American Germander (*Teucrium canadense*)
Appar Blue Flax (*Linum perenne*)
Beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*)
Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
Blanket Flower (*Gaillardia spp.*)
Blue Grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*)
Bushy Seedbox (*Ludwigia alternifolia*)
Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
Canada Milkvech (*Astragalus canadensis*)
Canada Tick-clover (*Desmodium canadense*)
Candle Anemone (*Anemone cylindrica*)
Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)
Culver's Root (*Veronicastrum virginicum*)
Dotted Blazing Star (*Liatris punctata*)
Evening Primrose (*Oenothera biennis*)
Everlasting (*Pseudognaphalium obtusifolium*)
False Boneset (*Brickellia eupatorioides*)
False Sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides*)
Grayhead Coneflower (*Ratibida pinnata*)
Gray Goldenrod (*Solidago nemoralis*)
Golden Alexander (*Zizia Aurea*)
Heath Aster (*Symphotrichum ericoides*)
Hoary Vervain (*Verbena stricta*)
Illinois Bundleflower (*Desmanthus illinoensis*)
Illinois Tick-tre foil (*Desmodium illinoense*)
Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium purpureum*)
Junegrass (*Koeleria macrantha*)
Lance-leaf Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)
Leadplant (*Amorpha canescens*)
Lemon Beebalm (*Monarda citriodora*)
Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
Long-beak Sedge (*Carex sprengeii*)
Marble-seed (*Lithospermum occidentale*)
Mexican Red Hat (*Ratibida columnifera*)
Missouri Goldenrod (*Solidago missouriensis*)
New England Aster (*Symphotrichum novae-angliae*)
New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)
Pale Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*)
Perennial Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*)
Plains Coreopsis (*Coreopsis tinctoria*)
Plains Wild Indigo (*Baptisia bracteata*)
Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
Purple Lovegrass (*Eragrostis spectabilis*)
Purple Poppy Mallow (*Callirhoe involucrata*)
Purple Prairie Clover (*Dalea purpurea*)
Redroot New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus herbaceus*)
Rosinweed (*Silphium integrifolium*)
Rough Blazing Star (*Liatris aspera*)
Sawtooth Sunflower (*Helianthus grosserratus*)
Showy Partridge Pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*)
Showy Wand (*Solidago speciosa*)
Sideoats Grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*)
Sky Blue Aster (*Symphotrichum oolentangiense*)
Slimflower Scurfpea (*pedimelum tenuifolium*)
Stiff Goldenrod (*Oligoneuron rigidum*)
Sullivant's Milkweed (*Asclepias sullivantii*)
Tall Boneset (*Eupatorium altissimum*)
Tall Cinque foil (*Drymocallis arguta*)
Tall Dropseed (*Sporobulus compositus*)
Thickspike Blazing Star (*Liatris pycnostachya*)
Upright Coneflower (*Ratibida columnifera*)
Virginia Wild Rye (*Elymus virginicus*)
Western Ironweed (*Veronia baldwinii*)
Western Spiderwort (*Tradescantia bracteata*)
White Prairie Clover (*Dalea candida*)
White Wild Indigo (*Baptisia alba*)
Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
Wild Prairie Rose (*Rosa arkansana*)