



Short Prairie Requirements and Plant List

Requirements

Size: The size is variable. A prairie of less than an acre will allow many different species to be grown, but to attract larger and more diverse wildlife by having a variety of plant communities, more acreage is needed.

Prairie Garden: A prairie garden can be any size. An existing perennial bed may be enhanced or a new one established.

Light: Six hours or more per day of full sun should be available.

Water: No water is needed after the plants are established (after one to two years).

Elevation/Topography: Level ground is best for a prairie, but a south-facing hillside is doable as is an east- or west-facing hillside. North slopes should be avoided.

Soil: Native plants will grow in a variety of soils: dry and mesic (moderately moist) plants do well in loose soils with good drainage, while wetland plants will do well when drainage is poor (standing water three to four hours after rainfall). Soil may be amended using sand.

Plant Materials: Sun-loving native forbs and grasses are recommended. See list.

Planting and Maintenance: Follow the guidelines given on the Web page, "How to Plant and Maintain Native Plants." <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/education/Pages/PlantListMaintain.aspx>

Special Considerations

Patience: Because native plants need to develop vast root systems, a prairie planting may take several years (five or more) to look mature, especially if started with seeds.

Plant List for Dry Soil

azure aster (*Symphyotrichum oolentangiense*)
black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
brown-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia triloba*)
butterfly-weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
Canada milk vetch (*Astragalus canadensis*)
foxglove beardstongue (*Penstemon digitalis*)
little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)
nodding wild onion (*Allium cernuum*)
Ohio spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohioensis*)
pale coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*)
prairie blazing-star (*Liatris pycnostachya*)
prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)
purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
purple prairie clover (*Dalea purpurea*)
rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*)
rough blazing-star (*Liatris aspera*)
round-headed bush clover (*Lespedeza capitata*)
sand coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)
shooting-star (*Dodecatheon meadia*)
side-oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*)
smooth aster (*Symphyotrichum oolentangiense*)
small Solomon's-seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*)
stiff goldenrod (*Oligoneuron rigidum*)
wild quinine (*Parthenium integrifolium*)

Plant List for Medium Soil

azure aster (*Symphyotrichum oolentangiense*)
black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
brown-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia triloba*)
butterfly-weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
Canada milk vetch (*Astragalus canadensis*)
foxglove beardstongue (*Penstemon digitalis*)
little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
New Jersey tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)
nodding wild onion (*Allium cernuum*)
Ohio spiderwort (*Tradescantia ohioensis*)
pale coneflower (*Echinacea pallida*)
prairie blazing-star (*Liatris pycnostachya*)
prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*)
purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
purple prairie clover (*Dalea purpurea*)
rattlesnake master (*Eryngium yuccifolium*)
rough blazing-star (*Liatris aspera*)
round-headed bush clover (*Lespedeza capitata*)
sand coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)
shooting-star (*Dodecatheon meadia*)
side-oats grama (*Bouteloua curtipendula*)
small Solomon's-seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*)
smooth aster (*Symphyotrichum laeve*)
stiff goldenrod (*Oligoneuron rigidum*)
wild quinine (*Parthenium integrifolium*)