



PRAIRIE MOON NURSERY™

PLANTING INSTRUCTIONS

FOR HAND SOWING YOUR NATIVE SEED MIX

BEFORE PLANTING:

It is crucial to eliminate all existing vegetation and reduce the weed seed bank. Proper site preparation will give the native plants with slower establishment times an advantage to out-compete fast-growing weeds. It is much easier to put time and effort into proper site preparation than to deal with overwhelming weed competition later. Any of the following **SITE PREPARATION METHODS** may be used:

- **Sod Removal:** A sod removal tool slices off the top few inches of grass and soil. Results vary. There may be unwanted, dormant weed seed in the soil beneath the sod.
- **Smothering or Solarization:** Covering the soil surface for an extended period will kill unwanted plants underneath due to heat and/or lack of light. Intervals of 4 to 5 weeks "on" and 1 to 2 weeks "off" can allow multiple waves of weed seeds to germinate before being killed during the following cycle of smothering. Some weeds need to be covered for two years. Smothering a lawn takes less time; it usually can be killed in two months by a close mowing before covering.
- **Repeated, Shallow Soil Cultivation:** An option for larger sites, usually with a tractor and disc. Soil disturbance exposes weed seeds; the weed growth is then tilled under. Repeat many times.
- **Herbicide Treatments:** We at Prairie Moon are proud of our organic farming legacy, but we also view the responsible and judicious use of herbicides as an effective tool for establishing native ecosystems. Repeated use of herbicide is most effective over a full growing season.
- **Mowing and/or Burning:** Depending on the existing vegetation, this can sometimes be sufficient.

LEARN MORE: SEARCH "SITE PREP" AT [PRAIRIEMOON.COM](https://www.prairiemoon.com)

FALL/WINTER SOWING YOUR NATIVE SEED MIX

(Late October - March)

We recommend seeding during these months because it offers the following advantages over spring seeding:

- Cold-moist stratification occurs before the first growing season, resulting in a more successful establishment of forbs (wildflowers) and sedges, which are often overwhelmed by the grasses.
- Good seed-soil contact without disturbing the soil.
- Higher soil moisture at the time of germination and less need to water the site.
- Small and large seed can be sown together.

1. Divide the planting area into 2+ equal sections. The greater the number of sections, the more even your seed distribution will be.

2. Combine all packages of seed and mix thoroughly.

3. Divide the combined seed mix into as many sections as you planned for in Step 1.

4. Choose a filler material to mix with the seed. Sawdust, compost, peat moss, sand, or rice hulls (available at prairiemoon.com) work well. Use ~4 gallons of filler per 1,000 square feet. For larger plantings it may be practical to use less. Moisten the filler, being careful to not over-wet it.

5. Thoroughly mix each part of the divided seed mix with slightly moistened filler material.

6. Using one part of the seed-filler mix per section of the planting area, hand broadcast and leave it on the soil or snow surface.



Short-term Storage: Store your seed in a cool (below 70 °F), dry place for up to 6 months. This may be room temperature in your home. If packets have a pink note, they must be stored in the refrigerator (33-38 °F) until planting.



Included in Your Seed Mix:

- 1 LARGE SEED PACKET
- 1 COVER CROP PACKET
- 1 SMALL SEED PACKET



SPRING SOWING YOUR NATIVE SEED MIX

(April - June)

Seeding at this time of the year is optimal for establishing warm-season grasses.

However, most of the wildflowers and sedges will not germinate until the following year because they did not overwinter. Weed growth in the first season may be greater due to the soil disturbance (see Step 7).

1. Divide the planting area into 2+ equal sections. The greater the number of sections, the more even your seed distribution will be.

2. Combine all packages labeled "Large Seed." Keep the Small Seed separate.

3. Divide the Large Seed and the Small Seed into as many sections as you planned for in Step 1.

4. Choose a filler material to mix with the seed. Sawdust, compost, peat moss, sand or rice hulls (available at prairiemoon.com) work well. Use ~4 gallons of filler per 1,000 square feet. For larger plantings it may be practical to use less. Moisten the filler, being careful to not over-wet it.

5. Thoroughly mix the Large Seed mix with slightly moistened filler material.

6. Thoroughly mix the Small Seed mix with slightly moistened filler material. Keep separate from the Large Seed.

7. Hand broadcast the Large Seed only. Use one part of the seed-filler mix per section of the planting area. Lightly rake or drag to incorporate the seed very shallowly into the soil – only $\frac{1}{16}$ " to $\frac{1}{8}$ " deep.

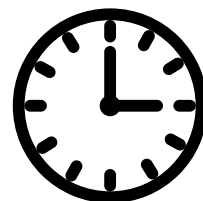
8. In the same manner, hand broadcast the Small Seed and leave it on the soil surface. Do not rake or otherwise disturb the soil after this step.

9. Gently pack down the soil. You can use your feet, a lawn roller, or other equipment. This improves soil moisture retention and will result in more successful establishment of plants.

NOTE: 43,560 sq ft = 1 acre

Sowing Time:

$\frac{1}{8}$ th acre of land takes approximately 1 hour for 1 person to broadcast seed





MANAGEMENT:

1ST YEAR WEED CONTROL:

Maintenance mowing through the first growing season will prevent quick-growing weeds from excessively shading the new native seedlings. Hand-held string trimmers are ideal tools for small areas or sites that are too steep to mow.

Mow each time weed growth reaches 8-10 inches. Cut everything to a height of 4-5 inches. Don't worry about trimming the tops of native seedlings or crushing them underfoot. Mow frequently to keep cutting debris reduced so that it doesn't smother desirable seedlings.

Stop mowing at the end of the first season. Remove any weed seedheads but don't be concerned with additional vegetative growth. It can help protect native plants through winter by providing plant litter and catching snow. Which helps insulate the soil. This reduces the risk of plant loss from frost heaving.

If weeds are thick in the beginning of the second season, mow or spot-mow once or twice. Raise the cutting height to 6-12 inches.

LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT:

After two or three growing seasons, most native plantings need to be burned annually for the next five or more years to become well established. If a planting is not periodically burned, a thatch layer can build up over the years, causing some native species to grow poorly or even to die out completely.

After five years, divide the area into thirds and burn a different section each year. This protects over-wintering insects. Burning is the single most important management practice for native plantings. Always use caution and common-sense when burning. Follow local fire regulations, obtain permits, and have plenty of tools and help on hand.

If burning is not permitted at your site, or if you prefer not to use this method, you can mow or manually remove thatch in early spring.