



BACKYARD PRAIRIE POLLINATOR PROGRAM

The Backyard Prairie Pollinator Program provides guidance for establishing native prairie plots to support pollinators. Establishing a successful prairie requires patience and proper preparation.

Site Selection

- Ideal plots are in full sun with few or no trees.
- Best placement is on the east, west, or south sides of buildings.

Site Preparation

Proper seedbed preparation is the most critical part of prairie establishment. Two main site types are addressed:

Bare Soil Sites

- Loosen soil via rototilling or shallow disking.
- Broadcast seed by hand in spring (April 1–May 31).
- Use a cultipacker or tools like mower tires or weighted fencing to press seed into soil.
- Spray any green vegetation that appears 7–10 days post-seeding with glyphosate.

Vegetated Sites (e.g., turf, pasture, hayfields)

Herbicide Treatment Method:

- Mow low, allow regrowth, then spray with glyphosate + 2,4-D.
- Re-spray 14 days later, then expose soil via tilling or raking.
- Seed after 14 days, then cultipack.

Non-Herbicide Method:

- Cover area with dark plastic or plywood for 2 months before planting.
- Remove, rototill, seed by hand, and cultipack.

Compacted Soil Testing

Use the “screwdriver method”: if you can’t press a flathead screwdriver more than 2 inches into the soil, it’s too compacted and needs disking or tilling.

Broadcast Seeding

Scatter seed by hand, ideally dividing both the seed and plot into equal sections for even coverage.

Establishment & Managing Expectations

- The first 1–2 years will involve noticeable annual weeds and minimal above-ground growth.
- Most growth happens underground early on as native plants establish strong root systems.
- By year three, native plants should dominate and outcompete weeds.
- Annual maintenance during the first two years is essential to minimize weeds long-term.



Photo Credit: Chris Helzer, The Nature Conservancy

To find more online, scan or visit:
lpsnrd.org/pollinatorprogram



LOWER PLATTE SOUTH
natural resources district

3125 Portia Street, Lincoln, Nebraska 68501-3581 • Phone: (402) 476-2729