Creating a Native Meadow

WHY plant a meadow?

Compared to ordinary lawns, native meadows:

- Are drought resistant, requiring no watering after establishment
- Only need mowing once or twice a year
- Thrive without fertilizers and pesticides
- Filter and clean pollutants from stormwater runoff
- Recharge groundwater supplies

HOW do meadows work?

Perennial meadow plants native to the Eastern U.S. spend their first year building deep roots. These roots give the plants access to moisture and nutrients far below the surface. Compare the roots of the common lawn grass, Kentucky Bluegrass, to native perennial meadow plants.

WHAT grows in a meadow?

Below are examples of some of the native grass and flower species you may find growing in a meadow. In addition to soaking up excess runoff and reducing water pollution, these plants provide food (nectar and seeds) and cover for birds and butterflies.

Aster Novae-angliae
New England Aster

Schizachyrium scoparium
Little Bluestem

Asclepias tuberosa
Butterfly Milkweed

Sorghastrum nutans
Indian Grass

Echinacea purpurea magnus
Purple Coneflower

Panicum virgatum
Switchgrass

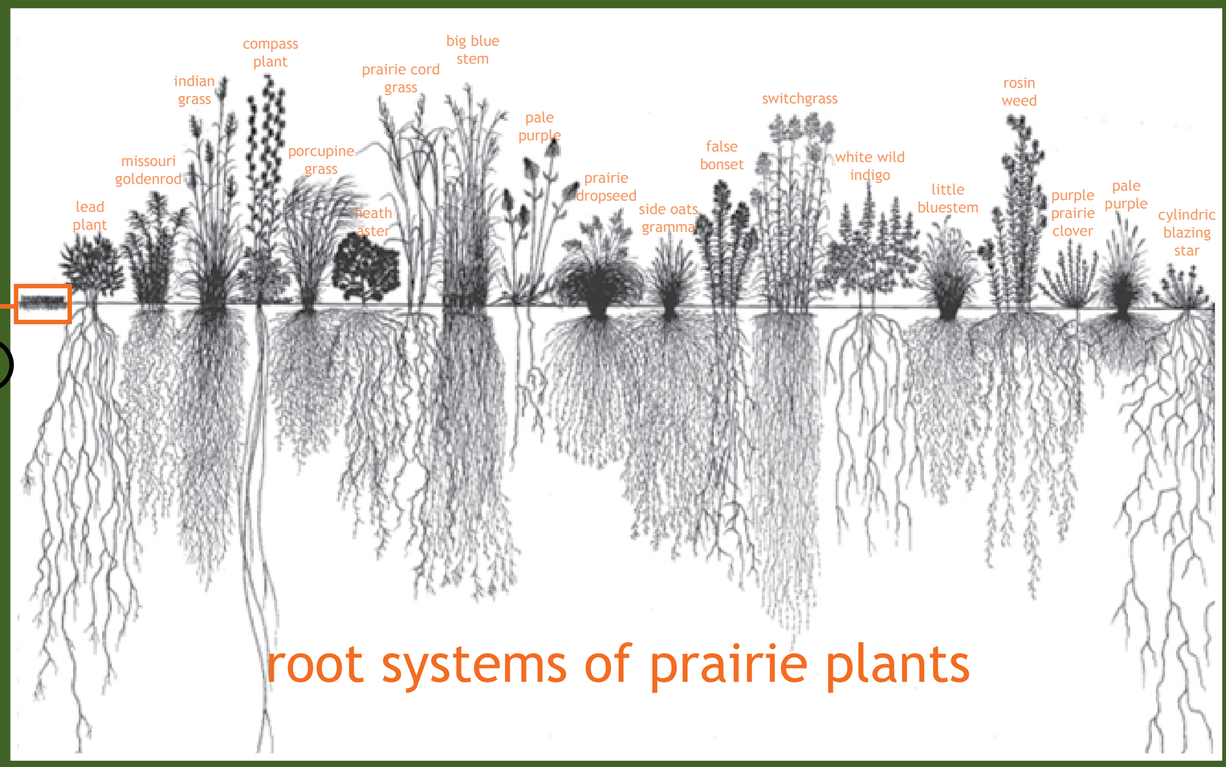
WHO can plant a meadow?

YOU!

Seeding a native meadow in an unused section of your lawn is simple and inexpensive. With some patience to let the new plants set their deep roots, you'll add color and interest to your property while reducing mowing, watering and fertilizing expenses. You'll be improving habitat for beneficial wildlife, too!

In front of you is a demonstration meadow. It was planted in 2011 and will take two to three years to get fully established. An established meadow is close to maintenance free, requiring only occasional weeding and mowing once a year.

Scan for a Meadow vs. Lawn Video



root systems of prairie plants

*plant photos courtesy of USDA PLANTS online database

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