



## STEPS FOR ADDING NATIVE PLANTS TO YOUR PROPERTY

Our step-by-step guide helps you meet your native landscaping goals whether you live on a city lot or in the country. Even adding a few native plants can make a difference.

### STEP 1: DELINEATE & MEASURE PLANTING AREA

This will help you figure out how many plants or seeds you will need. Measure in square feet for small plantings, acres for large areas.



### STEP 3: SELECT PLANTS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR SITE'S CONDITIONS & YOUR GOALS

### STEP 2: EVALUATE SITE CONDITIONS

- **Soil type:** Read the document [here](#)
- **Soil moisture & drainage:**  
Dry soils are extremely well-drained, usually with sand, gravel, rocks. Moist soils are regularly damp, only have standing water for short periods, usually loamy. Wet soils remain damp year-round, may have standing water for long periods.
- **Light regime:**  
“Full sun” has > 6 hours sun / day  
“Partial Sun” has 4-6 hours of sun / day  
“Shade” gets < 4 hours of sun / day

#### References to help you with those selections:

- **Home garden:**
  - DNR “Native Plants for Beginners”
  - Local native plant nursery or garden center
  - “DNR’s Native Plant Recommendations for Landscaping and Natural Community Restoration”
- **Pollinator habitat:**
  - DNR “Native Pollinators” webpage
- **Bird habitat:**
  - DNR “Plants for Birds”
  - DNR “Create Habitat” for birds
- **Wild game habitat:**
  - DNR “Wildlife and Your Land” series
- **Stormwater management:**
  - DNR Rain Garden information
- **Ecological restoration**
  - “Prairie Primer” (UW-Extension publication)
  - DNR “Plant Species Composition of Wisconsin Prairies: An Aid to Selecting Species for Plantings and Restorations Based Upon Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison Plant Ecology Lab. Data”
  - “The Tallgrass Restoration Handbook for Prairies, Savannas, and Woodlands,” by Stephen Packard and Cornelia F. Mutel. Island Press: Washington D.C., 1997
  - DNR’s “Native Plant Recommendations for Landscaping and Natural Community Restoration”



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### STEP 4: DECIDE ON SEEDS, PLANTS OR BOTH

#### SEEDS

##### Pros:

- More cost-effective
- Can be sown throughout the year
- Plants better adapted to local site conditions

##### Cons:

- Can take 1-3 years for plants to establish and flower
- Weeds/plants that compete with growing seedlings need to be controlled



#### PLANTS

##### Pros:

- Immediate gratification
- Rapidly stabilize soils
- Can be installed in spring, summer & fall

##### Cons:

- More expensive than seeds
- Risk of transplant shock
- Regular watering needed for several weeks after installation.

### STEP 5: FIND A SOURCE FOR SEEDS & PLANTS

- See DNR “Wisconsin Native Plant Nurseries” for listing. Place orders over the winter to help ensure you get everything you want.
- Check DNR “Native Plants” website periodically for schedule of native plant sales.
- Connect with local garden clubs, Wild Ones chapters, and neighbors.
- Volunteer with local natural areas to learn how to collect native seed in the wild.

### STEP 6: CONSIDER HIRING HELP

See list of Wisconsin Restoration Contractors if you need professional assistance. Some native plant nurseries will also do home garden installations.

### STEP 7: KEEP A PLANTING LOG

Create a simple map of your planting showing where, when and what you planted. Observe and note which species were successful and which ones didn't work out.

### STEP 8: WINTER EVALUATION

Use your planting log to review and revise your goals as needed, and make plans for expanding and enhancing plantings.



DNR Natural Heritage Conservation Program  
Box 7921

Madison, WI 53707

PUB-NH-946

608-261-6449