

# NATIVE PLANTINGS



## MAINTENANCE

## COSTS

- Range: \$480 – \$2400  
(average = \$1140)
- Healthy Lakes & Rivers grant funding available: \$1000 per 350 ft<sup>2</sup> area

## MATERIALS

- Black plastic or herbicide
- Native plants
- Bulb auger or hand trowel
- Mulch
- Watering equipment



## POSSIBLY REQUIRED

(if using herbicides in or adjacent to the water's edge)



Beaver Dam Lake, Dodge County - Bill Foley

**NATIVE PLANTINGS**, a transition zone best practice, are template planting plans designed for a contiguous area of at least 350 ft<sup>2</sup>. Each template has a corresponding list of native plants suited to the given soil conditions and function of the plan, including lakeshore, bird/butterfly habitat, woodland, low-growing, deer resistant, and bare soil area plantings.

## PURPOSE

Native plantings improve wildlife habitat, slow runoff water, and promote natural beauty. Each template described above serves all of these functions to some degree, but one may be better than another given your property's unique site characteristics and areas of concern. For example, the bird/butterfly template includes flowers that attract these types of wildlife.

## HOW TO BUILD

It may be necessary to work with your local land and water conservation department or a landscaper to design and/or install these plantings. Check with your local zoning department to determine if any permits are necessary. Planting specifications and densities follow [Wisconsin Biology Technical Note 1: Shoreland Habitat](#).

Detailed guidance is found here: <http://healthylakeswi.com>.

### 1. Find a location

350 ft<sup>2</sup> native plantings should begin, if possible, at the typical water's edge (i.e. Ordinary High Water Mark on a lake or the floodplain edge of a river), be at least 10 feet wide – parallel or perpendicular to the shore, and contiguous rather than planted in patches. The final shape and orientation to the water's edge are up to you. Choose an area of turf grass you wish to revert back to a more natural state or an already vegetated area you would like to augment. Try to choose a location in full or partial sun.

### 2. Determine soil type

It's important to understand what type of soil is in the planting location because that will determine which native plants can survive and thrive. The fact sheet links provide tools and guidance to help determine your soil type. Most of the template plans have two plant lists – one for moister soils and one for drier soils.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

**SITE PREP**  
**6 WEEKS - 6 MONTHS**

**INSTALLATION**  
**1-2 DAYS**

**MAINTENANCE**  
**2 YEARS**

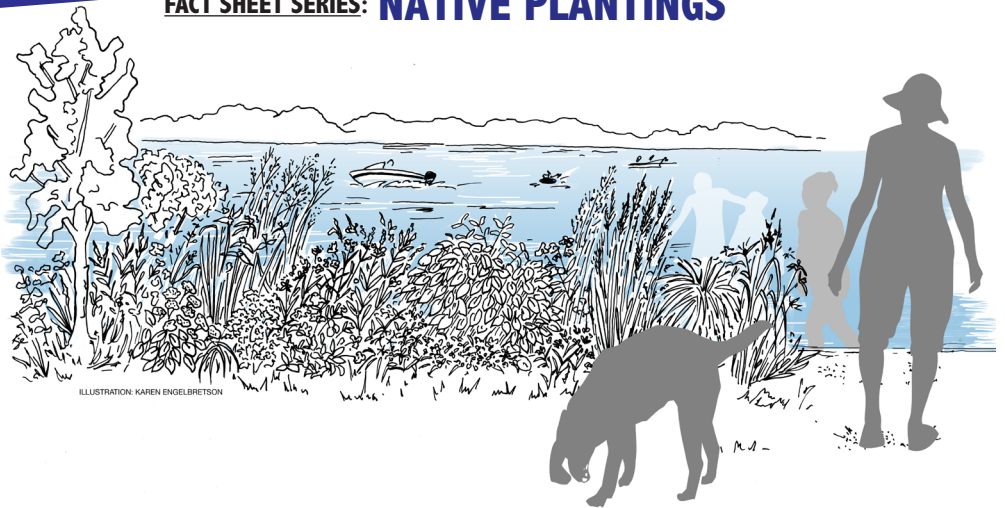
**PROJECT END**  
**3 YEARS**  
Ongoing weeding may be necessary in subsequent years.



## FACT SHEET SERIES: NATIVE PLANTINGS

### 3. Choose your template and design shape

By planning your 350 ft<sup>2</sup> native planting on paper first, you will be able to create the best appearance possible and you will understand how the practice will function and fit into your landscape.

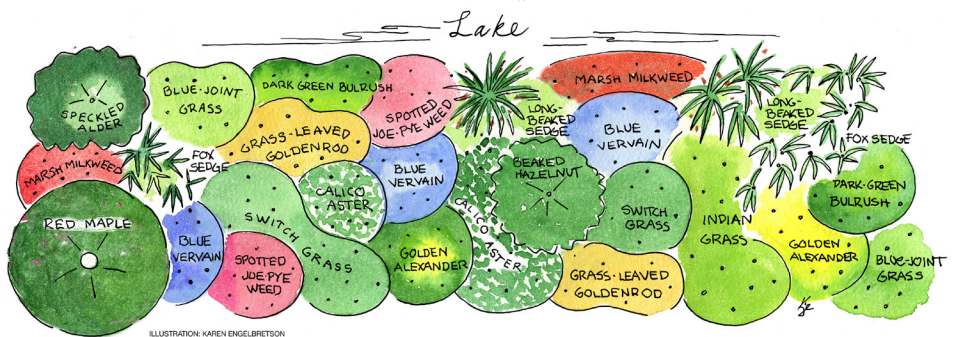


### 4. Choose your plant list

Native plants are used because they are best adapted for our climate and provide ideal habitat for our wildlife. The 350 ft<sup>2</sup> native planting templates include a mixture of grasses, sedges, wildflowers, ferns, shrubs, and trees, depending on the desired function and site's soil type (i.e. dry, medium, moist, or wet).

### 5. Lay out the planting

Lay out the shape and boundary of the 350 ft<sup>2</sup> native plantings based on your design. Before you start digging, contact <http://www.diggershotline.com/>.



### 6. Prepare the site

Removing lawn grass is critical to native planting success. The 2 most common ways to do so are with herbicide and black plastic. Black plastic may be preferential to herbicides, especially if you are near the water, which may require a chemical control permit for herbicide use. If you already have some native plants growing, you might consider removing weeds and planting among what is already growing. The designs provided in the fact sheet links assume you are removing lawn grasses and starting from scratch. *Site preparation, including controlling invasive species, is eligible for grant funding.* Lay mulch or wood fiber blanket down prior to planting. This will conserve moisture and reduce weed growth within the planting area. Wood chips (2 inches deep), straw, or fallen leaves (each 3-4 inches deep) may be used as mulch.

### 7. Plant

Follow the design specifications by placing your plants in the approximate positions described in the template plan. Step back and look at the 350 ft<sup>2</sup> native planting area. Plants should be placed about 1.5 feet apart from each other. When ready use a hand trowel, bulb planter, or bulb auger drill bit attached to an electric drill to plant them. If grant funded, the 350 ft<sup>2</sup> native planting must be in a contiguous area. In other words, the plants cannot be put into the ground in patches.

### 8. Water and critter-proof the plants

Good water techniques and maintenance are the keys to native planting success. Be ready to water them as soon as they are in the ground and to continue to water them daily for the first few weeks or until the plants are well established. Once plants are established, water only if prolonged dry periods occur. If grant funded, watering is required.

A temporary fence or animal deterrent sprays may be necessary in areas prone to deer browse, rabbits, and other critters. Fencing specifications are found in the 350 ft<sup>2</sup> Native Planting Best Practices Manual. If grant funded, fencing may be required depending on geographic location.

## MAINTENANCE

- Water the plants a minimum of 1 inch per week and more during dry periods for 1-2 years.
- Become familiar with weeds and invasive species, in particular, and remove them frequently.
- The standing dead plants may be left in place through the winter for wildlife cover and food and then cut back when new spring growth emerges.
- Native plantings must remain in place according to local zoning specifications if within the vegetation protection area (i.e. buffer).
- The 350 ft<sup>2</sup> native planting must remain in place for 10 years if Healthy Lakes & Rivers grant-funded.

## LINKS

Healthy Lakes & Rivers Website – <http://healthylakeswi.com>

Controlling Runoff and Erosion on Your Waterfront Property: A Guide for Landowners – <http://healthylakeswi.com>

350 ft<sup>2</sup> Native Planting Best Practices Manual – <http://healthylakeswi.com>

DNR Surface Water Grants – <http://dnr.wi.gov/aid/surfacewater.html>

For more information contact Patrick Goggin at 715-365-8943 or [Patrick.Goggin@wisconsin.gov](mailto:Patrick.Goggin@wisconsin.gov).



Design and layout by Amy Kowalski, Extension Lakes