Plug Planting Recommendations and Care

Native plants have evolved over thousands of years! They can do well in all conditions and can resist most of what Mother Nature can throw at them! Native plants occur in communities, that is, they have evolved together with other native plants and species that rely on them. As a result, a community of native plants provides habitat for a variety of native wildlife species such as bees, songbirds, butterflies and benefit the soil and surrounding environment. They also provide a food source with an array of colors from brilliant purples to show stopping oranges all season long!

- **Habitat**– Bees, butterflies, birds, and other wildlife use the plants for cover and food
- **Low Maintenance**-Native plantings require **no fertilization** and minimal watering. Fertilization and watering can be an expensive, time-consuming procedure that can encourage undesirable vegetation. Costs associated with lawn irrigation, maintenance and chemical applications are reduced
- **Resist Weeds**-Native species naturally resist weed invasion more effectively than non-native species
- **Good for the Soil**-Extensive fibrous root systems of native plants reduce erosion by holding soil and slowing runoff and pollutants. Deep root systems also build soil and restore soil health by opening the subsoil to water percolation and aeration, replenishing the soil with organic matter

1) Plan area for planting and select kit based on soil, sun, and drainage. One plant per square foot is recommended. Grasses and sedges play an important role in supporting wildlife as well as physically supporting the forbs (flowers). Evenly spaced grasses with clusters of flowers looks nice in small plantings. Locating taller plants near the back or middle and shorter plants on the edges can make the planting more appealing. Diversity (the number of species) should increase with the size of the planting. Sketching a rough plan can be helpful.

2) Prepare the planting site by removing all unwanted vegetation. This can be done with a glyphosate based herbicide, mechanical removal, or solarization. Weeding the planting in the future can be made much easier if the removal is complete. Don't rush this stage. To suppress weed pressure, lay down 3" of mulch. Double-shredded is recommended due to its cohesiveness.

3) Plant your plugs! Mark each plug with a stake, popsicle stick, etc. to identify and assist in weeding. Use caution not to bury any mulch or other fresh organic matter in the hole. Use a hand shovel or drill attachment to make a small hole. The plant should be planted flush with the surface of the ground or just slightly below.

4) Precipitation should do most of the watering, but plugs should be watered at least once immediately after planting and every 5-7 days without rain for the first month. After year 1, plants will be well established, and watering is not needed. Roots of native plants are very hardy and can resist harsh conditions.

5) Pulling weeds by hand is the most effective way to get the planting off to a good start. Soon the plants will fill in enough that weeds will not be able to become established.

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