

The 5 P's of Prairie Establishment

Plan

- **Goal:** Identify and characterize your site
 - How large is the intended planting area (how many square feet)?
 - What type of soil and moisture? Is it well drained or moist soil?
 - How much sunlight?
 - Is water available if needed?

Prep

- **Goal:** Your site is devoid of vegetation and weed seeds
 - Lay clear plastic on site for 8 weeks during the growing season
 - OR
 - Following label instructions, spray your site with Roundup or similar product to kill existing turf and other vegetation (Roundup is not a residual, so it will not affect your new seeds)
 - Till site to loosen the soil
 - A second round of spraying/tilling might be necessary if weeds re-emerge
 - Site can be raked or harrowed to create a smooth seed bed if necessary

Plant

- **Goal:** Seed is evenly spread over entire site, and in good contact with the soil
 - Split the seed mix in half
 - Broadcast one half of seed over entire site by hand or with a spreader
 - Broadcast other half of seed over entire site (to ensure coverage of the area)
 - Lightly rake, drag, or roll site to promote seed-to-soil contact
 - Weed-free mulch or erosion blanket can be installed after seeding to minimize erosion and retain soil moisture (especially on sloped sites)

Promote

- **Goal:** Prevent the spread of weeds and allow sunlight to reach natives
 - Mowing is crucial in year 1! It will prevent weeds from seeding out and allow light to penetrate to the soil
 - Set your mower to the highest height and mow the site each time the vegetation reaches a height of 10"
 - Alternatively, use a weed whip or scythe to trim to a height of 4-6"
 - Year 2 maintenance will consist of mowing, trimming, or spot spraying as needed
 - A controlled burn is recommended in year 4, and every 3-5 years after. If you cannot burn, mow site all the way to the ground and rake off the clippings.

Patience

- **Goal:** Your prairie will take time to establish, be patient!