

*Will's Native Perennials*

## Pocket Prairies



**Pocket Prairies are small spaces that allow biological diversity utilizing native plants while providing numerous environmental and health benefits.**

# Turf Grass

## Did you know?

Turf grass has more of an environmental impact than asphalt parking lots!

Turf grass has a myriad of problems without human assistance throughout its life cycle. Originally, this was part of the appeal of turf grass. Royalty in Europe would keep well manicured turf as a status symbol of wealth. In the U.S. turf grass became popular after WWII, and by the 80's had been ingrained in the American psyche.

Converting turf grass is better for the environment and in the long run easier for the home owner.

There are two types of turf conversion

Pocket Prairie



Low/No Mow

# Creating a Pocket Prairie

## Planting

### Choose Which Route Works Best

**Small Area**  
1,000 sq' or less

**Large Area**  
1,000 sq' or more

### Small Areas

#### "Lasagna Method"

1. The Lasagna Method utilizes layering to provide multiple benefits to suit each application. Each layer can be customized to fit the needs of your prairie.



Your new topsoil where seedling will develop

Customizable layers. These are composed of all organic matter. Layers of peat moss, straw, compost, leaf mulch, wood mulch, twigs, topsoil, etc. These add nutrients, but you can also balance PH in your soil at the bottom of this layer.

Cardboard layer for weed suppression

Current soil surface (turf) or bare soil

#### Initial Planting

1. Buy cheap, tough, 'colonizing' plants. These are used to fill in your space economically and crowd out undesired plants.
2. Plant your most desired species. These are likely to be larger and more expensive. Place them in highly visible areas where you can enjoy them.

#### Maintenance

1. Not the most fun part, but VERY IMPORTANT follow your IPM for invasive management to ensure success.

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# Before Planting

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Right Plant

Right Place

*"If you plant the right plant in the right place you'll never have to touch it again."*

## Create Your Plan

Before you plant anything you need to have a vision in mind!

### Assess What You Have

1. Identify What you currently have, what you want to keep, and what needs to go.
2. What conditions are present? Sun, Facing, Soil Type, Moisture, Wind. These create your "micro-climate".

### Design

1. Design your future pocket prairie! Follow right plant right place according to your micro-climate.
2. Keep in mind the 5 basic landscape design principles: Line, Form, Texture, Scale, and Color. Added to this, do you have special considerations? Municipal codes, visibility issues, multi-use medicinal or food plants?

Research these principles and learn how to apply them!

### Create an IPM (integrated pest management)

1. An IPM is a strategy to ensure your success creating your prairie. It times, organizes, and focuses your efforts to minimize invasives while supporting your developing native communities.
2. An IPM utilizes three main control methods: Cultural, Mechanical, then Chemical. Cultural Control enables natural systems to do the work for you; crowding out pests by planting natives that can out compete. Mechanical Control is done by people or machines; timed mowing or hand weeding/pulling. Chemical Control is the appropriate application of Herbicides; spot treatments with broad-leaf specific herbicide.

I have a customizable IPM for you to use!

*Echinacea purpurea*  
*Eastern Purple Coneflower*  
*2015*

## Assess Your Progress

1. It is vital that throughout the season you assess how your prairie restoration is progressing. Keep track of what is working, what isn't, what plants are thriving, track invasive plants increasing or decreasing, etc. I will have a form you can fill out in my IPM guide.

## Fall Prep

1. The main goal of fall preparation is to set yourself up in the best position you can for next season. This will save you time and money in the long run.

2. There is no need to cut/trim anything. You will need to overseed the area again and its a good opportunity to apply soil additives.

## Large Areas

### Similarities

1. Many of the ideas and techniques are the same, they just need to be done on a larger scale. You will not be able to do the Lasagna Method, so you'll have to create your blank canvas differently..You'll follow the Initial Planting, Maintenance, Assessment and Fall Prep in the same manner (different techniques) as in a Small Area

### Creating the Blank Canvas

1. Since you cannot use the Lasagna Method you will have to complete your initial weed suppression differently. For turf grass I recommend using a 5% a.i. Glyphosate mix. This will have to be done in two applications two weeks apart. Them two weeks after that, you can overseed or plant the area. Alternatively, if you do not want to apply herbicide, you can till the area every 10 days (after seedlings sprout) until the seed bank is depleted.

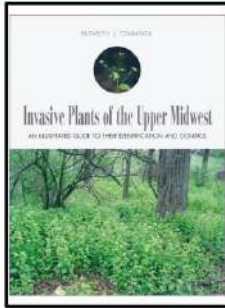
## Summary

1.It is important you take your time and do a thorough job BEFORE you begin planting. Spend time on your assessment, design, plant choices, and IPM, these are vital to the success of your Pocket Prairie. Utilize the design, IPM, and Plant Choice guide that I can provide you.

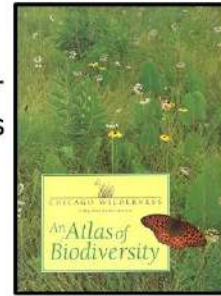
2. If you have site specific questions, please reach out and ask. I am more than happy to help.

# Supplemental Materials

## Books



*An Atlas of Biodiversity -  
Chicago Wilderness*



*Invasive Plants of the  
Upper Midwest -  
Elizabeth J. Czarapata*

## Websites

\*Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center\*  
[wildflower.org/plants/](http://wildflower.org/plants/)

*User Friendly &  
Thorough*

Audubon Society  
[audubon.org/Native-Plants](http://audubon.org/Native-Plants)

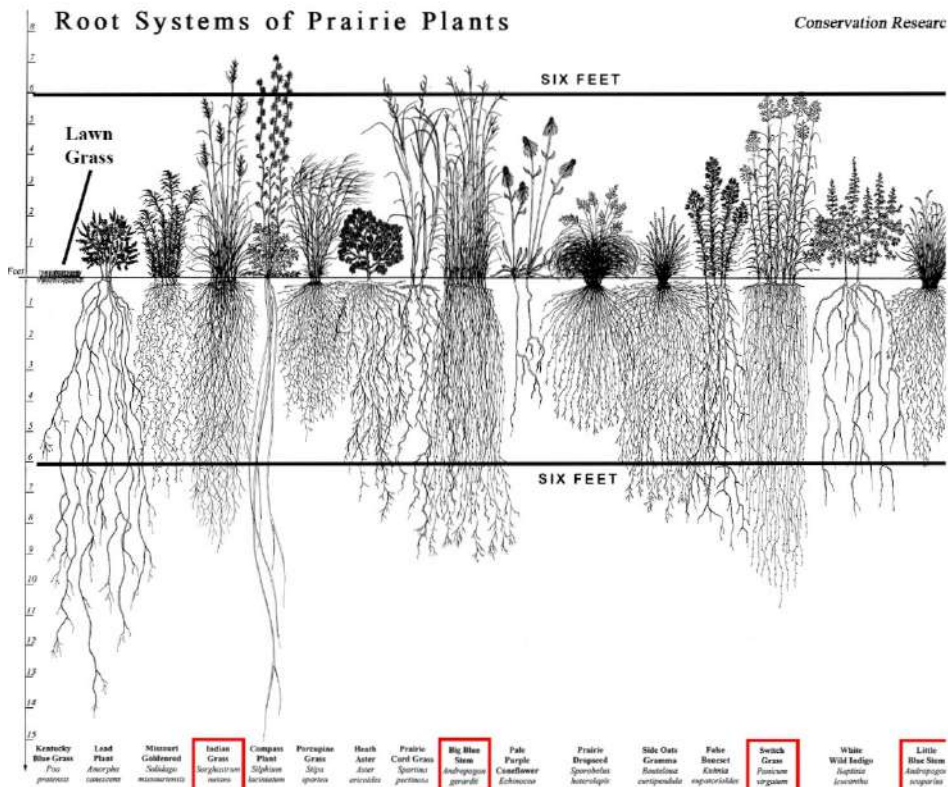
*Native Plants to  
Attract Birds*

NWF Native Plant Finder  
[nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/Plants](http://nwf.org/NativePlantFinder/Plants)

*Sorted by Natives to  
Attract Butterflies*

Biota of North America Program  
[bonap.org](http://bonap.org)

*Most In-Depth*



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