

General Prairie Planting Guidelines

Mixing your seed:

Make sure you have mixed your seeds thoroughly using ten parts moist sand to one part seeds. Mixing your seeds in this manner ensures an even broadcast without wasting any of your seeds. With smaller plots, you can broadcast several times over the same area to make sure you have complete coverage. It is extremely important to mix your seeds in this manner to avoid wasting and to provide the best coverage.

Preparing the seedbed:

Completely till the area you want to sow and make sure you have removed as many of the weeds as possible. You may want to use a contact herbicide to kill the weeds and sod before and just after the tilling. Roll or pack your seedbed just before you plant it, making sure the soil is firm.

Frost seeding - (February through March)

Broadcast seed onto the seedbed you prepared in the fall and allow the freeze/thaw processes to work the seeds into the ground.

Spring seeding - (April through June)

Broadcast seed onto a firm, well prepared seedbed.

Lightly rake the seed into the soil.

Roll or compact the seedbed after the seeds have been raked in.

Keep the area moist, but not wet over the next few weeks.

Fall (Dormant) seeding – (October through December)

Broadcast the seed onto a firm, well prepared seedbed.

Allow the freeze/thaw processes to work the seeds into the ground.

Maintenance:

Year 1 – Keep mowed to 4 to 6 inches through the entire first season

Year 2 – Keep mowed to 6 to 8 inches through the entire second season

Year 3 – Burn area in spring or fall. If burning is not possible, mow the area if weeds become a problem. Prairie plants thrive on fire. You can burn every year, but burning may destroy beneficial insects, therefore a partial burn of the site may be best.

Obviously, the key to a lush prairie of your own is patience. The prairies did not happen overnight; your prairie will do best with patience and good maintenance.

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