



The Tallgrass Prairie Center Guide to Prairie Restoration in the Upper Midwest (Bur Oak Guide)

Daryl Smith, Dave Williams, Greg Houseal, Kirk Henderson

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Although less than 3 percent of the original vast landscape survives, the tallgrass prairie remains a national treasure, glowing with a vast array of colorful wildflowers in spring and summer, enriched by the warm reds and browns of grasses in fall and winter. This comprehensive manual, crafted by the staff of the Tallgrass Prairie Center at the University of Northern Iowa, will be an essential companion for everyone dedicated to planning, developing, and maintaining all types of prairie restorations and reconstructions in the tallgrass prairie region of Iowa, northern Illinois, northwestern Indiana, southwestern Wisconsin, southwestern Minnesota, eastern South Dakota, eastern Nebraska, northwestern Missouri, and northeastern Kansas.

Focusing on conservation plantings, prairie recovery, native landscaping in yards and at schools, roadside plantings, and pasture renovations, the authors—who collectively have more than a hundred years of experience with prairie restoration—have created a manual that will be particularly useful to landowners, conservation agency personnel, ecosystem managers, native-seeding contractors, prairie enthusiasts, teachers, and roadside managers. A wealth of color and black-and-white photographs taken in the field as well as checklists and tables support the detailed text, which also includes useful online and print sources and references, a glossary, and lists of common and scientific names of all plant species discussed.

The text is divided into five parts. Part I, Reconstruction Planning, provides an overall summary of the entire process, information about securing good-quality seed, and the design of seed mixes. In Part II, Implementing Reconstruction, the authors consider ways to prepare and seed the site, manage the site in its first growing season, identify seedlings, and evaluate success. Part III, Prairie Restoration and Management, deals with identifying and assessing prairie remnants, working toward a predetermined restoration goal, and managing restored prairie remnants and completed reconstructions, including prescribed burning. Chapters in Part IV, Special Cases, discuss the uses of prairie in public spaces, roadside vegetation management, and landscaping on a smaller scale in yards and outdoor classrooms. Part V, Native Seed Production, describes the processes of harvesting, drying, cleaning, and storing native seed as well as propagating and transplanting native seedlings.

Although we cannot recreate the original blacksoil prairie, tallgrass prairie restoration offers the opportunity to reverse environmental damage and provide for the recovery of vital aspects of this lost ecosystem. Anyone in the Upper Midwest who wishes to improve water quality, reduce flood damage, support species diversity, preserve animal habitats, and enjoy the changing panorama of grasses and wildflowers will benefit from the clear, careful text and copious illustrations in this authoritative guide.

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