

PRAIRIES CAN SAVE YOU MONEY...AND LOTS OF IT!

Did you know that converting your lawn to a prairie meadow can save hundreds, even thousands of dollars a year? That's because the average manicured lawn costs between \$500 and \$1000 an acre per year to maintain. All those fertilizers, herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides really add up, not to mention mowing the darn thing every week, plus de-thatching it every other year or so.

And how often do you have to fertilize, spray, and de-thatch your prairie? *Never!*

Once established, a prairie requires no irrigation and only one mowing (or burning, if you're adventurous) per year. So you can put away the chemicals, stash the lawnmower for the summer, turn off the sprinklers, and sit back and enjoy the flowers while you spend your time and money on something you'd rather be doing!

COMPARATIVE LIFE CYCLE COSTS OF PRAIRIE VERSUS LAWN OVER A 20 YEAR PERIOD

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Landscape Type	Ave. Install Cost/Acre	Amortized Annual Cost Per Acre (20 yr)	Annual Maint. Cost per Acre	Total Annual Cost/Acre (20 Yrs.)
Prairie	\$2500	\$175		
A) With Annual Mowing Maintenance			\$100	\$275
B) With Annual Burning Maintenance			\$200	\$375
Seeded "No Mow" Lawn	\$2325	\$116	\$100	\$266
Seeded Traditional Lawn @ \$0.75/sq. yd w/o irrigation	\$3630	\$181	\$500	\$681
Sodded Traditional Lawn @ \$2.00/sq. yd. w/o irrigation	\$9680	\$484	\$500	\$984

The above figures are average costs for planting two to five acres. Actual costs may be higher or lower depending upon factors such as:

- 1) The complexity and diversity of prairie seed mix will influence the cost. Seed cost per acre can vary from \$500 to \$1500 per acre. The cost above is based upon a seed cost of \$1000 per acre, installation cost of \$1000 per acre, and site preparation costs of \$500 per acre.
- 2) The size of area to be planted will influence the per acre cost. The cost per acre will be reduced significantly for larger projects of 10 acres or more.
- 3) Site preparation costs for the prairie will vary depending upon how much pre-planting weed control is required. Site preparation costs can vary from \$50 per acre to \$500 per acre.
- 4) Annual maintenance costs for lawn will vary depending upon the level of care provided. These above figures are based upon a typical lawn care regime of spring fertilization, broadleaf and pre-emergent herbicide treatment, and bi-weekly mowing. Costs such as annual depreciation of equipment, labor and benefits, as well as fuel, herbicides, fertilizers, fungicides, and other lawn care products are included in these figures.
- 5) If irrigation systems are to be included in the lawn maintenance program, the initial cost per acre must be increased to reflect this added expense. Permanent irrigation systems are not required for prairie plantings.
- 6) The maintenance costs for prairie are based upon one annual spring mowing or burning.
- 7) If specific perennial weeds appear in the prairie or lawn, selective removal or treatment may be required. This will increase annual maintenance costs.