

MEADOW GARDENS

AND THE STEPS TO CREATE YOUR OWN AT HOME

Designed primarily with native plants, a meadow garden mimics the look and function of natural meadows, which are open fields of grasses and wildflowers. This type of garden offers numerous environmental benefits, including supporting biodiversity, promoting pollination, and creating a cooling island effect, while requiring less maintenance than a traditional lawn.



COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MEADOW GARDENS

People often confuse a neglected lawn with a meadow garden.

A neglected lawn is left unattended and can create safety issues, such as blocking sightlines and access to your property, fire hydrants, or other services. These areas often contain invasive plant species.

A meadow garden, on the other hand, is intentionally designed and maintained. It uses native plants and mimics natural ecosystems to support biodiversity.



Eco-Nico,
Environmental
Ambassador

CREATING YOUR OWN: HOW TO GET STARTED

STEP 1:

Plan the Garden Design and Prepare the Planting Area

- For beginners, it is recommended to start in small patches and reserve additional space for an eventual expansion.
- Remove your existing lawn using the method of your choice, such as digging under the roots with a spade or using the lasagna-gardening method, which involves planting directly on top of the grass.
- Select plants that grow well together. This is an important step in the process, and careful attention should be given to the plants' blooming times (consult the full plant list on our website: ptclr.ca/ecologicalgarden).
- To create a balanced-looking garden, use approximately 65% grasses and 35% flowering plants. It is recommended to plant predominantly native plants as opposed to non-native species (70/30 ratio).
- Choose five to seven different native plant species for your garden and arrange them in a neat and layered design. The objective is to create visual patterns with plants grouped in clusters.



SIDE VIEW OF THE GARDEN WITH EACH PLANT AT ITS MAXIMUM FLOWERING SIZE

STEP 2:

Create Layers and Begin Planting

- **Build your base layer:** Start by planting a thick layer of low-growing grasses to limit the spread of invasive plants. Grasses like Prairie Dropseed act as a cover of natural mulch.
- **Introduce accent plants:** The next layer should include plants like Coneflowers, or other species that reach a height of 60-120 cm (2 to 4 ft). These plants should be laid out in clusters.
- **Add architectural plants:** The final layer should include taller, standout plants, such as Joe Pye Weed, or other species that reach over 150 cm (5 ft) in height at maturity. This will add structure and height to your garden.

STEP 3:

Add Pathways and Mulch

- Make your garden easily accessible and organized by adding wood chips as pathways between flower beds.

STEP 4:

Maintain Your Garden

- Once your meadow garden begins to establish, it will require continued regular maintenance.
- Cut back and trim plants in early spring. This maintenance measure not only saves time but also helps conserve habitat for insects and birds during the winter months.

NEW GARDENERS, BE PATIENT!

When converting a traditional lawn into a meadow garden, the area needs time to adapt, develop diverse vegetation, and build a natural resilience.

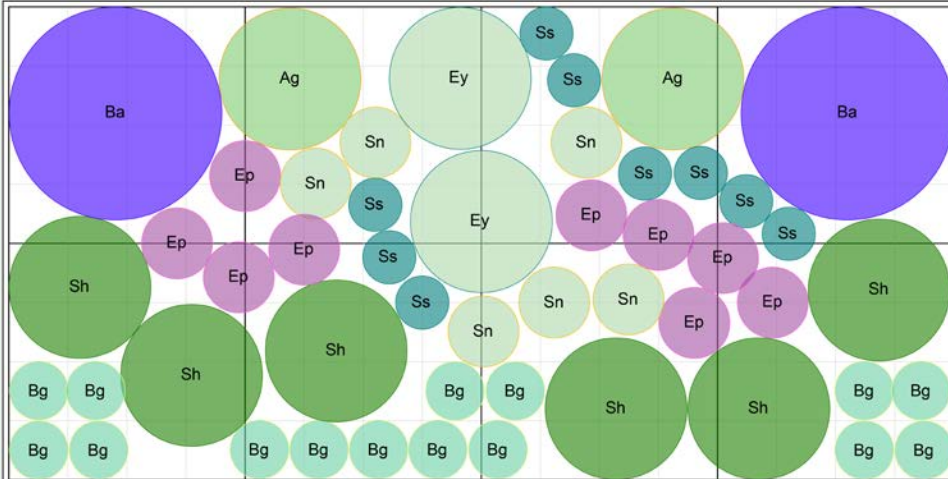
This gradual transformation is essential for creating a thriving ecosystem, allowing the garden to fully establish over the course of several years.



LIST OF PLANTS USED

Select plants from the recommended list based on sun exposure and staggered flowering (early spring to fall).

- Ss** *Schizachyrium scoparium*
Little Bluestem
- Sn** *Sorghastrum nutans*
Indiangrass
- Sh** *Sporobolus heterolepis*
Prairie Dropseed
- Bg** *Bouteloua gracilis*
Blue Grama
- Ag** *Andropogon gerardii*
Big Bluestem
- Ey** *Eryngium yuccifolium*
Rattlesnake Master
- Ep** *Echinacea pallida*
Pale Purple Coneflower
- Ba** *Baptisia australis*
Blue False Indigo



EXAMPLE OF PLANT ARRANGEMENT IN A GARDEN MEASURING 4 M X 2 M (12 FT X 6 FT)
(Each little grid square is 25 cm (10 in))

Scan the QR code to discover the list of suggested plants for meadow gardens, our glossary of gardening terms, and other types of gardens.

