

**“Plant A Prairie”**  
a project of the Kansas Native Plant Society  
and the Gary and June Kliesen Memorial Fund

**Kansas Teachers May Apply Now  
For Free Garden Kits**



Kansas Native Plant Society (KNPS) is again providing free “Plant A Prairie” garden kits to teachers in 2021. Kansas teachers K-12, as well as leaders of youth organizations, are eligible to participate. The project will supply 40-50 kits to applicants as long as supplies last.

Applications are open now through May 17, 2021. Participating teachers will receive 32 live native plants on September 17, 2021—delivered directly to the classroom. Each prairie kit includes 8 species that are hand-selected by the nursery to match local growing conditions. These are vigorous, easy-to-grow native plants that are pollinator friendly.

The Plant A Prairie garden, about 8' x 10', is sized to fit the needs of the classroom teacher (or can be shared by multiple teachers/classes). Students will have the opportunity to learn about the ecology of Kansas prairies. And, they will put that knowledge to work by building a mini-prairie for conservation of bees, butterflies and birds.

The Plant A Prairie kit includes a mix of grasses/sedges (25%) and wildflowers (75%), mostly spring and fall blooming plants. The kit contains perennials that benefit insects, birds and other wildlife, including one or more varieties of milkweed for Monarch butterflies. A full list of kit contents is below.

Funding for Plant A Prairie is provided by the Gary and June Kliesen Memorial Fund. Gary and June were active KNPS members and advocates for native plants and prairie restoration. The purpose of the Kliesen Fund is to engage Kansas youth in building prairie gardens at schools and in the community.

### **Key dates to remember**

**Mar. 17, 2021 through May 15, 2021**—applications are open as long as the supply lasts.

**Sept. 17, 2021**—your plants will arrive on or about this date.

**Spring 2022**—Send us a photo of your garden and complete a survey.

### **Learn more about Plant A Prairie and how to apply below....**

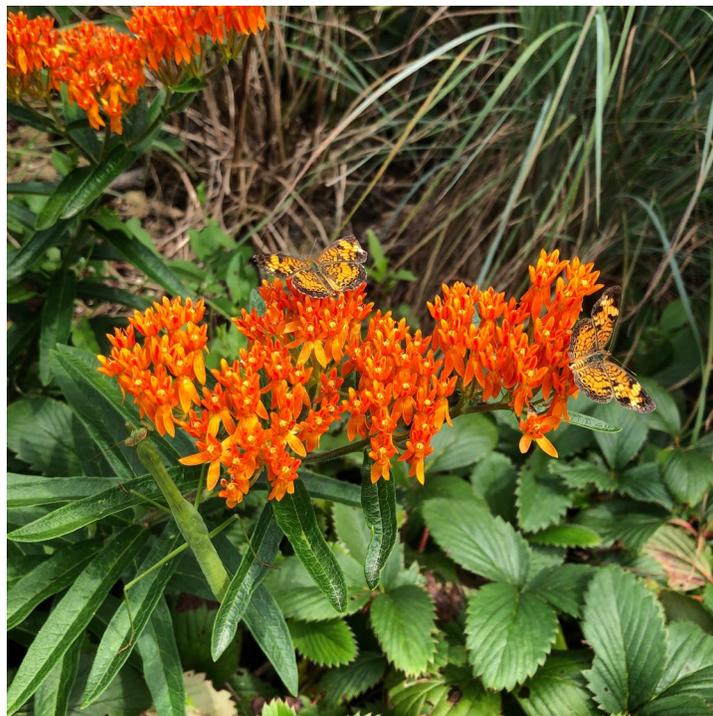
- **Who is eligible**
- **What is included in the prairie kit**
- **Links to lesson plans and other teaching resources**
- **Planting and care instructions**
- **List of Plant A Prairie plants with useful information**

## Who is eligible to apply

Kansas teachers K-12 are eligible, as well as leaders of youth groups, such as 4-H, scouting and others. Simply complete the one-page application and return it by July 1. Plant A Prairie kits are free, but a limited number of prairie kits are available. Successful applicants will describe (1) a clear educational plan with (2) a strong youth involvement.

## What is included with the prairie garden kit

- **32 individual potted plants**, each hand-selected to match the local growing conditions (as indicated on your application). Plants will be shipped in a live plant carton via UPS from Taylor Creek Restoration Nursery to arrive on or about September 17. Plants are about 8 inches tall; some taller plants may be trimmed at the nursery to fit. Note: you will get an email alert prior to plant shipment. The average height when mature is 24" - 36," with upper limit of about 48" tall.
- **A wildflower ID poster** with attractive color photos of more than 50 Kansas plants (shipped separately). The poster is a useful reference tool for the classroom.
- **An attractive "Plant A Prairie" sign** to place in your prairie garden (shipped separately).
- **Links to lesson plans** and other teaching resources. See below.
- **Planting and care instructions** (see below). These include handy tips to assure your garden will be a success.
- **Technical support via email.** A KNPS plant specialist will answer your questions about designing, planting and caring for your prairie garden. **Email contact: [PlantAPrairie@gmail.com](mailto:PlantAPrairie@gmail.com)**
- **A list of Plant A Prairie plants** with their common *and* scientific names and other useful information (See below) to be used for reference. For example, the list contains information on plant height (tall, medium and short) and season of bloom.



**Butterfly Milkweed *Asclepias tuberosa* and  
Wild Strawberry *Fragaria virginiana***

## Links to lesson plans, educational standards, etc.

Some of the sites below offer free downloadable materials; some offer publications for sale; and, some require a subscription fee to download materials.

**Tallgrass Prairie Center**-University of Northern Iowa (elementary/middle school)

<https://tallgrassprairiecenter.org/lesson-plans>

**Earth Partnership**-University of Wisconsin (100 activities, elementary/middle school)

<https://www.projectwet.org/what-we-do/publications/standards>

**Dyck Arboretum of the Plains**—Earth Partnership for Schools

[Dyckarboretum.org/earth-partnership-for-schools/](http://Dyckarboretum.org/earth-partnership-for-schools/)

**Project Wet** (64 activities K-12, water conservation: Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards)

<https://www.projectwet.org/what-we-do/publications/standards>

**Project WILD** (K-12: wildlife conservation)

<https://www.fishwildlife.org/projectwild/project-wild>

**Project Learning Tree** (Environmental education, all levels)

<https://www.plt.org/environmental-education-curriculum/>

**Teacher Link** (social studies and children's literature)

[teacherlink.ed.usa.edu/tlresources/units/byrnes-literature/alleman.html](http://teacherlink.ed.usa.edu/tlresources/units/byrnes-literature/alleman.html)

**Missouri Botanical Garden**-educational resources

[www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/learn-discovery/students.teachers/educational-resources](http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/learn-discovery/students.teachers/educational-resources)

**Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education, KACEE**, (Kansas environmental education standards, plan, and other resources)

[www.kacee.org/what-environmental-education-0](http://www.kacee.org/what-environmental-education-0)

**List of books on prairies** and related topics, including books for children and adults

<https://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/books.php>

## Links to plant descriptions and other information

**Michael Haddock, Kansas State University** (Kansas wildflowers and grasses)

[www.kswildflower.org](http://www.kswildflower.org)

**Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center** (North America wildflower information)

[www.wildflower.org/plant](http://www.wildflower.org/plant)

**Kansas Native Plant Society**—Wildflower Gallery (photos of many native plants)

[www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/gallery.php](http://www.kansasnativeplantsociety.org/gallery.php)

**United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)**—Plant Database (Search by plant name; maps of distribution; list of pollinators, and more)

<https://plants.sc.egov.usda.gov/java/>

**Missouri Botanical Garden**—Plant Finder (Search plant by name; photos and basic information)

<https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/plantfindersearch.aspx>

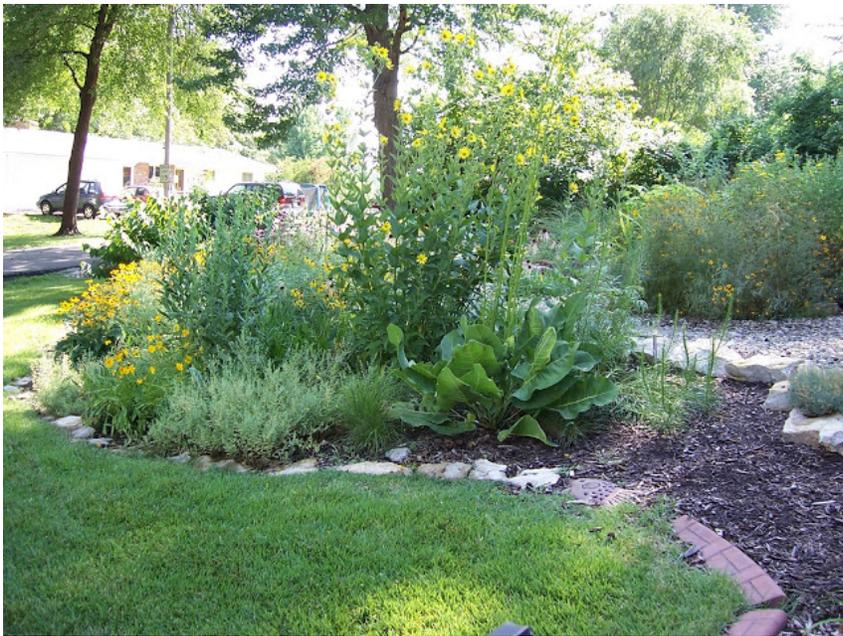
## Planting and care instructions

- 1. Prepare the garden site.** For best results, pick a site with at least 4 hours sun daily; more is even better. Plants will require 12-30 inches of space when mature, less for shorter plants, more for tall. Allow another 1' around the edge of your garden for border. Your finished plot should equal an 8' x 10' or 8' x 12' space.  
**If the plot you've chosen is filled with grass** (if not, skip to next step), you will need to kill and remove the grass. You may kill grass by covering the ground with a dark tarp or black plastic to smother the grass. Allow 4 weeks or more to kill the grass. You may also use a chemical application for this step. For best weed suppression, cover the space with cardboard or paper, then mulch. Water well. A double-ground leaf mulch is good, but hardwood or bark, straw or dried grass clippings work well, too. Apply no more than one or two inches deep. You may define the edge of a new garden with a shallow trench filled with a thick layer of mulch to keep out invasive grass. Rocks or even small logs can also be used.  
**If the garden plot is clear of grass**, simply cover the soil with mulch and water thoroughly.
- 2. When plants arrive**, remove the ENTIRE TRAY from the box, leaving the pots in their places. Move the tray to a shady area and water well. There are eight rows in the tray containing four plants per row. Typically, only the front plant in the row is labeled, and that label applies to all the unmarked plants behind it. You will need to create a label for EACH plant (craft sticks labeled with pencil work well, but can get lost in mulch and aren't permanent). Place a label in each pot.
- 3. Layout design for the garden.** We recommend you first create a rough plan on paper. Space plants according to mature size. As a rough guide, allow short plants 12"-18" space; medium, 18"-24"; and tall, 24"-30". Consult the plant list (see below) to determine the plant height (tall, medium or short). Place tall plants toward the back, or center as a focal point. Step down with medium plants; place short plants near the edge. For a natural look, avoid placing plants in a straight line.
- 4. Planting Day.** Choose a cloudy day, if possible. With plants still in their pots, place all plants according to your plan. Expect to adjust and rearrange, but remember that plants will spread and fill empty spaces.  
**Push gently on the pot bottom to remove the plant.** Keep working at it until it comes free. Do not pull plant out by its stem as that may cause injury. With a hand trowel, move enough mulch away to dig a hole twice the size of the pot. Break up any clumps and add a little (optional) potting soil to the hole to give roots a good start. Insert plant to the correct depth. Replace soil and press down to make good soil contact with the roots. Replace the mulch, taking care to not cover the young plant. Mark plant with its label, **consider adding a flag**. Water thoroughly. Repeat steps for remaining plants.
- 5. Initial plant care.** Water 2 to 3 times a week (if no rain) and remove any weeds. Water through October when plants go dormant. If any plants are pushed from the ground in winter, push them back carefully. Replace labels as needed.
- 6. First spring.** Identify your plants as they emerge before beginning to pull weeds. Reapply mulch where needed to suppress weeds and retain water. Discontinue watering at this point unless there is an extreme drought. Plants are putting down deep roots and are self-sufficient.  
**Second and third years.** Continue to mulch on the garden edges; normal plant litter may suffice as mulch in the garden's center. The plants will shade out most weeds. Dead stems and flower heads left standing through winter provide food for birds and habitat for native bees and other insects. Wait until early spring to cut back old stems, if desired, but leave 12" standing for habitat and support of taller plants.

## BEFORE AND AFTER



First season in a newly installed garden.



The same garden in its third season.