

Seed Mix Instructions

Congratulations on the purchase of this seed mix from Agrecol. We will outline several key steps that should be followed to maximize establishment. Read through all the directions before implementing any one part.

Caring for the Seed

Keep the seed in a cool, dry, site until planting time. A dry basement will work just fine. Another option (call for reasons) if you are going to hand-broadcast the seed, is to mix the seed together and with an equal part of sterile sand, sawdust, vermiculite, or other similar type of product. Wet the mixture until it is very damp but not dripping wet. Store this wet mixture at 30-38 degrees F for 15 to 120 days, checking periodically for mold. If it starts to mold store it colder or dry it down and plant it immediately.

Preparing the Site

Because of their slow growth, native plants struggle when they are young plants competing with weeds. Weeds are plants that were brought over from Europe and Asia and are now growing nearly everywhere, causing problems. Examples of weeds include quack grass, lamb's quarter, pig weed, dandelion, wild parsnip, Canada thistles, some mustards, reed canary grass, plus hundreds of others. Removing weeds before you plant is essential to a successful native planting. Below are listed several common methods to reduce the weeds:

1. Use a vegetation killing herbicide (Roundup®) at least two times
2. Cover the area with black plastic, cardboard, or mulch for one growing season
3. Rototill the area at least every month for at least one entire growing season
4. A combination of the listed methods

Planting the Seeds

Plant your seed mix either before June 15th or after October 15th for the best results. Soil seed contact is necessary for seeds to germinate; either rototill the soil well or use a special drill for no-till seeding. For best results incorporate soil amendments (lime, fertilizer, organic matter) before planting. If possible, after planting, mulching and watering may help depending on the time of year and the size of the plot. If watering, do it consistently until germination is complete (usually less than 3 weeks). Soil-seed contact is critical so try and lightly rake the site after planting. Do not plant the seed any deeper than ¼ inch or it will not survive!

Mixing the Seeds

Depending on how you will plant your seeds, the seeds may be packaged in several bags and will need to be mixed together. Most times your seed will come in five bags. 1. Vermiculite – an inert material that will help you spread the seed more evenly. It is light brown, light-weight, and looks like little crumbs. 2. Grasses – they are usually tan in color and are long and thin in shape. Some may have hairs attached to the seeds. 3. Wildflowers (forbs) will be multicolored, small, and consist of various shapes. 4. Legumes – members of the bean family – they are usually rounder and larger and in a smaller bag than the forbs. 5. Sedges and Rushes – typically very small round seeds. Included with the legumes is a bag of inoculant, a harmless bacteria that aids in plant growth. Before planting, mix the inoculant with the legume seeds. For hand planting, mix all the seed together with the vermiculite in a pail or garbage can and spread. For drill planting look for directions for that specific drill. It is best to break the mix into several equal portions and spread one portion at a time, looking at how fast you are spreading verses how much area you have covered, adjusting your planting rate such that you will run out at the end of your planting area. During planting always spread the seed conservatively, and use the remaining seed by planting it in the opposite direction. It is much better to run back and plant the extra than to run out before you are done!

Caring for the Planting

To care for your native planting, consider methods to control weeds after you have planted. The methods are dependent on the size of your site. Larger sites will require several key mowings the first two years. Mow at 6-12" in height just as the weeds flower or when they exceed three feet in height. Mowing too often or too short can be hard on the prairie plants. Mowing too often also trains the weeds to grow short and bushy – even worse for your native plants. After two growing seasons, burning the planting will also help control weeds. Burn as late in the spring as you can for maximum destruction of weeds (late April). Smaller plantings can use a power sting trimmer. In the fall or spring, it is good to either cut back or burn the dead vegetation. Most times this is best done in the spring to preserve winter nesting. This will help the perennials come back faster and stronger in the spring!