

Falcon Heights Environment Commission
March 12
Agenda

- 1) Approval of Minutes of February 13, 2012
- 2) Prairie Gardens
- 3) GreenSteps Minnesota Update and Next Steps (Mayor and Staff)*
- 4) Mercury Standards (Mayor Lindstrom)
- 5) Information and Announcements

* Commissioners may wish to review the following before the meeting.

GreenSteps References:

<http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/index.cfm>

<http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/bestPractices.cfm>

Falcon Heights GreenSteps status:

http://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/cityInfo.cfm?ctu_code=2394738



Falcon Heights Environment Commission

ITEM: **Prairie Gardens in Falcon Heights**
SUBMITTED BY: **Deborah Jones, Staff Liaison**

Description: Fairview resident Todd Miller has approached the City about converting part of his yard to a prairie garden. Because the Falcon Heights city code does not address this kind of landscaping specifically (other than a restriction of grass height to six inches), and because there is potential for abuse and neighborhood disagreement, staff suggested that Mr. Miller look for support from the Environment Commission and the City Council.

Background:

Adoption of natural landscaping, including prairie gardens, in Falcon Heights could contribute to the City's environmental and sustainability goals. However, the Falcon Heights code was written at a time when traditional turf-style lawns were the norm and the expectation. For instance, grass is limited to 6 inches in heights and "weeds" are considered a nuisance, even if they are not included in the state's list of noxious weeds. In the past, neighborhood controversies and code enforcement cases have arisen from instances where residents let their yards go wild and claimed they had a "prairie garden."

Real prairie gardens are very different from letting a yard go wild. They contain known native species of vegetation and require specific, regular maintenance tasks. Some cities have created successful ordinances that make a place for natural prairie landscaping in the urban environment. In order for residents to have the opportunity to plant and maintain prairie gardens, the City needs clear guidelines on what is allowed and what is required so different landscaping styles can be good neighbors.

Attachments:

- "Establishing and Maintaining a Prairie Garden" – UM Extension Service 1998
- Native Plant and Weed Control Ordinance Survey, City of Eden Prairie, 2001
- More information sources on the Web
- Discussion seed questions

ACTION REQUESTED:

- Advise City Council on the desirability of prairie gardens in the Falcon Heights and make recommendations for possible code changes that would allow this type of landscaping.

Additional Information Resources

Minnesota DNR

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/gardens/nativeplants/index.html>

Wild Ones: Native Plants, Natural Landscapes, a Wisconsin non-profit

<http://www.for-wild.org/weedlaws/weedlaw.html>

City of Golden Valley native plant ordinance and permit

<http://www.goldenvalleymn.gov/homeyard/yards/native.php>

<http://gv-img.ci.golden-valley.mn.us/Public/DocView.aspx?id=303011&dbid=2>

Discussion Seed Questions:

What is a prairie garden?

Is there a place for natural prairie landscaping (prairie gardens) in Falcon Heights neighborhoods? Is this in line with the City's environmental and sustainability goals?

How can these gardens be a good neighbor to traditional suburban landscaping?

Is this kind of landscaping suitable for some properties and not others?

Does the Environment Commission support this? Would the Council support it?

What kind of regulation is a "best practice"? Are there good model ordinances?

Should some kind of permit be required?

What public education would be needed to "do it right"? What do gardener/owners need to know and do? What do neighbors need to know?

What educational resources are out there?

What additional resources does the Environment Commission need to work on this issue?

Establishing and Maintaining a Prairie Garden

John F. Kyhl, graduate student, Entomology
Mary H. Meyer, assistant professor, Horticulture
Vera A. Krischik, assistant professor, Entomology

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NOTE: Figures only available in printed publication.

Introduction

Over the last 150 years more than 99% of the midwestern tallgrass prairies were converted to homesteads, agricultural fields, cities, and highways. In recent years, however, interest in prairies has soared, since people realized the beauty of native grasses and wildflowers. Much of the charm and appeal of prairies comes from wildflowers, such as coneflowers, prairie phlox, false indigo, and orchids. The great beauty of prairie wildflowers and grasses has prompted many people to create prairie gardens in their landscapes. People find prairie gardens attractive, as do many types of birds, butterflies, and other native wildlife. Over the years, prairie gardens may take less time and expense to maintain than conventional lawns, since they reduce the use of pesticides, fertilizers, and mowing.

Even though prairies aren't native to all regions, they can be created in most areas. Prairie management includes removal of weeds and volunteer woody plants that compete with prairie plants for water, light, and space.

Contents:

- What is a prairie?
- Planting a prairie garden
 - Site selection
 - Site preparation
 - Plant selection
 - Seeds vs. plants
 - Planting dates
- Prairie maintenance
- For further information
- Sources of seeds, plants, and information for prairie plantings
- Table 1: Prairie Wildflowers and Grasses

Planting a prairie garden

1. Site selection:

Prairie plants grow best in full sun and in open spaces. When selecting a site, look for areas with the maximum sun exposure with minimal root competition from trees. Ash, basswood, and maple trees provide more competition for prairie plants because they have many surface roots which compete for water and nutrients. Prairie plants often are more compatible with bur or white oak.

Knowing your soil type and surface drainage is quite important when selecting plants for your prairie. Native prairie soils vary greatly in composition, from dry, gravelly, sandy soils which hold little moisture to silty or heavy clay soils that can hold excessive water. Standing water on a site or water that does not drain from a 1' deep hole within 24 hours are indicators of wet and poorly drained soils. Knowing the soil drainage of your site is really more critical than taking a soil test which is typically done in planting a garden. Although you may have a soil test done, (soil test information is available from your county extension agent or from the University of Minnesota soil testing labs*) it is not critical in establishing a successful prairie garden. Understanding the drainage and sun/shade exposure of your site is essential for selecting plants that thrive in your location.

Determine if there are weed ordinances in your city. These ordinances were originally designed to keep yards more attractive and to control the spread of noxious weeds by keeping lawns cut to a certain height. Ordinances vary from one city to another, so call your city government to find out the specifics on the weed ordinances in your community. Consider using some "elements of care" such as mowed edges, signs, bird houses, edging fences, etc., near your prairie to show the area is meant to be there.

Also, prairies can be fire hazards during dry weather. Leave at least 20 feet of conventional lawn or noncombustible surface between the prairie and buildings or any other combustible items.

2. Site preparation:

The first step in preparing the site for a prairie garden is removing all existing vegetation. If you try to scatter seeds or put young plants into existing vegetation, you will have a very low likelihood of success. Maximize your success by reducing the existing plant competition.

There are three commonly used procedures to establish a prairie in an existing lawn or area of other vegetation. The first method is to put a dark plastic sheet, tarp, or pieces of plywood over the grass for at least two months before you begin planting. This kills the grass, making it much easier to remove, although tough perennial weeds, such as thistles and quackgrass can survive. Once the vegetation is dead, till the area thoroughly. This

method often works best when begun in the summer or fall to prepare for a spring planting.

The second procedure is to turn the soil and cultivate the area every few weeks for a complete growing season. Turning the soil brings weed seeds to the surface, and cultivating kills the seeds that have germinated since the soil was last turned. Over time, many of the weed seeds present in the soil will germinate and die. If possible, till to a depth of 12" or more and rake the area to create a uniform fine seedbed.

A third method, and probably the most common method of establishment, involves using a nonselective herbicide containing the active ingredient glyphosate, such as Round Up® or Kleenup®, to kill all existing vegetation. As with all herbicides, be sure to read and follow all label directions. When the vegetation has died in about two weeks, till to a depth of 12" or more. If a slit seeder will be used, tilling may be eliminated and the now dead vegetation can be mowed to a 1"- 2" stubble. This dead mat of roots and sod may actually act as a mulch and prevent excessive weed growth.

3. Plant selection:

Always select plants with the characteristics of your particular site in mind, because plants vary in their tolerance of light and moisture. Include grasses because they provide physical support, weed competition, protection for wildflowers, and a source of food and shelter for birds during the winter. Prairies typically consist of 60% - 80% grasses. A brief list of common prairie plants can be found in [Table 1](#). For a more complete list see Minnesota Extension Service publication [Plants in Prairie Communities \(FO-3238\)](#).

4. Seeds vs. plants:

You can start a prairie from seeds or plants; each has its own benefits. Starting from seed is more economical, but it will take two to five years for the plants to reach full size. Plants are more expensive, but establish quickly and may flower the first year. Also, some species are available only as live plants. You can control placement of plants, and they can easily be planted anytime from spring through fall. "Prairie-in-a-can" mixes are available from a wide variety of sources, but often contain marginally hardy perennial and annual species that don't return in subsequent years. Better results may be achieved by using seed mixes created for your area by local seed dealers. Be sure that any seeds you purchase are packaged for the year that you will sow them.

5. Planting dates:

The best time to direct sow seeds outdoors is after frost and before the heat of summer. For example, in central Minnesota this is between May 20th and June 20th, although seeds can be sown as soon as the soil can be worked. Dormant seeding in the fall, between mid-October and freezing, is another option.

Even seed distribution and **good seed-to-soil contact** are vital for successful seed germination. Broadcast seed by hand or use a spreader. For small seeds, mix with a bulking agent such as clean sand or dry sawdust for a more uniform seeding. Seed slowly and make passes from two different directions to cover the area completely. Flower seed can be concentrated in high-priority areas or spread evenly throughout the site. Many seeds are very small and should be spread thinly to achieve the best results. Seeding rates vary due to seed size and germination. As a general rule, use 1/2 lb. of grass seed per 1000 square feet, and 2 ounces of wildflower seed per 1000 square feet. More specific instructions on seeding rates can be obtained from the information provided when purchasing seeds.

Watering after seeding improves germination, but is not essential. Covering with a thin mulch of clean, weed-free straw prevents drying out, reduces exposure to wind and animals, and is important in preventing erosion on slopes. Grouping several plants of the same species together can make a showy display and can increase pollination and seed set.

Prairie Maintenance

Your biggest task in the first few years of a prairie planting is **weed control**. Weeding, burning, and mowing are the most effective ways to control weeds.

In small areas, removing and cutting back weeds are the most efficient methods. The most challenging aspect of these tasks is distinguishing between prairie plants and weeds. If you aren't sure what a seedling is, wait a week and look again, but be sure to remove the suspected weeds before they flower and set seed. See references for obtaining the slide set, *Prairie Seeds and Seedling Identification* (EP-6725).

The best way to manage a large prairie is through the use of controlled burns. Fire promotes plant growth by keeping down competition from trees and weeds, and by recycling nutrients. Burning is not practical or possible in all situations, as in small lots or within the city limits. Check with your local fire department to see if burning is allowed, and to get the required permits. Burning in April or early May is most advantageous to warm-season prairie plants, because it reduces competition with weeds and the soil heats up more quickly. Most prairies have only portions burned yearly in a cycle where complete burning takes several years. This partial burning fosters survival of overwintering insects that are lying dormant in the form of eggs or cocoons. It also leaves food and shelter for birds. Though burning is quite effective, it is not recommended until at least the third year after planting.

Mowing and removing clippings is a good substitute for burning, particularly on smaller sites. If you start a prairie from seed, mowing is recommended during the first year to control weeds which grow more quickly than prairie plants. For the first few years, set the mower high (4" to 8") to avoid cutting desirable prairie plants. After 4 or 5 years, mowing once a year after the seeds have fallen, or preferably, in the early spring. Remove clippings to expose crowns for regrowth.

Prairie usually needs no herbicides, insecticides, or fertilizers. Dense prairie vegetation will discourage invading weeds although perennial grasses from adjacent turf can invade along the edges of the planting. The wildflowers will provide food for beneficial insects which will aid in controlling pest insect populations.

For additional help in establishing and maintaining your prairie, consult the references below as well as private landscaping companies and, in some midwestern states, the Department of Transportation. For your own enjoyment, take photos from of same spot, on the same dates, several times a year, for several years. This will show you how far your prairie garden has progressed. Note how it changes through the year, including new and different creatures that your garden has attracted. Don't be surprised to see butterflies and native birds like goldfinches. Enjoy the benefits of restoring part of the landscape to what it was not so long ago.

For further information

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Smith, W. 1993. *Orchids of Minnesota*. Department of Natural Resources. St. Paul, Minn.

Van Breuggen, T. 1992. *Wildflowers, grasses, and other plants of the Northern Plains and Black Hills*, 4th edition. Fenske Printing Company, Rapid City, S. Dak.

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Table 1. Prarie wildflowers and grasses.

Name	flower color	flowering date	height
wild lupine (<i>Lupinus perennis</i>)	blue	May - June	1-2'
purple coneflower (<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>)	purple	June - Sept.	2-4'
meadow blazing star (<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>)	purple	Aug. - Sept.	2-4'
prairie phlox (<i>Phlox pilosa</i>)	pink/purple	May - July	1-3'
blue false indigo (<i>Baptisia australis</i>) tralis)	blue	June - July	2-5'
butterfly weed (<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>)	orange-red	July - Aug.	1-2'
black-eyed Susan (<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>)	yellow	July - Aug.	2-3'
grey-headed coneflower (<i>Ratibida pinnata</i>)	yellow	July - Sept.	3-6'
large-flowered beardtongue (<i>Penstemon grandiflorus</i>)	pink/purple	May - June	2-3'
hoary puccoon (<i>Lithospermum canescens</i>)	orange	May - June	1-2'
big bluestem (<i>Andropogon gerardii</i>)	bronze; bluish stems	Aug. - Sept.	3-8'
little bluestem (<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>)	white; bluish stems	Aug. - Sept.	2-4'
sideoats grama (<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>)	orange-purple	July - Sept.	1-3'
Indian grass (<i>Sorghastrum nutans</i>)	golden-brown	Aug. - Sept.	3-6'

* Contact the University of Minnesota soil testing labs by phone at 612-625-3101, or by mail at 1529 Gortner Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108.



Memorandum

To: Mayor and City Council
From: Leslie A. Stovring, Environmental Coordinator
Eugene Dietz, Director of Public Works Services
Through: Carl Jullie, City Manager
Date: September 27, 2001
Re: Native Plant Ordinance

Synopsis

The amendment of the City Code relating to maintenance of vegetation is to allow the use of native plantings to encourage water conservation and habitat enhancement. Native plants also require less intensive maintenance, resulting in less usage of fertilizers and pesticides. This change would give individual residents more choices for conserving water and thus meeting the intent of the Water Surcharge that was enacted in 1997 to encourage water conservation.

Background

The City began advocating xeriscaping, or water-smart gardening, as a way of moving away from growing plants from radically different climates, such as traditional bluegrass turf, to ones that thrive in our specific region. There are a number of perennials, annuals, shrubs, trees and vines that perform well yet require minimal supplemental irrigation and resist disease and pests with minimal chemical usage. This can be done without sacrificing the aesthetic quality of the City's yards and instead focusing on the character and beauty that natural landscapes can provide. After established, a properly maintained native garden should appear full and healthy.

Potential Questions on Native Landscaping

There are a number of potential questions associated with native plant gardens, including vermin population growth, mosquito growth, allergies and the need for annual burns. Research into these issues was completed and the results indicated that:

- Natural vegetation does not typically provide the quantities of food required for sustaining large vermin populations.
- Native landscapes tend to absorb water quickly and are less likely than a watered, sod-covered lawn to provide for mosquito breeding.
- There are few native plants which give off allergen-type pollens as most native plants are insect pollinated, not air pollinated. It is the air-pollinated species, such as Kentucky bluegrass, which are commonly allergens. Hennepin County has also stated that common allergens are so wide spread that the growth of a small number of air-pollinated species within a residential yard is inconsequential.
- Controlled burns are not required to maintain native landscapes within a yard. Mowing each spring and removal of debris will expose the soil for warming by the sun, mimicking the action of fire.

Key Provisions of the Ordinance

There are a number of issues addressed within the ordinance that may arise as a result of the new native planting guidelines. They include:

- It is unlawful for an owner or occupant to allow “noxious weeds” as defined by Minnesota Statutes or volunteer plants which are not customarily or intentionally planted to grow on their lot.
- Setbacks are required. They are 10 feet from the side and rear lot lines and 20 feet from the front yard lot line. The side and rear setbacks can be waived if there is a completely opaque fence with a minimum height of 5 feet.
- Prior vegetation, such as turfgrass, must be eliminated and the native grasses, sedges and forbs planted through transplanting or seed. This is to prevent “just letting the grass grow”. In addition, all natural areas must be marked with a sign advising that a meadow or prairie is being established in areas likely to be seen by the public.
- Plantings prohibited within the zoning district in which the planting is proposed, such as those provisions outlined in Section 11.50 the Shoreland Management Ordinance or Section 11.03 regarding sight line setbacks from intersections, would also be prohibited in this ordinance.
- All native-planting areas must be mowed a minimum of once annually between April 15 and June 1 to a height no greater than 8 inches.
- The City would **not** be responsible for damage to landscaped areas resulting from public works improvements or snow removal activities. The City may also require removal of native plantings from within right-of-way areas at no expense to the City.
- Work within conservation easement areas, including not mowing and cutting, requires written authorization from the City.
- Failure to comply with this ordinance, including setback, weed and annual cutting requirements, shall result in cutting of the vegetation and/or treatment of the weeds and the expenses thus incurred shall be a lien upon the lot or parcel for the amount of the cost incurred by the City.

Neighborhood Values

A concern has been discussed at staff level regarding the issue of the proximity of native grasses to lots occupied by someone with different values. The provisions for of setbacks or fences address this issue. However, there is the possibility that native vegetation could be installed next door to someone that values a manicured lawn.

Attachments

Proposed Ordinance
Survey of Local Ordinances

<u>CONTACT</u>	<u>RESULTS</u>
<p>City of Minnetonka Dean Elsted Planning Dept. 952-939-8217 Section 845.030 – Special Provisions: Lawn Maintenance</p>	<p>The City adopted an ordinance that allows citizens to install native plant landscaping that is “properly managed and maintained” approximately 10 years ago. The ordinance was instituted as the result of a lawsuit in which a resident contended that the City’s prior ordinance was too vague and that it infringed on their right to grow a native landscape in lieu of sod. Their previous ordinance was a basic ordinance stating that all vegetation over a certain height had to be mowed, similar to Eden Prairie’s. The City attorney agreed that the resident would likely win the lawsuit and the City drafted an ordinance that would allow native landscaping while regulating it.</p> <p>There have been few issues resulting from the ordinance and most residents have been very cooperative in allowing native plantings. They do have a few residents that have native landscape areas in place. Most native planting areas are within new construction where non-turf areas are part of the development plan. The majority of the complaints, of which there are few, are in the fall when the plants start looking a little overgrown as they only need to mow once during the year.</p> <p>Ordinance provisions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment of meadows and prairies is allowed, but not lawns or weeds left to “go natural”. Prior vegetation must be eliminated and the native vegetation planted through transplanting or seed by human or mechanical means. • A definition for “weeds” includes noxious weeds such as cocklebur, crabgrass, dandelions, quackgrass and ragweed. Weeds would also include anything that is horticulturally out of place, such as a tree seedling in a vegetable garden. Weeds are not to exceed a height of 10 inches, except in certain areas such as wetlands, ponds or other non-occupied areas that have never been graded, landscaped or mowed (City parks, etc.). • The area must be cut at least once per year to a height no more than 10 inches if the area contains more than 25% weeds. Once there are weeds of less than 25% of the area, no mowing is required. • There are no setback requirements. • A landscaping plan is only required if there is a question over whether a planting is “intentional” or not. • Large planted areas must have signage indicating that a restoration is in process. The sign must be a minimum of 10 inches by 10 inches and less than one foot by one foot. The sign must be located in an area which residents are likely to see it.

<p>City of Crystal Kelly Yeager Assistant City Forester 763-531-1000 Section 6.40 - Vegetation</p>	<p>Their ordinance promotes and encourages private residential applications of native plant landscaping. The ordinance was passed with little controversy and there have been no complaints since passage. There are a few residents taking advantage of the ordinance, three that she knows of. She did handle one complaint this year, but the resident's yard did meet the native plant requirements.</p> <p>Ordinance provisions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The City retains the right to cut any grass or weeds that represent a nuisance or hazard. • There is a 15 foot setback from the front street or side street (from the edge of pavement), and six feet from the rear or side yard (as measured from property line). • The setback is waived if there is a fully opaque fence at least five feet in height installed on the lot line. • The setback is defined as requiring regularly mowed turf grasses, which is defined as included blue grass, fescue or rye grass blends or other similar grasses. • Planned landscape areas must be cut at least once annually between April 1 and November 1 to a height no greater than 10 inches. • The landscaping plans must be submitted to the City Forester for review and approval. • The ordinance also specifically exempts parks and natural areas owned by the City and rights-of-way owned by the count and state.
<p>City of Eagan Pam Dudziak City Planner / Weed Inspector 651-681-4691 Section 7.08 – Regulation of grass, weeds, trees, and landscaping</p>	<p>The City of Eagan implemented a revised “weed ordinance” in 1990. The City has experienced few complaints with the native plantings in residential area. Only a few residents have installed native garden areas. One site they have been working with is Delta Dental, a company that converted large portions of their yard area to native landscaping. Complaints have centered on residents who are not aware that this is a native plant restoration area due to the lack of signage at the company. However, this area was done professionally and does look as intended. Delta has also reported a significant decrease in maintenance costs, including watering.</p> <p>Eagan’s code allows for establishment of woodland or meadow conditions for no more than 50% of all maintained areas requiring turfgrass. This includes the following provisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vegetation presently existing in the proposed restoration area shall be entirely eliminated and re-vegetated. • No noxious weeds or prohibited tree species are allowed. Prohibited trees are defined as female ginkgo, box elder, non-

	<p>disease resistant elm, and non-hybrid cottonwood.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A setback of 3 feet of turfgrass is required along the property edge where the restoration area abuts turfgrass areas on adjoining properties. • Soil erosion shall be controlled during the transition period of the restoration. • Turfgrass and other areas not covered by this ordinance are to be maintained at a height of 6 inches or less. • Areas exempt from the 6-inch mowing requirements include wetlands, floodplains, drainage ponds or ditches, pasture land, steeply sloped areas and restoration areas.
<p>City of Edina Vince Cockriel Park Superintendent 952-927-8861 and Lowell McCarty Retired weed inspector 952-922-5193 Section 1050 – Maintenance of Vegetation</p>	<p>The City of Edina has had a native landscaping plan that states that the area has to be a planned landscape or restoration area. The City has not had any problems with determining which are planned or not planned and ordering cutting for “unkempt” or “weedy” lawns. Overall, they are very satisfied with the ordinance.</p> <p>There has not been much controversy and are few complaints, especially after the residents learn what their neighbor is doing and why. They did have one complaint where the plantings were going beyond the setback area, but that was within the boundaries of the ordinance and was fixed. The majority of the native areas are on hillsides and were done with professional contractors. There are about 10 residents who have “whole yard” natural areas. Most are for smaller areas within the overall yard.</p> <p>Ordinance provisions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setbacks of 20 feet for street or side street sides and 5 feet for side or rear yards • Setback can be reduced to 0 if there is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a fully opaque fence of at least 5 feet in height, • a restoration area in adjoining lot, • a public park, open space or vacant lot next to it, • a wetland, pond, lake or stream, • or the slopes are greater than 3:1. • Setback must contain pavement, rock, gravel, wood chips, regularly mowed turf grass, trees and/or shrubs. • The weed definition includes primary and secondary noxious weeds as well as “any volunteer plant, except trees and other woody vegetation, which is not customarily or intentionally planted”.
<p>City of Plymouth Lara Newberger Forestry Technician & Weed Inspector 763-509-5946</p>	<p>Residents are allowed to request that portions of their property be designated a “Natural Preserve”. This formal application process includes a petition that must be signed by all adjacent landowners and approved by the City Council. However, they discourage most residents from going through the formal process as the</p>

	<p>Preserve area designation is intended for large restoration projects and would not include smaller landscape areas.</p> <p>They do work with homeowners to establish native-planting areas in back yards or adjacent to wetlands or other natural areas, similar to what Eden Prairie currently does. They also encourage signage of native plant restoration areas as they find it cuts down on neighbor complaints. They have also found that maintaining a buffer between yard areas helps stop encroachment of native plants into adjacent yards. The Natural Preserve / native plant areas must be kept free of Minnesota designated noxious weeds and must have a buffer of mowed vegetation adjacent to roads or paths. The City has over 20 Natural Preserve areas.</p>
<p>City of White Bear Lake Jim Robinson City Planner 651-429-8561</p>	<p>They have had a native plant ordinance for over 3 years now. The City has only had one complaint in this time. The complaint was settled relatively amicably and the native garden remained in place.</p> <p>Their ordinance was done very simply and includes a single provision. Their ordinance allows native grasses to exceed the City's 12-inch height restriction as long as the vegetation is set back a minimum of 20 feet from the property line and is part of a garden or landscape treatment.</p>
<p>City of Minneapolis Chuck Ballantine Planning Director 612-673-2616 Section 530.150 – General Landscaping and Screening</p>	<p>They allow use of native grasses within the landscaping and screening areas of developments. Use is encouraged to provide for interception and filtration of stormwater, to limit required maintenance, preserve or restore natural amenities and to conserve energy through shading and windbreaks.</p>
<p>City of Woodbury Steve Kernik Environmental Coordinator 651-714-3536 Section 15-7 – Lawn Maintenance</p>	<p>Their “weed ordinance” was recently amended in February 1997 to allow native landscaping. This was done to allow a variety of landscapes within appropriate locations within the City and also to address vacant lot issues. Approximately 50% of the calls they got were due to vacant lots, the remaining were due to either residents who already were doing native landscaping or those who were not mowing their lawns.</p> <p>Since passage of their ordinance, the number of complaints has dropped significantly, especially as residents became aware that vacant lots were exempt from the mowing requirements unless they had a significant amount of noxious weeds. This year he has only received two complaints about neighbors and both were in compliance with the ordinance. They had their 2nd annual landscaping tour and over 100 people attended the event.</p> <p>Natural areas are allowed on residential and non-residential areas, up to 35% of the rear lot in most cases. In general, vegetation</p>

	<p>must be 8 inches or less within 20 feet of buildings and within 20 feet of the curb or shoulder of roadways. There are a number of areas that are exempt from the 8 inch or less requirement. This would include maintained “gardens”, wetlands, wetland buffers, drainage ditches, steep slopes, vacant lots and berms greater than 4 feet high among others.</p>
<p>City of St. Paul Ed Olsen Public Works Dept. 651-488-7291</p>	<p>The City of St. Paul does not have a native planting ordinance, but does have a provision for boulevard plantings to “improve the aesthetic appearance of city street, avenues and alleys”. The ordinance allows garden areas with plantings not-to-exceed 24 inches in height with no overhang, encroachment onto sidewalks, curb or street areas. There have been no complaints and very few sight line obstruction problems.</p>
<p>City of Bloomington Glen Shirley Parks Maintenance Supervisor 952-948-8700</p>	<p>They do allow private homeowners to convert yard areas to “alternative landscaping”, including native prairie, when there are no conflicts with neighbors. No formal ordinance covers these situations. They have a basic “weed ordinance” that does not allow anything over 12 inches in height. The City is considering adopting a native landscaping ordinance in the future, as interest in this type of landscaping is rising.</p>