

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

You will save a lot of time if you ask yourself a few important questions:

- **How large is your project?** The methods you use will depend on the scale of your project. For less than an acre, weeding, spraying herbicide, and planting by hand may be adequate; for larger areas, you will need to use farm equipment.
- **What kinds of plants are growing on the site now and what is your vision?** Are they annuals or perennials? Grasses or broad-leaved plants? Are they green in winter and dried up by spring, or do they begin growth in spring and flower in summer or fall? Do they spread aggressively? Strategies for getting rid of unwanted plants depend on the answers to these questions.

WHERE YOU CAN GET ADVICE & INFORMATION

To learn more about using native plants and find out where you can buy them, visit the Palouse Prairie Foundation website at:

<www.palouseprairie.org>.

Click on [Palouse Prairie Restoration](#) to find more details plus answers to many of your questions. You will also find useful information by going to the above site and clicking on [Characteristics and Uses of Native Palouse Forbs in Landscaping](#).



AFTER YOU PLANT

- **Don't expect your planting to manage itself.**
- **Continue to control unwanted vegetation.**
- **Keep track of what you do.** Photograph your planting, mark down where you placed certain plants, record which techniques work and which don't, keep track of your ideas on how you might do things differently in the future.

🌱 Growing native Palouse Prairie plants is like an experiment. So start small, figure out what works, and then expand your planting. *Observe your project carefully, learn as you go along, be flexible and willing to adapt to surprises, and share what you have learned with others!*



This pamphlet was prepared by the Palouse Prairie Foundation and was partially funded by the National Natural Landmarks Program, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

Planting Your Land with Native Palouse Plants

WHY USE NATIVE PLANTS?

Native plants of the Palouse:

- 🌱 are attractive;
- 🌱 provide food and cover for wildlife;
- 🌱 help prevent water & wind erosion;
- 🌱 tolerate our dry summers & cool winters;
- 🌱 don't require much fertilizer, pesticide, water, or maintenance;
- 🌱 increase the available options for well-adapted ornamentals; &
- 🌱 may help reduce invasive weeds.



THE CHALLENGE

Growing natives takes time and effort.

Control of weeds is essential!

HOW TO OBTAIN NATIVE PLANTS

- **Make sure to use plants or seeds from eastern Washington or northern Idaho.**

Plants from other regions can undermine the genetic adaptations of our plants.

- **Read the label for all seed purchases.**

Make sure that:



the seed you buy is free of noxious weeds, contains only minimal amounts of other weeds, and does not contain crop seeds, & the grass seed you buy has been tested for germination within the past year.

See the overleaf of this pamphlet for information on where to purchase natives, & see accompanying information sheet for sources of plant material.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR SITE

- **Don't fertilize!** *Many weeds thrive in soils that are high in nitrogen.*
- **If your site is cropland, maintain crops until you are ready to begin.**
- **Weeds can be controlled by spraying, mowing, hand pulling,** or some combination of these methods.

Repeated mowing can reduce problems from annual weeds such as dog fennel.

Spraying must be done carefully to avoid harming native vegetation! Follow the label and consult experts. (See the web sites listed under **WHERE YOU**

CAN GET ADVICE AND

INFORMATION.) Spray when you will maximize damage to weeds and minimize damage to desirable species.

- **Non-native perennial grasses are especially hard to get rid of.**
- **It may take several years and several control methods to get rid of weeds,** but it is essential to eliminate them before you begin planting or they will quickly reinvade.

WHAT TO PLANT

🌱 **Idaho fescue, bluebunch wheatgrass, and prairie junegrass** are the most common and readily available native Palouse Prairie grasses. On shallow soils bluebunch wheatgrass & Sandberg bluegrass may be used.

🌱 **On shallow or rocky sites,** tapertip onion, Wyeth buckwheat, & biscuitroots do well.

🌱 **Plants that are well-suited to deep soil** include Western yarrow, blanketflower, false sunflower, Lewis flax, cinquefoils, Missouri goldenrod, biscuitroots, prairie smoke, arrowleaf balsamroot, silky or velvet lupine, & sticky geranium.

🌱 **Snowberry, Nootka or Wood's roses, Douglas' hawthorn, serviceberry, & chokecherry** are appropriate native shrubs.

HOW TO PLANT

Grasses

- **Get native perennial grasses started first** unless you are planting a very small area.

- **Seed grasses in the spring.**

- **In small areas, you can broadcast grass seed.** Check with an expert for advice on how much seed to use. (See **WHERE YOU CAN GET ADVICE AND INFORMATION.**) Include as many native grass species as possible. Push the seed down into the soil. A roller or a harrow will work well. Small areas can be raked. Good soil/seed contact is critical!

- **Use a drill to seed large areas.** Consult an expert about how much seed you will need. Make sure you have a firm seed bed. Plant seeds about ¼" deep & no deeper than ½".

Wildflowers

- **Purchase young plants in pots or tubes from a nursery.**

- **Select one or a few small areas for wildflower plantings.**

- **If you are planting into native grasses, you may till narrow strips** in the grass before planting plugs, but you will have to control weeds invading the tilled ground.



Shrubs

- **Obtain potted shrubs from a nursery.**
- **Plant shrubs early in spring or late fall.**
- **Water shrubs each week** throughout their first summer.
- **Use plastic tubes** to protect shrubs from rodents and deer.