



PRAIRIE BREEZE

THE LIVING PRAIRIE MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2021

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INTERPRETIVE CENTRE HOURS

Please see our website for information.
Online education programs available!

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Get the latest news here:

friendsoflivingprairie.org



Exhibit Upgrades

The Friends of the Living Prairie Museum came through once again!

The Friends applied for funding to support staff education and equipment upgrades from the Assiniboine Credit Union Sustainable Communities grant. They successfully received funding to cover 75% of the costs.

The Friends supported registration for museum staff to attend the Native Prairie Restoration/Reclamation Workshop online. This exceptional workshop gave staff the ability to learn from researchers, industry practitioners, and Indigenous perspectives on prairie conservation and restoration. The knowledge gained will be invaluable to staff who work to use the best practices available

to maintain the health and diversity of the preserve.

The funds were also used to upgrade the museum's current touchscreen technology. Visitors to the museum may have noticed that the touchscreens have been inactive for a lot longer than we'd like to admit...it isn't an easy bit of tech to replace. But, we now have new tablets and secure mounting brackets, and hope to have them ready to go when high-touch surfaces are available to the public once again.

Museum staff would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Friends for helping support environmental education. We also thank ACU for making these funds available to the community.



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Start Planning Your Plantings - A Helpful Guide

Spring brings daydreams of garden planning, and we love seeing how many of you are including native plants in those plans. Prairie plants provide habitat, help us conserve our prairie heritage, and contribute to carbon sequestration.

A successful planting relies on doing a bit of research before you get started. Here are some responses to some frequently asked questions that may help:

Can I seed into an existing planting or sod?

This isn't recommended. Prairie seeds need really close seed-to-soil contact, so bare areas are best. They also grow very slowly. Competition for light and space can significantly reduce their ability to grow. Always take the time to prepare a weed-free, sod-free patch for seeding.

Do I really need to stratify my seeds? I'm in a rush!

The answer depends on the species! Most prairie seeds come with pre-sowing recommendations. Many require cold, moist stratification. This treatment acts as a mock winter, helping them break dormancy and germinate. This may mean two to four weeks in the fridge in a damp medium prior to sowing, so budget that time. If you're really in a rush, select species that germinate well without stratification.

There are fantastic tips for growing plants from seeds on the [Prairie Moon Nursery website](#).

I'll be planting plugs, but how many will I need?

A general rule is one plant per square foot, so take some measurements of the area you intend to plant. It's also good to talk to your grower about the growth habits of the plant. How big

does it get? Will it form a clump? Does it spread? This may influence your spacing in the garden.

How long does it take for my planting to mature?

Most prairie plants won't flower or produce seed in their first season. As prairie perennials, much of their energy is allotted to increasing root volume. This is essential if the plant is going to survive its first hot summer and cold winter. In general, your garden will reach its full potential after three years.



Living Prairie Museum

I've heard that native gardens don't need any maintenance. Is that true?

Yes and no. In the first year, yes, your little perennials will need your attention. They will easily be out-competed by fast growing annual weeds, so you have to put in the effort to keep it weed-free. You will also need to water the garden while the roots are establishing.

As the plants mature, they require less maintenance. They become extremely drought tolerant and very rarely require watering. They don't need to be replanted and will spread or produce seeds. They'll become better equipped

Start Planning Your Plantings - A Helpful Guide

to withstand weeds, though all plantings will need weeding from time to time. But, after that initial investment in time, you get a garden that returns year after year and is well adapted to our local conditions.

I'm planning to naturalize my lawn. Will this get me into trouble with my neighbours?

Everyone has a different perspective on how a lawn should be kept, so it's important to be aware that not all will appreciate a prairie planting.

We strongly recommend that you keep a species list of your plants. If there is any discussion about your planting being "weedy", you can show that your plants are indeed native and not on any noxious weed lists.

We also recommend that you put the time in to care for the planting. Use edging, keep it weed-free, include some elements of design like stones or paths. Making sure there's beauty in your planting may help your neighbours get comfortable with the idea.



Living Prairie Museum

Our most important advice is to start small. Only create a planting that you can manage,

and slowly expand from there. The greatest source of failure is doing too much, too soon.

I want to help pollinators like bees and butterflies. What should I plant?

Living Prairie Museum is one of the organizations behind Bee Better Manitoba, an initiative to help Manitobans create pollinator habitat using native species of plants. The beebetterMB.ca website launched on Earth Day last year, and has a lot of content to help you create pollinator habitat. There is information about pollinator biology and conservation, best practices for pollinator health, native plant lists, site prep information, garden design ideas, and a FAQ and a list of helpful links for further learning. We hope you take the time to have a look at the site for some tips!

Something to remember about a pollinator garden - it's year-round habitat. Nesting and overwintering are very important life stages, so proper garden care is key. Leave the garden messy in fall, leave hollow stems and old wood for nesting, try not to disturb the soil where ground-nesting bees may be living. There are lots of tips on this topic on the website. There's even [a brochure](#) that helps summarize a lot of the general information you'll need.

Do you have any talks or workshops coming up this spring that may help?

We're working on it! We have tentatively set two dates for online Prairie Planting Workshops in April. Please watch your inboxes and social media as we confirm the details.

We're also participating in the SK PCAP Native Prairie Speaker Series. Our Curator will be presenting a free public lecture on pollinators. Please see page 4 for details, including a link to their series and registration.

Thank You



Thank you for
attending the Winter
Speaker Series on
Zoom!

MUSEUM STAFF

Sarah Semmler
Lois Grieger



Thank you for
receiving your
newsletter
electronically.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Native pollinators: Who they are, and how to help them out.

Tuesday, April 20th, 12 p.m. MT

This free webinar features a presentation by our Curator, hosted online by the Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan. It will introduce you to a range of pollinators, their conservation concerns, and what you can do to help them. Register by following [this link](#), or visit their event page.

Prairie Planting Workshops

We're working on arranging two sessions in late April that will help you learn about growing native plants. Instructor John Morgan will be presenting an online version of his workshops. More information soon.

Did you know we are offering online education programs? Visit our website to see our Prairie Life Online brochure!



Be like the coyote.

The coyote only plays with the coyotes it lives with and only communicates from afar.

Practice social distancing.

Visit winnipeg.ca/COVID-19 or contact 311 for updates



Please visit Winnipeg.ca/livingprairie for updates.



LIVING PRAIRIE MUSEUM

2795 Ness Avenue Winnipeg, MB R3J 3S4

Tel: 204-832-0167 Fax: 204-986-4172 E-mail: prairie@winnipeg.ca

www.winnipeg.ca/livingprairie

www.livingprairie.org

www.friendsoflivingprairie.org